

Vibrations

A spoken poem by Gael Hannan
Using the words of the hard of hearing and Deaf students at the
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association—NL Chapter
Youth Vibrations workshop, April 2006

I don't hear very well
I'm hard of hearing
And me... I'm deaf.
WE all have hearing loss

But we feel, and we understand
As well, or better than most.
We just need a few simple things
To help us begin
To understand what you're saying!

You ask,

Do we like being hard of hearing?
Do we like being deaf?
Sometimes no,
Sometimes yes.

But if you ask us a question that makes sense
Like what bugs us most about being hard of hearing
Now that's something we can tell you—
Have you got a few minutes?

Would we rather be hearing?
Don't ask us that,
It has no bearing
On the way things are
They just are.

Here we go
Here are our words
For the years of being deaf and hard of hearing.

It bugs me when:

Hearing people pity me, feel bad for me
People mock you about your hearing loss
And sometimes don't even talk to you, just because you're deaf
When they stare at us when we have our hearing aids on

And it REALLY bugs me when:

They treat me as less of a person, thinking that because of my hearing loss, I can't do certain things, or that I have no capabilities whatsoever.
When I was young, some people made fun of me and thought I was stupid because I was Deaf.
It bugs me that hearing loss does define who I am!

It's the little things that can really bug us:

Fast and slow talkers
Not hearing the alarm clock
Watching TV, and others tell me it's too loud
(that's SO embarrassing!)
Not getting the little sounds that mean so much to others!

Most of all, most of all, most of all:
You feel alone because you're the only person in the school with hearing loss
Making new friends is harder at first
It's harder to...oh, you know...connect because
WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING!
We get left out of conversations because we can't follow that fast
Everyone talks at once

But! But! But!
There are good things about being deaf, being hard of hearing:
It's easier to sleep..(and we love sleep!)
We can avoid arguments
And we can avoid other things by 'turning off'...
Turning off the teachers, our parents and the noise!
It's easier to be positive.
We are better listeners
We look people right in the face—because we have to!

The background noise makes us crazy
The topic changes, but you don't know that
And the jokes—we don't get the jokes. Right away, or, ever.
So we just shut up
And no matter what we do...We. Stand. Out.

There isn't anything good..oh, yes there is. Having the language of signing...because it's part of me..and a very effective way of communication. That's a good thing.

Hmm, what else is good?
Meeting other hearing-impaired students like me...and communicating with people who understand you!
We're more sensitive..to vibrations, to sights
It's peaceful; we have less headaches than hearing people
I love to tell my story about how I came to lose my hearing and how I have...lived with the loss
You know you have people with you every step of the way!

And hearing loss gives me a good excuse not to listen to other people...that's a good thing too

If you ask us what is the most memorable thing in our lives of being deaf or hard of hearing, we will tell you. Some good. Some bad.

Getting my hearing aids
I had surgery on my ear and then— I could hear. For a month and a half. But then, it got worse again.
In Grade 7, people stole my hearing aid. That's memorable.
Having conferences for deaf and hard of hearing people!
Learning sign language!
Nothing is memorable

My most memorable experience was forgetting my most memorable experience
When my friend took my FM and ran through the school talking to me through the system
A speech pathologist told me I was incapable of being in the public school system. Ha!
Meeting all these terrific people in the Newfoundland School for the Deaf

In hearing school, I was always alone. They would talk, I would sit and read. Then I moved to NSD (Newfoundland School for the Deaf)
When I first went to cadet camp, no one had ever met a hard of hearing person. I got a LOT of attention.
Friends, deaf friends, hard of hearing friends
When I got my hearing aids, I heard the rain for the first time
I have met many great people, who made me grow as a person

DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS? BECAUSE WE HAVE A LOT MORE ANSWERS!