

Chapter 10: The FaceTime Revolution

Chapter 10: The FaceTime Revolution unfolds the compelling story of Keith and Carol Adams and their son Trevin, born deaf on February 11, 2005. While genetic tests had initially given the family some hope that Trevin might not have any hearing impairments, the confirmation of his deafness by the doctor came as a surprise. Carol, ever optimistic, reassured Keith by saying, "Don't worry about it," emphasizing that their son's health was the most important thing to them. Their response set the tone for the journey ahead, one in which Trevin's deafness would become just one aspect of his vibrant life.

As Trevin grew, his experience differed greatly from that of his parents. While Keith and Carol had relied on outdated communication methods such as TTY devices, which were often cumbersome and slow, Trevin was raised in a world where technological advancements created new opportunities. He primarily communicated using American Sign Language (ASL), which he learned both at home and in school. With the evolution of technology, the world Trevin navigated allowed for near-universal captioning on television, making information more accessible, and mobile devices such as smartphones made texting and video calls via FaceTime an integral part of his daily communication. This revolution in communication technology ensured that Trevin's ability to connect with others, whether deaf or hearing, was only a tap away.

By the time Trevin enrolled at the California School for the Deaf, Riverside (CSDR), his world had become seamlessly connected, and the communication barriers that once hindered the deaf community seemed almost nonexistent. The introduction of the iPhone by Steve Jobs in 2007 marked a turning point for the deaf community, revolutionizing communication in ways that previous tools like TTY devices could not. FaceTime, in particular, played a pivotal role, allowing Trevin and others in the deaf community to engage in face-to-face conversations, breaking down the isolation that had once been a part of their reality. For Trevin, these technological advancements not only facilitated smoother communication with his peers but also fostered stronger relationships, helping him integrate into the broader social fabric more easily than his parents had ever imagined possible.

The generational differences between Trevin's upbringing and that of older deaf individuals are starkly illustrated in the chapter. Ken Watson, a coach born in 1952, represents an earlier era of the deaf experience, one defined by isolation and limited access to communication. Watson's summers were filled with loneliness as he relied on letters to stay in touch with his friends, a far cry from Trevin's constant connectivity through his smartphone and FaceTime. The contrast is jarring—where Watson had to wait days or weeks to hear from friends, Trevin communicates instantly with both his deaf and hearing peers, reflecting a seismic shift in how deaf individuals interact with the world around them.

Carol, like many parents, expresses concern about the impact of technology on her children's lives. She recognizes the potential risks of screen addiction, a common concern among parents today, but she also acknowledges the incredible advantages modern technology offers. The access that her children, especially Trevin, now have to educational resources, communication tools, and social connections far exceeds what she had access to in her youth. Carol's statement, "The access for the kids is amazing," underscores the profound shift that has occurred in how technology can bridge gaps and create new opportunities for the deaf community. As she observes, while technology comes with challenges, the benefits it provides are immeasurable, enabling her children to have richer and more connected lives than ever before.

This chapter encapsulates the transformational impact technology has had on the lives of deaf individuals, particularly in terms of communication. The advent of tools like FaceTime has made what once seemed impossible—instant, real-time communication—readily available. The evolution of mobile devices and digital platforms has allowed the deaf community to break free from isolation, providing them with a sense of belonging in a way that was unimaginable just a few decades ago. This technological revolution not only improves the lives of those within the deaf community but also enhances their ability to integrate into broader

society, creating a more inclusive world. Through these advancements, the line between the deaf and hearing communities is gradually being erased, making the world more connected and accessible for everyone.