

*It took my parents almost 20 years to discover my special "gift." I lived at home with them all that time and I could not tell them or show them myself. But eventually, they dug it out of me and then worked tirelessly to nurture and develop it. I believe every one of us has a special gift, but for some of us it is buried deeper than for others. For some of us you have to look harder and longer.*

*Daniel's gift was apparent long before mine. As far back as I can remember he was always sketching. It was his way of both coping with and communicating with the world. That is what our gifts or special abilities afford us, ways of reaching out past all the noise and confusion and expressing what is really in our minds, hearts and souls.*

*Some of us do it with written words, some with pictures, and others with music. But each of us has some "island of special ability" that enables us to shine. For some it is an "island of genius." I believe that is what it is for Daniel. His artistic talent rises above the norm. But, in order for such special talent to be realized, it has to be recognized.*

*And after being recognized it has to be given the opportunity to bloom.*

*I wonder what would have happened to me if my occupational therapist had not thought to try facilitated communication with me. The practice is very controversial and most states don't allow it. But she took a chance one day and that day changed my life. What would have happened to me if she hadn't taken that chance?*

*If Helen Keller's parents hadn't hired Anne Sullivan, can you imagine how her life would have turned out? Rex Lewis-Clack is a blind autistic, who plays the piano brilliantly, although he can't see or read a note of music. But no one might have discovered his amazing talent had his parents not given him a toy keyboard when he was a child.*

*It's a scary thing, but true. If someone does not come along and provide us the opportunity, whether they believe anything will come of it or not, we will never know what we are missing or capable of. And neither will they.*

