Audio Description: Inclusive. A Microsoft Design Toolkit.

Antoine Hunter, Deaf Advocate, Dance Teacher, Choreographer.

"I am a nea ope se obedi hene, father & dance advocate healer."

ANTOINE: I got one time, I had a really wonderful job offer, and I had to go to rehearsal to practice. The only issue was the door.

Audio Description: Antoine, a tall lean man with a beard, approaches an office building door and pushes numbers on an intercom keypad.

In an interview, he signs.

ANTOINE: I don't know what they're saying. I can't hear them.

Audio Description: Antoine presses his hand over the intercom's speaker.

ANTOINE: So I talked about the problem. They wouldn't hire me because they felt like it was too much energy just to have someone to let me in. So that was big friction. That was a cool job I wanted. That's a barrier sometimes.

Audio Description: Using a smartphone, Antoine and a friend sign to each other.

ANTOINE: I feel like as a kid, we accept each other so easy, and then we are taught not to accept each other. We are taught that we are so different, like, in a bad way, you know?

We are taught that being Deaf is a problem. It's not a problem; it's a different culture.

Audio Description: Antoine returns to his high school.

ANTOINE: At Skyline High School, Ms. James, my dance teacher, she said, "Everyone needs to create a piece, a group dance." I'm an outcast, no one really wants to work with me. I'll do a solo. Okay, do a solo. So I was trying to come up with ideas. I did a solo choreography with Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You." I was dancing, I was nervous, dancing. And you know, in the middle of that song, there's an instrumental break...

(humming notes)

And I didn't have to worry about the words. And I was just moving...

(humming notes)

And something electric just came through my body, moving with me-- the pain, the suffering,

the getting through the things that I was trying to make it from day to day. And then the music finished, and it was like...

(sighs)

And people stopped to look at me, and then it was like, "Oh yeah!" It was so cool. And then my teacher was like, "What do you think of that dance? What did you feel?" And people were saying, "Oh, I felt like you were cold. I felt like you were trapped. You were suffering."

They were saying all the words that I was thinking and feeling. Yeah, that's exactly what I felt.

That was communication! I fell in love right there.

Audio Description: Antoine applauds by lifting both hands and shaking them.

ANTOINE: With music, I use a lot of bars that move for volume.

Audio Description: On stage with musicians, Antoine strikes a graceful pose.

ANTOINE: I just want to see it.

Audio Description: He touches the instruments.

ANTOINE: I see Marcus Shelby, and he's like...

Audio Description: He mimes playing a cello.

ANTOINE: And then I see the piano guy going...

Audio Description: He sways.

ANTOINE: And my body records it and memorizes it really well.

Audio Description: Antoine starts to move.

ANTOINE: I just start putting it all together, creating my own instrument so I can dance with everyone.

Audio Description: Shirtless, Antoine shows his muscular arms and torso as he reaches, dances, turns, and kicks in rhythm.

ANTOINE: And even though I really want to know, "What's that music they're doing?" I'm fine, I'm satisfied because I made mine. I have my voice, I have my music, and I'm with them. And it only happens without my hearing aid. I was able to listen to myself more. Wow! I started hearing my body more.

Audio Description: In a class, Antoine's teenage students move in slow motion, stretching their bodies.

ANTOINE: I've been alone for a long time, and I really don't want people to be alone. That feeling is awful, really.

Audio Description: Antoine teaches a class to teenage girls. The students copy his movements.

ANTOINE: And so I'm always trying to bring people together.

Audio Description: The dancers do slow hip rolls. They stretch their arms and gently wiggle their fingers, then strike poses in a group. As class ends, everyone claps. Antoine signs "thank you"

and bows to his students.

On a playground, a woman gives Antoine a hug. Later, he signs to a young mother as her toddler sits in a stroller.

ANTOINE: I wish they would tell people to take a minute to listen to yourself. Keep going, go for it! Keep fighting, and then you'll discover something that will be awakened and blow up. And you'll be like, "What is that, what was that?" That's your voice, that's your music, that's your spirit!

Audio Description: Antoine steps into an empty theater with rows of red seats. On stage, he stands in front of a white screen, undulating his arms. His long dreadlocks fly as he spins around.

ANTOINE: My biggest dream is hopefully one big opera theater, and international dancers

are coming, and we're learning from them and we're giving role models

to the kids. You know, give one to my daughter. And keep on inspiring each other, keep bringing each other up.

Audio Description: A spotlight casts Antoine's shadow onto the white screen. With a serene smile, he takes a bow.

Titles: This is part of a film series created to build empathy and inspire designers.

Inclusive: A Microsoft Design Toolkit.

A Slanted Light Production.

Microsoft.