

December 2, 2025

Dear John Hendrickson,

Before reading your nonfiction novel, *Life on Delay*, I thought I was alone with my stutter. My words were like prisoners trapped behind a locked door. My stutter is an unexpected fog that rolls in. I thought I was the person that was useless because I would take so long to talk, and everyone would walk away after hearing my stutter. I had some darn fine jokes that nobody laughed at because of my stutter. I can't talk fast because of my stutter. In addition, I can't talk too slowly, or I stutter. Can't say things in a regular voice, I stutter. Every day, I would get bullied. Everyone would bully me! The smart kids, the popular kids, the kids that were bad. They would call me a "can't talk right boy" and mock my stuttering. They would say, "ah- ah- ah-, spit it out." It was the worst. I cried myself to sleep every night. Hoping kids would just give up on trying to make the effort to bully me.

At one point, I even considered suicide. I'm not proud of it, but when I was my lowest I was cutting myself on my stomach. I still do to this day. I couldn't escape its grasp.

I wondered if the bullying was going to stop. It never did. The bullying took away my confidence, self-love, and self-esteem. It caused me to have to go to therapy, caused anxiety, and social withdrawal. I hated it. What people can do to one can make other people physically and mentally ill. You made peace with your stutter, and I plan to too. You wrote about your challenges. So, I think I can make peace with my stutter also.

Your book showed me I was not alone. Your book brought me to the realization of what I go through. It really helped to see what I went through. Your book unlocked the door and cleared away the fog. "The look is almost always the same. It's the moment the listener realizes something is wrong with you, that moment they subtly wince," I like this quote because I saw people wince when they would hear me speak. Your words reinforced the fact, I am not alone. Other people have the same insecurities because of their stutter.

I realized how your experience matched mine. How other people have stutters and how there is no pill I can take to fix it. I try to help other people at my school with stutters. To comfort them, and to give them hope. It is part of me, and I have to make peace with it. I will be forever thankful for your book.

Sincerely,

Daniel Atkinson