

CHEF DARREN: The Challenge of Profound Deafness Transcription

TIME	SPEAKER	DIALOGUE
00:00:00		
00:00:06	Linda	When Darren was born, the doctor said to me, "This is the most perfect baby I've ever seen." I've thought about that so many times. Darren was more affectionate as a baby than his brother had been. He was cuddly. But he wasn't babbling and I remember changing his diaper, and talking to him to get a reaction. And there was no reaction.
00:00:33	Bernie	It was confusing because we'd close the door and he'd look up. What we didn't realize was maybe he was responding to a shadow or a vibration.
00:00:43	Linda	He, like many deaf children, was very visually acute. So, if I walked into the room, he'd turn around. But his behavior was different. I can't tell you why, and no doctor could ever tell us why.
00:00:58	Seth	He's profoundly deaf. He's not completely deaf. Completely deaf, you can't hear anything. He hears about 5% of the noises there.
00:01:08		People don't realize how devastating deafness is. They think, "Oh... poor kid can't hear the birds tweet or will never hear Mozart." That's not the biggest problem. The biggest problem is the acquisition of language. To be able to express the way you feel. Imagine not having the words or the language to talk about how you feel.
00:01:39		CHEF DARREN: Meeting the Challenges of Profound Deafness
00:01:45	Linda	Living with a significant hearing loss does make some situations more difficult. Still, Darren continues to forge ahead. One of Darren's great joys in life is being with his son, Noah. Noah has no problems with hearing. When it's noisy, Noah uses sign language so that he can be sure his dad knows what he is saying. When it's quieter, Darren can read Noah's lips and understand some of what Noah says.
00:02:18	Chef Darren	I love to spend time with him in my free time. I love teaching him how to play sports. Are you excited?

00:02:47	Linda	His first few months were very normal. I started to think something was a little different at about four months.
00:02:56	Bernie	My wife thought, "You know what?" "There's something wrong. He doesn't seem to be responding to sound."
00:03:01	Linda	He would just start spinning, spin and spin and spin, and then stop and stare off into space. And that was pretty frightening.
00:03:12	Bernie	So we took him to the doctor, and the doctor told my wife, she's just a nervous, neurotic mother. "Go home. He's perfect."
00:03:20	Linda	No matter who we took him to no one would come up, could come up with anything that sounded like diagnosis.
00:03:29	Narrator	Linda and Bernie would compare Darren's behavior with that of his older brother, Seth, and it was clear to them that Darren's responses were different.
00:03:38	Bernie	My wife said "that's it. Either you test him, or we're going somewhere else." And he tested him and they told us, "Yup. He's deaf and slow." And that was it. I mean, what do we do? We were really devastated and confused. And it turns out that there's factions in the techniques of raising a deaf child.
00:04:01		Where's the bear? Yes. Bear. Yes.
00:04:06	Narrator	There's lip reading, sign language, cued speech, oralism - try to talk and use whatever little hearing you have. Bah... bah... B - B - B... Bah... bah... B - B - B...
00:04:21	Bernie	Everyone's philosophies seem right when you're talking to 'em. So... we decided, "Let's not listen to philosophy. Let's look at results."
00:04:30	Narrator	Darren's family worked on finding a place that would focus on using whatever small amount of sound a hearing impaired child could still pick up.
00:04:40	Helen Beene - Video Footage	This program demonstrates an approach to teaching hearing-impaired children at the clinic of Mrs. Helens Beebe, in Easton, Pennsylvania.
00:04:50	Narrator	Helen Beene felt that not just hearing a sound, but understanding that sound, is where real communication takes place.
00:05:03	Helen Beebe - Video Footage	Put the spoon in the cup. Spoon.

00:05:14	Narrator	Bernie and Linda invested all of their savings in Darren's therapy, and moved with both children, to Easton, Pennsylvania, to be near Beebe's clinic.
00:05:24	Bernie	They took the oral technique to an ultimate end.
00:05:29	Helen Beebe - Video Footage	Open it! Look! No, no. Say, "Open!"
00:05:35	Narrator	The word makes it happen. That's the name of the game. The word makes the thing happen.
00:05:41	Linda	We were doing a completely unique type of therapy, which they then called Unisensory. You'd get hearing aids for the child, you cover your mouth, and you teach them to listen and remove all other stimulation. Therapy became me locking him in his high chair, because he was very active. And with a little, little treats on the tray I would make animal sounds. I had little animals and I'd go, "Moo" for the cow and "Neigh" for the horse, etc., and, uh, he eventually started picking up the right ones, all with my mouth covered.
00:06:22	Bernie	Every waking moment was a language lesson. Nothing was easy.
00:06:28	Linda	We were convinced this was the way to go. Unfortunately, as hard as we worked with him, Darren's behavior kept his progress to a minimum. It was as if he was trying to fight them.
00:06:44	Narrator	After working with Beebe for two years and seeing little progress, they decided to move to London, where the Unisensory method had originated. Once again, they uprooted the family.
00:06:59	Bernie	I almost looked at it as an adventure -for me, personally. It wasn't great for my older son, who was three and a half years older, because we moved quite a bit, but the foundation of our thinking was, "What's best for Darren?" He's the one who has the difficulty. Yeah, we'll all suffer. It's not easy on my wife. It wasn't easy on me. It wasn't easy on my other son. But, what's best for him? Because he's the one who got short-changed.
00:07:25	Narrator	In London they were struggling to build a new life, - and they needed help.
00:07:29	Bernie	And a wonderful thing happened to us.
00:07:31	Linda	A young lady had graduated with a degree in Psychology, and she was traveling around Europe with a guitar. She turned out to be, I think, the most pivotal person in the education of Darren.

00:07:46	Betsy Speech Teacher	When I met Darren, as a four year old, he really did not have any self control. He was... He didn't really understand boundaries. He would try to escape from the house. But, was he escaping, or just...? He was curious. He would open the door and take a walk and everybody else in the house is sleeping.
00:08:06	Narrator	When Betsy first started to work with Darren, he had no language skills at all. She had to figure out ways to help Darren let her know what he wanted. And you needed to... You needed to sort of think like an impulsive 4 year-old.
00:08:21	Betsy	He was... He was a challenge. You needed to be three steps ahead of him.
00:08:31	Bernie	She made the connection with Darren that was extraordinary. She was doing better with Darren than either my wife or myself.
00:08:40	Betsy	He would come and ask me to take him for a walk. He would just do this, and I knew what he wanted me to do. We were able to communicate because he was so expressive with his whole face and his whole body.
00:08:56	Narrator	Betsy became interested in deaf education and moved to Easton, where she trained with Beebe in the Unisensory Method.
00:09:05	Bernie	Now, up to this point, keep in mind, there's probably not a word he spoke that anyone could ever understand. But, we're still trying, and every day, we're putting the language in, and putting the language in, but he still wasn't getting it as well as we thought. So we came to a decision. A hard one.
00:09:23	Narrator	Darren's parents decided to send him to live with Betsy in Easton for 3 months. That way, she could work with him on a one-to-one basis.
00:09:33	Linda	She would take him in for therapy every day, but she would work with him at home.
00:09:39	Narrator	With his limited understanding of spoken language, it was difficult for Linda and Bernie to explain to Darren why he would be staying with Betsy.
00:09:49	Darren	My mom, my dad, and my brother left. And I was so scared; I didn't know what was going to happen - that Betsy was taking me. So I was left all by myself with Betsy. I cried for a couple of days. I didn't know what to do.
00:10:09	Betsy	Everything was a lesson. Every day, all day was teaching him to listen, to pay attention to use words when he could. One of Beebe's tenets for working with children was discipline, discipline, discipline.
00:10:26	Narrator	Helen Beebe went beyond teaching Darren how to speak and understand words. She introduced subtle concepts through humor and conversation.

00:10:37	Helen Beebe Video Footage	Uh... Where did Betsy and Mommy go?
00:10:40	Helen Beebe Video Footage	To Boston.
00:10:43	Helen Beebe Video Footage	Bossss-ton.
00:10:45	Helen Beebe Video Footage	Boston.
00:10:46	Helen Beebe Video Footage	You know what Timmy told me? Timmy told me that his mommy went to... He said, "to Boxtan" - and Timmy said, "You know... Box... Box-ton." Timmy thought his Mommy said,
00:10:59	Helen Beebe Video Footage	I know... that's a dog.
00:11:02	Helen Beebe Video Footage	A boxer. A boxer is a dog
00:11:04	Helen Beebe Video footage	A boxer can fight.
00:11:06	Helen Beebe Video footage	A boxer is a fighting dog, yes.
00:11:07	Helen Beebe Video footage	Like a box...

00:11:09	Helen Beebe Video footage	But Timmy thought his mother said, "I'm going to Box-ton."
00:11:13	Helen Beebe Video footage	To Boston...
00:11:14	Helen Beebe Video footage	He didn't hear correctly.
00:11:15	Helen Beebe Video footage	Boston.
00:11:16	Helen Beebe Video footage	How do you spell Boston?
00:11:19	Helen Beebe Video footage	B,o,s,t,o,d
00:11:23	Helen Beebe Video footage	...t,o,N
00:11:24	Helen Beebe Video footage	...t,o,N
00:11:25	Betsy	We worked on phrases that would be useful for him, "I want that" was one big one that we tried to work on. But the first phrase that Darren learned was, "Sit down, Darren! Sit down, Darren!" He did fight sitting down, and he had a hard time sitting down. He really did accept this whole process. And I credit him with just really wanting to learn. He was a people person, and he hadn't been able to communicate with people, and I think he knew that this was how it was going to happen.

00:12:02	Bernie	He comes back after 3 months - we haven't seen our child. This is hard. And he runs to us and says,
00:12:11	Linda	"Mommy! Daddy! "I can talk, and I can hear"
00:12:17	Darren	My father was so surprised. He cried. He was very happy.
00:12:23	Bernie	This was the change of life. Betsy made a breakthrough. Betsy did the "Miracle Worker" thing.
00:12:32	Darren	Betsy taught me how to speak. We worked many hours every day, and made me able to learn how to speak very fast. That was the biggest change of my life.
00:12:47	Bernie	Imagine how hard it is on him, in a classroom with thirtysome kids. The teacher can't just respond to Darren. He has 29 other kids. So, the teacher turns his back, he's not looking at Darren. And Darren is trying to get the most that he can out of this experience.
00:13:04	Linda	He was up to being in a regular class with my help at home. And, we fought every year to keep him in public school with hearing children.
00:13:18	Bernie	When he graduated high school, the question was "OK, now what?" He was a fisherman. He'd love to go fish. He would catch a fish, bring it home, gut it, cook it and no one ate fish that good...ever. It was just some... I'm going to use the words, "God-given Talent." He seemed to have the ability to make things taste good. He had an... an art form almost.
00:13:41	Seth	He was kinda pre-destined to go into becoming a chef. When we were kids, if we had to make our own breakfast, I'd make toast, and it would annoy me that it took two minutes for the bread to get toasted. Why can't they sell pre-toasted bread? Darren would come in and spend an hour dirty every pot we had-- there'd be eggs on the ceiling-- but he'd have this souffle you know, that was beautiful and I'm sure it tasted extremely great. And that was when we were kids.
00:14:13	Linda	No one ever taught him and no one ever thought anything about it except how good it was. And we loved to eat it. He had no... no one had any ideas about him going into food.
00:14:24	Bernie	So he seemed to have a talent, and, okay, what can we do with this talent? He applied and got into The Culinary Institute of America. in Hyde Park, New York, which is one of the finest cooking schools in the country. And he just flowered.
00:14:39	Darren	The class lasted between four to eight hours. There's only so much time to having an interpreter. Because of so many demonstrations doing hands-on cooking work. In between, sometimes, when the instructor was speaking, I

		had a few of my classmates move their mouths for me to understand... "whisper." I was able to lip-read them, which helped me a lot. There were some brats. They kept telling me, "because you're deaf, you should never be in my class." But there are some other students that liked to talk to me because they learned a lot from me
00:15:23	Linda	Being there and seeing what the students were doing was a wonderful experience. And when he graduated, the tears were flowing. I had never really allowed myself to think about what his future might be.
00:15:38	Narrator	After graduation, Darren worked at fine restaurants around the country.
00:15:43	Seth	He was eighteen, and he moved to New York. Shortly after that, one of his first cooking jobs was in Hawaii. I mean, here's this kid who can't even communicate with the gate agent at the airport flying all over the world and living in extreme cold or extreme heat and 3,000 miles from home, either way. He's been blissfully unaware of his limitations in a lot of cases, and I think that's great.
00:16:04	Narrator	In 2007, Darren opened his own restaurant in Manhattan Beach, California.
00:16:09	Darren	We typically do fine dining, but the food is more simple. Some people love to have a big piece of steak, cauliflower and portobello mushrooms, lobster chowder, truffle fries. Not too modern, not too classic.
00:16:31	Narrator	Bart, the General Manager of the restaurant, has been working with Darren for more than ten years.
00:16:37	Bart GM	The magic of the restaurant starts at the front door, and it happens throughout the entire experience, from every one of my staff members: from the hostess to the server, to the bartender making the special drink, to Darren making sure that the food is perfect, to the customer eating a fantastic meal, to them leaving and saying "goodbye", and walking out the door.
00:17:01	Narrator	In the same year that he opened the restaurant, Darren met his wife, Sawalin. Darren and Sawalin raised Noah to use both speech and sign language. Sawalin, who is also profoundly deaf, uses only sign language. She taught Noah to sign when he was an infant.
00:17:20	Sawalin	He was a baby - about seven months old. He started with easy, repetitive signs: "milk," or "drink," or "hungry." And then, from there, he picks up the rest.
00:17:35	Narrator	Noah also learns more signs when Sawalin reads to him.
00:17:41	Sawalin	I read it, and then I sign it. We look at each word. We'll go over how to sign it with our hands, obviously not speaking out loud.

00:17:54	Darren	I love to teach Noah to learn how to cook. He's only 5 years old. Those skills really take time, but do it enough to learn how to cook. It's sharp. The other side is not sharp. The other side. Start here and peel the carrot. But, remember, when you peel, never peel here. It could cut. Ow! Let me tell you, just peel out this way, okay? That's good. Okay... good... fantastic! OK, now go put the carrot in the trash.
00:18:42	Noah	Ahhh.
00:18:47	Darren	Keep the knife this way, not like this, because you could cut yourself. Hold it for this one. OK. Move it here. Like that. OK... That is the hardest part... hold it here. Done! Nice! Pretty neat, huh? Put the carrot in the bowl. Just put the carrots in the pan. That's good.
00:19:56	Sawalin	We're waiting for dad to come to the table, and then we can eat.
00:20:06	Darren	Can you say to Mommy, "it's the best fried rice you've ever had?"
00:20:11	Narrator	Darren's desire to share his love of preparing and serving delicious food inspired him to arrange a cooking class for hearing impaired children.
00:20:21	Darren	They take their cooking job very seriously. I give them chef's hats to wear because it makes them feel like a real chef. I give them full-sized knives and teach them how to cut very carefully. I trust them. They are not only learning how to cook. They are also learning how to share the work. It's really fun for me to see the kids eating together after they have created a great meal all by themselves. It makes me feel good to give the kids the opportunity to learn how to cook more nutritional food.
00:21:08	Narrator	Darren's life is working well now, but it's still hard.
00:21:12	Darren	Sometimes, being deaf, I feel frustrated, because I'm not getting what everybody's talking about at the table. It just makes me feel left out.
00:21:25	Narrator	For most of his life, Darren has used only hearing aids. He lived with whatever sound the hearing aids made available.
00:21:33	Seth	The hearing aids all that does is amplify everything. It's an electronic version of that thing you saw 100 years ago, with, like, basically a funnel going into your ear. It just makes everything louder. And, so, if you're at dinner, the glasses clinking, and the cars going by and all that stuff, that's amplified as much as speech, so it just becomes white noise. Darren would often get frustrated and just take his hearing aids off because they weren't helping. He happened to get his cochlear implant the first month he opened his first restaurant. What's great about the cochlear ear implant is that it tries to shut down the outside noise and only amplify human speech. For it to work, you have to start really young, And, he was already a full-fledged adult, and

		pretty busy. So, it hasn't worked as well for him as it would for a kid who was born today.
00:22:15	Narrator	Darren does feel comfortable when he's working with his staff and in communication with his customers.
00:22:21	Darren	I want to make sure everything is good, especially the food and the service. It's challenging because customers may not realize that I'm hearing impaired, but I just let them know when I greet them. "It's nice to meet you. I want to let you know that I'm hearing impaired, and I need you to look at me to be able to lipread and understand."
00:22:47	Restaurant Patron	You know, I think that just the fact that it does require you to slow down a little bit is almost kind of a blessing in disguise because the world is so crazy and so manic all the time and you kind of talk as fast as you can and it takes you back to really watching the entire person, their body language, see the warmth in their eyes, the smile that comes up on their face. You listen to the words just a bit more, and you take time to kind of get to know the person, rather than just a fleeting interaction.
00:23:18	Bart GM	In the beginning, working with Darren, I had a little bit of communication problems with him just as far as me understanding Darren and what he was saying exactly. He's told me before that when I speak, he can read my lips. I understand when to talk fast, and I understand when to talk slow for him. I think that's why Darren and I get along so well, and that he works so well with me is that I include him in everything. Whenever I'm talking to someone else, I try to speak clear enough so that he can read my lips and understand and be part of the conversation. And I also take my time out of the day, every day, on every different conversation, to make sure that he's completely understanding what's going on.
00:24:03	Narrator	One of the keys to Darren's success are repeat visits from his best customers. Jim Fox has been a regular client for years.
00:24:12	Jim Fox	The flavor that I find in the food at Darren's just stay with me for such a long time. As a professional athlete, you rely on your senses. You rely on your physicality. You rely on your strength. And I think Darren, of course, with the hearing issue it's something that he's had to battle. But he's not afraid to take a chance. I see it in his food. He will go for it! He's had to overcome, but it has not set him back. It's actually gone the other way. It makes him go for it, and I love that about him.
00:24:26	Bart GM	It's awesome. I mean, the guy rock and rolls. He just doesn't give up. He never ever quits. No matter how frustrating things get or how difficult things get, we will always get through it.

00:24:58	Seth	People really like him. People rave about his restaurant and his food. And he's not just cooking. He's mingling with the guests and being a real restaurateur.
00:25:08	Linda	Zagat voted Darren's restaurant # 25 of the top 50 restaurants in the greater Los Angeles area.
00:25:19	Bernie	And that's a lot of restaurants. That's thousands and thousands and thousands of restaurants. He's received great reviews and awards, but maybe his greatest achievement has been to create a fulfilling personal life.
00:25:38	Seth	It's not a secret how to be successful. He kind of embodies the traditional you know, love what you do, do what you do well, and he's the best chef around! It has nothing to do with being deaf. He's deaf, and he does that.
00:25:58	Narrator	After 12 years running his own restaurant, Darren stepped down to spend more time with his family. He's now the executive Chef at his brother Seth's restaurant, The Chelsea Pub and Lounge in Hermosa Beach. Together, they bring Darren's food artistry to the community.
		THE END