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## **My Opinion on Cochlear Implants for Today's Deaf Children**

**October 7, 2003**

### **Parents should be open to different choices**

We are living in the time people argue along themselves over the CI issue. Myself, I felt that the CI issue is a case by case thing. CI don't work for everybody, just as learning how to speak with one's voice doesn't work for everybody. We already realize that not all deaf people have the ability to talk well. And this is the same with CI. Thus, it is a case by case issue. And well...even if one has an implant, that person is still standing out from the hearing population. And I believe that any hearing impaired child should be exposed to everything.

There are teenagers who "hate" their parents for not letting them learn sign language. There are teenagers who "hate" their parents for not letting them learn how to talk with their voices. Myself, I used to hate my mom for not forcing me to learn how to talk. My mom did put in the effort to teach me how to talk, but the process was so slow that it was eventually dropped. My mom kept on telling me that she would rather have me learn how to read and write than to talk. Today, as a young adult, I no longer complain to my mom about her not forcing me to learn how to talk with my voice. In fact, I was glad that she at least did give me the chance. And it was clear that I was not going anywhere fast enough to make the oral project worthwhile.

### **My parents had me try a little bit of everything**

When my parents found out that I was deaf at 16 months old, they talked with the hearing impaired adults they could find. Some of these adults were against the use of hearing aids as much as some people are now against CI. After weighing things, my parents decided that it was best to just let me be exposed to everything. And I mean everything. My parents not only put hearing aids on me, they tried two types of vibration systems. One went around my neck (no longer on the market). The other one was my good old Tactaid II+, which I still use from time to time. I asked my parents if they would even try the CI on me if we had it at the time I was young. My parents answered that any kind of surgery is risky and the single-channel implant available when I was little didn't seem worth the risk. Today they would research the issue carefully and might decide to use a cochlear implant-with sign language.

Like noted, I called my Tactaid II+ my good old "hearing aid". I stopped using hearing aids daily when I was about 10 years old. By age 12, I decided to kick the habit of wearing the hearing aids completely. I was basically wearing only weight on my ears. Without hearing aids, the most quiet noise I can hear is low frequency at about 130 dB. Since I stopped using my hearing aids, the only times I hear sounds is when I am undergoing audiological testing. Other than that, I am stone deaf. I learned the world's sounds from using my Tactaid II+ with a high frequency and low frequency vibration. The Tactaid II+ also helped me know whether I was making sounds or not without my hearing family telling me.

Once again, I say the hot argument of whether to use a CI or not is a case by case issue. And in my opinion, voiced by my experience, being exposed to everything may be the best way. But, I do agree that implanting CI systems into heads by surgery needs some careful considering.

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*You can find this page online at:*  
<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/meet/deaf/mavis/ci.jsp>