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# When The Hearing Gets Hard

Elaine Suss



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The National Institute on Deafness reports that a total of 28 million Americans are affected by hearing impairment. For these people, routine tasks may be full of unexpected difficulties - the "simple" act of communication can become a frustrating and humiliating experience. When the Hearing Gets Hard addresses this and other challenges with rare sensitivity and compassion. Elaine Suss, a hearing-impaired journalist, novelist, and poet, encourages people with impairment to cultivate a rewarding life by learning how to cope with telephones, doorbells, driving, shopping, and participation in other public activities. Strategies for interacting with family members, friends, children, co-workers, medical personnel, shopkeepers, and other service attendants are carefully presented to help people with hearing impairment avoid any awkwardness or embarrassment. In addition to providing insight from personal experiences, the author recounts the fascinating experiences of hearing-impaired actors, sports personalities, and business executives and the obstacles they overcame to succeed within the "hearing world." Through her own involvement with the hearing-impaired community, Suss eloquently articulates problems faced by people with hearing handicaps who have "dropped out" of the hearing community and hide behind psychological barriers fabricated by themselves and the hearing society. The author provides information on the newest assistive devices that significantly increase auditory comprehension, and offers hope and encouragement about the possibility of reversing hearing impairment with dietary management. One of the book's most important features is the section on the largely unknown dangers of ototoxic medications and substances that induce degrees of deafness. Extensive lists of ototoxic materials, compiled in collaboration with renowned ototoxicologists, otolaryngologists and pharmacologists, will be invaluable to the lay reader as well as the medical community. If

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