

Hi everyone,

Since someone recently asked about the Sound and Beyond software, I'll put in my 2 cents' worth.

From two weeks ago at my fourth MAPPING, I had 4 Ps "fine tuned" (increased volume, equilibration of loudness across the 22 electrodes, adjusted T levels, etc.) which were 3 ACE and 1 CIS programs. My first day of activation was 12/8.

I kept an old ACE program from my 3rd MAPPING to use as a point of reference (it was my favorite one) to keep in the 4th MAP set of Ps. That quickly got too weak for me -- sounds in general got more and more soft with each passing day (this meant that my auditory nerve was increasing in strength/use with practice every day). A second P was a louder version of the first P1 (ACE 720 Hz. at 12 maxima). The third P was CIS, 12 maxima. The fourth one was ACE, 1800 Hz, 8 electrodes. For the first three weeks, I would switch from P2 to P3 and to the next (skipping P1) every day, to see which one I liked best of all. Just a few days ago, I thought I had finally settled on one, but had the growing realization that I was losing the "tip of getting speech discrimination" -- in an earlier post, I mentioned an analogy of "almost tasting, but not quite there" lemon when you have this barest, imperceptible stimulation by eating something lemony, but it was not a LEMON. I seemed to have lost that sensation, and I was getting frustrated like Lisa Kozlik as she had expressed her feelings at losing that ability to discriminate speech when she had her second MAPPING.

Well... after a couple of times listening to an audiobook ("Make Way for Ducklings") and reading along with the children's book -- was having a hard time trying to follow the sentences and listening for any cues to clue me in on where I was in the book... switching from P2 to P3 to P4 and back again. Not very happy was I.

Then I decided I would use the Sound and Beyond software. [I had installed it on my PC several weeks ago but hadn't had the chance to look at it thoroughly until I was sure of the P I wanted in my BWP to use.]

I went into the Pure Tones Discrimination testing component and tested my hearing with each tone (there are 21 specific tones from 168 Hz to 7272 Hz) with each P. I quickly learned that some tones sounded either too soft or too flat when I would press the button to make the sound for 609 Hz, for example, using my computer and the computer speakers. I realized then and there that my P2 was weakest in the 461, 609, 903, 1049, 6207 Hz areas so that made me realize why I was "losing my edge."

P3 sounded a little wooden-y for me (CIS) -- tones were either missing or too weak at 309, 461, 609, 756, 903, 1049, 1583, 3294, 6207 Hz tones.

P4 had fewer weak spots at 609, 756, 903, 1049, 1202 and it sounded great at higher frequencies (this is ACE at 1800 Hz). I realized that my best advantage was to keep using P4 and wait till my next MAPPING visit to "tweak up" the weak spots for P2 and P3; but I've already

decided that I like ACE at higher firing rates.

So folks, the software is great to use at home, to test your pure tone discrimination, and it serves as a great tool for me to tell my audiologist where I'm not able to hear tones well, and he/she can use that information to adjust your P next time.

Tonight I was more adventurous and went into the other areas of Sound and Beyond, using my P4 program, knowing that I was hearing "more" with P4 than the other Ps. I tested myself at the pure tones, I got placed at level 4 (there are 5 levels). Environmental sounds placed me at level 1. This component allows you to listen to environmental sounds, and you pick one of the four pictures that correspond to it, for example, you hear an owl hoot: then you have to answer by picking a picture of a church bell, a whistling man, a kettle boiling or an owl.

You move your cursor to the picture that you think is making the sound, and the computer tells you if you are correct or not correct. Then both the picture that you picked incorrectly and the correct picture play their sounds, so you learn quickly which sounds are being made by an owl, a kettle, a man whistling and the pealing of a church bell. Wonderful to do this in the comforts of home without having to go outside to find an owl, or a church!

Listening to male and female speakers, level 1. This was a little difficult for me so the test placed me at level 1 so that in the future, I can practice listening to male and female speakers saying words, and learning the differences in pitch.

Word discrimination was a little easier. There are sets of four words in different categories: animals, food, color, family, numbers, time. I practiced listening to words of animals, food, etc. I got 72% correct in selecting words of animals in 25 questions; 68% in food; 72% in color; 84% in family; 72% in numbers; 64% in time. Remember this was my first time in listening to these words and somehow (without being taught by anyone) I was able to get clues from the word being spoken (hey, I was more than 50% right!) to pick the right answer. During this listening exercise, I became aware of my learning to identify what part of the word was the /s/ consonant. It dawned upon me that the /s/ consonant was vert helpful as a cue in picking the right answer; and within several minutes, my brain was quickly training itself to listen for the /s/ sound in order to help me select the right answer. I felt a lot better tonight than I did before checking Sound and Beyond, and it tells me that I am nearly there in selecting the best P for my BWP and next week, my ESPrit!

After 15 minutes of paying attention to the /s/ consonant in words in the training components, I tested myself on everyday sentences: you listen to a sentence being spoken and you have to pick 1 out of 5 sentence that you think is being said.

Imagine my surprise that I tested at 74%, and was placed on level 2! I got a sense that when I have my /s/ consonant learned, the others /m/, /n/ and /w/ were close behind -- almost there, but not quite. I haven't felt this being so accomplished in a long time, and it's really gratifying to be able to do this at home, on your own, without

having to see an auditory therapist. So tonight, I've tasted the LEMON in /s/!

I hope my experiences will help you with your decision on whether to get the Sound and Beyond software for yourself to use at home.

Chris, activated 12/8, prelingually profoundly deaf, HAS 40+ years, aged 43