

Vision News

Newsletter published by The Vision Education Centre 339 Bloor St. W. #212 Toronto M5S 1W7 (416) 599-9202
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Dear friends,

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a forum for all of us who are interested in vision education to share experiences or bring up questions for discussion, and to print or re-print articles and items of interest. I invite you to submit material for the next issue.

Best wishes for healthy, clear vision and for a joyful holiday season.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Abraham

Holistic Vision Conference

As many of you already know, I recently returned from England, where I attended the 11th annual Holistic Vision Conference. There were vision education teachers, optometrists and ophthalmologists from all over the world, and I found the experience inspiring and instructive. Last year the conference was in the Netherlands, where I was the only Canadian, and among one of the few people who were not bi- or trilingual. This year Robert-Michael Kaplan from Vancouver was also a participant, and there were a large number of teachers from England as well as from Europe.

The Conference was organized by a friend of mine, Peter Mansfield, who is principal of The School of Vision Education in England, and secretary of the Bates Association of Great Britain. Peter publishes a fascinating journal called 'Seeing', and is in the process of collecting data on measurable improvement in vision. Thanks to each one of you who has called or sent me information to add to this research. Please keep it coming. It is helpful, if possible, to have a copy of your original prescription and the new one showing the change.

I was delighted to meet two teachers I had heard about for many years - Rosemary Gaddum-Gordon from Boston, and Jerriann Taber from California. Jerriann is president of the Bates Teachers Association of the United States. She presented a half-hour 'Morning Drill' to be done upon waking each morning. I have been doing it faithfully since the Conference and have found it valuable, so I will share it with you.

Morning Drill

Each part of this routine corresponds to one of the fingers, in order to make it easier to remember.

1. *Thumbs:* Stretching - Be aware of your thumbs and stretch your whole body like a cat.
2. *Index fingers* - four parts:
 - a. Love pats - Be aware of the tips of your fingers. Place them on your chin and, with loose wrists, tap up the sides of your face, over your jaw and temples, up to your forehead, and then down behind your ears and back to your chin. Repeat 10 times.
 - b. Breathe, blink and blow bubbles - Roll your head to one side while blinking rapidly and inhaling. Then close your eyes, exhale and imagine blowing bubbles out to the horizon as you roll your head to the other side. Repeat for 5 minutes.
 - c. Brow wagging - Move your eyebrows up and down rapidly for several minutes.
 - d. Chinese acupressure points around the eyes.
3. *Middle fingers:* Nose drawing - Imagine drawing an infinity sign over and over, on the horizon if you're nearsighted and close up if you're farsighted.
4. *Ring fingers:* Swinging - Put your index finger up in front of your eyes. Roll your head from side to side and see your finger moving in the opposite direction. Alternate with closed and open eyes for 5 minutes, breathing deeply.
5. *Little fingers:* Palming.

When finished, get up and do the Long Swing to get you ready for your day with relaxed, moving eyes!

What is Vision Education?

The standard thinking about vision problems is that they are unavoidable and incurable: determined entirely by the inherited physical structure of the eyes.

More than seventy years ago, Dr William Bates demonstrated that this is not the case, and developed methods by which anyone can prove:

- That vision is inherently variable
- That visual problems are symptoms of general strain and distress in the body/mind
- That all the common visual problems can be prevented and improved, and in many cases entirely corrected.

Since Dr Bates' time, many other practitioners have either extended his work or contributed from other directions. Modern Vision Education is a holistic discipline which builds on the firm foundations of the Bates Method, utilising both ancient traditions and modern research.

The aims of the work are:

- Preventing deterioration and promoting improvement of eyesight and healthy functioning of the whole visual system
- Increased comfort in the use of the eyes for all purposes
- Better quality of life through enhanced awareness and appreciation of visual and sensory experience

The work is:

- Educational in nature: the student is in charge of his/her own learning process
- Based on relaxation, stimulation and perception
- Gentle and non-invasive, allowing vision to change from within
- Entirely compatible with other forms of health care, both alternative and orthodox.

'It is as natural for the eye to see as it is for the mind to acquire knowledge, and any effort in either case is not only useless but defeats the end in view.'
W.H.Bates MD

'We receive over 70% of our sensory experiences through our eyes. Most of our physical movements, our emotional responses, our mental performance, and even our deeper spiritual insights, are intimately linked with the successful functioning of our visual system.'

John Selby, author of The Visual Handbook

The Vision Education Centre

After more than 6 years of teaching Vision Education, I have finally registered a business name -**Vision Education Centre**. On Saturday, 18 January from 4 - 6pm, you are invited to an **Open House** at my studio - 339 Bloor Street West #212. You will have an opportunity to socialize with other vision students and enjoy some refreshments, and then we will do some palming and relaxercises together. Please mark your calendars. I look forward to seeing you.

As you know, vision is a complex and fascinating subject. It seems to me that finding and addressing the cause of vision problems is much like doing a jigsaw puzzle. There are many pieces and they all have to be integrated before the whole picture can be seen, but it doesn't really matter where you start the process. In my practice I use a combination of many different approaches:

- Teaching the Bates Method of relaxation and healthy functioning of the visual system,
- Facilitating the release of body/mind tensions with Trager Psychophysical Integration and Mentastics, kinesthetic awareness and movement,
- Guiding the process of Focusing (as discovered by Eugene Gendlin) in order to help shift the underlying emotional causes of visual tension.

I work with individuals and also teach classes and lead support groups. A schedule of classes for the Winter term is enclosed and also a flyer announcing the workshop with Meir Schneider that I am planning for the spring.

This has been a very rewarding year for me. It is a regular occurrence now for me to get letters or phone calls from students telling me of their improved vision. A couple of people have recently passed their driving test without corrective lenses, several have decreased their prescriptions by one or two dioptres or more, and there are even people who no longer need glasses for reading at all. A few weeks ago I got a call from a student in her 80s, who was thrilled because she can now thread a needle without glasses - a task she had not been able to perform for many years. And today, as I was writing this newsletter, a student came to my studio and said: I thought there was nothing to be done for old-age sight, but I've proven myself wrong! I do my exercises every day and I hardly ever need glasses any more.' Congratulations to you all! Calls like this make my day of course, but I am also glad to help during the frustrating times. Please keep in touch.