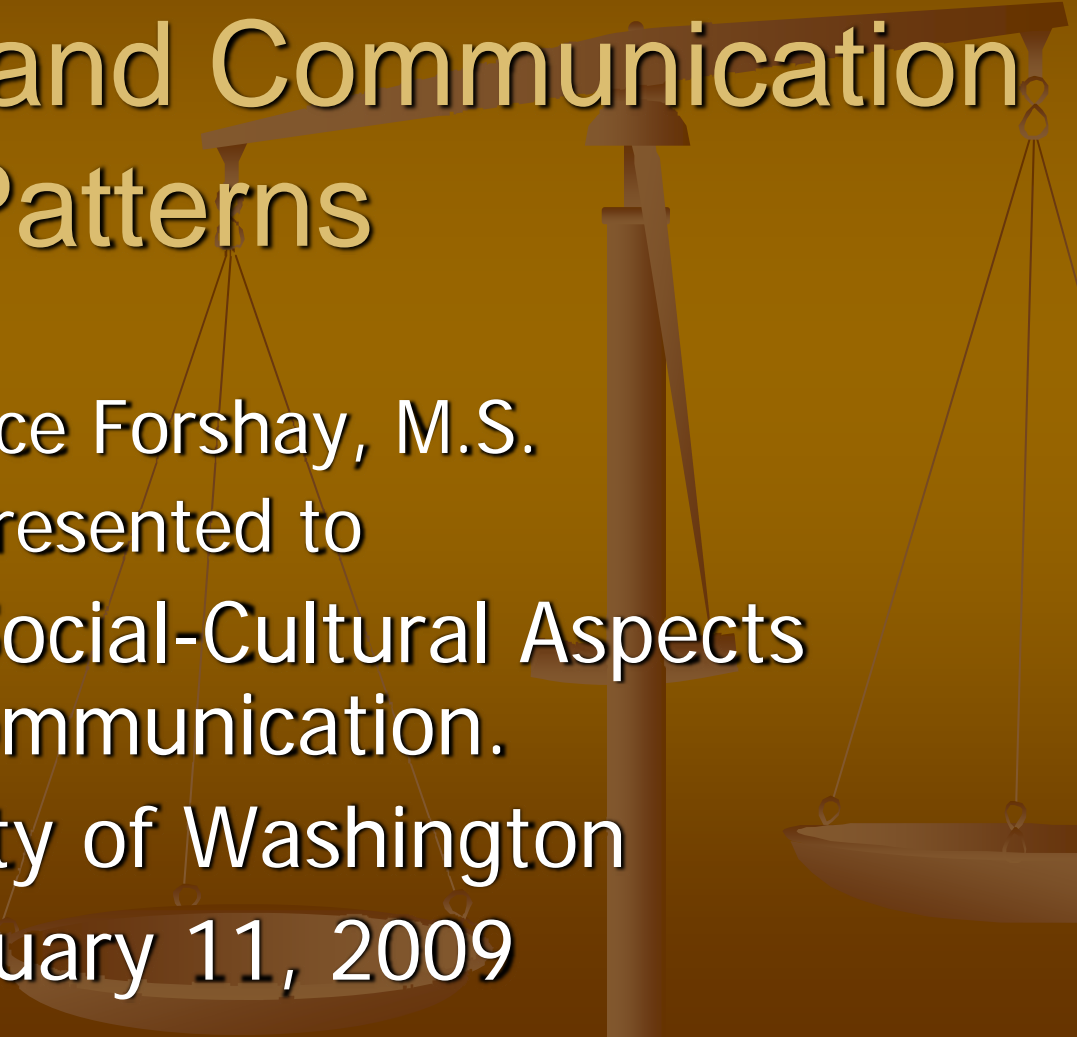


# Deaf Culture and Communication Patterns



By Lance Forshay, M.S.

Presented to

SPHSC 308: Social-Cultural Aspects  
of Communication.

University of Washington

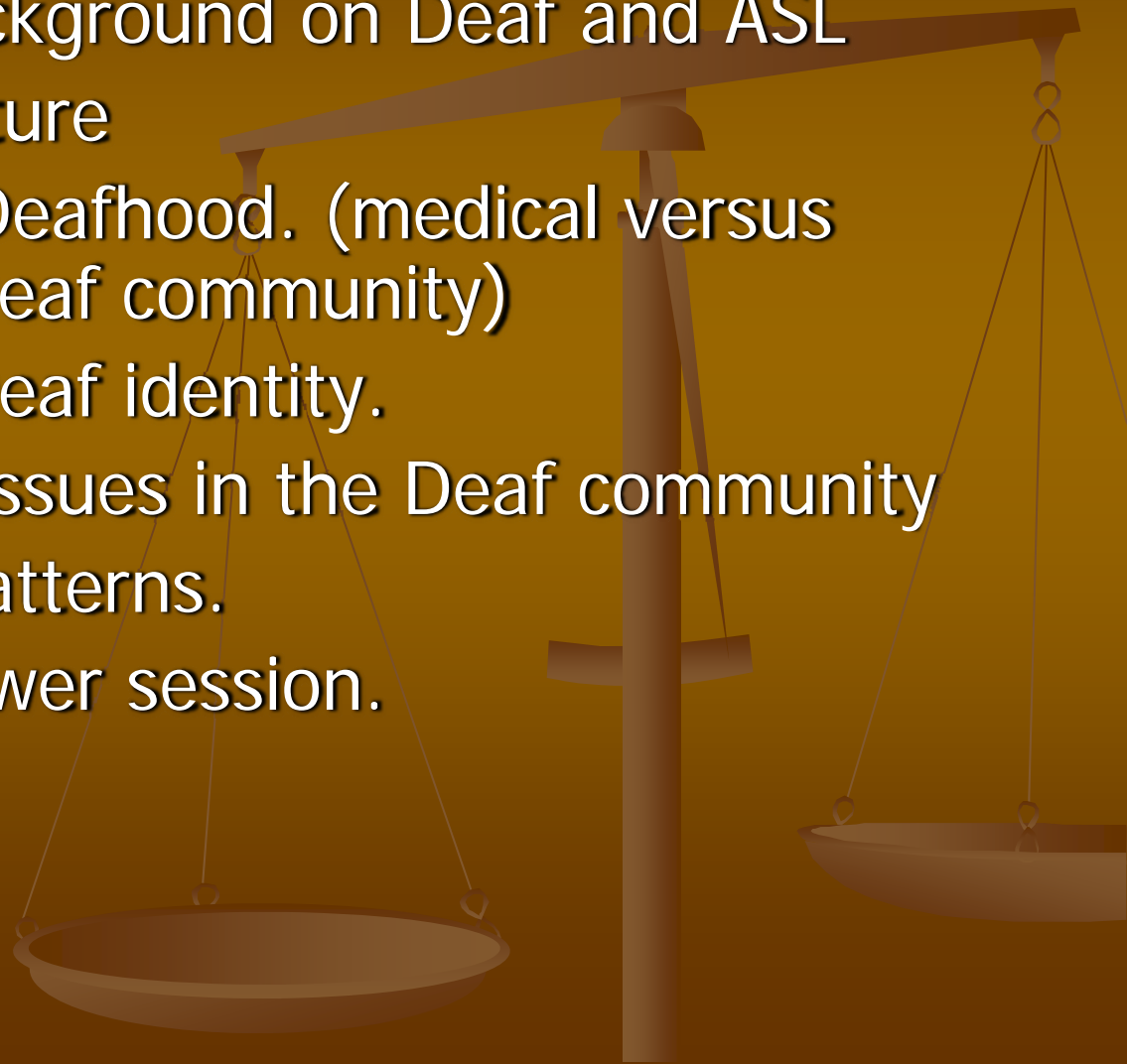
February 11, 2009

# About the Speaker

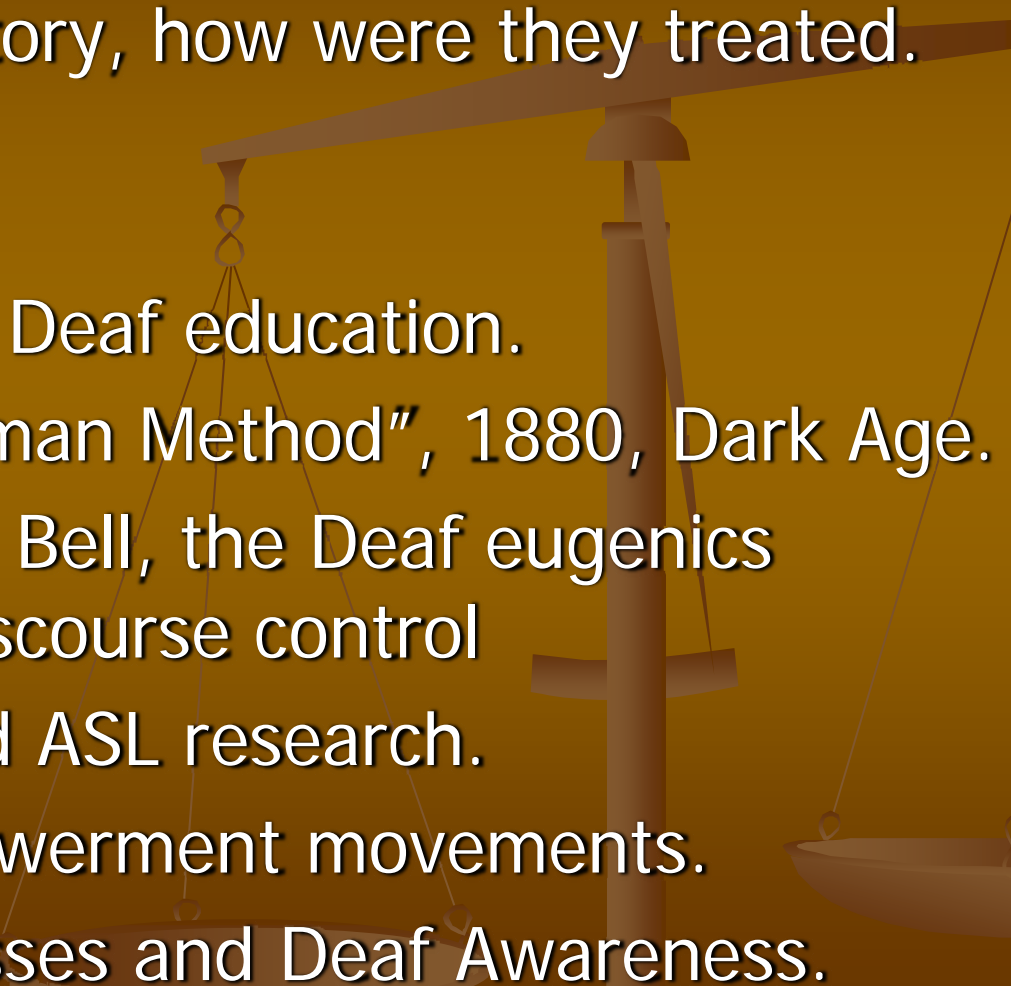
- Fourth of five Deaf generations, native of Kansas.
- Native of ASL
- BA in Mathematics and Secondary Education from Gallaudet University.
- MS in Ministry from Southern Christian University.
- 20 years of broad teaching experience, several subjects, tutorial to public school, children to adults, interpreter mentor to ASL research and consultant.
- President of Washington chapter of ASLTA
- Involved in Deaf organizations such as WSAD, DBC-Washington, WAFLT, WA GUAA, NW Rally (Christian Deaf Association), and inter-denominational Christian Deaf ministries.
- Married 14 years to Joan, two kids, Matthew 11, Samantha 9. Matthew is the only hearing member.

# Agenda:

- Brief historical background on Deaf and ASL
- Defining Deaf Culture
- Deafness versus Deafhood. (medical versus cultural view on Deaf community)
- Development of Deaf identity.
- Oppressions and issues in the Deaf community
- Communication Patterns.
- Question and Answer session.

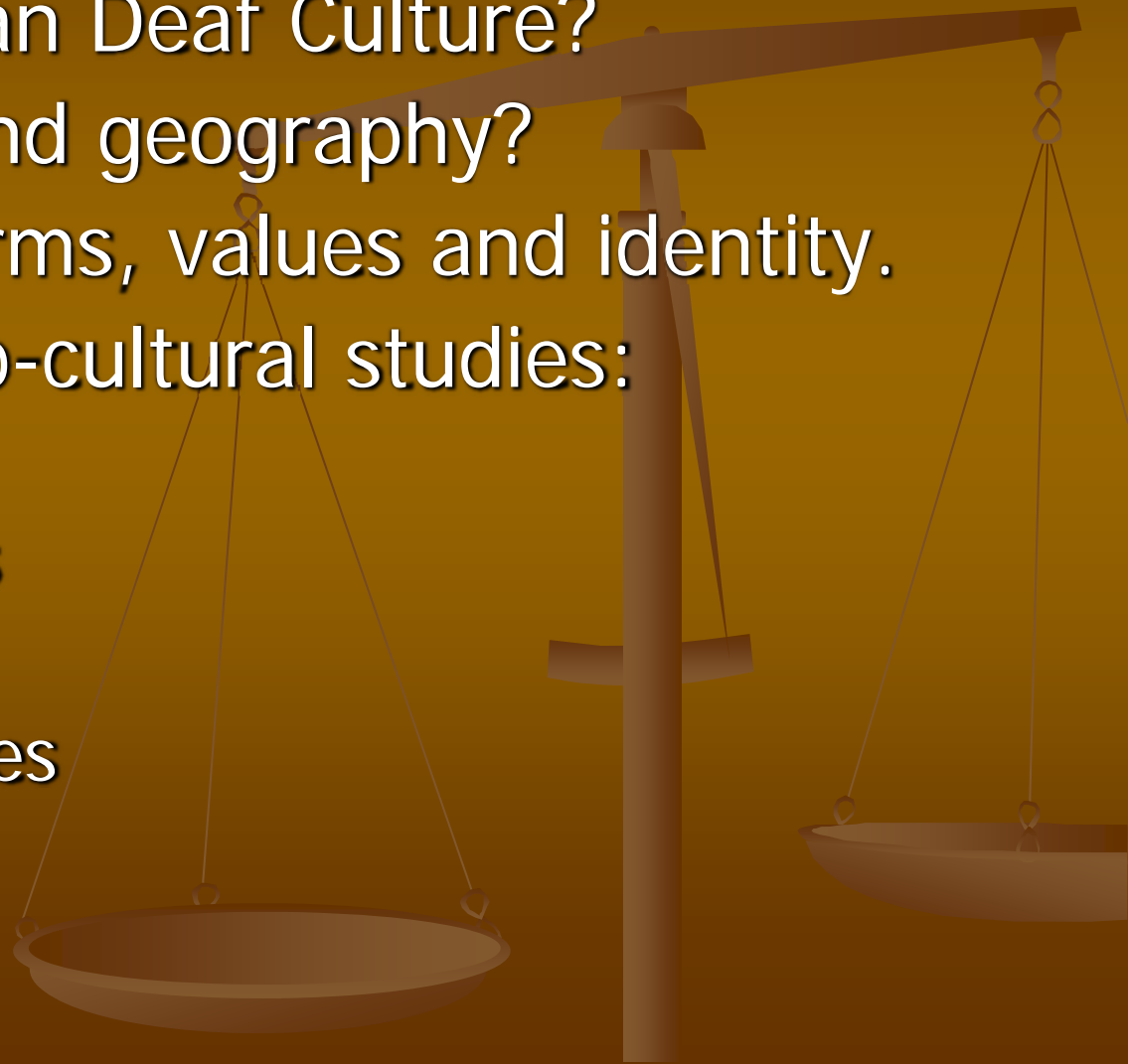


# Brief historical background on Deaf and ASL

- Deaf people in history, how were they treated.
    - Unequal citizens.
    - Experiments
  - Sign Languages in Deaf education.
  - Oralism, "The German Method", 1880, Dark Age.
  - Alexander Graham Bell, the Deaf eugenics movement, and discourse control
  - William Stokoe and ASL research.
  - Deaf culture empowerment movements.
  - Growth of ASL classes and Deaf Awareness.
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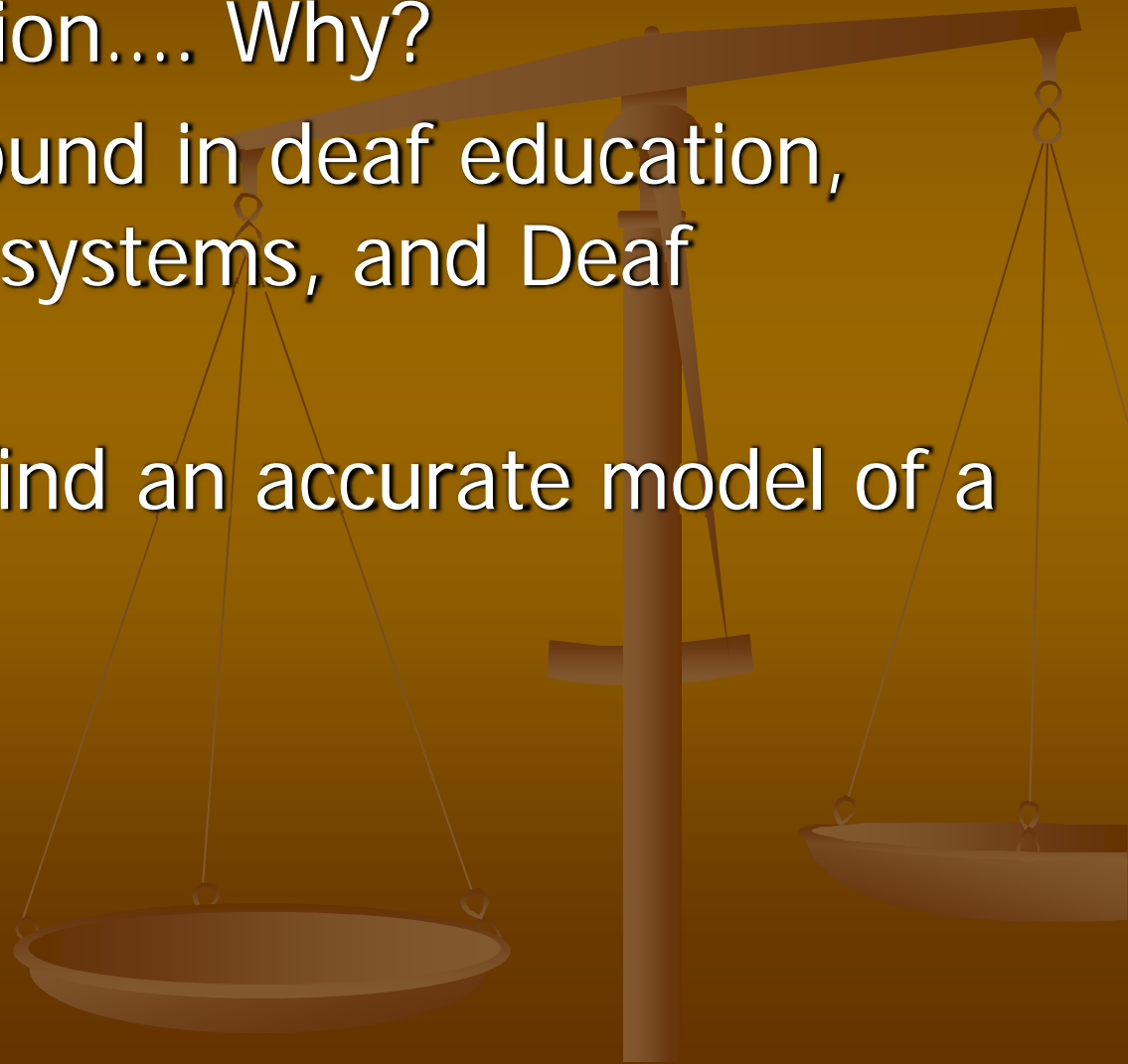
# Defining American Deaf Culture:

- What is American Deaf Culture?
- Food, clothes and geography?
- Social rules, norms, values and identity.
- Comparable sub-cultural studies:
  - Black Studies
  - Woman Studies
  - Gay Studies
  - Dwarfism Studies

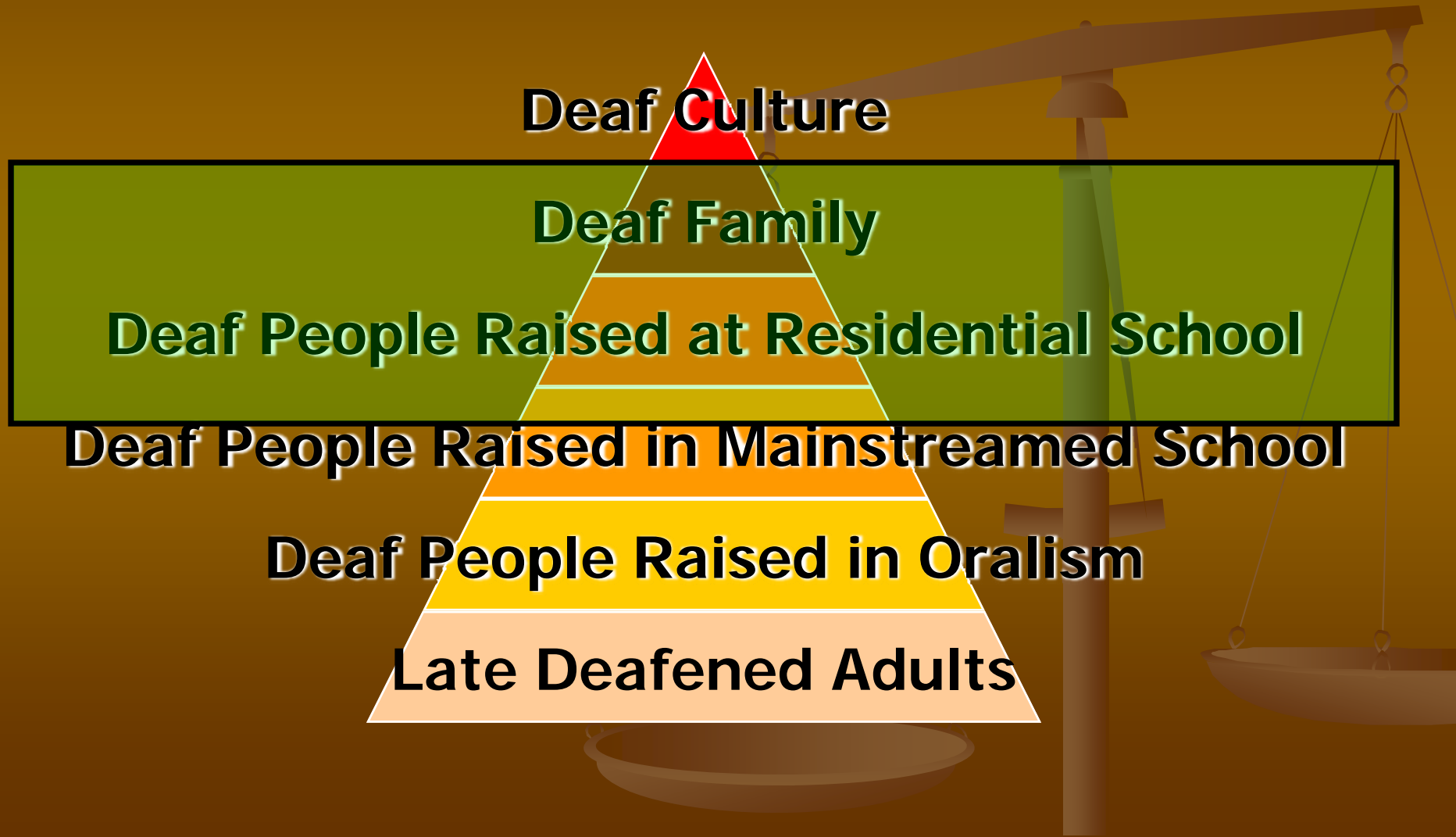


# What's a Deaf Culture Model?

- A difficult question.... Why?
- Diverse background in deaf education, communication systems, and Deaf identity.
- Where can we find an accurate model of a Deaf culture?



# In Search of a Deaf Culture Model



# Definitions of Deaf Culture

"A social, command, and creative force of, by, and for Deaf people based on American Sign Language (ASL). It encompasses communication, social protocol, art, entertainment, recreation (e.g. sports, travel, and Deaf clubs), and worship."

--Matthew Moore, Deaf Life Editor


"The Deaf culture is the shared experience of deaf people that has its own values, social norms (ways of doing things), a unique history, and a rich tradition of storytelling and poetry passed from generation to generation."

-- Jason Zinza, Master ASL! (ASL Textbook)

# Deafness versus Deafhood

- **Deafness** is a focus on the inability to hear and ways of “fixing” it through hearing technologies. It is also a mental framework that guides the deaf child’s development with a medical perspective.
- **Deafhood** is a progress of self-actualization and establishing a Deaf identity through life events that shape one’s view of self as a Deaf person and his/her role in the Deaf community.

# What is a Deaf Identity?

- Audiological labels vs Cultural Identities.
  - Again, the Deaf world also has different attitudes and worldview in regards to Deaf identity.
  - Example: "Hard of hearing" identity.
    - Mark
    - Darrin
  - Establishing a cultural identity is essential to be able to relate to diverse cultural identities.
- 

# Cultural Identity (not deafness) and Attitudes

Hearing Identity  
Center

Deaf Identity  
Center

**Cultural  
Attitudes**

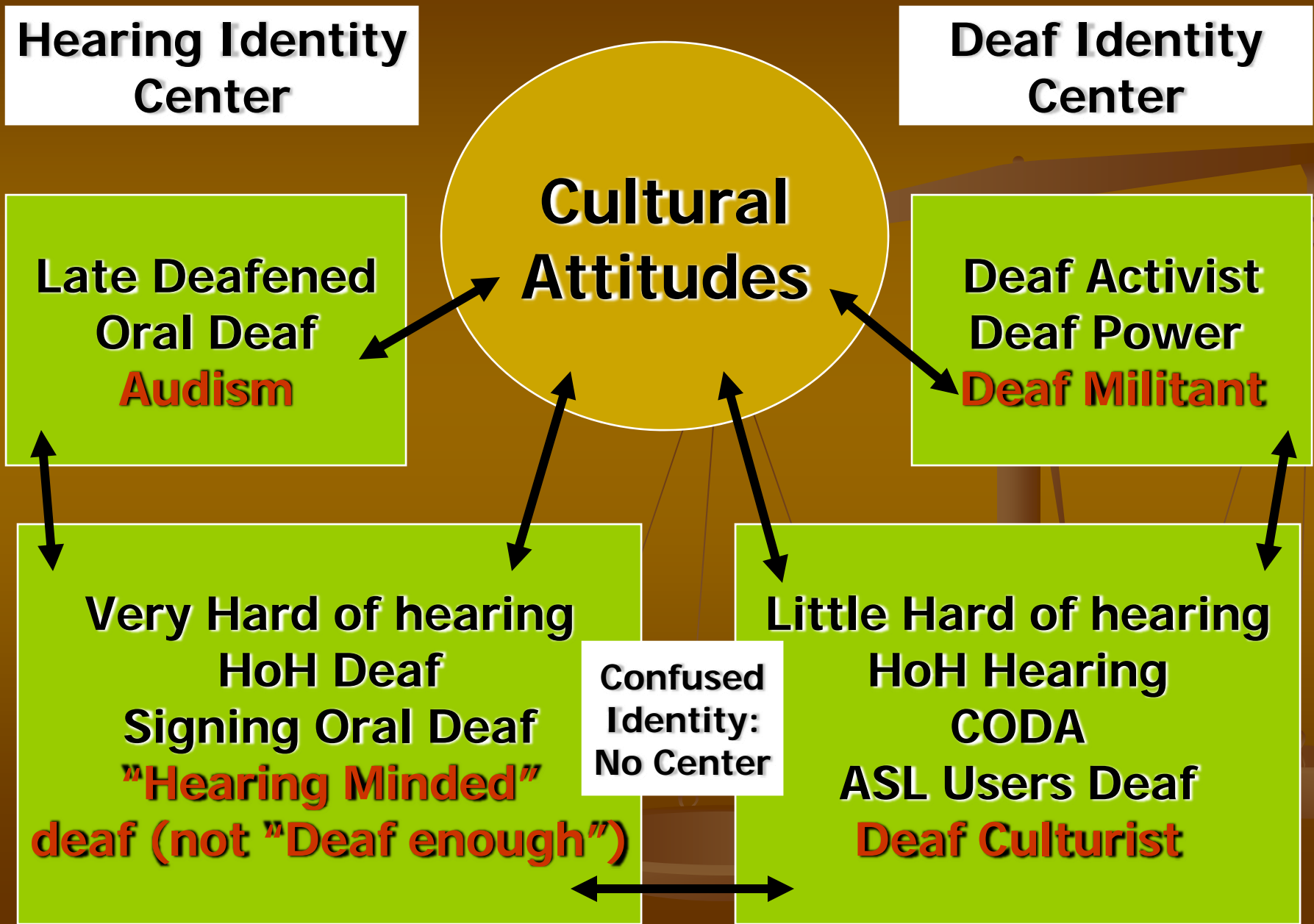
Late Deafened  
Oral Deaf  
**Audism**

Deaf Activist  
Deaf Power  
**Deaf Militant**

Very Hard of hearing  
HoH Deaf  
Signing Oral Deaf  
**"Hearing Minded"**  
**deaf (not "Deaf enough")**

Confused  
Identity:  
No Center

Little Hard of hearing  
HoH Hearing  
CODA  
ASL Users Deaf  
**Deaf Culturist**



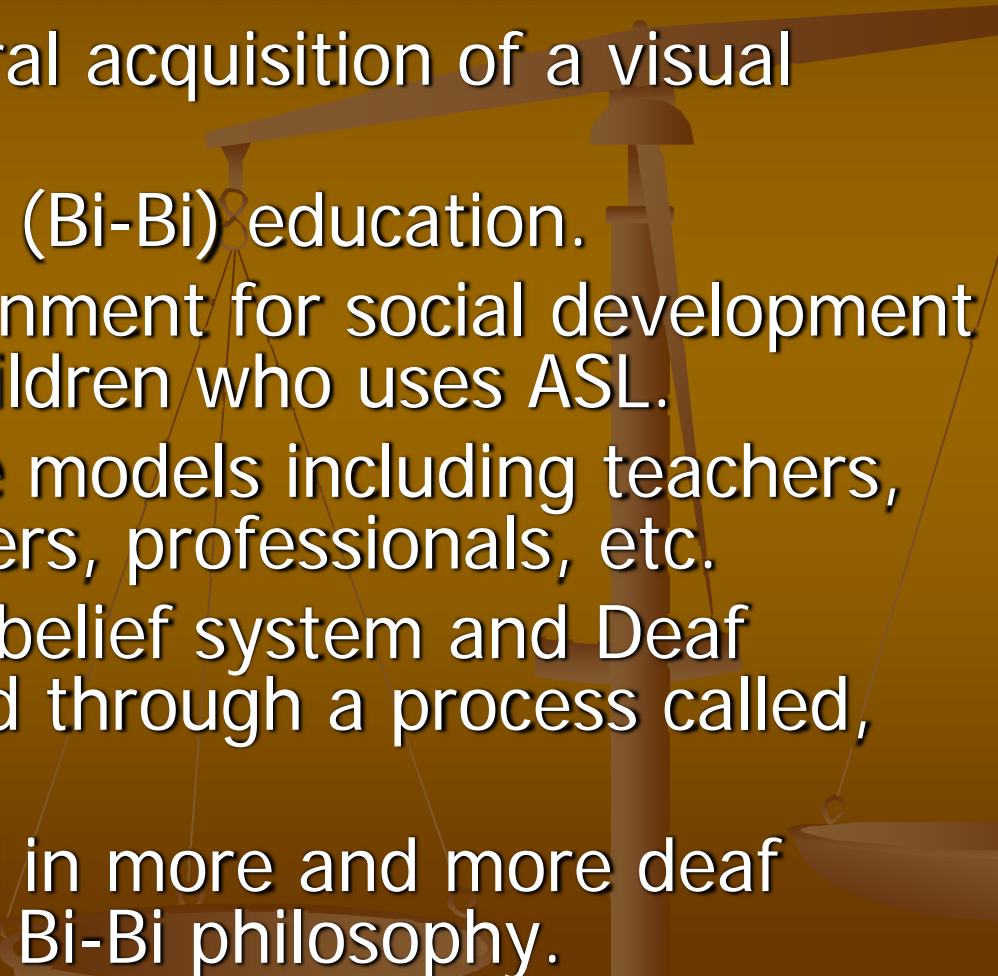
# Quotation on Deaf Identity

“Without a legitimately recognized language, there is no culture; without a culture, there is no self-identity; without a self-identity, you just go on trying to be what others demand you to be.”

- Lou Fant

(Source: Dr. Genie Gurtz's presentation, 2008)

# What's a Healthy Deaf Identity?

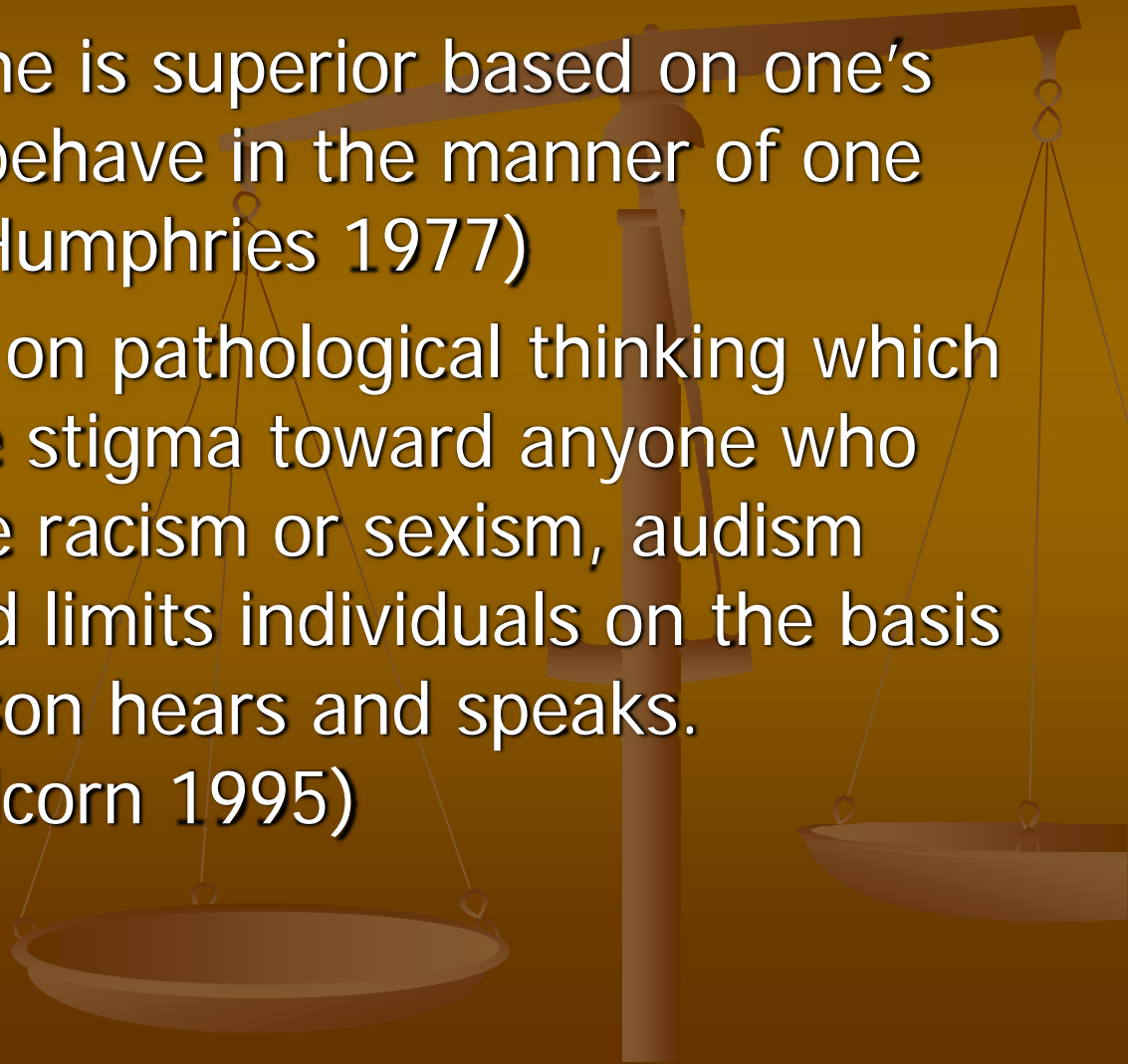
- Acceptance of individual's deafness
  - Experience a natural acquisition of a visual language, ASL.
  - Bilingual-Bicultural (Bi-Bi) education.
  - Appropriate environment for social development with other deaf children who uses ASL.
  - Deaf adults as role models including teachers, community members, professionals, etc.
  - Has his / her own belief system and Deaf identity established through a process called, "Deafhood"
  - This model is used in more and more deaf schools that adopt Bi-Bi philosophy.
- 

# Oppression in today's Deaf Education



# Audism

- Definition?
- The notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears (Tom Humphries 1977)
- An attitude based on pathological thinking which results in negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear, like racism or sexism, audism judges, labels, and limits individuals on the basis on whether a person hears and speaks. (Humphrey and Alcorn 1995)



# Audism

- The corporate institution for dealing with deaf people – dealing with them by making statements about them, authorizing views of them, ...; in short, audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the deaf community. It includes such professional people as administrators of schools for the deaf children and of training programs for deaf adults, interpreters, and some audiologists, speech therapists, otologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, librarians, researchers, social workers and hearing aid specialists. (Lane 1992)

## *THE GREATEST IRONY:*



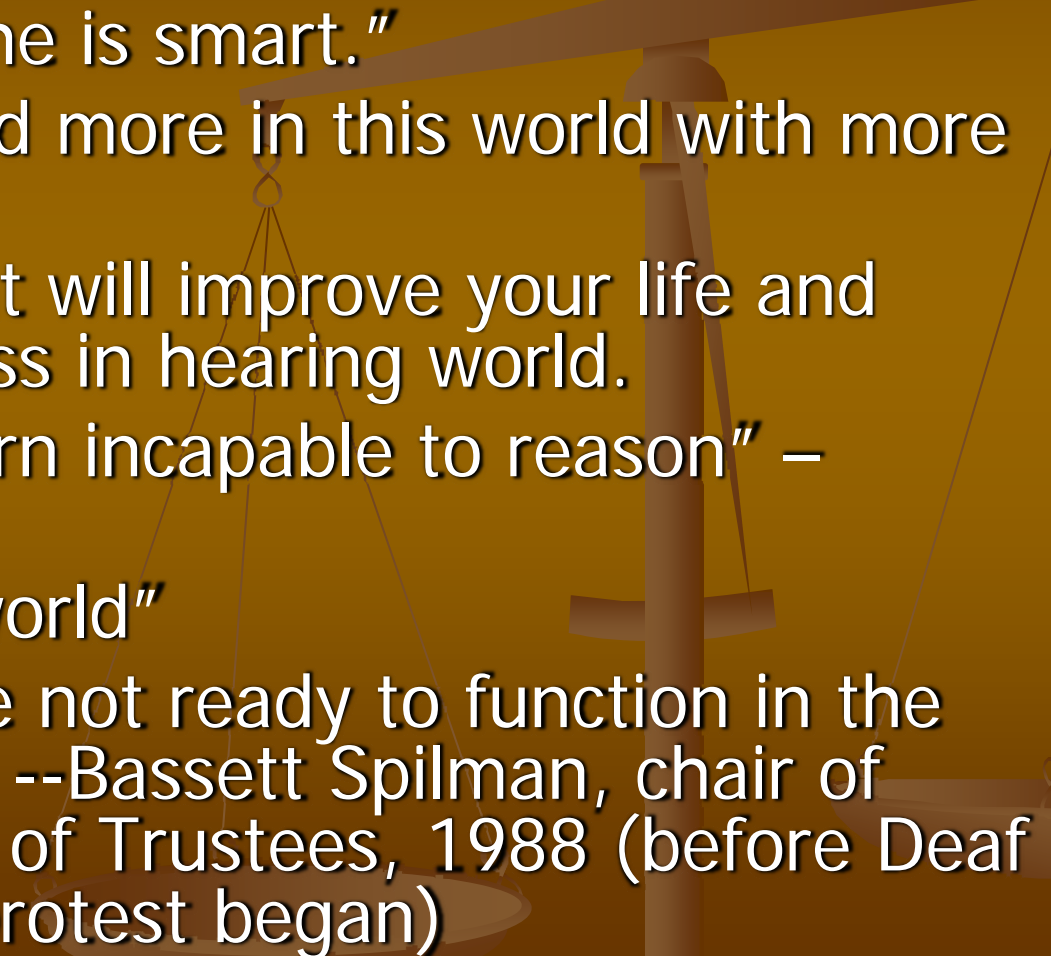
*Maureen J. Kugler*

**Research shows that if hearing babies learn sign first, they will be ahead with language development.**

**Now, why are deaf babies still denied this right for the sake of speech training instead of the most natural language acquisition through the visual mode?**

**Why would many hearing parents and audiologists push for this most difficult way of teaching children through Audial / Verbal Therapy (Oralism) which often result in a delay in language, social and identity development for the deaf child?**

# Subtle or Not So Subtle Audist Comments

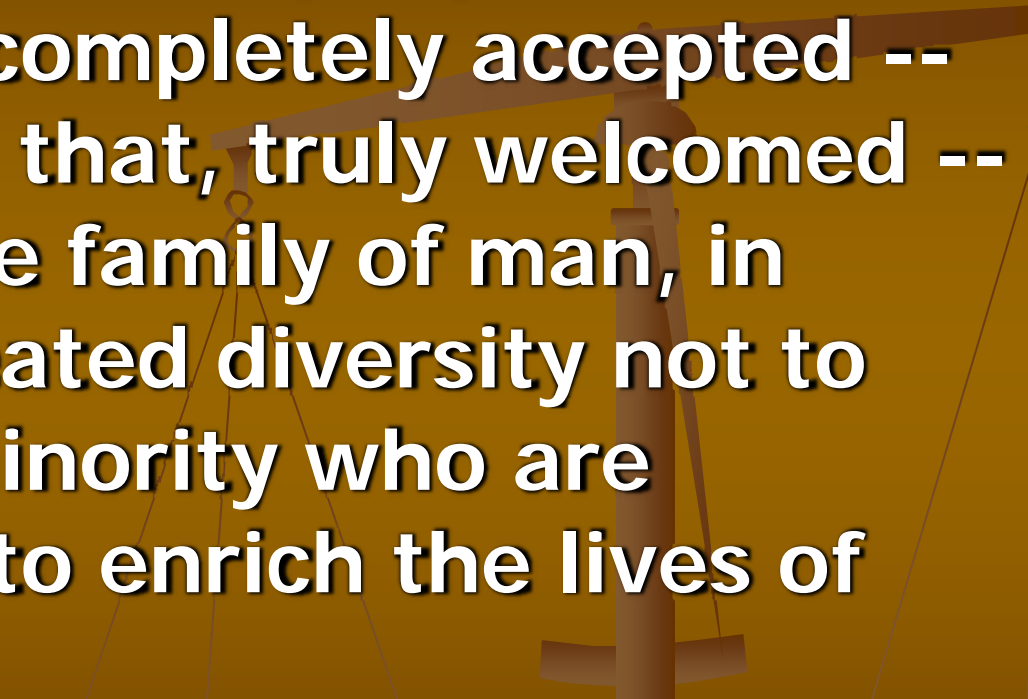
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1. "He is deaf but he is smart."
  2. "You will succeed more in this world with more speech skills."
  3. Cochlear Implant will improve your life and chance of success in hearing world.
  4. "Deaf people born incapable to reason" – Aristotle
  5. "It's a hearing world"
  6. "Deaf People are not ready to function in the hearing world." --Bassett Spilman, chair of Gallaudet Board of Trustees, 1988 (before Deaf President Now protest began)

# Deafhood

- Concept of liberating one's mind from colonialization of mainstream society
- Definition: "a process by which Deaf individuals come to actualize their Deaf identity, posting that those individuals construct that identity to their heightened forms by various factors such as nation, era and class."
- Dr. Paddy Ladd's book, "Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood."
- Clarifications about "Deafhood":  
<http://www.csun.edu/~patrickb/DH/DH.html>

# Deafhood and Deaf Identity



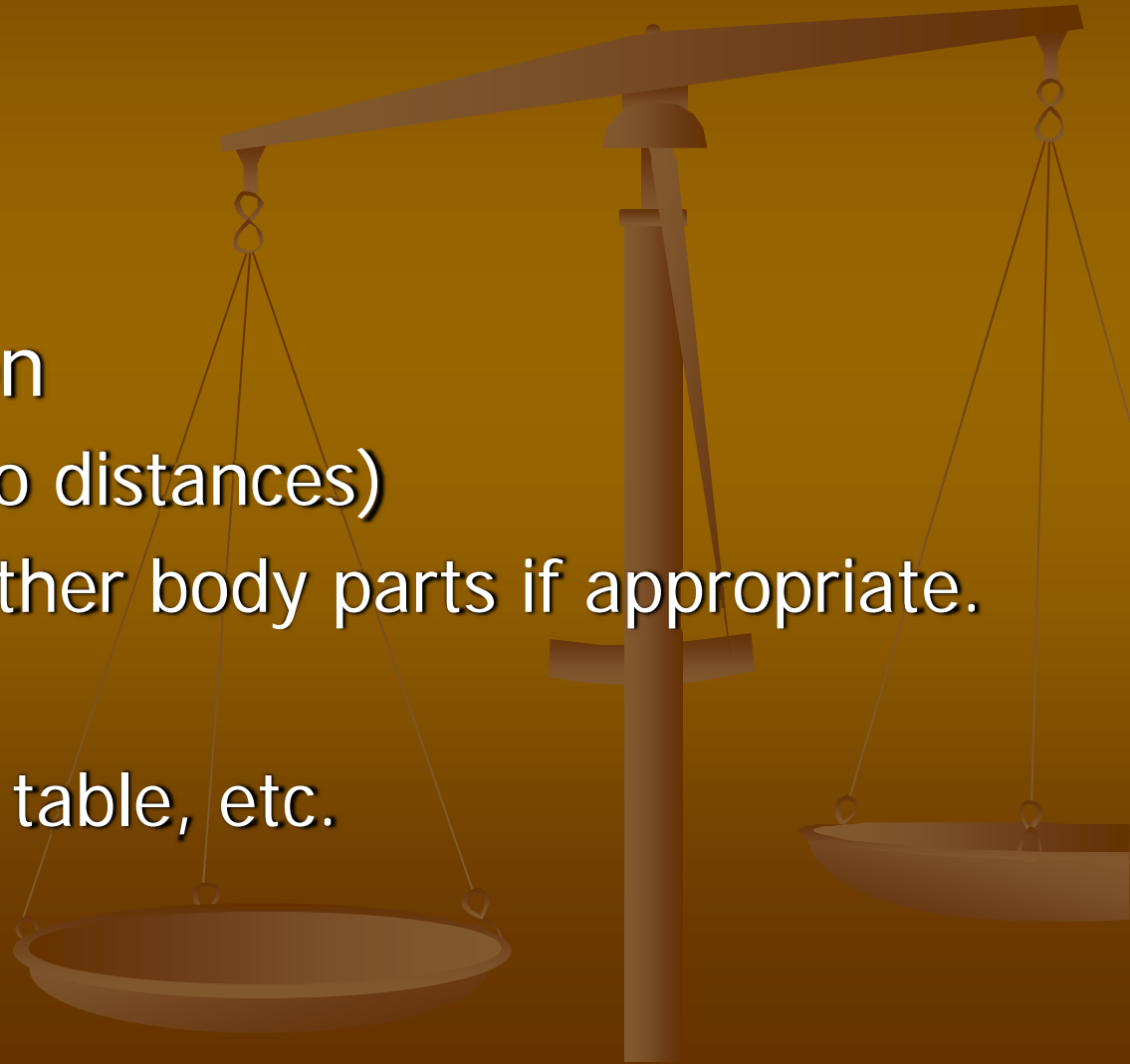


**"A day when deaf people and their language are completely accepted -- no, more than that, truly welcomed -- as a part of the family of man, in which God created diversity not to oppress the minority who are different, but to enrich the lives of all."**

**-- Laurent Clerc**

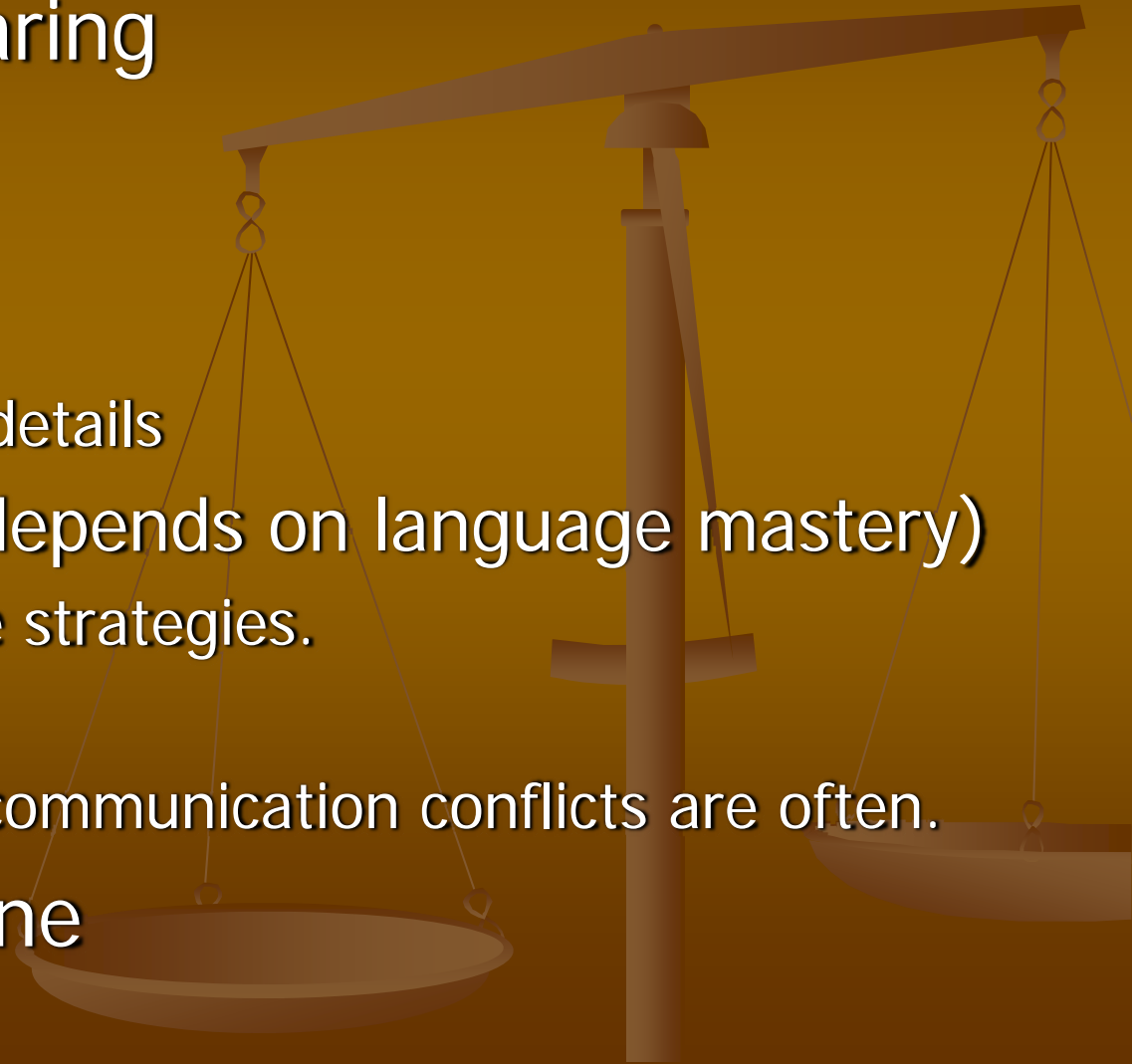
# Communication Patterns

- Introductions
  - Deaf-Deaf
  - Hearing-Deaf
- Getting Attention
  - Hand-wave (two distances)
  - Shoulder tap, other body parts if appropriate.
  - Lights.
  - Pounding floor, table, etc.



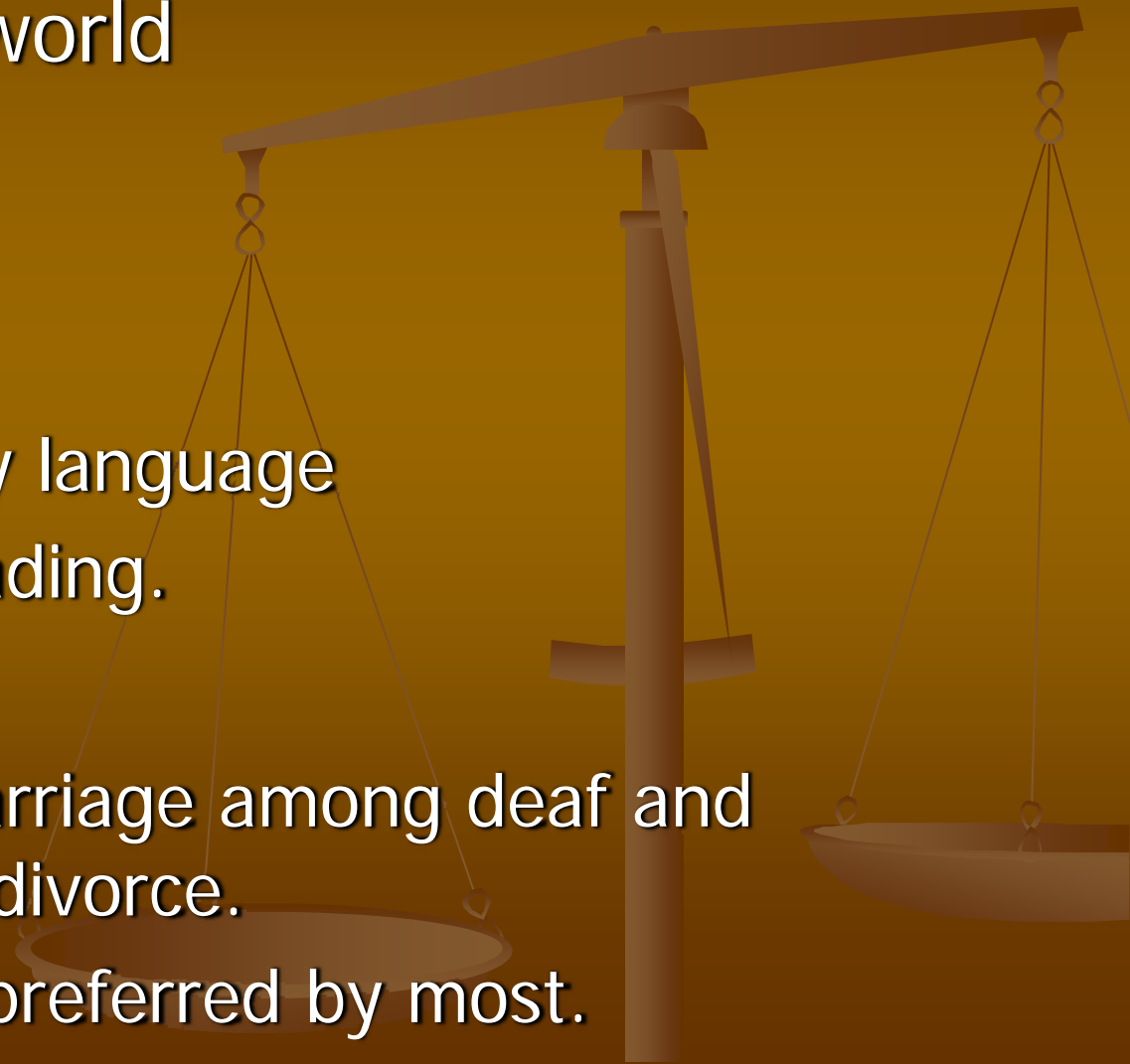
# Communication Patterns

- Information Sharing
  - Deaf-Deaf
    - Lateness
    - Open & direct
    - Informative & details
  - Deaf-hearing (depends on language mastery)
    - Communicative strategies.
    - Trust
    - Cross cultural communication conflicts are often.
- TTY / Videophone



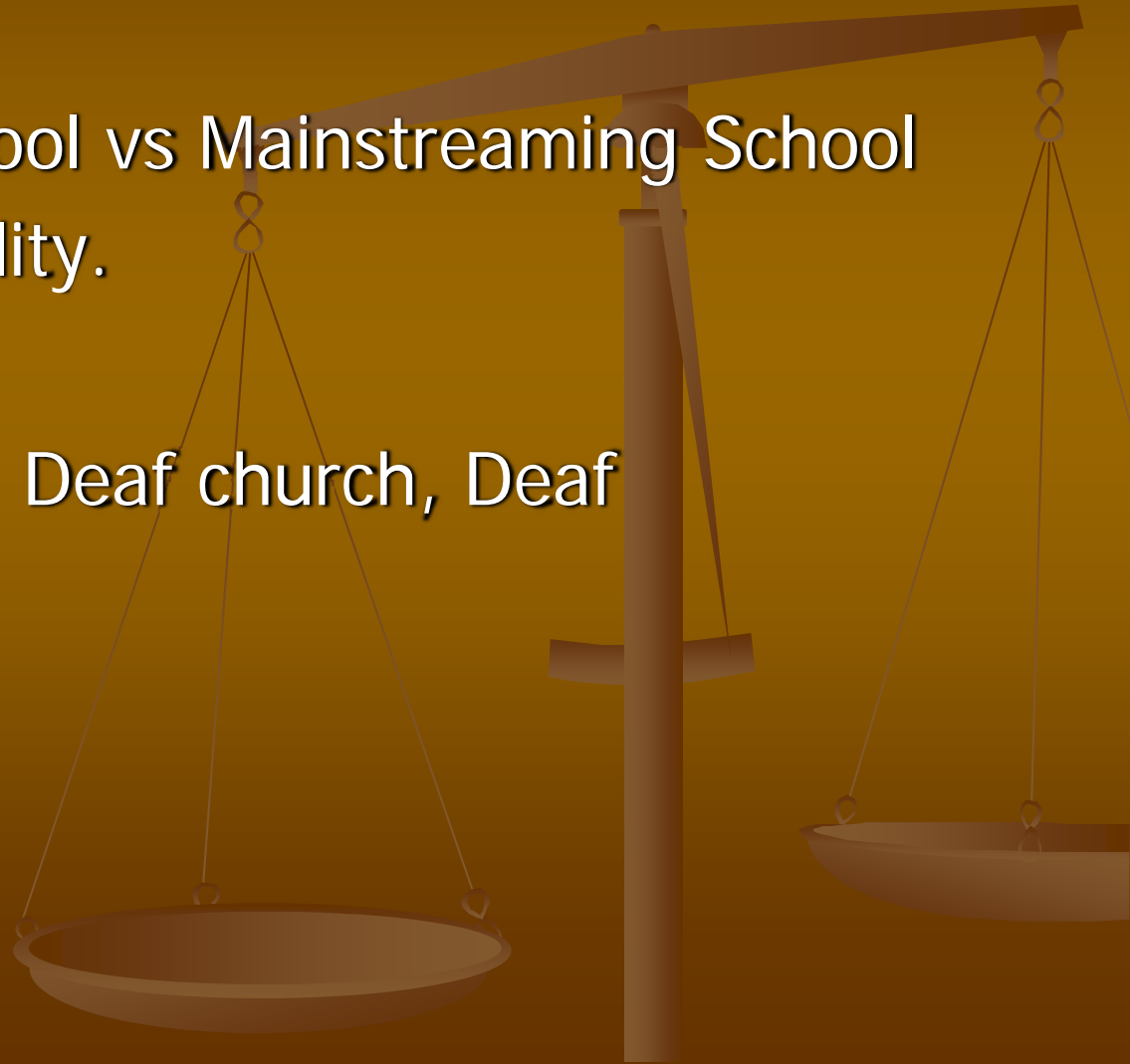
# Communication Patterns

- In the hearing world
  - Interpreter
  - Sign language
  - Pen / paper
  - Gestures / body language
  - Speech / lipreading.
- Marriage
  - 90% of intermarriage among deaf and hearing end in divorce.
  - Deaf – Deaf is preferred by most.



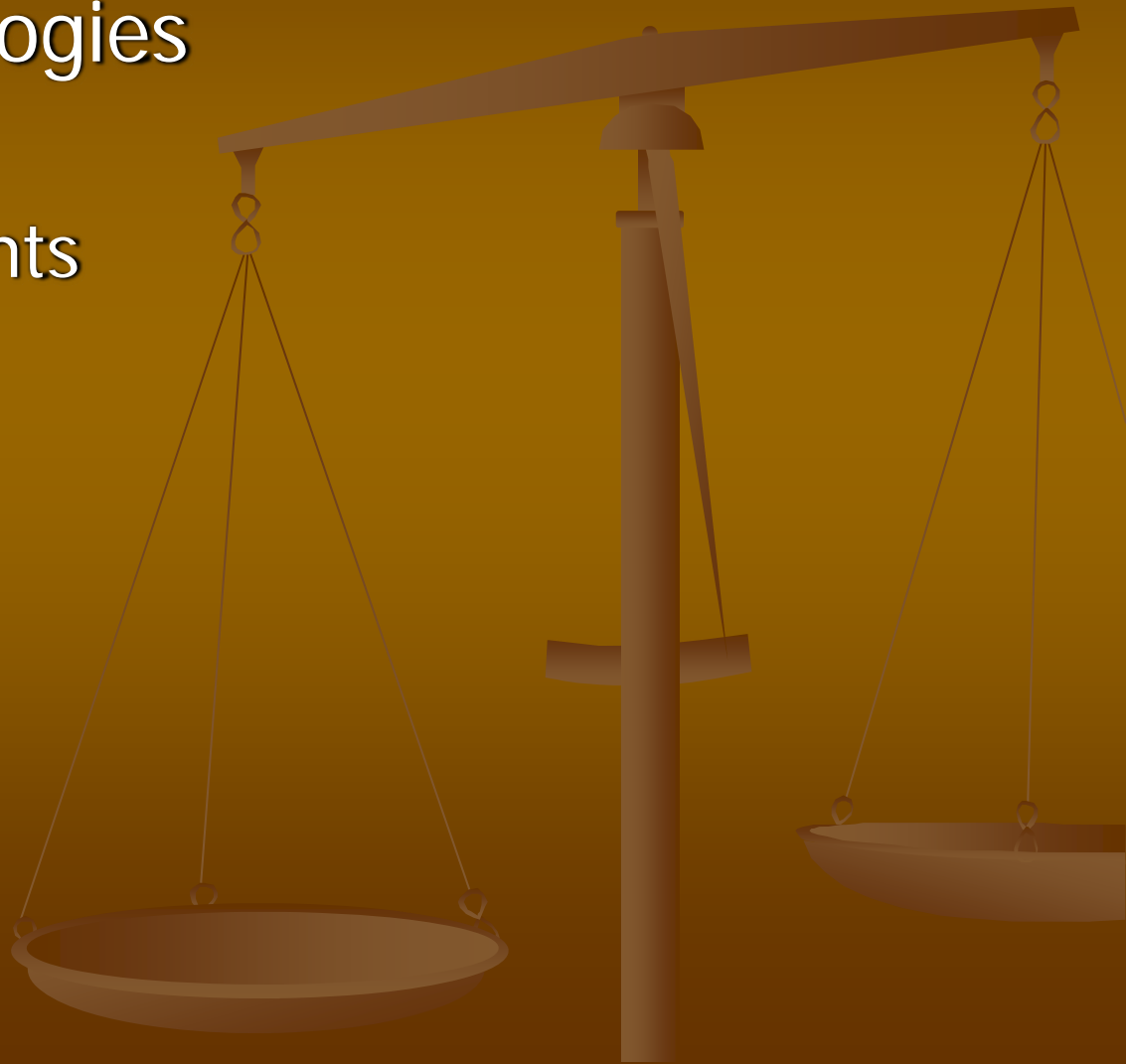
# Communication Patterns

- Education
  - Residential School vs Mainstreaming School
  - Interpreter quality.
- Community.
  - Deaf gathering, Deaf church, Deaf organizations.
  - Long good-bye



# Communication Patterns

- Hearing technologies
  - Hearing aid
  - Cochlear Implants



# Perspectives on Cochlear Implant

**Hearing Identity  
Center**

**Deaf Identity  
Center**

## Perspectives

```
graph TD; A((Perspectives)) <--> B[Miracle Cure]; A <--> C[Against CI]; A <--> D[Encourages CI]; A <--> E[Individual Choice]; B <--> C; D <--> E; B <--> D; C <--> E;
```

**Miracle Cure**  
**CI = Success /**  
**Self-Esteem**  
**Promotes CI**  
**Should require it**

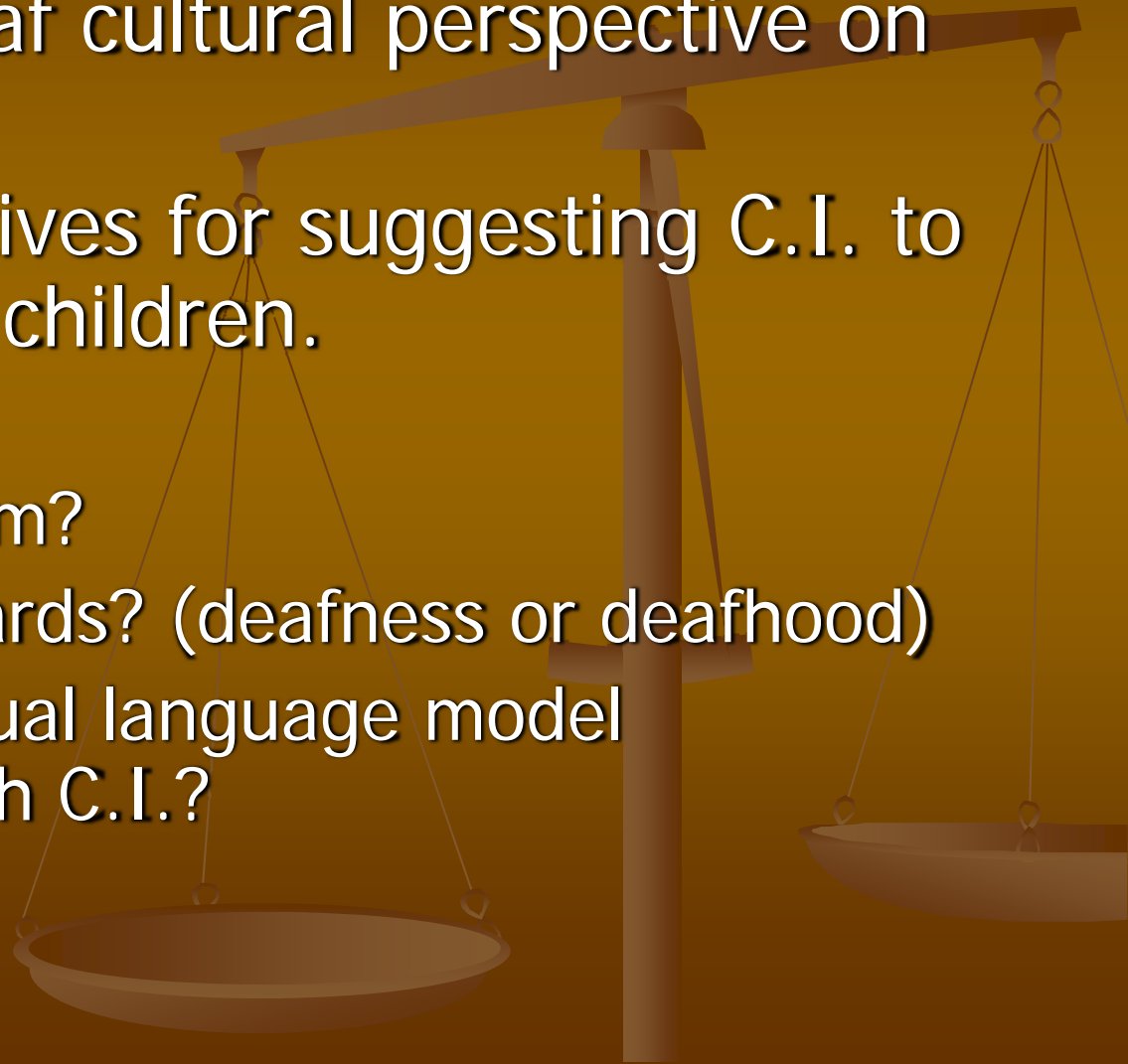
**Against CI**  
**CI = Genocide,**  
**Audism, Oralism.**  
**Violates child's**  
**rights**

**Encourages CI**  
**Unsure about requiring it**  
**Good for deaf children**

**Individual Choice**  
**Not for children**  
**If CI is given, include**  
**sign language**  
**CI = confused identity**

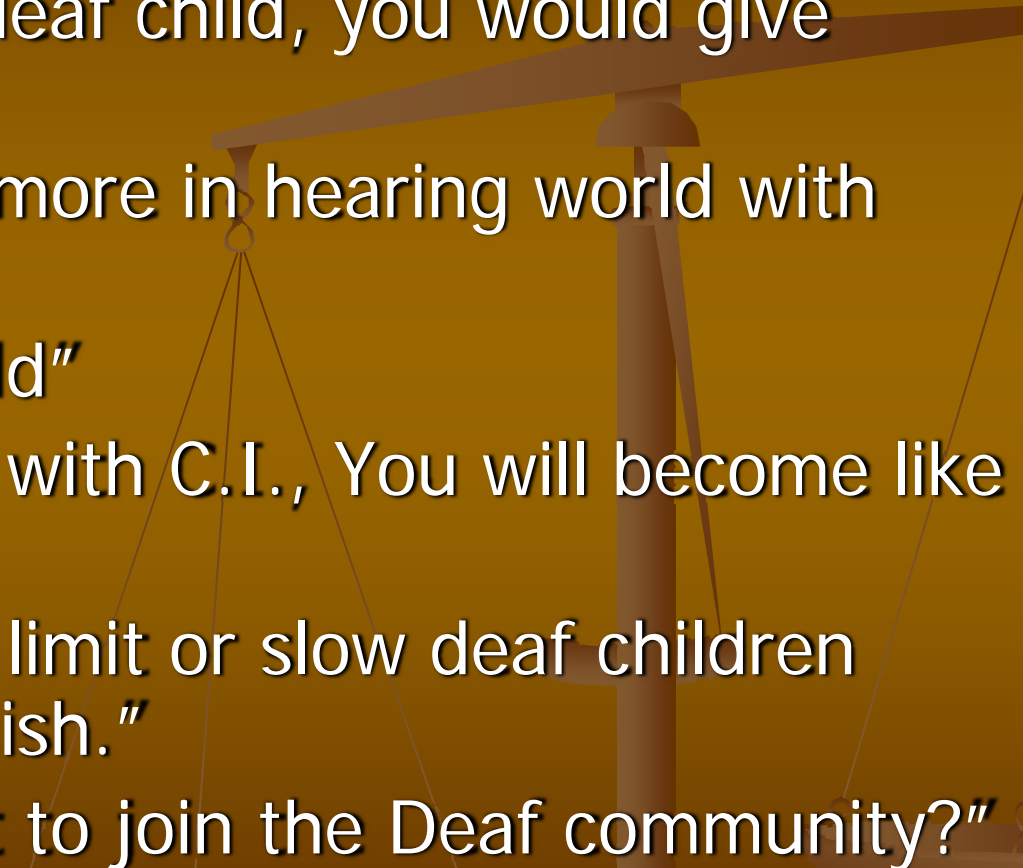
# Your Role with Deaf People?

- Be aware of Deaf cultural perspective on "deafness".
- Check your motives for suggesting C.I. to parents of deaf children.
  - Money?
  - Medical / Audism?
  - Your job standards? (deafness or deafhood)
  - Culture and visual language model encouraged with C.I.?



# A Final Note:

## Avoid dangerous statements...

- "If you love your deaf child, you would give them C.I."
  - "You will succeed more in hearing world with C.I."
  - "Its a hearing world"
  - "If you speak well with C.I., You will become like hearing people"
  - "Learning ASL will limit or slow deaf children from learning English."
  - "Why do you want to join the Deaf community?"
- 

# Questions?

## Contact Information

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