Hadley

Vision Loss Bloopers Continued

Presented by Ricky Enger

**Ricky Enger:** Welcome to Hadley Presents. I'm your host, Ricky Enger, inviting you to sit back, relax, and enjoy a conversation with the experts. In this episode, Hadley's Doug Walker joins us as Hadley members share the funnier side of vision loss. Welcome to the show, Doug.

**Douglas Walker:** Thank you so much, Ricky. It's great to be here.

**Ricky Enger:** It is awesome to have you back.

Before we get into our bloopers for today, if you’re listening to this show, you probably already understand just what a difference Hadley makes in people’s lives. And everything we do is offered free of charge. We’re able to do that because people like you have financially supported our work in the past.

Please consider supporting us today so that we can continue to offer older adults adjusting to vision loss the practical and social and emotional that they deserve.

If you’d like to donate, please visit [hadleyhelps.org/donate](http://hadleyhelps.org/donate) or call 847-784-2825, thank you!

And now, let’s talk bloopers, shall we? And I think this is volume 3 or volume 4, something like that. It turns out that there are lots of funny things that happen to people, and we're so thankful that people chose to share those things with us. And, hey, if you're new and you're listening to this and you're like, "Oh, these were funny. I want to go back and find the others," we will definitely have those in the show notes. But, Doug, surely you've never had a blooper before, ever?

**Douglas Walker:** I think I could fill up a whole show just on my own bloopers, Ricky. So most of it is good, I guess. So, yeah, just a couple. I'll probably be sharing a couple today.

**Ricky Enger:** Just a couple. A couple that you're willing to share, anyway.

**Douglas Walker:** There's a few that... Off-air, maybe.

**Ricky Enger:** Right, yeah. Or a few that are just too embarrassing, even for a nice, safe space like this.

**Douglas Walker:** Yes. Absolutely.

**Ricky Enger:** Well, thanks to Ed Haines, who was gracious enough to read the written bloopers that came in from our members. We really appreciate that. I can't wait to see what everyone is sharing, and maybe I'll share one or two myself and encourage Doug to do the same. So why don't we get started then? We are first going to hear from Rick.

**Ed Haines:** From Rick. Well, I have to share this blooper with you. A few years ago I was at my dentist office getting a checkup. I needed a filling, so he gave me the injection to freeze the area, and he said he'd be back in a few minutes. So I decided to use the time to visit the bathroom. I knew very well how to get there without assistance, so off I went. Coming back I entered what I thought was the room I'd been in. I carefully walked to the chair, turned around and started to sit down, at which time I sat upon the lady that was already in that chair.

Seems I missed my room completely. The dentist who was in the room at the time but had his back to us didn't see me in time, but he directed me back to my room, and I could hear him explaining to the lady that I was visually impaired. I think she figured that one out. The lady was a good sport and commented that I could at least have bought her dinner first. I've been more careful since that time.

**Douglas Walker:** That is so great.

**Ricky Enger:** Have you ever done this or almost done this?

**Douglas Walker:** I have come close. I've actually sat on more things, I guess, than people. Yeah. One time a plate of food was on a chair.

**Ricky Enger:** Oops.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. Like at a picnic or something. So I did that, but never on a person. How about you?

**Ricky Enger:** Almost, but not quite. And like you, I've almost sat on things as well. At my doctor's waiting room, between some of the chairs, there's this really low table and I've almost sat on it several times. And what I think is so funny is, for me anyway, nobody's telling me I should buy them dinner. They kind of get speechless, but they just make these sounds. Like if I'm about to sit on something, it's like, "Oh, oh, oh. Ah, ah, ah. No, no. Ah."

**Douglas Walker:** That's funny. That's sort of like our cats. We have three cats, and they know that when I come to sit down, they had better move, so they scurry out of the chair real fast. So, yeah. That's a great email.

**Ricky Enger:** Yes. Thank you, Rick, for sharing that one. Up next, we are going to hear from Dale.

**Ed Haines:** From Dale. Our school district administrative team and spouses went out to dinner. It was a very fancy restaurant, which means there was really little lighting. After I'd taken a few bites, I decided I better ask my wife if there was anything on my plate that maybe I don't want to eat. She responded, "Well, the flowers are gone." The waitress assured us there was nothing to worry about. "Those flowers are edible," she said.

**Douglas Walker:** Well, at least he didn't eat that centerpiece.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. At least it was on the plate.

**Douglas Walker:** I've probably done that one before. Not the centerpiece, but the garnish on the plate.

**Ricky Enger:** And would Kim just watch you and let you do it, or would she speak up and say something?

**Douglas Walker:** She would tell me if she saw that I was going to do that. Well, you never know. I mean, yeah, it just depends on what kind of mood she's in.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. How much trouble you're in.

**Douglas Walker:** Hopefully I would be told. That's it. That's it.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. I have not done that, but what I have done is, in some places, there are salads, and for whatever reason they will not cut things up. So I've had so many rings of onion just hanging off my nose for a second.

**Douglas Walker:** It's usually the onions.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. I don't know why they can't... Come on, chop the salad, or why I don't learn. I should really figure out what's going on here before I spear something with a fork.

**Douglas Walker:** Absolutely.

**Ricky Enger:** I had to reach out to our access technology specialist, Lisa Salinger, because she had told a story before, and I felt like it fit so perfectly here. And so I said, "Will you record this? Because it's really so good."

**Douglas Walker:** Okay.

**Ricky Enger:** So she did, and here it is.

**Douglas Walker:** Great.

**Lisa Salinger:** I'll never forget the first time I visited a Japanese restaurant. I decided I wanted an appetizer, so I ordered these little dumplings, and they came on a nice little plate with a blob of something that seemed vegetable-like. I later found out it was ginger. There was a little bowl for soy sauce, and then there was a little ball of spread. I have no sense of smell, so I couldn't figure it out that way, but I touched it, and it kind of felt like cream cheese.

Well, I never met any spread I didn't like, and so, foolishly, the small size did not raise any warning flags in my head. And so I popped the whole thing in my mouth. At that point, my sinuses underwent an amazing transformation. I thought they were on fire. I thought I was dying. My ears even burned. Like the insides of my ears burned, and that is how I got introduced to a substance I hope to never encounter again. That was my meeting with wasabi.

**Douglas Walker:** Wow.

**Ricky Enger:** I sympathize and laugh at the same time, and I really like wasabi, but I mean, eating that whole bowl of wasabi, I think that's how you transform into a dragon.

**Douglas Walker:** I just can't imagine her tasting anything else after that-

**Ricky Enger:** Ever.

**Douglas Walker:** ... to eat anything else after that, and still drinking water at this minute. Oh, my goodness. No, I do like banana peppers, and occasionally in a salad I'll mistake a jalapeno for banana pepper and do that, but that's nothing like the wasabi to me.

**Ricky Enger:** And I like really, really spicy stuff, and I'm still cringing, like, "Oh."

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, yeah.

**Ricky Enger:** So I think there's a lot that happens around food. There are a lot that we didn't share only because they are such a common theme that it just feels like, "Oh, everyone's done this at least once." And if you haven't, your time is coming. But pouring the wrong thing in your coffee cup, like, "Oh, I put pepper in there, or orange juice, or whatever in the coffee." So a lot of things go wrong around food for whatever reason. Up next is really no exception, I guess. We're going to hear from Linda.

**Ed Haines:** From Linda. I have retinitis pigmentosa. My vision is very blurry. We were on a cruise to Alaska, and we were going to the buffet for lunch. We finished lunch, and I was standing outside the cafeteria waiting for my husband. My husband is bald, so a bald man walked out of that cafeteria, and I grabbed his arm and I said, "That was a really good lunch." He said, "Yes, it was, but who are you?" We all got a really good laugh out of it.

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, that is great.

**Ricky Enger:** Have you done this one before?

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, yes, and I'll talk about this later on, but used to work at the Tennessee School for the Blind, and my wife was actually the principal in the school. And there was a teacher that looked exactly like my wife, to me, with low vision, right?

**Ricky Enger:** Right, right.

**Douglas Walker:** So this teacher, when she was coming down the hall, before she would get to me, she'd say, "I'm not your wife." So she was like an announcement. Don't say anything you'll regret kind of thing. So, how about you?

**Ricky Enger:** I've not really done that so much except for one incident that I'll talk about a little later. I guess because I don't have any vision, I'm waiting for the person to speak before I say anything. So it's not that I'm just that much more clever. I have different problems.

**Douglas Walker:** Get that auditory cue before you start.

**Ricky Enger:** That's it.

**Douglas Walker:** There you go.

**Ricky Enger:** So have you had any other lunch-related difficulties?

**Douglas Walker:** Well, on the theme of eating and food and all that. I mentioned earlier that I used to teach elementary school at the Tennessee School for the Blind, and I would bring my lunch with me every day, sort of like a little brown bag lunch. My wife used to pack my lunch for me. That was very sweet, right? But anyway, I took my lunch, and I would put it in the refrigerator in the teacher's lounge. Well, it was going to be lunchtime, so I went down and got my lunch and brought it back to my classroom to eat. So I sat down, I started eating it, and I thought, "This is kind of different." She put this little package of tiny pickles in there, and there was some chocolate pudding in it, and I think there was also a ham and cheese sandwich. But anyway, it's just a little bit different than what she usually packed, but it was really good.

Anyway, I had totally forgotten about it after lunch, but the next morning I was putting my bagged lunch in the fridge in the teacher's lounge again, and I overheard one of the other teachers saying, "Can you believe that somebody stole my lunch yesterday?" And I was thinking to myself, "What kind of person would do that? Take someone else's lunch like that?" Then I heard her saying, "Yeah, I had these little pickles in there and some chocolate pudding." And I thought, "Oh, no." So I snatched open the door to the fridge and checked, and sure enough, there was my real lunch from yesterday, had all the stuff that I would typically find in my lunch bag. Gosh, I was so embarrassed. I did confess, Ricky, you'll be proud of me.

**Ricky Enger:** Okay, that's good.

**Douglas Walker:** Told her I'd eaten her lunch.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. I thought you might've just shrugged and walked away.

**Douglas Walker:** No, no. Everybody got a big laugh out of it, and for weeks I heard, "Watch out. Don't let Doug steal your food." I didn't hear the end of that for a while.

**Ricky Enger:** I imagine not. But, hey, you probably got some good ideas for future lunches. Throw some of those in your shopping cart. Absolutely.

**Douglas Walker:** That's right.

**Ricky Enger:** And speaking of shopping carts, we have a story from Linda. It's another story from Linda. Thanks, Linda for sharing two of them.

**Ed Haines:** From Linda. Another time we were grocery shopping. I always pick out my produce and put it in the cart and my husband had gone to get something else. So I grabbed my produce, turned around to put it in the cart, and said to him, "Why is this in my cart? I didn't get this." And the man who owned the cart said to me, "This isn't your cart." At this point my husband came back and said, "Honey, I'm over here."

**Ricky Enger:** Oops.

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, my. I've done that. I've put stuff in other people's carts, not ours.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah, and you got to wonder. I mean, if it was snacks or something and someone's watching their diet, did you get them in trouble?

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. Me and those little pickles, right? There you go. Putting them in somebody else's cart. Have you done anything like that before?

**Ricky Enger:** Well, my thing is to wander off from the shopping cart and then come back. I think I mentioned this in a previous blooper episode, where I like to go smell the candles if we're by the candle aisle, or maybe I have to go feel the costume jewelry, or "Ooh, the sweaters are out. I need to go check those out." So I wander away and then I make my way back.

**Douglas Walker:** Hopefully.

**Ricky Enger:** Hopefully is right. Actually this one time I wandered away and I came back and I made my way to the front of the cart, and I feel my purse in the cart in the front of the little basket thing where you would put small things. So I found my purse there in the front of the cart, but it feels kind of bulkier and fuller than I remember. So I'm standing there just kind of squeezing, massaging my purse, going, "What in the world is in there?"

And I'm standing there kind of confused, and about the time I bring my attention to the familiar weight of my purse hanging on my shoulder, I hear, "Ma'am!" I jumped and I was blushing and stammering, and it was not my finest hour. I was not very graceful about it, and I was trying to explain, "I'm so sorry. I what just absent-minded. I forgot I had my purse on my shoulder." And she's trying to be polite, but you can tell that she's really just not having it. And finally, when she says, "They're not even the same color,"-

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, my. There you go.

**Ricky Enger:** ... I realized...

**Douglas Walker:** You didn't notice that?

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, gosh. The texture of the purse felt just like mine, in my defense.

**Douglas Walker:** I bet you did have a chill run down your spine when you realized, "That's not my purse." Oh, my goodness. Oh, it makes me feel better about the food.

**Ricky Enger:** I wanted to run away. I so wanted to run away.

**Douglas Walker:** That is hilarious.

**Ricky Enger:** I definitely did not have the charm to gracefully extricate myself from that one. I wish I did, but Jim, on the other hand, I think would've done a lot better in a similar situation with a stranger. So let's hear from him.

**Ed Haines:** From Jim. The most frequent blooper that I step into is the accidental conversations that I have with total strangers. I leave home with my partner, and I can go virtually anywhere, shopping, to a party or to a restaurant, and the atmosphere is usually calm and casual. I sometimes believe I'm standing next to my partner or a friend, but unknown to me, they quietly slip away or divert their attention to something other than me, and then I, unknowingly, begin my conversation.

I talk very openly and in a friendly way I ask questions or state my opinion, and I have low vision that frequently changes through the day. So sometimes I see the surprised or bemused expression of my victim, but many times there's a verbal interaction that's either embarrassing or more often, funny. I'm now accustomed to meeting people this way. It's happened so often it's become a family joke that my family underplays it. "Hey, Jim, met anyone yet today?"

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, yeah.

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, my. I'm usually talking to poles. I don't often do this with people. Or empty rooms. I do that a lot.

**Douglas Walker:** Yes, with a mannequin. I think I've talked about that in another blooper. So, yes, inanimate objects all around.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. Have you ever had one where you were talking to someone that you didn't realize who you were talking to? Or anything like that?

**Douglas Walker:** I've done that before, oh, yeah. Especially in dimly lit areas, darker places, I think I'm talking with somebody and then realize all of a sudden, "Whoops, this is not the person I thought I was speaking with."

**Ricky Enger:** Well, at least you're not gossiping about the person you end up actually talking to.

**Douglas Walker:** That you know of Ricky.

**Ricky Enger:** That I know of. Yeah.

**Douglas Walker:** Maybe on the next blooper show. Oh, no. How about you?

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, gosh, thankfully, usually, that doesn't usually happen to me. I do remember when I was younger though. I have the ability to do impressions, and I always liked to do that for a laugh. And there were a couple of times where the person I was doing impressions of just happened to be standing behind me. Now, thankfully, it was always in good fun, but that did not lessen the embarrassment factor.

**Douglas Walker:** I bet not.

**Ricky Enger:** All right. So next up, let's hear from Lee.

**Ed Haines:** From Lee. This blooper was about 15 years ago. I was at the San Antonio Rodeo with my two young boys. They're twins, and they were about six or seven. We were playing around, and I was tapping them with my cane as we walked around, and they were laughing and running in front of me as we walked. Suddenly I noticed they were still laughing but they weren't in front of me anymore. Turns out we had walked up behind a couple, and I was tapping some lady's ankle with the tip of my cane. Good thing her husband was understanding.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. You don't want to use that as a get-to-know a stranger. "Hey, I tapped you with my cane. Was this a good opening line?"

**Douglas Walker:** Not a great way to shake hands. That's right.

**Ricky Enger:** Kids are fun though. I haven’t done exactly that, but I think there have been any number of instances where things have gone wrong, and my kid was involved. I have one that I'm actually still kind of mortified to share.

**Douglas Walker:** I'll bet.

**Ricky Enger:** So when my son was younger, he had to catch the bus to school, and the school bus did not stop right outside the house. We had to walk a little way and wait at this little area, and the bus would come by and pick up the kids. So one morning we get to the bus stop and it's a little bit early and my son's just a bundle of energy and he's kind of pacing around and singing a little song and picking up rocks and doing all this stuff and just having a good old time.

And the other kids start to arrive, and he gets quieter and a little more shy, and suddenly he stops walking around and comes and stands fairly close. And I hear this wrapper. So he's unwrapping something, and I smell... You know that really artificial grape smell? It doesn't really smell like grape, but it smells sweet and-

**Douglas Walker:** This sweet smell. Oh, yeah.

**Ricky Enger:** So I smell that, and I look over at him and I'm just exasperated. Like, "You just had breakfast and brushed your teeth. Where did you even get this, anyway?" And the response was, "My mom gave it to me for a treat." It was-

**Douglas Walker:** Somebody else's.

**Ricky Enger:** ... not my kid.

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, no. Oh, that is too much. That is great.

**Ricky Enger:** And he was just so indignant, this kid, and with good reason, I think.

**Douglas Walker:** Absolutely. "This was mine. My mother gave it to me."

**Ricky Enger:** Exactly. So I felt really bad. It's like, "I'm really sorry. You should enjoy your treat."

**Douglas Walker:** That's it. Oh, that's great.

**Ricky Enger:** I can't imagine what he went home and told his mom though.

**Douglas Walker:** "There's this lady at the bus stop. Watch out."

**Ricky Enger:** So on the theme of kids, we have one from Cheryl.

**Ed Haines:** From Cheryl. I have many bloopers I could share with you, but probably the most memorable one, at least for my son, began on a rainy day. It was kind of gray and drizzling, and I was in the car. Someone else was driving. We were coming back from taking him to trade in a video game when I saw a young boy standing in the rain in a short-sleeved white T-shirt, very close to the street.

Immediately I thought, "This is just a toddler, and he shouldn't be that close to the road." I rolled down the window and started telling him to get away from the road, and I was just about to get out of the vehicle and walk him up to the front door of his house when my son said, "Mom, please stop yelling at the fire hydrant." The city I lived in had recently painted the fire hydrants blue on the bottom and white on the top, and previously they've been yellow.

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, no.

**Douglas Walker:** That is great. Yeah, that is funny. It reminds me of a previous place I used to live, across the street from our front door, there was a sign and the sign looked like a guy standing there with a hat on. And I knew it was a sign because I'd gone out and checked. It was strange. It just stood there forever. But every time I would look out that front door, I would see that guy across the street with a hat on, and then I'd go, "Oh, that's the sign," kind of thing. It's so easy to do.

**Ricky Enger:** Every time, like, "Why is that man standing there? Oh, nevermind."

**Douglas Walker:** "Oh, that's the sign. That's right." So, I totally get that one. That is great.

**Ricky Enger:** These are so fun to share and get a good chuckle out of. But what’s kind of weird is that we've gone through this whole episode and considering that it's you and me on the episode, we have not talked about technology once.

**Douglas Walker:** That's right. Well, guess what? Yeah, I think I can help fill that one in there.

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, good. Oh, good.

**Douglas Walker:** So I do have a blooper. It doesn't involve technology, but it involves airport travel... I'm going to tell you. I have a lot of travel bloopers. We probably could do a whole show on just travel bloopers. Most of us could, I guess. But I was actually traveling, flying into Hadley from Nashville. And so my wife dropped me off at the airport and I went through security and all that fun stuff, and finally made it to the gate. Now I have really, really low vision, so I use my white cane. I use it pretty much all the time now when I travel, especially. But I don't want to run over anybody, right?

So I'm at the gate and I sat down and pulled out my iPhone so that I could text my wife and say, "I made it to the gate safely. Everything's good." So I notice that I've sat down next to a group of about four or five teenage boys, and I can tell that they're all just staring at me. And I thought, "Maybe they've never seen anybody using a white cane." I don't know. But, anyway, I just put in my AirPod so that I could hear my screen reader as I'm typing. But the iPhone also has this great feature called screen curtain, and when you turn on screen curtain, it turns your screen completely black so that people around you can't just glance over and see what you're doing on your screen. It's a really great built-in privacy feature. I think Android has it too, right?

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah, they do.

**Douglas Walker:** Built-in as well. Anyway, I have my screen curtain feature turned on and I start texting my wife. Now I can tell that those teenage boys are still just staring at me, and I hear one of them next to me, and he whispers this, but it wasn't really a whisper because I could hear every single thing he said, typical teenage boy. Anyway, he said, "Dude, he's pretending to type on the thing." And I just... I couldn't stand it. I just burst out laughing and I thought it was just really hilarious because with the screen curtain on, I guess it did look like my phone was turned off and I'm just pretending to type on the thing.

**Ricky Enger:** Right. And I've done that, like give a kid a broken piece of technology so they can play with it.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. "Well, this guy's sitting there playing with his phone." But, anyway, it turned out to be a pretty good thing because I took it off screen curtain, and I took out my AirPod so they could hear it talking and everything, and I showed them how the phone speaks everything, and I can totally move through it. And it turned into a little mini-Hadley workshop right there in the airport. When it was time for me to leave and get on my plane, it was like they didn't even notice my cane anymore. And they were saying, "That is so cool. You're so cool." So, anyway, I don't know if that's much of a blooper, but it's a pretty fun moment. It was a pretty fun moment for me.

**Ricky Enger:** I think it's great. I think it turned into a learning opportunity where something that could have been embarrassing where they're just whispering about you "behind your back"-

**Douglas Walker:** "Dude, he's pretending to type on the thing."

**Ricky Enger:** ... they learned a lot. I love it when kids can learn things like that and then they end up doing something for a school project later, or they think about things a little bit differently just because of that encounter.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah.

**Ricky Enger:** Wow. These are always so much fun.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah, they are. I love it.

**Ricky Enger:** My face hurts from smiling so much.

**Douglas Walker:** I know. I've been sitting here smiling through this whole thing. It's been so much fun.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. I want to thank you, Doug, for agreeing to share some more of your bloopers. And Ed, thank you for reading those, and Lisa for recording that, and the rest of the Hadley members, for being vulnerable enough to share things that maybe did not feel great in the moment, but later you were able to get a chuckle out of those things and give other people a good laugh as well.

Thank you again for dropping by, and if you want to listen to the previous bloopers, we'll have those in the show notes. If you continue listening to the very end of the episode, you will have info on how to contact us and you can share more bloopers if you like, or anything else that you happen to be thinking about. Thanks so much.

Got something to say? Share your thoughts about this episode of Hadley Presents or make suggestions for future episodes. We'd love to hear from you. Send us an email at podcast@hadleyhelps.org. That's P-O-D-C-A-S-T @hadleyhelps.O-R-G. Or leave us a message at 847-784-2870. Thanks for listening.