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Pamela

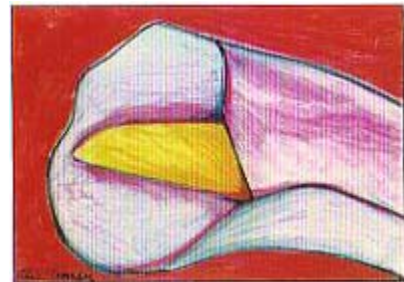
Pamela is a senior at a mainstream high school. She wrote this essay for her college application. [Contact us](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/contact.jsp) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/contact.jsp>) if you want us to respond to Pamela or ask her questions.

February 11, 2003

Triumphing Over the Struggle

My mother cried tears of grief when I was a baby because she found out I was deaf.

I know in my heart that my mother will cry again at my high school graduation, but this time, the tears will be tears of joy. Our triumph over the struggle to accept my deafness and my willingness to overcome my disability is what changed the nature of my mother's tears. My father passed away when I was eleven, but I still feel lasting imprints of his faith in me. He believed I was his sunshine and could shine at anything I set my mind to.



To be born with a severe to profound hearing loss will naturally change the course of one's life. Language development is severely inhibited for a deaf child because the child lacks the ability to discriminate between sounds and therefore understanding speech is at least difficult, at worst impossible. As a young child, my reading level was behind and my speech was unclear. English was not my mother's native language so it was difficult for her to speak and write it. I was never able to have a real conversation with my mother until I was nine. My mother was also busy raising my little sister who was born deaf.

Proving What We Can Do

At a young age, I used to harbor bitter resentment toward my mother for trying to make me hearing; I felt like I was not good enough for her. The communication barriers were overwhelmingly imposing. I remember avoiding my mother for days just so I didn't have to talk to her. I felt stupid when I couldn't understand her or get her to understand me.

She was burdened with the fear that she would fail as a mother if she could not raise her deaf daughter to be able to succeed in life.

There are many who believe deaf people are dumb, and I wanted to prove them wrong. I was terrified of hearing people for fear that they would reject me for being deaf. However, my desire to gain respect from hearing people helped me to overcome my fear of approaching them. When I was mainstreamed at high school, I surprised many hearing peers by taking honors courses with them. Finally, I was able to stand up and show everyone that even a deaf person can succeed in class with hearing students. This motivation carried me into my senior year where I have now accomplished far more than I ever anticipated.

Having a Mom Who Has High Expectations

I know parents who gave up on their child because they pitied their child's disability. My mother is not one of them. She has held high expectations for me and does not let me falter. She inspires me to always try to be the best possible person I can be. I only hope I inspire her to continue to be the mother she is and to be proud for what a miraculous job she has done with me.

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