

Deafness Doesn't Define You: How to Excel this School Year

Lucy Wyndham

Across the United States, approximately 1,000,000 people are hard of hearing. What does this mean? Well, to start, [it means you are not alone](#). Also, it means that more and more people are learning how to interact with the deaf community, presenting opportunities to people who are hard of hearing that are more advantageous than ever.

If you are hard of hearing or deaf, you know better than anyone the struggle that it can be. But, it certainly does not mean that you can't [excel in your life](#). To help you succeed at school this coming year, here are three tips to help you show people the true you.



Take Your Time

[Taking it slow is essential](#). Everybody has problems with new social settings and environments. When you are deaf or hard of hearing, all of the usual social anxieties and complexities can be heightened. But this is no reason to worry. You may need more time to adapt to new settings, but you will get there. It is important to remember to be patient with yourself. Are you struggling to communicate to others that you can't hear well, or perhaps at all? That's okay, just take your time and use your knowledge of sign language or social cues that many people can pick up on. Just as you are patient with others, remember to be patient with yourself as you are trying to convey unique things about you. Being hearing impaired, while a hurdle to overcome, is nothing to be embarrassed about.

A good way to keep tackling these various challenges is by [setting up a personal 'rewards system](#), similar to those used by children as incentives to complete tasks such as potty training, eating their meals and learning to brush their teeth. For every 'challenge' that you identify and manage to overcome, try rewarding yourself with one of your favorite snacks, hobbies, or even some extra down time. Overcoming the challenges of being hearing impaired may not be easy, but you can certainly do it.

Patience

Not everybody may perceive that you struggle with hearing. When this happens, it's important to show them patience. School hallways and public places like malls and sporting events can be loud. People get distracted and cannot always pick up on your hearing situation right away. Help them understand your situation, and if you become friends then offer to teach them some sign language. This is something that most people do not get to experience, and it can be a really great way to grow closer and develop a special bond with your loved ones and friends.

Don't stress

Deafness can be tough. Sometimes, it may seem easier to just give up and keep to yourself. But while deafness may be a unique difficulty to overcome, it also presents to you the opportunity to overcome and grow stronger emotionally and physically. Deafness may start out as a trouble, but through perseverance and determination, it can help shape you to become a wonderful, hard-working individual. Deafness doesn't define you, your character does.

Photo by [Matheus Ferrero](#) on [Unsplash](#)