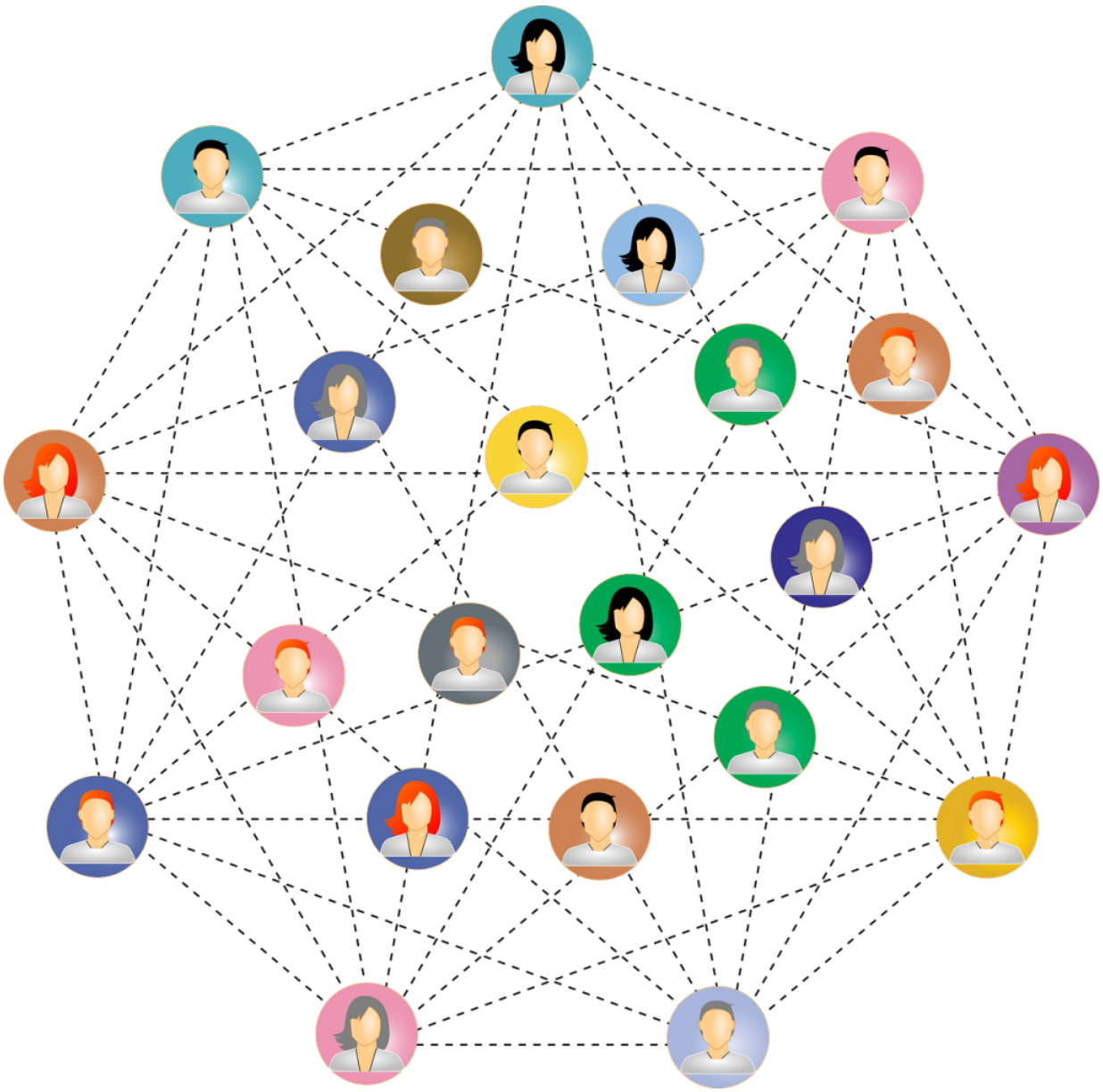
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What a HoH Believes

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For some people, the diagnosis of hearing loss simply means making a few life changes, including the wearing of assistive technology.

For many others, it means adding a significant descriptor to their self-identity. They have now become a ‘person with hearing loss’ and the life changes are more challenging. They have discovered, to their disappointment and frustration, that hearing loss affects everything they do and that a perfect, easy antidote to hearing loss has not yet been discovered.

Accepting the reality of hearing loss is a different process for everyone. Some adjust better than others, but we all struggle with the changed dynamics of our relationships – why is it this hard to change how we communicate? Some of us feel caught between worlds – the realms of people who can hear and the people who can't.

Today, there is more help for those who are new to hearing loss – professionals who better understand the real-life needs of their clients and consumer organizations and people who offer a haven of information and support.

In my regular church-going days, I would recite along with everyone else, the Credo – a statement of belief – which told you what you were supposed to believe. And in case you forgot or weren't sure, it was printed in the back of the hymn book.

On my road to acceptance of my lifelong severe hearing loss – a journey that took years – I developed some personal guidelines that have kept me from indulging in a permanent pity-party. (Which would be very easy to do; I've met people who can't stop raging against the impact of hearing loss on every area of their life.) One day, I realized that I had these as-yet-unexpressed beliefs that put my hearing loss into perspective and in a nutshell, this is what they are.

I believe that:

There is no shame in having hearing loss. There is pride in working hard to meet its challenges. And it is not the greatest challenge I will face as a human being.

Having hearing loss is just one aspect of who I am. It does not define my whole self or confine me to a group of people.

My most important goal is not to *hear* better, but to *communicate* better.

I accept and am grateful for the powerful role that hearing technology plays in my success.

By advocating for myself and others with hearing loss, I am helping to break down public and societal barriers.

By being honest about my hearing loss and by articulating my needs, I am a better communicator.

I need professional help from a provider who can look beyond hearing aids for solutions that meet my needs.

By connecting with others who have hearing loss, I enter into a circle of unbreakable support.

Hearing is precious, and I will protect what I have from noise damage.

I recognize that my hearing loss affects everyone in my life and I must include them in my communication solutions for better relationships.

This is what I believe. I still have bad hearing days. I still catch myself bluffing. I still get frustrated about systemic barriers. But I always pull through, especially when I stop to think of how my life with hearing loss has improved in the last 20 years. My hearing loss is now profound, yet I communicate better than ever before, because of what believe.

I've *got* this, I can *do* this!