



What did the Judge say?



Again!



I do alright.



I'm fine. What does she know?



How can I make him realize?



What's the point?

The High Price You Pay to Keep Your Hearing Loss

Mr. Hearing Loss is a thief and if most knew the havoc he spreads we would not let him get away with it!

According to health experts, "Spontaneous interchange is vital to our human health and bonding process."

Hearing for most of us determines our lifestyle, our goals, ambitions, and our opportunities. It acts as our radar system for our safety and security.

For some with fading hearing abilities, it seems important to continue to maintain a façade of spontaneity in any given situation. When the social environments present themselves, often the hearing impaired individual must laugh whole heartedly at the unheard punch line, or vigorously applaud for no other reason than everyone else is doing so!

It's a fact that 96% of those with hearing loss are in denial. The invisibility of hearing loss makes it almost transparent to the sufferer. As the problem develops worse to the state of moderate hearing loss, it becomes still easy to deny that they have a hearing problem or are convincing themselves that it's still too early for help.

So, while it is progressing worse and worse, the hearing impaired become more psycho-socially inhibited, keeping them from seeking after and accepting hearing assistance that is available to them and their loved ones.

And then we have the added John Wayne Syndrome, which we will discuss later.

Their continual denial and refusal for help or to accept their problem causes them to live in their own distorted perspective in a nearly constant defensive strategy to hide their problem for fear of being discovered and found out.

In many instances, they have to bluff their way through even the most trivial and mundane social situations. This is the social equivalent to fight or flight which is a conscience avoidance of any potential communicative situation such as Church, family gatherings, noisy restaurants and clubs, all of which usually can test their bluffing skills to the max!

Perhaps the situation calls for him to visit with a handful of friends and family in his living room where the lights are low, the television is blaring, and some are sitting at a distance. That situation can be tough with normal hearing, but with hearing loss it's almost impossible.

Instead of relaxing and enjoying the moment, he is in the throes of almost insurmountable communication obstacles. More pressure, more tension, anxiety and energy is spent trying to catch the conversation. No wonder he is frustrated and exhausted. No wonder he falls asleep in Church. If you can't hear it why bother to listen?

Often a feeling of being left out takes over and he becomes increasingly resentful about his experiences and lack of sensitivity to him. **Drawn inward from his pain he can at times become**

come negatively self centered. He has finally lost control and there is no relaxation for him. It is simply not fun anymore! He attempts to survive socially but he feels intellectually challenged as the topic keeps changing continually before he can add in his two cents.

Interactions become forced, belabored, repetitious, and worse – his responses become inappropriate and embarrassing. With those kinds of humiliating mistakes the person feels slapped down, and the fear of repeating such an incident can be a losing gamble at best.

In a moment he may temporarily forget his pain and regain his confidence, only to unintentionally once again put himself in the uncomfortable and embarrassing spotlight, which may be an experience he would prefer to forget and avoid next time altogether; hence disappearing now into his own state of a frozen shell or mental created prison.

He is misunderstood from his lack of assertiveness and spontaneity. He is frozen trying to figure out the minute details which have been lost in the confusion! The conversations are all happening too fast for him to keep up with and process.

His irrational social fear, defensiveness and personal insecurity all surface. Further anger, blame, and confusing misunderstandings are all a part of the slavery he has sold himself into.

Resentment is displayed from hurt feelings of wanting to be a part of the conversation, but feeling locked out and all alone.

This can be a strain on the spouse, as she feels like an abused victim from her sabotaged relationship. There is a loss of closeness and intimacy for both of them.

What is happening she asks? She is smothered by his dependency on her, and then blamed for not speaking clearly, or not understanding, or expecting too much, or not covering his back.

What - is she supposed to be his ears now? Is she supposed to do all of his hearing, keep him updated, and literally his first 'living' hearing aid? That certainly is a lot of pressure to put on anyone, and usually does not work out too well.

Perhaps they get away to take a trip, just them alone. Now he finds that he cannot hear her in the car because of the road noise or the distance she is sitting from him. Then there's her quiet, high pitched voice, not to mention she may be sitting on his bad side!

This results in wanting his wife to repeat herself and speak up over and over again, until she gets so tired and fed up with it. Then it eventually becomes a tug of war battle of who's right and who's wrong!

Oh, this is exhausting! Enough already! Ask yourself, is all this pain and suffering really worth it? Have you and your spouse paid enough yet? Well if not I will continue!

Eventually the person is drawn inward and resigns themselves to going it alone into their quiet world, feeling sorry for themselves, unloved, depressed, and eventually forgotten.

Who wants to be with anyone anymore who is no longer any fun?

All of these self inflicted wounds give him plenty of ammunition and guilt which he can lay on his spouse.

How can she take it any longer?

What he doesn't know is that his subconscious is working against their sense of security and ability to concentrate. His imagination is dulled, opportunities dwindle, horizons darken, unsung and forgotten songs are no longer prompted by the voice of loved ones beside him. He is determined to fight this battle alone.

How selfish and how sad.

Fact: For a man to admit a hearing impairment and the willingness to accept the help for it is at times tantamount to denying his manhood, and is what we commonly refer to as the John Wayne complex.

Fact: If a man has a chance to help his hearing and delays it, he tends to do so for another eight years. He will likely not be back until he sorely loses at Bingo or he is finally convinced that he is not just a cantankerous, opinionated or socially diminished individual. After all, he does have a legitimate hearing problem that really needs help. Little by little, day by day, it grows worse - about 5% worse per year - like a cancer on the hearing.

Before long, only half the words are clear and many he can barely make out at all.

Most people think a hearing loss is just words and sounds becoming fainter. Not so! We come to find out that distortion is different. It's how *clear* the words are. Even if the words are loud enough, the Inner Ear interprets them as distorted.

This gradually grows worse and worse with time. It can become permanent, ruining the ability to understand words and even limiting how much help can be obtained after correction.

The longer the loss in either ear is ignored, the more deterioration there will be.

A person thinks they may be able to get away with turning the TV louder or ask to repeat and talk louder, but they are usually greatly confused and disappointed when they still cannot understand the clarity.

If help is sought early enough, studies and results have proven that the right hearing device, worn regularly, can actually slow down the spread of distortion as much as 90%. However, in order to stop distortion tomorrow a hearing aid has to help you hear better today.

This improved clarity exercises the nerve endings in your inner ear so that they do not become brittle and break off.

This stimulation begins the replant

the sounds will have no meaning.

The longer you wait, the more your brain will forget and the greater the chance you will develop speech and other related disorders, including problems with your sense of direction and your balance.

Hearing loss invisible? Far from it! Loud TV, loud repeating over and over again, loud talking and controlling of the conversation. It looks a lot more noticeable to me. That fact is, when it gets that bad a hearing loss is much more noticeable than a tiny custom hidden hearing aid.

Chances are if the guy had his choice he would appreciate the speaker having a megaphone or a microphone to make everything clear. Well isn't a hearing aid just that? It's a tiny PA amplification system that has been put in his ear.

What price will you pay?

How much is your hearing worth?

Think about all of the value your ears and your brain have so far brought you to date. All the joy and meaningful experiences that have so far been a part of your life, and all of the many future surprising sounds and communications you will yet have.

What is your hearing worth to you?

My last statement is from someone who really understands and appreciates the meaning of communication. As Helen Keller once said:

"Deafness is a worse misfortune than blindness, for it means the loss of the most vital stimulus – the sound of voice that brings language, sets thoughts astir, and keeps us in the intellectual company of man.

Without my eye sight I am inconvenienced, without my hearing I am isolated and lonely."

Thanks to today's advancements and caring professionals you don't have to remain alone!

We at Big Rock Hearing, and I am sure your loved ones, stand strong to support you in this process. May you truly find your way to better hearing!

Special thanks to the following contributors:

Written by: Daniel L Finlay Audioprosthologist and Max Chartrand PhD. Special facts and information supplied by Max Chartrand PhD, author and Hearing Educator. Dr. Chartrand serves as director of Research at Digicare Hearing and Research in Rye, Co. www.digicare.org.

Additional Contribution -- S. Kochkin