

VisionNews

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Dear friends,

It's spring! What a treat to have flowers in bloom.

I enclose the schedule of classes for this term. It would be great to see you either in a workshop or for a private lesson. Please keep in touch.

I would very much appreciate it if you would post or pass on the enclosed Introductory Class flyer and help spread the word that we can all learn to improve our own vision.

Happy seeing!

Elizabeth Abraham

.....
'An important first step is to realize that everyone bears responsibility for the direction his or her life has taken and the adaptive outcomes that have come about. Each life is an individual act of creation, a work of art. Realize that the way a situation is perceived and reacted to is based on a 'choice' that was made. The situation itself is neutral. Beliefs are not. Beliefs have tremendous power. Beliefs do not come out of thin air. They are selected, chosen and accepted...

Keep telling yourself that your problem, visual or otherwise, is a reflection of your attitudes, emotions and behavior - in that order. It did not simply happen by chance or inheritance. A negative approach or passive acceptance of the condition only reinforces the feeling of being a victim and of being vulnerable. Instead, reassure yourself that the condition is due to basic attitudes and beliefs and that these can be changed.

Consciously working to modify one's beliefs can be considered as the ultimate form of human creativity. Tell yourself that the beliefs you want to change are not true, that they are simply beliefs organized by the ego to sustain the feeling of 'self'. If you are not totally at peace with yourself, then be open to switching to new beliefs even as a game...the way you think, feel, act and see are under your control, take responsibility.'

From: *Stress and Vision* by Elliott Forrester, OD

TAKE CARE

In North America we often say 'take care' on parting from a friend. But do we take care of ourselves?

What does taking care of ourselves look like? We all know we need to eat well, get enough rest and exercise. What else do we need?

When I over-schedule my time so that I am out late every night, I start feeling stressed and irritable. That negatively affects my life, and people with whom I come in contact. The activities with which I busy myself are often fun - a class to teach, students to see, a dance class to attend...but I know I need a certain amount of time at home if I want my life to work well. Perhaps, as Forrest says in his quote, it is useful to look at behaviour as a sign post to underlying beliefs. When I don't give myself 'down-time', what does it say about my beliefs: My life is only worthwhile if I am being productive? Other people's needs are more important than mine? If those are my beliefs, could I change them? If I changed my beliefs would my behaviour change?

When you look at your life, what does your behaviour tell you about **your** underlying beliefs? How about letting me know for the next newsletter?

VISION NEWS

This is Issue #30 of Vision News. Thanks to all of you who have contacted me to say how much you enjoy the newsletter. And thanks to those who have contributed by helping with distribution of flyers, with folding, sealing and stamping thousands of envelopes, and by contributing money for stamps, photocopying etc. I really appreciate your support!

On the next page I have included some comments from vision students who have taken the time to keep in touch and let me know how they are doing. Please keep it coming! I love to hear from you, and am sure that your experiences will ring a bell with others and inspire them to continue their practice.

I now have many students who receive this newsletter via email. If you would prefer that medium, please email me your request to:

www.visioned@interlog.com. Thanks.

THANK YOU FOR KEEPING IN TOUCH!

Wendy emailed me with a helpful tip - 'On my way back and forth to work each day, I have noticed that if I choose to sit on the streetcar on a sideways seat (so that you do not have to turn your head to look out of the windows), you can get great exercise for the eyes by panning the houses as you travel along... You get the travelling cars to watch as well as the stationary houses in the background.'

Stefan wrote to tell me that he got a weaker prescription, and noticed that as soon as he started wearing the new glasses, there was less tension in his eyes. 'Although the vision is blurry, I am able to manage with it. I have found that with less tension in my eyes, I am also experiencing less tension in my body. My eyes are certainly grateful for it.'

Irene took classes with me 8 years ago. Recently she wrote: '...the principles of relaxation and acceptance (and removing my glasses at every opportunity) have always stayed with me. Rather than focus on my eyes and work to improve them, I've been working on 'improving' myself this past decade, learning to release judgements and fears bit by bit, deepening my connection to my spirituality. Although my eyesight is not perfect, it has not deteriorated as most people think it's supposed to do at this stage in life. It's encouraging to know that everything is connected and when you strengthen one aspect of your life, emotional, spiritual, physical, then others benefit.'

Jen started wearing glasses in university. She soon switched to contact lenses, but by the end of her twenties, she had become allergic to them and was back in glasses full time. She disliked them intensely, and decided to come to an Introductory class I was teaching to see if there was anything she could do to help herself. After the course, she decided to stop wearing her glasses and to change her life-style. She stopped drinking and social-smoking, stopped drinking coffee, and cleaned up her diet.

She says: 'For the first time in years, my eyes were able to relax...they started improving immediately. For the last several years I have been driving without glasses (even at night), watching TV (even reading subtitles without them) and recognizing friends at a distance from down the street.'

Jen recently went for an eye exam and was told what she already knew - that she could now drive legally without glasses. Her prescription went from -1.25 to -0.25 in her right eye and -2.75 to -1.00 in her left. She says: 'I know that some people have much worse vision than I had, but my experience shows that vision deterioration is not an irreversible process, nor a function of aging.'

SHIFTING THE EYES: GET MOVING!

This was written by my friend and colleague CJ Wilson, and reprinted with permission from our website: www.visioneducators.com. Summer is a great time to start the habit of shifting. We are often more relaxed and willing to experiment with new ways of doing things in the summer - especially on vacation.

Shifting is a wonderful way to get the eyes moving and out of a stuck, staring state. It's a marvellous habit, and one which complements sketching and edging.

Movement and relaxation are key to improving vision. The eyes of people with great vision are always moving in a constant dance, seeing tiny bits of objects in swift, automatic movements. While you can't 'make' the eyes move in this way because it's an unconscious process, you can imitate the process by inviting your eyes to do lots of shifting.

I like to teach shifting in the following sequence:

1. Find some vertical porch posts, the small ones that are many and a few inches apart. Walk along beside them and run a hand/finger gently over the little posts. Don't stop on any, but let your hand just touch them lightly. You could do the same thing with the black keys on a piano, running your fingers across them but not stopping on any key.
2. Let your eyes do what your hand/finger was just doing. Let your eyes dance across the porch posts, just touching lightly on each one, but not stopping to 'grab on' to any of them - as if you are dusting them with a long feather that extends from your nose. Do this over and over. You may feel your eyes start to move, or they may be moving without your sensing the movement. As you practice, you will become aware of your eyes making 'big jumps' and 'tiny jumps'. (The tiny ones are what we are going for.)
3. Now look around you in the world, and find shifters in your house (louvered doors, little windows side by side, patterns in rugs, etc), and outside as you are walking (shingles on roofs, siding on houses, bark on trees...). Ask friends to do some shifting as you watch. You will see their eyes do a quick little dance as they shift across objects.

Let shifting become a new habit along with sketching, lots of blinking and full breathing. Your eyes, and your whole body, will feel more alive and relaxed!