

Vision News

Newsletter published by **The Vision Education Centre** 339 Bloor St. W. #212 Toronto M5S 1W7 (416) 599-9202
Issue #3 May 1997

Dear friends,

At last Spring is happening! What joy to see the leaves and flowers appearing, to go out without boots, to smell the earth and feel the warmth of the sun. Each year in February and March I begin to wonder whether it will ever come. Then, when it does, it seems that the wait was well worthwhile.

My major project this year has been to organize Meir Schneider's workshop. It was a great success and was definitely worth all the work. There are a number of people who are asking about professional training with Meir. I am considering holding another weekend workshop next year and setting a date for Part 1 of the professional training. I would appreciate feedback from those of you who attended this year in order to help me in the planning for next year. I am enclosing a questionnaire with this mailing.

By the way, there was a lilac sweater, a stripped towel and a beige and brown duffle bag full of goodies left at the McGill Club. I have them in my office. Please give me a call and come to claim them.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Abraham

.....
'The brain is not passive in the seeing process. It is actively seeking particular types of information, depending on the emotional mood, physical imperatives, and mental expectancies. Depending on the immediate interest of the person, the mind processes visual information in different ways, taking the basic images received from the retinas, and integrating this immediate information with the vast computer-bank of past visual information, in order to make meaning out of the perception. What we actually experience as seeing is the end result of a highly complex process of perception.'
John Selby from *The Visual Handbook*.

SUPPORT

Those of you who have been taking classes with me recently know how keen I am on the idea of support for the eyes. As John Selby says in the quote I have cited, vision is a complex process. We need all the help we can get when it is no longer functioning in a relaxed, healthy way.

As we know, 90% of vision happens in the mind. But when we are stressed, our minds are usually distracted with worries and anxieties and cannot be present to interpret the images. This is why I place so much importance on 'mindfulness' - on being aware of what we are doing as we are doing it. No easy task. This alone can take a lifetime! But the good news is that each time we are aware of what we are doing and how we are doing it instead of functioning on automatic, our mind can come to meet our eyes and give them support.

The same thing applies to awareness of our body as a whole. As Meir said in the workshop, if our ankles are inflexible it effects our knees, if our knees are tight it effects our hips, and our back, and shoulders, and neck, and ultimately of course, our eyes. As crazy as it might sound, working on your ankles helps your eyes. When we are stressed, we tend to separate our body and mind. We push ourselves to work much longer than is comfortable without a rest. We decide that we just **have to** finish that project, and even though our eyes are red and sore, we make them continue. We need to get back in touch with our body if we are to recover our lost functions. So any time you have a massage or do some exercise which gives you a feeling of the connectedness of your whole body, you are supporting your eyes.

For me, the easiest way to get in touch with myself and to stay present, is to remember my breath. When I am tense I hold my breath. If I can remember to be aware of my breath for a minute or two when I'm sitting at the computer, listening to a client, reading a book, hurrying to an appointment, I come back into my body and my eyes can let go. They know I am there to support them. And it really is surprising how quickly a minute or two multiplies. Of course, I keep catching

myself holding my breath, not blinking, pushing myself instead of stopping to rest, but it feels **so** good when I remember again. Just like a breath of spring air.

As well as learning to support ourselves, we need to learn to support each other. When I started to improve my vision in 1989 I was the only person I knew who was even interested in the subject. Even though my family and friends loved me dearly, they really had no interest in hearing about the anxiety and frustration I was going through without my lenses, and no understanding of the excitement I felt when I realized that I was slowly but surely learning to change the way I used my eyes. It was a wonderful feeling when I started working with Meir Schneider, but when I came back from San Francisco I was again alone.

For this reason, when I started teaching, I soon began a support group for my students. This is an ongoing group for people who are working on their own and feel that they would benefit from the support of other like-minded individuals. It is not meant to be a class for teaching new material, but I am there to make suggestions, facilitate discussions and to lead the group in whatever direction is needed. The dates for the classes are included in this newsletter.

The other thing I can suggest is that you get together in small groups and use Meir's book **The Handbook of Self-Healing** as a guide, and also that you work with his tapes. (You can get the book from your local bookstore - it is published by Penguin Books - and you can order the tapes from: The Center for Self-Healing, 1718 Taraval Street, San Francisco California USA 94116.

I now have a mailing list of over 800 students. I could run this off by postal code in order to help you locate people in your area who might be interested in forming a support group. Please call me if this suggestion interests you.

The first support group I had consisted of one other person. We used to meet every Sunday evening to palm together and we often went on Vision Walks without our glasses. Meir speaks in his book of his own support group with whom he met weekly. They would spend a whole day together each week massaging each other, doing exercises, going for walks and discussing their concerns. Sound good?

Students often come for private vision lessons and for bodywork session with me as well as taking classes. This is an option you might want to explore. Please let me know if there's any way I can help you in your process of Self-Healing.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES

1-Day Workshop on Sunday 1 June. If you have taken an introductory class and would like to learn more about how to improve your vision you might want to consider taking this workshop. It will be from 10am - 6pm at 339 Bloor St W. #212. Bring a lunch and if the weather permits, we'll eat outside. The cost of the workshop is \$75. Please call to reserve your place.

Support Group Vision Retreat Weekend from Friday 13 June - Sunday 15 June. This will be the third year for the retreat weekend. It will be held at Novalis (formerly Prem Anandham) Retreat Centre near Beaverton. The cost is \$200 inclusive. A deposit of \$100 will secure your place.

Vision Walk on the Island on Saturday 28 June.

This is a traditional get together for anyone who's interested. We meet at the Ferry Docks at the foot of Bay Street at 10am (rain or shine), take the ferry to Hanlan's Point, walk (along the beach wherever possible) to Ward's Island, have lunch at the Rectory Cafe and take the ferry back from Ward's Island dock. We get to stretch our vision with long, beautiful views of the horizon, exercise our bodies, chat and share news and concerns, and eat delicious food. If you'd like to come, just meet us there.

Introductory Vision Education Classes and the series of 8 Relax and See Classes will start again in the middle of September. The mailing in August will include a flyer announcing the dates.

Vision Support Group. This series will continue on Saturday afternoons from 4 - 6pm on 17 and 31 May and 7 June. **Please note: There will be no support group meeting on 24 May.** The cost is \$10 per class. After this series, classes will resume in September.

HELP WANTED

I would like to use this Newsletter as a vehicle for you to share information about your vision with other students. If you are interested in this, please keep me informed so that I can include your stories, anecdotes, triumphs, frustrations and queries.

Request number two: please let me know if you are moving or if you no longer wish to be on the mailing list. Every time I send out a mailing I get envelopes back because people have moved. Help! Thanks!