

VisionNews

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Dear friends,

I hope you have had an enjoyable summer in spite of the unpredictable weather. The unusual amount of rain has meant super, lush greenery at least - a wonderfully soothing colour for the eyes!

Last November some of you attended the Natural Vision Symposium in Virginia Beach, Virginia. This was the first symposium of its kind to be held in North America and it was a stimulating and nourishing time for all who attended. This year, on 16 September, Meir Schneider, Grace Halloran and Tom Quackenbush, all noted Vision teachers, will teach workshops and lead a Forum entitled 'Better Eyesight Naturally'. This will be held at a retreat centre near San Francisco. There is another Symposium in Virginia Beach planned for March 2001. I will let you know the details in the next newsletter. It is exciting to see how the interest in natural vision improvement is growing! There is a lot of research being done and we are learning more and more about how to help people using natural methods.

The schedule for the fall term is enclosed and, as usual, a flyer for the introductory classes. I would very much appreciate it if you would post the flyer or give it to a friend.

My best wishes to you all,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Abraham

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'A holistic approach to better vision begins and ends with the whole being, and deals with eyesight as an integral part of that being, not as an isolated medical phenomenon. From a holistic point of view, the eyes reflect the whole being and that being's relationship with its environment. If we are to genuinely improve our eyesight, we must deal with the over-all well-being of the entire organism as well.'

Lisette Scholl - Visionetics

HARD EYES AND SOFT EYES

In classes I often speak about 'hard' and 'soft' eyes. Sometimes people have difficulty understanding the concept. I came across an excerpt from *Centred Riding*, a book by Sally Swift on horseback riding, which describes it beautifully. I hope this clarifies things as you go through the suggested experiments - even without a horse.

'Let's experiment with your eyes. First, halt your horse. While sitting quietly, focus very intently on one thing, perhaps a letter marker or a certain post or object. Keep looking intently at the object. Concentrate on its exact outlines, its shape, density, color. Take everything in acutely. This is the use of what I call hard eyes.

Now relax your eyes. Let the object be the general center of your gaze, but look at it with your peripheral vision taking in the largest possible expanse, above and below as well as to the left and right. Be aware of the whole wide world. Sit comfortably with open eyes and have the feeling of going within yourself as your eyes encompass everything that comes into your field of vision. Remember that you are still aiming at the central object. This is what I call soft eyes.

What did you see when you looked with hard eyes? Did you see anything besides the object you were looking at? Not if you really focused. What did you see when you were looking with soft eyes? You probably saw at least half the arena even though your general focus was toward one object.....

Your eyes can give you much greater awareness if you allow them.'

The author then suggests that her students walk the horse while experimenting with shifting back and forth between looking with hard and soft eyes. I suggest you do the same while walking. You will probably find that when you look at something ahead of you with soft eyes it is much easier to be aware of your breathing and of your feet on the ground and of any tension in your body. When you look intently with hard eyes, you are probably unaware of your

body as well as the rest of the world around you. As Sally Swift says: ‘Glazing or making your eyes fuzzy is not your objective; that would most likely reduce what you feel in your body.’

She goes on to say: ‘From this experiment it becomes clear that soft eyes are much more than just a way of looking. Using soft eyes is like a philosophy. It is a method of becoming distinctly aware of what is going on around you, beneath you, inside of you. It includes feeling and hearing as well as seeing. You are aware of the whole, not just separate parts. Ponder the implications of this technique, this tool. The two ears of your horse are always in front of you, but so many of the important parts are under and behind you, where you cannot see them.’

This is what I mean when I talk about central and peripheral vision – being aware of what you are looking at in the context of everything around. One of the things that cause computer eyestrain is the tendency to stare with hard eyes at the screen with no awareness of the room around the computer and the person who is doing the staring! Let me know what comes of your experiments.

REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK

Some of you keep in touch regularly, even after you are no longer coming for regular vision lessons. Thank you. It means a lot to me to know how you are doing.

A couple of years ago I requested that you send me copies of your prescriptions as they get weaker and also written reports of your progress. Many of you responded, but I haven’t had much news for a while. This is another such request. New students want to know the experience of those who are engaged in the work, and I am trying to be more diligent about collecting stories. The last newsletter, for instance, had a long list of suggestions of things to experiment with. Any interesting results?

Maybe your vision has not yet improved on the eye chart, but if you notice **any** change since you engaged on your journey of vision improvement I’d love to hear about it. Perhaps you feel more relaxed, your eyes no longer burn, your family reports that you are easier to live with, you no longer have headaches, your ability to concentrate has improved, you are more aware of your body, you breathe more deeply, you don’t take yourself so seriously, you have more fun, you try new things, you are wearing your glasses less often.... Please send me a note or an email and tell me all about it.

NEW CLASSES AND WORKSHOP

Those who prefer to take group classes instead of private lessons begin the process by taking an introductory class. After that, they take the series of 8 **Relax & See** classes or **The Art of Seeing Clearly** weekend workshop. They then continue with private lessons as necessary.

A number of students have told me that they would like to continue to work in a group after they have completed the 8 classes or the workshop, so I have decided to add new classes.

Relax & See and **The Art of Seeing Clearly** will now be taught in two levels.

Level One will continue to be an exploration of the principles of the Bates Method and the many techniques he developed to encourage healthy functioning of the visual system. Since this is a holistic course, we also learn to let go of tension in the whole body and discuss nutrition and other related issues.

Level Two will go into more depth. After practising the techniques there are always questions and a need for further study. Which activities are best suited to me? Am I doing them correctly? Why doesn’t the method seem to be working for me? How can I motivate myself to integrate it into my life? Why do I get irritated when I do certain techniques and relaxed with others? What should my next step be?

If you are interested in experiencing a deeper understanding of your vision and how to improve it, see the enclosed schedule for dates and times.

WEBSITES ON VISION IMPROVEMENT

I am new to ‘the web’, so I am only familiar with a few sites on Natural Vision Improvement. If you know of others that give interesting information, please let me know and I will publish them in the next newsletter.

www.visioneducators.com

www.seeing.org

www.fitfun.com/eyes.html

www.holisticonline.com/yoga/hol_yoga_pos_eyeex.htm

www.oldeyes.com/mbronly/oldeyes.htm

JUICY TIDBIT

The actor Kirk Douglas attests to the success of vision improvement in his autobiography: *The Ragman’s Son*. He describes how he failed the eye test for entry into the Navy during the war, then says: ‘I bought a book called *Sight Without Glasses*. I read it and did the exercises for a month. Then I passed the eye examination and joined the Navy.’