

## Just a DEAF Person's Thoughts II

*Gil Eastman*

Gil Eastman presents his latest thoughts and observations on life as a DEAF person.

This little book will raise your eyebrows, challenge your thinking, change your opinions, make you laugh.

These quotes provide perfect topics for discussion and/or debate among ASL classes, Deaf Culture classes, and family, friends, and professionals.

Gil Eastman, the award winning host of *Deaf Mosaic*, was a Professor in the Theatre Arts Department of Gallaudet University. Gil was also a founding member of the National Theatre of the Deaf. He has also been an actor, stage manager, translator, or director for more than 50 plays. Gil has written the acclaimed *Sign Me Alice*, *Laurent Clerc: A Profile*, as well as several other plays. He is currently enjoying his active retirement with his wife June.

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## ***Introduction***

From my view of the world as a DEAF person, there are four distinct groups of people. To understand this book accurately, you must understand these groups:

**DEAF** people – those who have a hearing loss, use American Sign Language naturally, and cherish and preserve DEAF culture.

**Deaf** people – those who have a hearing loss, but do not value DEAF people, their language or their culture.

**HEARING** people – those who are themselves not DEAF, but who value DEAF people, their language, and their culture.

**Hearing** people – those who themselves are not DEAF, and who do not value DEAF people, their language, or their culture.

***Do you ever wonder why...?***

in the education of the DEAF we learn the biological terms regarding the human ear such as eardrum, middle ear, inner ear, external auditory meatus, eustachian tube, cochlea, hair cell, and so on, but rarely the terms regarding the human hand and eye?

***Does it bother you that...***

hearing people desperately rely on  
telephones, cell phones, car phones, voice  
response computers, etc. everywhere they go?

(They must be handicapped)

***Sad but true...***

It is expensive to be DEAF  
but it costs a fortune for the hearing  
to try to change the DEAF.

***Sad but true...***

The hearing audience would believe a movie about the deaf done by a hearing filmmaker . . . but if a DEAF filmmaker shows the truth in a movie about the DEAF, the hearing audience ignores the story.

**OUT**

It is a miracle for a DEAF person to talk.

**IN**

It is a miracle for a hearing person  
to use ASL fluently.

***Do you ever wonder why...***

hearing people tend to praise deaf  
people for their lip-reading skills  
but rarely praise DEAF people  
for their signing skills?



**OUT**

Public speaking Course: Using Signed  
English with Voice

**IN**

Public speaking Course: Using ASL with  
English-speaking interpreter

*Strange as it seems...*

the hearing continue to try to develop many different signed languages for DEAF children and in reality the DEAF have only one language: American Sign Language.

***Just some advice...***

Hearing parents of DEAF children:  
Listen to DEAF adults!

***Do you ever wonder why...***

there is a common question  
from hearing people?  
"How do you communicate  
with your wife in the dark?"

Easy, turn the light on!

**OUT**

Ears

**IN**

Eyes

*Sad but true...*

Many hearing educators of the DEAF  
do not become involved in DEAF  
communities and therefore,  
know nothing about the DEAF.

***Does it bother you that...***

hearing employees tend to say,  
"the Deaf guy", hardly ever mentioning  
the DEAF person's name?

*Sad but true...*

Deaf people can easily throw away  
earphones, hearing aids, head phones  
but cannot throw away cochlear implants.



***Just a reminder...***

I am DEAF but it does not mean  
that I am deaf to the hearing world.

***Advertisement I would  
like to see...***

Wanted DEAF babysitter for my  
DEAF child, two years old. Must be able to  
communicate in ASL only. Good pay.

***Just a reminder...***

Forbidding DEAF children to use ASL  
in the classroom is called language abuse.

***Sad but true...***

The media always mentions lip-reading  
experts and praises them

... never sign language experts.

***Just a question...***

Any government agency will listen  
to hearing parents who are not happy  
with their DEAF children's communication.

Will the government agency listen to DEAF  
children who are not happy with their  
hearing parents' communication?

## **OUT**

Concentrate on the DEAF person's  
auditory problems.

## **IN**

Concentrate on the DEAF person's  
ability to learn.

## **OLD DAYS**

Hearing people using sign language  
were called saviors.

## **NOW-A-DAYS**

Hearing people using sign language  
are called friends.

***Just a thought...***

Hearing and speaking do not make you smart.

Learning and understanding do.



*An equation to ponder...*

DEAF perception of the world – eyes  
equals  
hearing perception of the world – ears

***Just a thought...***

Removing ASL from a DEAF child  
is like abortion.

Implanting a hearing device in a  
DEAF child's ear is invasion.

**OUT**

Don't sign in public.

**IN**

Use ASL freely in public.

## *Just a question...*

At all hospitals or doctors' waiting rooms there are brochures or flyers advertising hearing aids or Hearing/Speech programs.

Why are there no advertisements on American Sign Language, residential schools, or periodicals about the DEAF?

## ***Sad but true...***

Same old story: If one deaf/DEAF driver is in auto accident, hearing people would think ALL should not drive.

**OUT**

Can you understand me in plain English?

**IN**

Can you understand me in plain ASL?

***Notice the differences . . .***

DEAF WORLD

"Mother Father hearing" "Mother Father DEAF"

"Brother Sister hearing" "Brother Sister DEAF"

HEARING WORLD

"I have a son and he is dea . . . hmm . . . a  
little bit hard of hearing . . . er, sort of  
hearing impaired . . .

*Just a thought...*

It is interesting to see that DEAF people  
can function in the hearing world  
very well while hearing people cannot  
function well in the DEAF world.



## **OUT**

Ask the hearing because  
they know everything.

## **IN**

Ask the DEAF because they know  
the same as the hearing do.

***Just a reminder...***

DEAF does not mean  
being cut off from humanity.

Hearing people separate us.