

Ted Baxter, Acclaimed Author & Stroke/Aphasia Survivor, Describes the Art of Using Gestures to Communicate Alternatively

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [Ted Baxter](#), Award-winning author

and stroke/aphasia survivor, explains the importance of alternative communication using gestures that helped him through his experience after his massive ischemic stroke in April 2005.



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Ted Baxter

Gestures are non-verbal ways of interacting using signals and hand movements. When words fail to communicate, gestures can help, especially for people with language disorders such as impairments in oral fluency, comprehension, repetition, naming, reading, or writing. According to research, using gestures in speech therapy is more effective than initially believed.

“A great strategy to improve communication with someone with aphasia is using gestures. Gestures don’t require any special equipment or training; they are free and always

available,” explains Baxter.

People with acquired language disorders due to a brain injury, such as a stroke, traumatic brain injury, or brain tumor, frequently struggle to communicate with others. These patients often attempt to express their needs through hand gestures.

[Stroke.org](#) states, “Stroke survivors with aphasia can’t recall keywords and need to use gestures to get the point across. Although many with severe aphasia naturally try to use gestures, others struggle to say words and must be encouraged to use gestures.”

After a stroke or brain injury, working with a speech partner, SLP (Speech Language Pathologist), caregiver, community speech practice groups or a loved one is critical to help rebuild your communication skills. All will need to learn about hand gestures to help improve communication.

Baxter says, “In my situation, I really couldn’t speak that well (no more than 1000, maybe 1500

words the first year). I remember my SLP told me from day one about how the tools of gestures, verbal speech, and writing fit in overall language and communication.”

Among the gestures Baxter used in the hospital, rehab facility, communication groups, and many stroke and aphasia groups were:

- Mimicking common actions – eating, drinking water, making a phone call, driving, and teeth brushing.
- Head nod – helpful when responding to yes or no questions.
- Pointing up/down – helps to identify numbers, dates, and quantities. In addition, pointing up can indicate more or higher, while pointing down can mean less or lower.
- Thumbs up/down - A familiar gesture that can mean good or bad as well as yes or no.
- An extended flat hand – A gesture used to communicate “stop”, which can be used by either the person with aphasia or the communicating partner. It can mean he/she does not understand something that the other person is saying.



Depending on the individual and their country of origin, gestures and physical contact may be used frequently or hardly ever. However, these actions can express a significant amount of information.

“There are four modalities or types of communication that can be improved—Non-Verbal, Verbal, Written, and Visual. When we speak, we communicate much more than just the content of our words. Use the modalities (and practice them) when they are available to you. Remember, you’re trying to improve conveying ideas or themes to the other person each time you’re participating in a good conversation,” concludes Baxter.

Ted Baxter

Ted W. Baxter was born and grew up on Long Island in New York. He received his bachelor of business administration degree in three years at Hofstra University in 1984 where he majored in public accountancy. He took a job working for Price Waterhouse as an auditor and he passed all four parts of the CPA exam on the first shot. He then became a management consultant soon thereafter, focusing on financial industry clients. While he was working as a senior manager, he attended the Executive Masters Business Administration program at Wharton on the weekends, where he got his MBA, concentrating on finance and strategy.

Ted built a financial services consulting practice in Tokyo for Price Waterhouse and rose to

partner in record time. For the next six years (1995–2001), he lived in Tokyo and Hong Kong, traveling almost constantly between ten Asia-Pacific countries, first for Price Waterhouse and then as a Credit Suisse First Boston managing director. He left Credit Suisse First Boston, eventually landing the global finance post as a managing director at a premier hedge fund and investment institution, Citadel Investment Group, based in Chicago.

After spending twenty-two years in the financial industry, he retired as a global finance executive with expertise such in international banks and securities, risk management, financial products, controllership, team-building, change management, strategic planning, and information technology systems.

Ted experienced a massive ischemic stroke in April 2005. Ted is now an advocate, ambassador, author, and speaker for stroke education and prevention, and tools and techniques for aphasia. Ted is the Founder of Speech Recovery Pathways (<https://speechrecoverypathways.org>), formed in November 2020, a nonprofit speech organization, which provides ongoing communication practice to its members, builds confidence, and gets survivors connected. He is also involved at the University of California at Irvine Health and St. Judes' Hospital in Fullerton.

Ted lives in Orange County, California, with his wife, Michelle, and their dog, Zorro.

Aurora DeRose
Boundless Media Inc.
4706611843 ext.
[email us here](#)

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