

## "The Full Moon Phenomenon"

Some experts believe there is no connection between the full moon and erratic behavior or mood changes in us, but I have observed and been a part of a strange phenomenon that occurs every 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 2.8 seconds. My job as a bartender gives me the opportunity to observe people in various stages of celebration, social exchange, loneliness, or depression. I am firmly convinced, that at the time of the full moon, alterations in personalities do occur.

George is the most recent example of the change. At least once a weekend he ambles into the club. A tall, nice-looking man, he always has an easy smile as he eases into his favorite bar stool. His ever-present cowboy hat doesn't conceal the calm that always seems to be there in his warm blue eyes. There is always a Heidelberg established on the bar in front of him, but with George it's just a prop, something to do. He's unlike some of the others determined to "get drunk tonight!"

One evening, during a gorgeous harvest moon, he took his usual bar stool, but he didn't seem to be the same polite George I'd always known. His tone was demanding as he ordered his beer. I didn't notice anything else amiss. It was just a fleeting feeling of uneasiness that night. There was something different about George.

I didn't pay too much attention to him throughout the evening. It was a hectic Friday night. Soon, it was time to gather up the half-empty glasses, overflowing ashtrays and whatever else was left there on the tables to surprise me. The next job was to convince the stragglers that the fun was over.

Quite a few of them gave me their usual excuses and comments:

"I'm not through with that drink yet!"

"Gimme a whiskey!"

"You can't take that. I'm not done!"

"Hey, I have 2 minutes!"

After the allotted arguing time (I'm sure they feel it's a requirement), they relented, as always. One who is never a problem is George, but not tonight.

I'll never forget the cold look in those steel blue eyes when I picked up George's beer. His mouth dropped in actual horror as though someone had struck him. He scanned the bar around him to see if others had actually seen the outrageous deed I had done. His head dropped to his arm on the bar as if to cry. Then up it came again with that horror-stricken look. He put his head down once again as I watched his outstretched hand continue to curl and uncurl as if a brewing storm in him were trying to escape. Finally, the words came out of his mouth ever so slowly: "I can't believe it. You took my beer." I delivered my usual speech about O.L.C.C. rules and that it was time to close, but as I was talking I was becoming more unnerved by his piercing eyes.

I was actually thinking to myself, "This man wants to kill me!" In retrospect it does sound like an overreaction, but that was how it affected me. I don't know what would have happened had the bouncer not come along and broken the spell.

He said, "Come on, George, it's time to go home." It was as if a light switch were turned off in George as he wandered out the door with the bouncer's help.

The mixture of feelings, from fright to bewilderment, lingered with me as I cleaned the bar. Sleep came a little later than usual that night. Even now, two years later, it still makes my skin shiver when I think of those few moments and that burning look.

Although George is once again his wonderful, sweet self and probably has no inkling of the impact he had on me that night, I won't forget what happened. The experts may say whatever they wish, but am a firm believer in the full moon phenomenon.

by Lis Dymond

## "The Stutterer"

You call a friend on the phone. You ask a question at a department store. You order food at a fast food restaurant. You talk to your friends during school. You give an answer to someone who wants to know how to get somewhere. All of this sounds very routine doesn't it? This is something you may do every day. You don't even think twice about it. You take for granted your ability to communicate.

This time, imagine yourself calling your friend on the phone again. He says "Hello;" you sit there; garbled sounds come out of your mouth. He says "Hello" again, now you can't breathe, the harder you force out a word the worse it becomes; your friend hangs up.

Someone asks you a question on the street. You choke, no air seems to come out of your lungs. Your mouth starts to twitch violently and your eyes begin to roll up. The person waits patiently, you still remain in this convulsive state trying to speak; the person walks away. What do you do? How would you feel?

This is the world of the stutterer. You have probably seen someone who stutters, or actually know someone who does. Have you ever wondered what his problem was or how he coped with it? Being on the receiving end of the situations I have stated above, would you have really wanted to know.

Stuttering is believed to be a coordinative disorder involving a disruption in the speaking process and the auditory system. It is believed that stuttering may be caused by genetic factors, but no one knows for sure.

Little of this matters to the person who stutters. His overwhelming concern may be just to get through his next sentence and avoid trying to get caught up in another one. His inability to communicate for whatever reason may have one cause, but many detrimental effects.

The effects of these situations may cause the stutterer to (like I have mentioned above) avoid speaking situations. These situations become embarrassing, stressful, and very painful. In order to accomplish this the stutterer will begin to avoid other people. This in time may cause the individual to withdraw even further, becoming reclusive and distant. He begins to feel overwhelmingly depressed and starts to take much of the burden for his failures on himself now refusing to talk to anyone. His speaking ability now, and afterwards, will most likely continue to get worse. This is not because his stuttering has gotten any worse, but his avoidance of social situations has made him an ineffective communicator. The ability that most people have to interact socially, use words in correct context, and generally be at ease around other people is something completely lost in the stutterer's case.

One side-effect that occurs from this withdrawal is the ability to constantly analyze situations. One might consider this ability to be worthwhile and useful. In the stutterer's case it has grown to such an excess that it begins to hinder him in all ways. He will begin to analyze everything by trying to foretell events that may never happen and reading other people's minds. He does this to protect himself and to keep himself from getting hurt.

Stuttering, when first seen has often been mistaken for being retarded. The convulsive facial gestures that are produced when

too much force is being applied to speaking gives this appearance. The stutterer realizes this all too vividly. He is far from being retarded; he is usually intelligent, but in a tainted sort of way, focusing much of his thoughts on his problems. To escape this very embarrassing appearance the stutterer puts on a mask of insensitivity and coldness. Now he not only has shut himself off from the rest of the world, but has effectively created a force to repel others. Compiled with this and the other effects I have mentioned earlier, the stutterer has gone from being the most ineffective speaker to becoming the most effective non-verbal communicator.

The stutterer also becomes very unwilling to risk anything, step into new territories, or get involved with anyone. He has gone from refusing to speak to being afraid to speak. He walks a thin line, trying with all his effort not to veer off to one side or the other. Going off the line into the down side of life causes his problems to magnify. Bad grades, family problems, and criticism take on a whole new meaning in the stutterer's case.

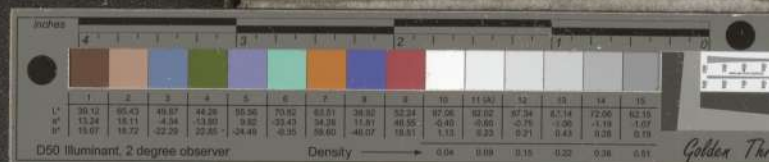
Not only does the stutterer not wish to be caught up in the turbulent down side of life's experiences (who does), but is also afraid to be caught in the up side as well. Times like these cause the stutterer to lose part of his foundation and also break down the walls he created. He does not know how to deal with the situation, most likely because he never learned how. He begins to feel that he is losing control of his speech and of himself. Then he quickly pulls himself back down. Once he has gained control he can better analyze events, watch himself and watch others. He has now regained his flimsy idea of false comfort.

Emotions also prey upon the stutterer. Every time he stands there trying to get out a simple word his frustration builds and he becomes very bitter after countless attempts. He now begins to fear other people; his heart pounds every time someone approaches him to talk. He becomes angry and punishes himself for his behavior. Of all the emotions the worst are sadness and loneliness. They are caused by his avoidance of other people. The depression this creates becomes hard to overcome.

Not all of the effects of stuttering are bad, a few that are produced are very good. His disability has made him very sensitive to other people. He is not quick to judge them for their problems and can easily place himself in their shoes. He also does not make hasty judgments. He uses his analytical ability to figure them out; then he makes the best choice.

These are just some of the effects that stuttering may cause. Some stutterers have very few of these effects, some have more; it all depends on the individual. I have been with and talked with many stutterers, they share many of the same feelings. I also am a stutterer, but you may have already figured that out. I do know that all of us feel a little bit apart from everybody. We just want to be like everyone else.

by Darin Kenney



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