

Full Sensory Training

*by Stephanie "Teffie" Landmann, COTA/L
PAC Support Mentor, Coach, and Trainer*

My first time at a certification course was a wonderful data overload. At the time I was a traveling Occupational Therapy Assistant. I happened to be in a small town in Texas, somewhere between Houston and Austin. I found myself signing up for a PAC Coach Certification in yet another small town near San Antonio. This should be great, get some training and spend some time seeing the sites. Remember the Alamo? I do, because luckily, I visited before the second day of training started. The drive home after training is lost somewhere in the depths of my brain.

Day 1 started bright and early which is great for me as an early bird. I arrived on time, walked into the training room, and first thing I see is a bunch of people. I'm not the first one there thank goodness. There are other learners sitting at round tables, someone up front at a computer that's attached to a big screen, and other folks moving around busily. I picked two open seats between a guy to my left and an open chair to my right that I'm saving for the lady I meet last night at the hotel dining room.

I met her in line when we were waiting to get seated by the hostess. I turned to her and said, "I'm so excited to be here. Tomorrow I'm going to a training that I think will help me in the line of work that I do." She smiled shyly and said that she was here for a training as well. I smiled brightly and said, "Oh wow! Are you here for the Teepa Snow training?" She relaxed a little more and said, "Why yes, I am." So, I asked her if she would join me for dinner. We talked well into the evening.

Now at our freshly chosen seats the morning of the training, I can see her slowly organizing her stuff on the table getting settled in. I've started a conversation with the guy to my left. He looked like he needed someone to talk to. Turns out he drives a Mini Cooper like I do. We are swapping stories on driving Mini Coopers and fun roads to let loose on. I shared with him about the time I was in a Mini on a race track somewhere in Ohio. For a while he was telling me about a really curvy road in Arkansas when I finally noticed my right shoulder started to hurt and my left butt check was going numb. Oops, I sat down, got lost in conversation, and forgot to put my bag down and I was only half way sitting on the chair.

Okay time to get settled in, set bag down, sit up straight, and then the smell hits me... Coffee. I love coffee. I can drink it all day long, with cream and sugar of course. So, I look around the room spot the coffee pot in the back with a table full of tasty treats. The guy next to me is still talking to me. Shoot. I need to get to the coffee before they start this training day. So, I turn to him and say "Oh! Look coffee and muffins. Do you want me to bring you something?" He asks for a blueberry muffin.

That was my chance. I make a break for it and make for the coffee. Cup check, milk check, sugar check, more sugar check, coffee yes. Ahh. Okay blueberry muffin for him,

um yeah one for me too. Why not it's the kind I like with sugar sprinkled on top. I get back to my seat hand him his plate and settle back into my chair, turn to him and say okay what were you saying before I got coffee? He starts back up with the conversation. I quietly sip my coffee now able to pay attention. Glance at my watch. Wow, I've only been here five minutes. Imagine what happened with my senses the rest of the two days?