**Using AI To Talk Better**

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**ABSTRACT:**

I (Daniel) have Machado-Joseph Disease (MJD), and as my ability to speak and move has declined, communicating my thoughts and feelings has become increasingly difficult. In the past, I relied on people guessing what I wanted to say, which is something that comes naturally in my culture, where understanding is often based on observing body language and context. But as I now need support from people outside my family, this hasn’t always worked.

I work with Damien, my psychologist, to find better ways to communicate. One of the biggest changes has been using structured yes/no questioning, which makes it easier for me to express myself. Before our sessions, Damien speaks with my family members to understand what has been happening in my life. This way, he can ask me direct questions that I can respond to quickly, instead of me having to spell out every word on my alphabet board, which is slow and tiring.

Another big change has been using AI to support my communication. AI helped by identifying the common experiences of people with MJD, which I could then confirm or reject based on my own experience. From my responses, Damien and I put together a message for a family member who was recently diagnosed with MJD. AI then helped turn this into a clear, flowing story, and even a poem, which allowed me to share my feelings and support them in a way I wouldn’t have been able to otherwise.

Since improving my communication, I feel more included, more confident, and more engaged with my family. I’ve been able to share my experiences, offer support to my loved ones, and even reflect on my own emotions in a way that feels natural. It has also helped me avoid feeling trapped in my own thoughts—when I stay engaged with others, I feel better, and I don’t get stuck in unhelpful thinking patterns.

Together, Damien and I want to share this journey—what has worked, what has changed, and how a mix of structured questioning, AI-assisted storytelling, and cultural understanding has helped me continue to connect with the people I love, even as my ability to communicate gets harder.

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