

Understanding of deaf culture

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To better appreciate what Deaf culture is, let's go to an opposing view and take a look at what Deaf culture is not. There are those who insist there is no such thing as Deaf culture. Some people will argue that deafness is nothing more than a disability, a disability that must be fixed. Getting this disability "fixed" may involve repeated visits to an audiologist, getting fitted for hearing aids, attending numerous speech therapy sessions, or even undergoing surgery to get a cochlear implant.

This is what's called the pathological approach to deafness. It focuses on what's wrong--the inability to hear--and utilizes numerous technological and therapeutic strategies to solve the problem. The success of this approach varies from individual to individual. For many hard of hearing or late-deafened people, technology may be a welcomed addition that allows them to continue functioning in the world of their choice. "Deafness is a disability that is so unique, its very nature causes a culture to emerge from it.

Participation in this culture is voluntary. " There have been numerous Deaf publications over the years, such as Silent News, DeafNation, SIGNews, Deaf Life, and more. There are also catalogs chock full of books written by Deaf authors covering a wide range of topics. Some of these books include fascinating accounts of Deaf history and folklore. We've been blessed with numerous Deaf performing artists such as Clayton Valli, Patrick Graybill, Bernard Bragg, Mary Beth Miller, Freda Norman, Gil Eastman, Peter Cook, C. J. Jones, Nathie Marbury, Evelyn Zola, The Wild Zappers, Rathskellar, and many more. In hearing culture, it is rude to stare. However, in Deaf culture, staring is necessary. If you break eye contact while a person is signing to you, you are incredibly rude. That's like plugging your ears when someone is

speaking to you. In hearing culture, facial expression is very limited. If you move your face or body a lot while you are talking, you can be seen as "weird" (and nobody wants to be weird).

However, in Deaf culture, facial expression and body movement is required for ASL. It's part of ASL grammar. It's OK to be "weird" in Deaf culture... it's normal! And absolutely necessary. In hearing culture, you normally introduce yourself by your first name only. Deaf people, however, introduce themselves by their full names, and sometimes even what city they're from or what school they went to. By city, I mean the city you grew up in, not what city you are currently residing in. And by school I usually mean a residential school you attended.

The Deaf community is very small, and Deaf people like to find those specific commonalities with each other. Men are more likely to develop hearing loss or complete deafness than women. About 20% of Americans have reported some degree of hearing loss. 2-3 children out of 1,000 are born deaf every year. 9/10 children with a degree of hearing loss are born from hearing parents. 1 out of 5 people who'd benefit from hearing aids; actually wear them. About 4,000 cases of sudden deafness occur each year. 10-15 percent of sudden deafness patients know how they lost their hearing.