Hadley

The Secret was Killing Me

Presented by Douglas Walker

**Douglas:** Hello, and welcome to the Insights and Sound Bites podcast, where people facing vision loss share insights about what has helped them cope and adjust.

**Angela Delgado:** So, the secret was killing me. The secret was putting me in dangerous situations.

**Douglas:** My name is Douglas Walker. Let’s face it, we all want to fit in. Even if fitting in, means hiding pieces of ourselves. Today we’ll hear from Angela. Angela shares with us the moment she knew that hiding was no longer an option.

**Angela Delgado:** Hello, my name is Angela Delgado. I live in New York City.

I worked in the hospital for a long time and I was always on the computer a lot and I noticed that I started to see floaters in my eyes and overall I just realized that my side views was going and when I went to the doctor, they told me that I have symptoms of glaucoma and I'm like, "Glaucoma? What is that?" I heard of it, but I just didn't know anybody that had that.

They said eventually you're going to wind up losing your vision more and more over time. And they said that there's no cure for glaucoma. And I'm like, "What do you mean there's no cure? You can't fix this? I want this fixed now."

Overall, I started to lose most of the vision in the right eye. So I'm using the left eye. So I'm off balance when I'm walking because I have no peripheral. They told me, "Oh, well you should sign up for Commission for the Blind. I said, "Commission for the Blind?" I said, "What are you saying? I am not like those people. My situation is different."

They gave me the cane. I had the mobility training, the rehab, and it came out to where I live. I can't legally drive anymore, so they declared me legally blind and visually impaired. I had the cane inside my rain boots in the closet.

I was like, "Well, I still got a little bit of vision left, so I'm going to use what I got. I don't want people to know my business." I said, "Because it's my secret." So, the secret was killing me. The secret was putting me in dangerous situations. I fell so many times, I bumped my head so many times. I was taking the train and buses and people was coming left, right, all different directions in the city. And I was like, "Oh, excuse me." They said, "Watch out lady." They said, "What's wrong with you?

My daughter came by to see me, She said, "Mommy, why you don't usually take your cane with you?" And when she said that, it was a light bulb went off in my head. And here I am, it's not like I don't have a cane.

Because we was going to the mall, and I remember the last time we went to the mall, I ran into a pole and I had a big old knot on my head. I almost split my head open. And I was afraid of that, but I didn't say anything. I just wanted to make them happy.

I have a brand new cane that's in the closet in my rain boots. And I haven't even been wearing the rain boots because the cane was in it, so I felt like it was contaminated with the cane. She said, "This would help you so much." And all I could do is, and then I started crying. I started crying because... I'm crying now, but I started crying because it made me realize that the only person that was embarrassed of my vision loss was me. And I didn't want to burden nobody else. And they was more worried about me not using the cane, and I didn't know that.

And I thought that they didn't want to be around me or when they was around me, I wanted to be like them. I wanted to go and act like I could still see is good.

But when we went to the mall, I had the cane out and it just fit me. The cane was moving without me. Put it that way. It was guiding me without my permission, if that makes any sense.

Everything just happened so naturally. That was the best thing I ever did.

**Douglas**: I’d love to hear your story. If you’d like to share, you can leave me a voicemail by calling, 847-512-4867. Or, you can email me a recording to podcast@HadleyHelps.org. Again, my name is Douglas Walker. Take care and I’ll see you next time.