

Seeing is Believing: My Vision Improves

by

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"Nothing can be done for nearsightedness except glasses or contact lenses." I was nineteen, at Moorfields Eye Hospital in London. I loved anatomy and soaked up every word my teacher said. Training to be an orthoptist, I worked with ophthalmologists teaching eye exercises to people whose eyes don't work well together.

At twenty-four I was living at the Integral Yoga Institute in Los Angeles. We did asanas for our eyes. Fellow yogis talked about people who'd done eye exercises and no longer needed glasses. I told them it was impossible and thought that their devotion to yoga was blinding them. I remember their tolerant smiles as they turned their attention to other things.

Two years later I was living in Santa Fe teaching Hatha Yoga classes at night and practicing orthoptics during the day. One afternoon, while looking at a picture of Swami Satchitananda, I realized that the principles behind yoga and orthoptics were in direct opposition to each other. During the day I was telling people to try harder, to push. At night I was saying breathe, relax, and let your body find its own way. I felt confused. I didn't know which was "right". And if one was "right", was the other "wrong"? I looked towards Heaven and asked for help.

Within a week a man walked into my office saying he taught eye exercises. I assumed he must be an orthoptist and asked where he was trained. After a few minutes I discovered he taught the Bates Method of Vision Improvement. He said that not only could he help people coordinate their eyes better - but he could also help them get out of glasses. Of course, I didn't believe him. It was impossible. I had it from an authority.

I had been wearing glasses for nearsightedness since I was fourteen. Helmuth offered to show me how the Bates Method worked. I was skeptical but when he said it was based on relaxation, I became intrigued. It sounded like yoga. My curiosity and wish to be free of glasses persuaded me to explore. I was extremely resistant and questioned everything. My mind raced during our sessions, it was very hard to relax.

The first improvement was with my sensitivity to bright sunlight. I practiced a technique for increasing light tolerance and it worked. I no longer needed dark glasses. It was great, but I still wasn't seeing more clearly.

During one session I was working with the eye chart. I was so relaxed I was practically asleep. There was a small letter up on the board, I think it was an "o". At first, it looked like a smudge, but as I practiced, it started to become legible. Then it began to clear. It wasn't a fluke, I could repeat it. I was amazed, especially when Helmuth told me its size was 20/20.

That was twenty-two years ago. The experience made me question everything I'd learned. I began to integrate the Bates Method techniques into my orthoptic practice. When a boy of nine was able to improve his vision from 20/30 to 20/20 in one month, I was thrilled.

Since then we moved to the Boston area. I received a graduate degree studying vision and psychotherapy and continue to explore any field which may help someone to see better. I haven't worn glasses in years and will always be grateful for the wonderful way in which my prayer was answered.