

It doesn't have to be  
this way

Michael Craine

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**MOTIVATING AND  
ASSISTING OTHERS TO  
HEAR WELL AGAIN**

Often it is assumed the person with a problem hearing is aware of it and motivated to participate in the solution to hear well again. This is not always the case. While the reasons for denial of a hearing loss have been covered in the initial sections of this book, motivating the person with a suspected hearing problem to seek assistance will now be the topic of discussion.

### **Motivating**

It has been my experience that to successfully motivate some general guidelines should be followed.

1. *Don't try to force the person with a suspected hearing problem to seek assistance.* In order to be successful, he or she needs to be willing to participate and invest effort in a solution.
2. *Don't embarrass the person who has a hearing problem.* It may seem funny to repeat blunders or misunderstandings, but this will not motivate. It will probably have an adverse effect. Shaming a person into getting a hearing aid seldom works.
3. *Learn more about hearing and hearing problems.* Take on the responsibility that you will be involved in the solution. You will be a supportive partner in the solution. Communicate this support by telling the person with a hearing problem that you want to be involved.
4. *Provide positive and enlightening resource material.* Such material is available from many hearing healthcare professionals at little or no charge.
5. *Don't be judgmental. Don't get frustrated. Be patient with this person that you suspect has a hearing problem.* Let him or her know that you support their decisions and see that they act upon them.

6. *Proceed slowly (if resistance is high). Motivate this person to go one step at a time.* You can start by saying "Why don't you talk to your friends about their hearing aids. See how they hear with them." Sometime later you can follow up with "Why don't we see someone about it. Maybe there something simple that is wrong with your ears and it can be easily corrected." Some time later you can say ..." Many people wear hearing aids. Did you know that (give example of friends or acquaintances) wear hearing aids."

7. *Don't make it your personal struggle.* The person with a hearing problem may take an irrational stubborn stand and be unwilling to back down.

8. *Subtly and gently, when hearing difficulty occurs remind the person with a hearing problem about the pleasures of hearing.* "Wouldn't it have been nice to hear better at the movies?" or "I saw you struggle hearing your granddaughter. Life would be easier and more pleasurable if you could hear well again." "Lets find out whom you should see." or "It's important to hear at those meetings. Hearing better may make your job easier."

#### 9. GENTLY AND SUBTLY KEEP THE PRESSURE ON!

After the person has seen a hearing health care professional for a hearing evaluation, further discussions may be necessary to motivate the person with a suspected hearing problem to take the next step along the journey to hear well again. It is very important to continue to be patient, supportive and point out the pleasures that are needlessly being missed by an uncorrected hearing loss.

### **Assisting**

If a hearing aid is necessary and recommended a 30-day trial period is so important. Remind this person that he or she doesn't have to make a decision to keep the hearing aid(s) until 30 days after being fitted. However, he or she must be willing to try. Patience and motivation and investing in better hearing are major requirements for successfully wearing hearing aids.

When this person is fit with amplification, your continued support is critical. Too many family members and friends feel their involvement ends at the point where a hearing aid(s) is fitted. This is one of the main reasons a person trying amplification for the first time may fail to adapt properly.

The hearing aid wearer is trying to improve communication with others. In some complex listening environments he or she is able to meet others only halfway in improving communications. He or she must be constantly aware of the limitations of hearing aids, especially those equipped with simple hearing aid technology. Others need to be cognizant of these limitations and change their behaviors to accommodate these limitations. These limitations have been outlined in previous chapters. Interested family members and friends need to review these limitations.

The hearing aid wearer can be helped if others:

- Look directly at him when they are talking.
- Talk one beat slower (not exaggerated).
- Become cognizant of the interference caused by background sounds and decrease the distance between themselves and the person wearing the hearing aid.
- Reduce background sounds by

- a.) closing the car windows while talking,
- b.) shutting the door in a busy office,
- c.) pressing the "mute" button on the TV remote control during conversations.

d.) suggest that socialization take place in more listener friendly restaurants or meeting places.  
(environments with less background noise)

- Avoid starting a conversation in a noisy environment such as a busy hallway or sidewalk.
- Repeat when asked by the person wearing the hearing aid (repeat only once and then rephrase differently).
- Include this person in conversations.

**PERSISTENCE AND PRACTICE WILL ENSURE SUCCESS.**

**Michael Craine has been an audiologist for more than 33 years and has helped thousands of people to hear well again. He is licensed as an audiologist and hearing aid fitter in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.**

**Awarded a Masters degree in Audiology from Adelphi University, a Masters in Business Administration from New York University and a Doctorate in Deafness Rehabilitation from the Department of Applied Psychology New York University, Dr. Craine continues to see patients through his practice : “Hear Well Again Centers”, headquartered in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. There are Hear Well Again Centers throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania.**

## BACK COVER

About 30 million Americans have some difficulty hearing – that’s one in ten of your friends, neighbors and those you see everyday.

Sometimes a hearing problem can be easily determined. However, in many instances, the symptoms are subtle, conflicting and unexpected. A hearing problem can be very serious and costly in terms of the quality of life. It can rob a person of the every day pleasure of communication with family and friends. It can increase stress in the family and on the job. It can drain the vitality out of relationships. It can isolate a person by imposing a communications barrier.

**It doesn’t have to be this way.** I’m Michael Craine and I’ve helped thousands of people to hear well again and improve their lives.

Over 95% of those with a hearing problem can have their hearing improved. It is the exception when a person’s hearing cannot be helped. The introduction of new technology has made it easier to have people hear well again.