

# Flip the Script!

## *Helping People Understand You As A Person*

**WHAT AND WHY:** Individuals who use AAC are often treated with less than respect due to a myriad of myths, misunderstandings, and ignorant believers such as:

- a) Generalization of disability (e.g., my Dad was blind so people often interacted with him in ways that showed doubts about his ability to think or communicate);
- b) Reduced expectations (I remember hearing Rich Creech (author, *Reflections from a Unicorn*) first talk about this in about 1979 – the way he spoke about it was so powerful and memorable);
- c) Lack of awareness about who the individual really is, what they care about, and their potential to make a difference.

**WHO IS THIS FOR:** This is for anyone who uses AAC to communicate – and for their family members or therapists.

### **HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN:**

**Introduction Strategy:** This is something that we talked about consistently in the late 70s and early 80s, but I'm not sure it's being followed through on. The introduction strategy is a quick introduction that shares what the individual wants to share with someone new. Students I've worked with have chosen to share about a hobby, an interest, or a pet.



**Use Humor and Shared Interests.** Effective public speakers often use humor to put their audience at ease – including effective speakers who use AAC. A few examples:

- A 20-something at college 'Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. You don't have to be afraid of me <canned laughter>.'
- A 30-something at an AAC event. A well-intentioned nurse was 'talking down' to her while they were making a smoothie. 'Mary' used her eye gaze alphabet to say "How about a little vodka in there?" The nurse instantly relaxed and started sharing jokes, with the patronizing tone long gone.
- A teen who has programmed partner-related questions ("What's your favorite music? / What sport do you like to watch?") followed by a pause then her own answers to those questions.

