

Dear Provider

Hearing and understanding are two different things. This is what people mean when they say they “hear” they just do not “understand”. Hearing loss is a loss of “sound”, either in its entirety, or in parts of the hearing spectrum. Sometimes it does not matter if “sound” is restored if the brain does not know what to do with the sound when it hears it. No discrimination results in no identification and thus no “understanding”. This means that the brain does not know if the sound is an “s” or an “h”.

When other cues are available to help you to determine what the sound might be then you have another tool in your toolbox to understand. With speech you can have tools to help you figure out what the sound of speech was trying to tell you by putting together the pieces. Were you familiar with the topic? Are you familiar with the speaker? Are there any related visuals? All of these things can give your brain more information to help it to “understand” the sound input it received. This is all being done at lightning speed so that you can attempt to make an appropriate response in a timely manner. Not much pressure, huh?

Hearing aids are supposed to improve this? That is why they cost the big bucks, right? The answer to this question is purely dependent on each patient and their ability to detect a sound as registered on the audiogram and their ability to interpret speech that is presented at a comfortably audible level as registered in their speech discrimination percentage. 90-100% excellent, 80% good 70 % fair and so on down the line. So if two people have identical audiograms and one has 90% discrimination score and the other has 50% discrimination score hearing aids will bring both to understanding speech equally, right? Wrong even the most advanced hearing aid will not restore understanding to 90% for the latter or even to 100% for the former. Those hearing aids will get the cleanest signal to the brain for it to work with by making it first audible and then cleaning up the signal utilizing directional microphones and frequency shaping to make the speech sounds come through the noise better, but it’s just cleaning the brain is the bottom line.

So why do some people “understand” better than others well it all depends on the damage to their auditory systems and the auditory nerves conduction ability. Different exposures be it intensity of sound or intensity of chemical or drug, can cause different levels of nerve damage.

So when it seems like spending a substantial amount of money to “hear” but still not understand makes little sense remember the brain can only work with what it gets and with a hearing aid we can give it the best signal to work with to help understanding be the best it can be. You owe it to yourself and your family to try to hear the sounds of life.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [info@goodsoundaudiology.com](mailto:info@goodsoundaudiology.com)

**Best Regards,  
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