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The doctor turns and says, "I'm sorry, but your daughter failed her newborn hearing screen. We would like to retest her in a week." My oldest daughter did not pass her hearing screen as a newborn, only a few hours old. Hearing things that you never thought you would hear is almost an out of body experience. As a brand new mom I didn't know what I was hearing let alone processing the next steps. No one in our family was deaf. We didn't know anyone who was deaf. The road I had planned on going was now under construction and we had to go this road alone with no map.

Parenting within itself is an unknown road, but you can pick up guidebooks for typical children. It's like the fast lane on the highway. When you have a child with special needs you feel like the road is not so fast, breezy, and honestly, not in your control. You do get support, but it's mainly the opinions of experts, specialists, therapists, and teachers. You are told that you are a part of the team and that your opinions and knowledge of your own child counts. However, we felt we had to do things their way and that there was no room for us. Friends made comments - telling us how they would do it if it were them - but offered no real help or support to do it our way. I did not enjoy this path.

During my daughter's first grade year it became clear that my daughter was not doing well in school. She was being bullied for being different. Her education had become less important than the others in her class. We had had enough. We were through having the experts decide our path for us. We had a rough road taking back control and making all the decisions we felt were right for our daughter. Many experts were standing in our path creating roadblocks in every direction. We moved schools, broke up friendships, got new doctors and so much more. I will never look back.

My daughter is now top of her class and has a pack of friends. She has turned everything around. I feel like I found my child again. Recently, we even received an apology from one of the experts and a kudos for our decision. Even they saw that our parental intuition was spot on. This new path has given me confidence and overall happiness. Now, I believe in my intuition and that I can take what the experts say and use it as a guide. I don't need others to make my choices for me or to insist on the best course of action. I attribute taking this new path and carving the way the beginning of being my strongest self.

Advice I can give others is to never discount yourself. Ask questions, put yourself out there, believe in your gut. Similarly, Dolly Parton said, "If you don't like the road you're walking, start paving another one."