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The Next Frontier radio program
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Anne Barbano Hi everyone, you're listening to WOMM-LP, 105.9 FM in Burlington, Vermont. This is Anne Barbano on The Next Frontier, an autism, disabilities, and diagnoses program every Thursday at 6:00 pm. (Anne reads a list of program underwriters)

Anne I have a guest waiting to come on. I'm going to tell you a little bit about him and what we're going to talk about today. The film "The King's Speech" is quite a hit these days. Bertie, who will suddenly be crowned King George VI of England will have to overcome a stammer. My guest will probably correct me on this. What this film did for stuttering far exceeds what any research study could. I was inspired to know more, so I called an old friend, Dr. Barry Guitar, who I knew to be someone closely involved with speech research, and someone from this world with a stuttering condition. I am so happy that he accepted my invitation. Please meet Dr. Barry Guitar, Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Vermont. Hi Barry.

Barry Guitar Hi Anne, thanks so much for inviting me on the show, I really appreciate your invitation.

Anne Barry, you did grow up with a stutter, right?

Barry Yes. In the United States we usually refer to it as a stutter, and in Britain they sometimes use the word stammer for the same thing, and they use the word stutter for a more mild, repetitive kind of stutter.

Anne So Barry has told me he has gotten much, much better in the last 20 years, but he'll try to do a little stuttering just to give this some feeling to the program (laugh). That was our joke, folks. But the stammer. We were talking about The King's Speech, and you were saying, well, people don't use that word anymore.

Barry Yes, well I think in the United States usually it's stutter that used, and stammer may be an older term no longer used here. But in Britain, it means about the same thing as stuttering.

Anne So it is still used with researchers?

Barry Not so much with researchers, because that's very international, no matter if you're in Britain or not. But if you're a therapist, if you're a clinician in Britain, I think you're just as likely to use the word stammer. And just to make a comment about my stammering, the stammering you hear, I was saying to Anne it's just under the surface all of the time for me, so if I don't use my controls, if I don't try to talk in a certain way it will come out. It's just waiting to come out all of the time and so I keep it limited by talking a little more carefully, a little more slowly, and so I can turn the switch, work hard, and become more fluent.

Anne So when you concentrate, you can control your stutter?

Barry Yeah, I think that's essentially it. If I'm giving a speech or something like that where I want more fluency, I think about my speech more, I concentrate on it more. If I think I might stutter on a word I might approach it a little more carefully. I was just talking to Nick (Malutama) here in the studio, I was telling him that I had visited the town that his parents live in, Matadi and could see that I was going to stutter on "Matadi", so I just approach it a little slowly and I said "Ma-ta-di", and it only came out a small stutter.

Anne You know, Barry, listening to you it almost sounds like a dance, that you had to learn the steps.

Barry Yeah, I think that's true. And sometimes you have to think about them.

Anne It is involuntary, still. It's not that someone has a stutter because they're nervous.

Barry I thought it was a wonderful portrayal of what it feels like to be a stutterer. In other words, I thought that Colin Firth showed with his facial mannerisms and everything else just the apprehension that you feel and the disappointment that you feel when you do stutter. Also, I thought that it was brilliant to have those shots of the audience in the opening part of the movie. He gives a speech at Wembley Stadium and there's some shots of the audience looking very uncomfortable, embarrassed, ashamed, and that's what you get as an adult, or even a school-aged child who stutters. You see people reacting to your speech with a pretty negative response so you kind of incorporate that and feel negative about your abilities as a speaker.

Anne I'm thinking, why do we have to see that in a film? Do we have public speakers today that stutter, who have to speak in front of a crowd? We have legislators. I don't see this on television.

Barry You often don't. There's people like Joe Biden, who has been a stutterer, and now he's sort of got it under control, so you don't hear his stuttering. You have John Stossel, who's on the news. He stutters, but he has ways of controlling it. I think that I heard and saw a good example of somebody who had open stuttering without

controlling it, and that was a speech that Walter Annenberg gave in the Rose Garden of the White House when he was awarded the Medal of Freedom or something like that for his contributions. He was a pretty severe stutterer and was, of course, a billionaire, so he didn't care (laughs). When he gave his acceptance speech to the first George Bush he stuttered quite severely and made no apologies about it.

Anne Was that recorded in the news? Did anyone make any comment about it?

Barry No. Interestingly, the clips were all on the news, but nobody said, hey, that guy stutters.

Anne Going back to The King's Speech, and folks, I'm not a critic or reviewer, but I was wondering when you were watching that, did anything not seem right or correct. Did you find it really giving a misunderstanding about this condition?

Barry The only thing that possibly might be misunderstood is, Lionel Logue, who is his therapist, spent a good bit of time exploring with him his childhood and how harsh his father was, and other things like that. I hope people didn't go away thinking well that's the whole story on stuttering. Yes, sometimes people who have that way their brain is organized that they're probably going to stutter, might blurt it out the first time. I think for me, my grandfather was a pretty stern person, and I just remember talking to him and stuttering, and he kind of made fun of it, and I think that kind of stuck with me. Sometimes if you have the predisposition to stutter because your parents do, or something, and you grow up in a very nurturing environment, I think you'll be fine.

Anne This is where I come in and try to behave like Barbara Walters. I'm wondering what it was like? How old are you now?

Barry I'm 68.

Anne You're 68. When did you develop a stutter?

Barry I started stuttering at age 3 and it was pretty mild then and I just kind of stopped. And then it wasn't until I got into first grade that the pressure of reading aloud in class that I began to really squeeze because I didn't want to stutter, I was trying to hold it in.

Anne And you can say "I really don't want to go there", but how did your parents behave when you were stuttering? Did you feel that it was something they could help you with? This is 60-some years ago.

Barry I must say that even though my grandfather knew that I stuttered, I didn't stutter much around my parents so I really don't think they noticed it that much until my teachers explained that, Barry has a stutter and I just want to let you know that. At that time there wasn't any speech therapy to speak of, at least not on the east coast where I grew up. So they just didn't do anything about it. By the time I got to high school my teachers were really adamant with my parents that they should, well they were a bit

embarrassed to talk to me about it, and they tried to get some help for me, but there really wasn't anybody out there who was a stuttering therapist.

Anne Did anyone in your family have this?

Barry No. It's interesting that the only ancestor that I can think of who stuttered is a Puritan preacher named Cotten Mather. I don't know if you've ever heard of him, but he was sort of a fire and brimstone preacher and he stuttered really severely but he went on and became well-known in the first colony as a preacher who had a lot of negative things to say.

Anne Did he ever write about his stuttering?

Barry No. I just read in biographies descriptions of his stutter, but I never read anything that he wrote about it. Other than that, there's no stuttering that I can find in my family. Do you mind if I go a bit off on a tangent?

Anne Sure.

Barry One of the things that I think is combined with the way the brain is organized, or part of the way the brain is organized, is a bit of a more sensitive temperament, and a more dominant right hemisphere. What I often tell people is that my two brothers and two sisters are artists, some are artists as a hobby, and some it's a career. I think it's because there's that sensitive temperament in that right hemisphere dominance. They got the art ability, and I got the stuttering.

Anne And yet, it seems like with dyslexia, and a lot of neurological differences, people seem to feel that people who have these conditions are more creative. Is that an awful stereotype? It's kind of like autism. All people who are creative have autism.

Barry I don't think so. I think there's probably two things working. One is that the person needs an outlet, and that's their way of letting their ideas come out. They can't get them out in another way. And the other thing I think is that a lot of the disorders we're talking about may be disorders of the left hemisphere maybe not functioning as well or as efficiently as it might. That's either because, in the genetic makeup, there is right hemisphere dominance, in other words the right hemisphere is the more happening place and the left hemisphere doesn't develop as fast, and doesn't get, say, as many resources when it's developing in embryonic form and during the first few years. I think those people who are more right hemisphere dominant did it because they had to switch over, or that's just the way they are genetically. People with more right hemisphere dominance may well be more creative.

Anne So it's not as if that's why they have the stuttering or dyslexia or ADHD? Or do they?

Barry I think they may be coupled in this sense. If somebody has dyslexia, they

probably have a brain organization let's say that's not quite as efficient in the left hemisphere where language is, and so, hence the dyslexia. They may have that less developed left hemisphere because they have a very developed right hemisphere and you might have what is called right hemisphere talents.

Anne I'm following you now. You must have taken a lot of neurology in school. I think that was the question I had, that certainly parents that might be experiencing this right now for the first time with their children. You would think in this day and age most people would know it's neurological, that it's not psychological.

Barry Also, importantly, we know something about genetics of it, about the way the brain is organized that causes it. We know that parents don't cause it, and I think that's a really important message that if there are parents listening who have children who are starting to stutter I just want to assure them there's nothing they did. They didn't do anything wrong. Now they can begin to do everything that facilitates the growth of fluency.

Anne And that is a stereotype in a lot of films, years and years ago, that somehow that child's been deprived, or whatever. You were talking about numbers of people with stuttering conditions. What are the numbers?

Barry About one percent of the adult population stutters, so that makes it about a million in the United States. In children, it's a little more frequent, so about five percent of preschool children begin to stutter, but about eighty percent of that five percent, in other words, four-fifths of them will outgrow the stuttering, maybe because their level of brain organization is close to normal, like it just happened for just a little while, or maybe because they got some early therapy, or maybe because their parents just respond in a certain way. But in any case, the twenty percent of those kids who don't recover often go on to become life-long stutterers. I really put the emphasis on early intervention. We find that if we can learn from parents of a kiddo from two and a half, three, four, or five, we can close to eliminate the problem. Something happens when a child goes off to school and peers don't respond to him. He's old enough to become self-consciousness about it. Then it's harder to take it away.

Anne We talk about early intervention in a lot of conditions, and I'm just wondering if I'm fifteen years old and listening to you, is there any hope for me?

Barry Oh, yeah. I think there are great therapies for school-age kids, adolescents and adults. Our clinic at the university, where we work with a lot of adults who stutter, and although we are not able to make it disappear, we're able to get somebody to be like I am. I didn't get any therapy until I was twenty-something. So as you can see, I don't have a lot of severe stuttering left.

Anne It's amazing, folks, if you're listening to this. First of all, this is Anne Barbano on The Next Frontier, if you're just tuning in. Usually, it's an autism, or disabilities, or diagnoses program. We're going more into the diagnosis, and this is about stuttering. I

felt very, very inspired by The King's Speech, and Dr. Barry Guitar is here from the Speech and Communication Department. Is that what we call it?

Barry Yeah. It's actually called the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department. And then you have the clinic, that's called the Eleanor Luce Clinic in our building in Pomeroy Hall at the university. It's named after a wonderful speech therapist who worked all around the state of Vermont in the 40's, 50's. Well, 50's and 60's probably. She worked with all sorts of problems. But she was a magician when it came to voice problems.

Anne And Barry is considered an expert because he does do this research. I'm smiling because when he said "and look, I didn't start until I was in my 20's", I haven't seen Barry in quite a long time, maybe fifteen years or so, and Barry, it's remarkable the difference I hear with you. I'm just wondering, are you taking any medication (Barry laughs), because I was reading, is there medication that can help this?

Barry Actually, there is. I would never recommend it for a child, but for adults who know its limitations, there are medications that were initially used, I think, as anxiety reduction medications, and it was sort of discovered fortuitously that they work with stuttering. I think one of them is called pagoclone. I'm not exactly sure of what it is. It's produced by a pharmaceutical company called Indevus. It hasn't been released by the Federal Drug Administration or whoever is the watchdog, but they're doing a lot of trials of it and finding it reduces stuttering but doesn't one hundred percent eliminate it.

Anne I'm wondering how they would design a drug like that for stuttering?

Barry Well I think with this one they were testing for anxiety reduction and it just happened that among the thousands of people that they did the clinical trials on a few just happened to stutter. They said "hey, wait a minute, my stuttering is really helped by this." So they didn't start out to do that, but I think that some of the drugs that have been worked on have been things that have reduced the amount of dopamine, because there is some evidence that maybe because the way the brain is organized a little bit of excess dopamine might be produced by the brain. So if you reduce that you become a little more fluent. That's just one idea about neurotransmitters in stuttering.

Anne So if I have a child that is beginning to stutter, is it better for me to go see a neurologist right off, or should I go see a speech therapist who specializes in stuttering?

Barry Oh, absolutely see a speech therapist who specializes in stuttering. People who specialize in stuttering will know especially well how to work with children who stutter. So that early intervention, I can't say it enough, is so important at age two, three, or five. And if the child has been stuttering for longer than six months it's less likely that he or she is just going to outgrow it spontaneously, so some early treatment is helpful. Some of the younger kids can be treated in a very indirect way so we don't make them very aware of it. But once a child is three and a half, four, then we're very upbeat about it. Even though they might be aware of it, we treat it like it's no big deal, just like you know

you stub your toe or something like that. The therapy doesn't make the children negatively aware of it, it makes them positively aware of how fluent they are, and then they become more and more and more fluent.

Anne I'm sure everyone has a different approach how they treat this, right? I was reading about you, that you use more of an alternative approach. Should I be saying that on the air? It was an interview with someone else. That you use so much mainstream.... You get the parent involved.

Barry Here's the story on that. When I was in school, and probably most practicing speech pathologists in the United States when they were in school, the word was "don't call attention to the stuttering, don't have the child try to speak in a different way, whatever you do, don't ask the child to say it over again." Sort of hush hush about the stuttering. Maybe fifteen years ago or so the Australians took some American ideas and developed a treatment that is delivered by the parents. When we first started doing that in about the year 2000 there was a very big backlash, there was a lot of anger about the idea that we were being too direct with these children and we might hurt them. It's now used more than it ever used to be and more accepted in the United States, and used probably more in other countries than in the United States and I think people are realizing it's the treatment that has more evidence of its effectiveness than any other treatment of a speech and language disorder.

Anne If you haven't seen *The King's Speech*, and I keep going back to this film, you're going to be a little bit lost with this interview, but I do want to ask Barry. When you were watching some of the alternative therapy that that character was receiving, what did you think?

Barry (laughs). Well, actually, I really liked his approach. I mean, he did some pretty bizarre things, like having the king swear, and having him lie on the floor and roll around and some other things, but I think...

Anne And we don't know if that's true, because Colin Firth was on *The Today Show* saying his sister is a speech therapist and she worked with them, and they had to go back in history and say, this would be an alternative approach back then. We don't exactly know if he had this.

Barry Well I do think they've culled the writings of...Lionel Logue was the name of the king's speech therapist and he had a journal, and his grandson, I think it was, found a journal and helped the guy who wrote the script get it authentic.

Anne So it's more truth than I'm let to believe?

Barry Yeah. Yeah. But some of those things that seem so bizarre probably had some basis in them, I mean, a lot of the things that we do when we work with adults who stutter is, we explore various ways they grew up, and different reactions they and their families had, and help them sort of get beyond that. There's some emphasis on

breathing, there's certainly a lot of emphasis on feeling how your mouth is moving, and so I think some of that work with all those marbles in the mouth are whatever (Barry stutters on the word "whatever")...Now see, there's a stutter there, that I hadn't seen coming and so, as it hit me, I just had to move a little more slowly. I don't know if you noticed that. And I was not only moving more slowly, but deliberately. I was feeling my mouth move, and so that's I think some of the stuff that Lionel Logue was doing with Birdie was having him do lots of things with his mouth and become aware of the movements of his mouth and things like that. There were definitely bizarre things that we wouldn't do any more.

Anne Can you walk us through maybe a typical speech therapy, not the whole session, but maybe an example of someone who walks in the door, and you begin working with that person, what kind of exercise would you give me? I come in, and I'm saying my sound over and over.

Barry I think first of all I'd really explore with you what you wanted to get out of therapy, what your goals were, what ways your stuttering is.

Anne I'm a little kid. I don't know. All I know is I hate it.

Barry (laughs) I think we would sort of explore with you what you do, how you stutter. We would teach you how normal speech is made and then have you sort of experiment with contrasting the way to say a word without stuttering, with stuttering. And then really get sort of friendly with the stuttering because so much of the thing that keeps stuttering going, makes it persist, is people's feeling like "get me out of here, I hate this, I don't want to stutter." If you get a person to approach the stutter, if you get them to make friends with the stutter, to feel like, ok, "I..I..I..I'm in this stutter and I can tolerate this and I don't have to tighten up and back up." Then they can learn little by little to loosen it up. To ease up on that stutter.

Anne Ok, does laughing help?

Barry Certainly, having a sense of humor about your stuttering is a wonderful help.

Anne People will sing and they don't stutter. I'll bring my son in, who does not have tons of words. Fifteen (years old) with autism. But when he sings, oh my gosh, you understand every word, it's beautiful. I call him the silent stutterer. Like he's not actually singing the words, but it might be in his head he's stuttering. He can sing in Italian. He doesn't understand what he's singing.

Barry (laughs) Well, singing is pretty amazing. I think it's more based in the right hemisphere, and so those of us with autism or those of us who stutter probably have a pretty good right hemisphere compared to our left hemisphere. And so that singing is that prosodic, rhythmic thing with a lot of intonation. A lot of it is sort of based in the right hemisphere. That's why things like aphasia, which are from damage to the left hemisphere, we can use various therapies that use that melodic intonation, almost

singing, speaking with a lot of intonation in it, that will help somebody with aphasia, too.

Anne Do you ever see children with autism who are, you say non-verbal, they don't have a thousand words, they might have a couple hundred words? Do you ever see those kids?

Barry I personally have not, but I've known some internet discussion groups in which other stuttering clinician have talked about that, have worked with that, and made some improvements.

Anne So there's no research to say that it's a silent stutter, when they're not getting all the words out?

Barry Not that I know of, but it sounds like an interesting thing to explore.

Anne I know, I should go to medical school, Barry (laughs). Some of the readings I was looking up before we were to get together talked about men, or boys, tend to have this more than girls. Right?

Barry Un-huh.

Anne And sometimes it's affecting what you go into, if you marry, if you're social, the kinds of career you might have. And I started thinking about people who come to our country but their first language is not English. And suppose they stutter, but you don't know that because they are remaining quiet. I was wondering if you're having any of these experiences... You know, we have a Vermont refugee resettlement program. Do you have people who might be coming here with a stutter or some sort of condition? How do you know, unless they're demonstrating that?

Barry It's not uncommon for us to see refugees who've been through some pretty tough struggles. A lot of people who are coming over from Bosnia, from the conflict in Bosnia, they had seen a lot of terrible things and they had gone through a lot of emotional upheaval. That seems to have brought out the stuttering in a number of kids that we've seen. And then we'll see people from lots of different cultures who stutter, and it's been quite fascinating to, in our working with them, and exploring their experiences as they grew up, so many different cultures outside the United States, especially outside the sort of western countries, so many of these countries are very negative about stuttering. So a lot of people are treated very cruelly about their stuttering. You go from Korea or India or Japan or China, often don't get any treatment early on because it's such a taboo thing to do, to stutter.

Anne I do sometimes guest teach, and I'm around people who English is not their first language and when I come across a student who's in their teens and he's saying that he doesn't speak that much. And some of the others are learning English. I'm wondering, it would be so easy to hide this if you do have a stutter and you're trying to learn English. It could come off as that person's being shy. I know we can't fix the

world, but it came up for me.

Barry It's sometimes hard to know, especially if a person comes from a culture where stuttering is really a negative thing, then that person is much more likely to hide it and pretend to not know how to say something. The same thing happens in school with people from this country. I can remember many, many, many times in elementary school and junior high when I would be called on. I know the answer, but I would just say "I don't know" because I didn't want to stutter on it. I'm sure kids from other countries who have English as their second language will pretend not to know, as you're suggesting, because they don't want to stutter on a word.

Anne You come across as a very smart guy. You go off to college. In college...I read this about you, Barry... you come across someone who is going to influence your life with the stuttering. What did he do?

Barry This was after I had been in college for a couple years and I was stuttering quite severely the dean of the college that I was at discovered that there was no longer stuttering therapy offered at this college that I was at. He searched around the country and found this man, Charles Van Riper, who was in Kalamazoo, Michigan, at Western Michigan University who in my eyes was the best stuttering therapist who ever lived. He himself had stuttered, and still had a little bit of residual stutter, and he was a man like Lionel Logue in *The King's Speech*, trying anything, and very confrontational about emotional issues and things like that. He was just a big inspiration to me and made me want to go into the field and be like him.

Anne What did he do that changed your thinking about it? It sounds like you liked him.

Barry I was totally in love with this guy. I think it was his ability to accept me as I was, fleas, flaws, warts and all, and at the same time understand me. He was a good listener and he could understand me in a deep way. He really pushed me to confront my stuttering. I was with a group of people, and our first assignment was to walk up to ten strangers and say "Hi ya, Joe, how you doing?" and pretend that we knew them, even though we didn't know them. We really had to push ourselves to do that. The first five or six of the ten were hard, but by the time I got to number ten I went up to a woman and said "Hi ya, Joe, how you doing?" So you kind of get desensitized and I think that was really important to me to be able to stutter voluntarily and remain calm. Real stutterers just look the person in the eye and remain calm.

Anne It's amazing, I'm still listening to you, and I'm kind of waiting...Very, very little is coming out, and I think you're probably...you might be throwing it in just to make the show a little better. I hope not! (laughs)

Barry Let's just say that I'm not sort of dealing with all of them. Some I just let out.

Anne Going up to those ten different people, when you're being friendly we often have a smile, and that would change the tone, I would think when you're speaking. Just like

when I think about the singing, give you a little bit of a rhythm. Is that a technique?

Barry I think what you said is a really important message. And that is that if the person who stutters themselves feels pretty comfortable with themselves, with the stutter, tries to make eye contact, and really get it, the listener is not as anxious. Remember how anxious the listeners were in that movie *The King's Speech* when he was giving that first speech.

Anne Sure

Barry So that's often the message you get from listeners when you haven't had any therapy, you're just struggling and you're feeling embarrassed, and that makes the listener embarrassed, and then they're radiating back to you this anxiety and feeling of not accepting you. So I think as a person who stutters even if you do still stutter you kind of act like you have a right to stutter and you're just meaning to get your message over that will really just sort of take care of the situation. I think a good example of that is there was a man who was called the CEO's CEO. He was head of General Electric. His last name was Walsh. Why can't I think of his first name! (laughs). But in any case, he was a stutterer throughout his career. He was a wildly successful business person, great manager, and he stuttered and his mother had told him early on "if somebody has a problem with it, it's their problem, not yours." When you see him interviewed...I think he's been on Charlie Rose and all sorts of shows like that...

Anne Is he a young guy?

Barry No. He's in his 60's or 70's.

Anne I'm just thinking of the era he grew up stuttering, how people were behaving with him.

Anne Barry, I have a final question. I wonder what you should do when someone is stuttering? I know they say don't try to finish the sentence for someone, but people do get uncomfortable, and what should they do?

Barry I think if there's a lot of stuttering then it's ok to mention, to say "take your time, I'm not in any hurry", or "I know some words are hard for you, so ok, just take your time." Probably the most important thing is to just radiate an accepting feeling, radiate that you are listening, and just take your time so you can nod and do other things. But you're absolutely right about not finishing sentences.

Anne I would feel that I shouldn't say anything, I shouldn't be saying "take your time", that would make someone feel more self-consciousness.

Barry I think maybe the only time you'd say that is if there's so much stuttering that you can feel that the person is really uncomfortable, very, very tense, and to not say anything is like there being an elephant in the room and nobody is commenting on it. I

think a brief comment in that case if it's very, very severe stuttering, you can see the person himself is uncomfortable.

Anne This brings back a memory for me. When I was quite young I had a much older brother and sister that had a friend who had a severe stutter, like almost the teeth clanking together. I think later on, we're talking 1960's, he became an alcoholic. I don't know if that could be genetic too. I think back to that because my brother was very, very fond of him. There probably wasn't that kind of help and it was probably looked at as a defect with him. Who knows if he began drinking more. Very, very friendly guy, and everybody seemed to like him. But something from this film that came to me. How isolating this must feel. You're saying today it probably is more different. We're more educated, right?

Barry Well, thanks to *The King's Speech* we'll be even more educated than that. But could I ask you a question about your son? If you're somewhere out in public with you son and let's say he's acting a little bit unusual...

Anne Most of the time.

Barry Ok. Would you find it acceptable if another person said "I see your son's autistic, and I know someone who's autistic." If they brought it up, rather than just have silence about it?

Anne Because of who I am I'd be perfectly ok. In the early years, when you know your child is different, most people don't want to hear it. Sometimes they haven't even gotten the diagnosis yet. Most people didn't recognize it as autism, they would just think that you weren't correcting your child. They have sensory issues, and he's moving a lot, or he's bolting. I think if it's done with kindness. Sometimes people just want to reach out, and almost always that person has someone in their family, or someone they know who has autism. I think it's their way of communicating that. It looks hard. Yea, it is! I think that's a good question. I think people are looking for community. I feel a lot of isolation with disabilities.

Barry I think it would be interesting to do a whole show on how people feel about people in the public commenting on things. I have a friend at the clinic who uses a wheelchair and I think from our discussion I'll ask her what's the most comfortable way in which people respond to you. If somebody has cerebral palsy, and if someone mentions it in a very positive way.

Anne We've done shows on that. We had a high school student here a few years ago that actually wanted to come on. She was doing some sort of project to let her classmates know what it's like to have cerebral palsy. We do a lot of that. That kind of awareness. I think there's a lot more openness about these kind of discussions because, what is normal anymore? One of the reasons we added diagnosis on this program was, it seems as if autism is not just autism. Disability involves sometimes a learning disability, and I think stuttering is just one aspect of who you are. You're not

autistic, you have autism. I'm sure you go through this a lot.

Barry I think I'm so much the old school that I'm comfortable having somebody say "oh, Barry's a stutterer", whereas the politically correct thing to say is "Barry stutters" or something like that.

Anne You wouldn't say "he has stuttering." What would you say? (laughs) How would you say that?

Barry I guess you would just say "Barry stutters", but I'm comfortable saying "Barry's a stutterer." It's so common and acceptable to me, but the more sensitive thing is to say "Johnny has stuttering", or "Johnny stutters."

Anne Barry, when you came out of that film did you feel, wow, now people can really understand.

Barry Yeah, I think so. Because of the way Colin Firth portrayed it, it was such a wonderful movie in the sense it was such a positive view of stuttering rather than, like in *A Fish Called Wanda*, the Michael Palin character is made fun of, or Mel Tillis is more the jokey kind of thing. Because of his stature as king people took him seriously and listened to him, and to have a great actor like Colin Firth play him in a movie. And I think Colin Firth has said he's played other stutterers in other movies but I haven't been able to figure out what they are.

Anne When he was interviewed, he was saying it wasn't just a movie about stuttering. We talk about the royals. We talk about the pressure. There's a lot of different layers to it. They wanted it not to be just a film about stuttering, and yet that's the awareness part.

Barry It was really wonderful to see how supportive some people were and at the end, it wasn't that he was magically cured, it was that he still stuttered, but he managed.

Anne Now is that a film that you would show later on with your students?

Barry Oh, definitely. Or many of them have already seen it.

Anne Oh, I see. You've had discussions. I'd love to listen in on those discussions. Well Barry, I want to thank you on short, short notice, folks. Dr. Barry Guitar came from UVM. I think I called him a few days ago and I said "you probably can't come this Thursday." Well, he made it.

Barry Well, it's just been wonderful to be on your show and talk this over with you. And as you said, we haven't seen each other in many, many year, so it's nice to catch up and take advantage of *The King's Speech* being out there and talk frankly and openly about my stuttering, and Birdie's stuttering.

Anne Sure. And I'm hoping that you, folks, learned something about this and you can email me at abarbanovt@juno.com if you have a question or a comment. I can always send it off to Barry. So I want to thank you, Barry.

Barry You're very welcome.

Anne Ok, thanks a lot.