

# Hearing System

## Patient Expectations

(Understanding Outcome)

For those of us who remember hearing well when we were younger, or more likely, do not remember any problems hearing, we have much difficulty accepting any hearing improvements short of ‘what we remember’... Maybe we took our better hearing (and eye sight and balance and endurance... and general wellbeing..) for granted.

*“Why can’t I hear those conversations as well as I used to?”*

We tell our hearing-impaired clients and friends a very believable and reasonable anecdote about hearing when we are young: Remember back to your early grade school years. kindergarten, first and second grades? Remember that break often called recess? The whole school would venture out into the playground for a short while to play, enjoy the air along with all our classmates and friends. There was kickball, jumping rope, monkey bars, hopscotch, tag, general running and above all screeching, hollering and yelling. There was so much noise that the teachers assigned to monitor recess, 25, 30, 40 or even 70 years old thought it was chaos! But not you! Most of us do not remember having any trouble hearing our friends within the din.

I like to think of our younger hearing as more 3 dimensional. We do not remember any troubles hearing for the vast majority of us when we were young. I even contend that youth helps make learning other languages easier. Maybe we just don’t remember it being too painful. But as we get older we physically age making all our everyday activities seem harder. Hearing and **understanding** is no exception.

The hearing system community of manufactures, scientists, engineers, doctors, audiologists, and practitioners all contribute wonderful, often very sophisticated and expensive technology solutions. And as all the technologies progress, hearing systems become ever more capable. Think of mobile phone technologies and all the associated systems... we can listen to ‘Bluetooth’ speakers and connect to medical equipment, emergency pendants and smartphones and smartwatches and so much more. Our technologies even interface with our cars! And our online shopping experiences are often facilitated by these new technologies. I can even ask ‘Siri’ to make phone calls and send messages through my hearing technology!

But with all this technology, our hearing-impaired folks, especially elder impaired often cannot understand why they are not hearing and understanding more. They are

resisting accepting anything less than the level of hearing they were used to, perhaps a long time ago. I am often reminded of Dylan Thomas' "Do not go gentle into the good night", instead, "Rage, rage against the dying of the light...". And so our hearing impaired folks are strong examples of this profound longing to hear.

I suspect the best we can do is maintain a great heartfelt sympathy for our hearing-impaired folks (moreover, for all human impairments). I try to get hearing impaired folks to compromise by settling for, "the aids make a nice difference". If you are having trouble hearing at the diner table, take the hearing aids off for a while.

***Do the aids make any difference?***