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Living in the Hearing and Deaf Worlds

October 7, 2003

I like being with hearing people...

I like hearing people. Sometimes I love hearing people. Other deaf people sometimes will ask me if I am cutting myself from the deaf community. "No," I tell them, "only that the kind of things I like to do happen to be readily available in the hearing world."

It is true. Every weekend, I ride my high quality road racing bicycle at high speeds (sometime as fast as 40 mph on the flats) with a bunch of men from my bicycle club. I am the only deaf person in that 500 member club. I also enjoy going to the shooting range to fire handguns and socialize. I never heard of any other deaf person who regularly goes to the shooting range.

I could be going to the deaf night outs. I could be joining my college's deaf organizations. I could be going to the deaf dance events. But, I have no interest. To be honest, I found the deaf events downright boring. I only go if I have nothing better to do. Since I am always happily busy, I seldom go.

...but deaf people are my people, too

I however still need deaf people for social reasons. They are my people, and I just needed to be with them from time to time. As a college student in the city of 17 million, it is not hard to get out and hang out with deaf people whenever I have the desire.

But I knew the meaning of having at least a few deaf people in my life back in my high school days – especially when I was mainstreaming most of the time.

My entire hearing family could sign fluently. But, they were not enough. During the summer vacations, I would get so painfully lonely after about 3 to 4 weeks that I would drive all the way to my "deaf sister's" house. My "deaf sister" was 1 of the 2 known deaf teenagers within 50 miles from my home – her entire family was also deaf. This "deaf sister" of mine was completely the opposite of me. But, we knew each other ever since we were in diapers.

Here is an illustration of a typical visit: I would be sitting on the sofa (not my thing) with my "deaf sister" quietly watching junk on TV (not my thing) with her. From time to time, I would try to start a chat by saying something such as "What will happen if I put ink on my tongue?"

"I don't know."

"Should we do it?" I asked.

"Not me, you do it."

"No, I have work tomorrow and I should not be a mess. Come on, you coach potato..."

"I won't do it!" my "deaf sister" groaned at me as if I were a weirdo.

We then quieted down until I could think of something else to say. It was a dull afternoon of just sitting and watching TV with my "deaf sister". I felt like every hour was about 2 hours of time wasted doing nothing. But, I couldn't force myself to leave. I would just stay and stay until I finally crawled out to my car as late as 3 o'clock in the morning.

I imagine that even if all hearing people on this earth could sign fluently, I would have an inner desire to be with people like myself from time to time...no matter who the deaf ones are. They are my people. And they will always be.

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You can find this page online at:

<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/meet/deaf/mavis/worlds.jsp>