

Talking On the Phone

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There's something about the sound of a friend's voice that transcends anything we can put in writing.

When I was young, the phone was the primary means of real time communication between two people who could not be in the same space. Not being in the same space being a sort of universal theme just now, I have been making use of my phone as – wait for it - a phone.

Texting, tweeting and the like just aren't the same. They involve the sort of arm's-length separation that defines the difference between 'messaging' and really communicating.

In the sound of the voice, we experience the joy of connection. Every pause, catch, tonal nuance and modulation carries meaning that is lost in the written word. That's why for all the books written every year, there are relatively few that capture the readers. It's difficult for a writer to structure their words so that the reader is caught up in the emotional weight of the thought behind them. Trust me; I know something about this.

Not so with the spoken word. The sound of a voice carries the sudden sob of relief, the catch of gratitude and yes, the pause that signals the need to probe more deeply. It is connection at a whole different level.

Please pick up the phone and call someone. You'll both be glad you did.

And by the way, signing is one of the most expressive languages out there. It was developed by folks who had to figure out how to convey meaning and emotion without intonation or volume control. Now might be a good time to learn at least enough ASL or SEE to say, "I care about you, let's find a way to stay in touch!" Lots of basic courses out there on the Internet. And who knows, you might really get into it and become your deaf friends' best Skype buddy.