

Facilitated Communication

By Joshua Harris

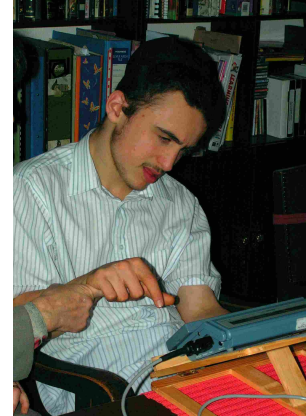
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Josh is a sixteen year old, autistic, young man currently attending a mainstream Orthodox Jewish school. He was introduced to Facilitated Communication whilst a residential student in a special needs school, having been assessed as functioning at the level of a two year old.

I am writing this article to really help other people to understand that a great new technique is invented that helps people to communicate with hopelessly disabled people. The method of communication people use if they can't talk is facilitated communication. Typing is facilitated by a facilitator holding the hand without guiding to the letter.

At first the important thing is to hold the hand really extremely firmly to help the student to say what is really important to them. To facilitate typing, the student's eyes have to stay on the keys and the support has to fade back. For me, your attention to the finer details of my communicative needs and reliance on body control gives the support that enables me.

Fading back is when a facilitator slowly withdraws physical support. I am working towards independence so I can communicate without facilitation.



With this method, really exciting, wonderful things happen with writing what one feels and desires.

When I and others like myself write things that are more than the routine, the mundane, we defy the cynical - so we are seen as really extra exceptional autistic people. This is well deserved, well received but a shame for autistic people without the typing effects (facilitation) that I and some others have. This intellect is not new just revealed by facilitation. Autistic's writing for praise and honour are mistaken, praise from some yet falsified by professionals.

When I wasn't able to type; everyone thought I was stupid because "killer autism" really had me in its terrifying power.

It is ridiculous when experts say, "most autistic people do not understand what other people are saying and cannot comprehend why people talk to one another." It is false; easy for the experts to say. Have they been stuck in a body that won't do as you desire thinking the thoughts of a genius? I think not!

I think that the problem with autistic's communicating (with facilitation), is people's lack of understanding and their little minded attitude. Such people think autistics are not seeing, feeling, living people therefore they underestimate the power of autistic minds.

I think everyone feels really frustrated if they can't discuss their feelings and they want to say what is troubling them. I invite experts and others to ask autistics how we feel and our opinion.

Autism really offers the world a fine lesson in humanities. We require understanding, trust and love. In return we test the world's ability to accept the differences that exist between people.