

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,

I am very glad to report that interest in Vision Education continues to grow. I have been invited to teach at several organizations this fall and expect that this trend will continue. As people spend more and more time in front of computer terminals they notice increased eye strain and loss of clear vision. With some understanding of how to take care of their eyes and the introduction of simple techniques, the difficulty can often be alleviated or prevented. If you have a Wellness programme at work and think your company might be interested in having me come to speak, please give the appropriate person my number.

The Introductory classes, Relax and See and Vision Support classes begin again in the New Year. Please consult the enclosed schedule and call me to register for classes you wish to attend.

I would appreciate it if you would pass on the enclosed flyers or post them in your neighbourhood. I count on you to spread the word. Thanks.

Best wishes for a joyful holiday season.

Love,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Abraham

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'The Bates method is valuable in every kind of visual disorder because it is based on restoring or ensuring the natural function of the eyes. Since it brings a unique insight to the relationship between eyes, brain and body, it also does good work in a range of conditions - physical, psychological and emotional - that might not normally be thought of as primarily visual in nature. Because it involves a particular understanding of learning processes, its principles make an important contribution to resolving all kinds of learning difficulty; for example, my first experience in the method, beyond the improvement of my own sight, was to create a dramatically different and vastly more effective approach to music teaching.

Peter Mansfield: *The Bates Method*

LEARNING TO SEE: A WEEKEND WORKSHOP WITH PETER MANSFIELD

I have been working with Peter Mansfield for over 3 years and find his approach extremely valuable. Since I encourage my students to experience other teachers whenever possible, I am bringing Peter to Toronto for a weekend workshop. I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity. If you are new to Vision Education this will serve as an excellent introduction, and even if you have been working with me for a while I am sure you will still benefit. Peter's specialty is in helping people get their eyes to work together, so if you have difficulty in this area, the workshop will be especially valuable for you.

I enclose a flyer with this newsletter giving you all the details. Please reserve the date in your calendar if you are interested and send in your deposit as soon as possible because space is limited.

Peter Mansfield trained as a musician and taught music for a number of years. Becoming increasingly interested in general problems of co-ordination and learning, he discovered first the Alexander technique and then the Bates Method, eventually training as a teacher of both. He is the founding organizer and current secretary of the Bates Association of Great Britain, and also the principal of the School of Vision Education in London, England. He has taught the Bates method for over 10 years and works individually with clients from all over the world as well as training teachers, lecturing and writing. His book, *The Bates Method* is widely acknowledged as being one of the most authoritative and readable modern works on the subject.

Several of you have asked me about training to be Vision Education teachers. There is a great need for this work and a real shortage of teachers in Canada. Vision Education can be readily combined with other holistic health practices as well as being taught on its own. Peter and I are planning to start a teacher training course in 1999. If you are interested in more information or know someone else who might be, please give me a call.

NEW - CLASSES IN 'FOCUSING' AT THE VISION EDUCATION CENTRE

'Focusing' was developed by Eugene Gendlin in the 1960's at the University of Chicago. During a research project he was running with Carl Rogers, he came to appreciate that the body has its own intelligence and responds well when its messages are heard. All too often, we have not been listened to as children and so have not learned to listen to ourselves. Gendlin developed Focusing as a means of helping people get in touch with what the body knows about a particular issue, and learning to listen to it.

Focusing can be used as an adjunct to therapy, to help release addictions and action blocks, in decision-making, and to help people clarify what they feel and what they want in their lives. It has been an invaluable part of my own work on my vision over the last few years, and I find it very helpful in my Vision Education practice.

Vision students often have difficulty in feeling a connection with their eyes. They feel the tension around them readily enough, but do not really understand that the pain and discomfort are messages from the eyes. Since many of us have spent years trying to tune out the messages of the body, learning to listen to our eyes takes special skill and training.

I plan to teach a four-week course in the spring to introduce you to Focusing. In this course you will learn to listen to each other and also to the messages from your own body in this very valuable way. Focusing, by the way, will not only help you with your vision, but with how you relate to others in the world around you. It is a wonderful communication tool.

If you are interested in the Focusing course please call early to register as the class will be limited to 8 people. (The details are in the enclosed schedule). If you want to come in for an individual Focusing session on the issue of your vision or on any other aspect of your life, just give me a call to set up an appointment.

SYMPATHETIC OPTOMETRISTS

In the last newsletter I gave you Paula Garshowitz' phone number as an optometrist who is sympathetic to Vision Education and who will give you a reduced prescription. Dana Blakolmer O.D. is in the same category. She is at 117 King Street East in Oshawa. Her number is 905-434-3600 x283.

I have had several students ask me if I know of a sympathetic ophthalmologist. Unfortunately, I do not. If any of you has an ophthalmologist you feel is supportive to natural alternatives, please call and give me their name. Thank you.

INTEGRATION AND BALANCE

Here is an excerpt from Peter Mansfield's book *The Bates Method*, which I hope you will find interesting and useful.

'Total or partial suppression of one or other eye, or big differences in acuity (anisometropia), suggest that, while the eyes may be individually fine, there is some misunderstanding between them and the brain. How is this to be overcome?

Working with separate eyes is helpful in any condition, provided relaxation is maintained. Here relaxation is vital. The basic strategy is to use the hands in a simple coordination task, eg colouring, catching a ball, as a way of 'accessing' the two hemispheres of the brain, singly, in rapid alternation, or together. If the eyes are also used separately and together this gives 12 modes (see illustration). I must emphasise that both eyes are used equally and the total amount of time spent on one-eye work is quite small. This is much more helpful than the common practice of constantly covering the 'good' eye.

Working through the task in these permutations will show up any 'challenges', as inability, mental or physical discomfort, or excessive effort. The aim is to encourage free flow of energy so that the activity can be equally easy and relaxed in any mode. When this is the case it can be assumed that the relationship between each of the eyes and both of the brain hemispheres (and, accordingly, each other) is improved....

In order to work with the eyes separately some means must be used to patch or occlude. Rather than cover the eye completely with a 'pirate patch', I prefer an open-sided shade that obstructs forward vision but maintains the peripheral vision. This can be done either with sunglasses which has had one lens removed and the other blackened out, or with the back of the hand (not the palm). The glasses are useful when the hands are required, as in ball games, but the back of the hand is favoured when swinging, or perhaps in drawing and colouring.'