

It took my parents and teachers twenty-one years to discover my written language ability because my hand eye coordination is so poor. And, I didn't realize that keyboards could be used to type my own thoughts until someone sat me down and showed me. She didn't use special apps or assisted technology that limit communication to programmed choices. Instead, she used a keyboard that was voice enabled and asked me a question about my favorite food. Then, she waited for me to answer.

At first, I couldn't get my hyperactive thoughts and movements to settle, but eventually my stubborn body began to listen to my mind, and I was able to direct my finger to the P. I'm not sure how many slips I made that first time, but somewhere in the mix of impulsive and intentional key taps, I spelled out the word PIZZA.

My wonderful therapist knew enough to recognize **POISZZSA** for what it was, and not just a hodgepodge of letters. More importantly, she knew what my ability to spell portended for my ability to communicate, not just my wants and needs, but also my thoughts.

The day that I realized that my finger could do the talking was the very best day of my life. For 20 years, all my words and thoughts had been trapped inside my head. Now, suddenly, they could be set free. My parents were over the moon. But, getting from those first tentative taps to where I am today took years of daily practice and hard work.

