OUTLINE

• Communication Predicaments

• Selective Assertiveness

• Writing as Selective Assertiveness
Cross-Cultural Aging Stereotypes

- **NEGATIVE** – Low Vitality
  - Low Competence
  - Poor health
  - Dependence
  - Past-oriented, Little future

- **POSITIVE** – Benevolence
  - Friendliness, Helpfulness
  - Wisdom
Hiding Hearing Impairment Can be Risky for Older Adults

- First impressions
  - more negative of an older person communicating poorly when their hearing impairment not disclosed.

Ryan Anas & Vuckovich, 2007
PATRONIZING COMMUNICATION

FUNCTIONS
OVERLY CONTROLLING
OVERLY NURTURING

LANGUAGE
Overly familiar FORMS OF ADDRESS
SIMPLE VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR
REPETITIONS
TOPIC MANAGEMENT

TONE OF VOICE

NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR
The Communication Predicament of Aging:
Interrupting the Cycle with Selective Assertiveness

- Increase in Stereotypical Behavior/Cues
- Stereotyped Expectations of old age held by Other Person
- Negative Consequences for Old Person
- Passive or Aggressive Reactions by Old Person
- Modified Communication Behavior by Other Person
- Encounters with an Old Person

Selective Assertiveness Responses by Old Person
Tanta Becky

“I dasn’t take dese medicine.”

Illustrates Patronizing Talk and Impact of Low Expectations on performance of the older person
The people who avoid me, who try to help by telling every salesperson that I am visually impaired, and who yell in my ear to make sure that I can hear them – these actions no longer evoke my anger.
The anger has been replaced with an inner smile of new secret knowledge.

I have won the battle within myself, and occasionally I give others something to think about.
| **Who?** | Older woman with a visual impairment |
| **What?** | Denial of request for help with reading |
| **Where?** | Community or Hospital setting |
| **When?** | Moderate or Severe situation |
| **How?** | Assertive or Passive response |
Assertive Advantage as a Function of Setting

**Competence**

- Community: Passive - 3.96, Assertive - 4.87
- Hospital: Passive - 4.09, Assertive - 4.51

**Future Success**

- Community: Passive - 2.98, Assertive - 4.53
- Hospital: Passive - 3.68, Assertive - 4.33
Assertive Advantage as a Function of Situation Seriousness

Competence

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Future Success

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Writing as Selective Assertiveness –

Telling my story my way
Author(ity) of Dementia Writers
Looking Through My Grandmother’s Lace Curtains
I would love to see some people with Alzheimer's not trying to stay in the shadows all the time but to say, damn it, we're people too. And we want to be talked to and respected as if we were honest to God real people.

Henderson, 1998
“We are adjusting our dance steps to the changing melody of dementia, listening to the music within, as well as being encouraged by the supportive music around us.”

Bryden, 2005
Clinical Messages

- Beware Automatic/Patronizing Reactions to Old People -- One word solution – LISTEN!

- Foster Selective Assertiveness by Older Persons

- Support Writing by Older Persons