

The Art of Success

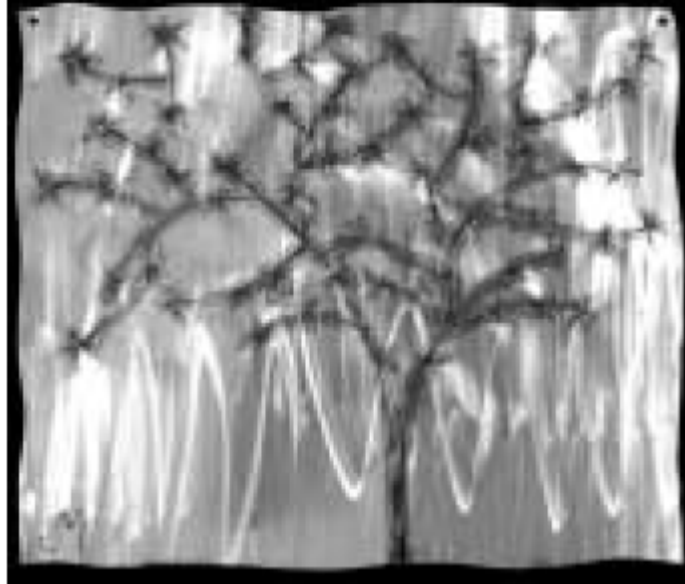
Jason Mernick

(As told to the National Stuttering Association)



my speech as noticeable, but some than others. People that I stutter.

About four years ago which I was a sold to a publicly and I needed to look for my next business venture. I made some money, but not enough to retire on, so I needed a new way to make a living. My lovely wife was still in law school and not working, so it was all on me.



I wanted to share with LETTING GO my recent success as an artist and some of my perspectives on stuttering. I would describe “medium.” It is days are worse definitely know

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Of all things, I chose to be a metal artist (with zero background in art and zero experience with metals). I decided the most efficient way of testing the market was by doing outdoor art festivals. The festivals were easy to get into and not expensive to do. I knew that most fluent people would find dealing with strangers on the street very challenging—not to mention trying to sell them something they just saw for the first time and know little about.

I started selling my metal art on the street four years ago in Southern California outdoor art festivals. Some people tell me that I lack perspective, but I have not seen my speech to be an impediment to me at all. In fact I see it as a big asset. I see having to “overcompensate” for my speech to be one of the things that has helped me build success in many areas of my life. I have been told that I am an unflappable extrovert, very confident and loving of attention. If I did not stutter I am not sure I would be so confident. It is the stuttering in and of itself that made me try harder and be bolder. I married a woman for whom there was tons of competition and loved the challenge. In fact, my wife of 10 years now says she was intrigued with my confidence even though I had a stutter.

Now back to the art business. I have done more than 200 art shows now and have been picked up by more than 50 galleries nationally that purchase my line from me for resale. I regularly work on sizable commissions for both residential and commercial clients. I recently inked a licensing /manufacturing /distribution deal with Intercontinental Art (ICA), the largest distributor of wall décor in the U.S. ICA manufactures elements of my work offshore

(which will not compete with the originals sold by me or in the galleries) and supplies major retailers like Z-Gallerie, Bed Bath & Beyond, and Target with wall décor for the public to buy. All of the work is fully branded with my name and Web site. This ICA deal has the potential to make me one of the most widely distributed artists in the country. My lawyer wife currently runs the business full time. All of this was done by starting on the street with a speech impediment.

From my perspective, one can do just about anything one wants. I am not trying to be an air traffic controller or an auctioneer; in those professions I can see how stuttering might be a setback. I see it like this: it is not what happens to us, it is the way we deal with it. I am convinced that some stutterers hide behind their speech impediment and use it as a crutch and victimize themselves with it. Just like fluent people have issues and crutches, so do we stutterers. Many times it is not our stutter that is the problem. I have been shocked at what I have been able to accomplish simply because I was not afraid to try—stutter or no stutter.

Jason Mernick is 38 years old. For more on Jason, see www.jasonmernick.com or do a www.google.com search on Jason Mernick

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