

# A Different Way of Seeing.

Learning to let go of tension in our eyes and mind.

*By Esther Joy van der Werf*

During my most stressful year in business college my eyes became nearsighted. I was supposed to wear glasses, but I didn't particularly like them and couldn't get used to that crutch leaning heavily on my nose. It seemed much easier to leave the glasses off and live with the blur. For the next 16 years I got used to that blurry world and more or less forgot what it was like to see with perfect clarity.

At some point in those years I read that eye exercises can improve vision. Always the optimist, I was curious enough to give it a try. But looking at beads on a string and repeatedly letting my eyes go from near to far and back was not something that held my attention for long. It was boring. I got frustrated, so I gave up, without seeing any results.

You'll completely understand my skepticism when I came across another method that claimed to naturally improve vision. This one, however, said it did not involve exercises. Hmm, my curiosity rose above my skepticism. It didn't involve drugs or surgery, so it couldn't hurt to try. Even if my vision did not improve, it might help me avoid worse vision along with the corresponding future need for glasses. I began using this method without any real hope that my vision would improve. My only aim was to learn enough about eye-care so I could avoid vision deterioration.

To my delight, this method taught me how to use my eyes effortlessly *all day long*, while doing whatever I wanted to do. It turned out to be a simple choice, between my habitual *straining to see* and this new way of *relaxing to see*. I could make that choice at every moment, regardless of what I was using my eyes for, and thereby change my way of seeing.

Imagine my surprise when I looked at an eye-chart two weeks after I started incorporating relaxed vision habits. My 20/50 blurriness had improved to a very nice 20/20 clarity!

I was happy, and at the same time even more curious. Would this also work for people with worse vision?

I recruited a friend who wore glasses all day long and who could not even see the eye-chart from twenty feet away, never mind read the big top letter without glasses. After a month of using relaxed vision habits his vision acuity increased to 20/50, which is only one line away from passing the driver's test without glasses. I was convinced.

Since then, others have experienced a similar ease in improving vision:

*"It is unbelievable, but my vision is improving daily. I have been going without my contact lenses for nearly three weeks now, with incredible results. The odd thing is that I didn't do anything for it, other than looking around in a relaxed way."*

*Marc L, The Netherlands*

I began studying eyesight in earnest. I read the various theories about the cause of blurry vision, and I learned how simple it is to reduce the blur, regardless of theories that say it is impossible to do.

At first I focused on the physical part of vision, because the muscles around the eyes need to relax for clarity to return. However, I later realized that the mind is very much 'attached' to those muscles. It turns out that our physical vision often parallels our outlook on life.

Do you see the big picture but prefer to delegate the little details? Chances are you are farsighted. Are you an accountant who loves going over numbers all day but you have some challenges in relationships? The odds are for nearsightedness.

Our eyesight reveals a great deal about our internal state. Dr. William H. Bates (an eye-surgeon from New York who pioneered natural methods of improving vision) said that sight is largely mental. Our thoughts, beliefs and feelings influence how we see.

It follows that learning to release strain from our visual system is going to affect more than just our eyesight.

*"The eyesight is getting better. But even more important, the calming effect that relaxing the eyes has created is the true blessing."*

*Ray F, Culver City, CA*

We have a tendency to fight the blur when it first begins; we typically squint for temporary improvement, until squinting no longer suffices. Then we hide the blur with compensating lenses, and learn to accept that we may be on a downhill slide of worsening vision. After all, that's the norm in our society.

It doesn't need to be that way. Instead of squinting, you can choose to stop fighting the blur. You can take the lenses off and begin to notice what message the blur is trying to give you.

Simple practices, such as regular blinking, curiosity for detail, and letting our eyes be free to follow our attention, can help release eye strain as well as mental strain. When that strain is released, everything in life seems to get easier.

*"Actually this month is extremely busy with so many projects on my plate. However I am grateful that I am now learning the vision improvement at precisely the right time as it helps me to learn how to relax better not only for my eyes but also to cope with so many projects without feeling stressed out. In other words, it is helping me to survive this month well :)"*

*May W, Scottsdale, AZ*