Hadley

It’s a part of me now

Presented by Douglas Walker

**Jayne:** With vision loss, so often I spend so much of my day trying to force myself to see things I can't see. And I stress out about it and I just shut down.

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

**Jayne:** My name is Jayne Surrena and I'm from Philadelphia.

I went to school for painting and got my masters in art education. I had been painting and showing my arts since I was 20 and working nonprofits and teaching.

I have retinal dystrophy. I didn't realize I had an issue until I guess the beginning of the pandemic. I honestly thought everyone saw the same way I did my entire life.

So I went to a different eye doctor. They're like, there's nothing we can do. This is normal, it usually happens when you're older. We can't do anything about it.

I felt so in the dark about everything and just very isolated. I would go online and just try to look up the terms that they were using because I still feel, I guess, very vulnerable about it.

With vision loss, so often I spend so much of my day trying to force myself to see things I can't see, like trying to focus on something that's blurry or not there anymore.

And it I get anxiety and I stress out about it and I just shut down. And because it's never gonna come back, it's never gonna come into focus.

But the one positive of everything is with my artwork.  
The fact that I can't see every imperfection and mistake in my artwork anymore, I have so much more freedom. And instead of spending like hours trying to make everything meticulous, I'm going through pages and using colors for the first time. And creating images that are just actually from like inside of me and like from emotion, instead of trying to remember technical skills that I was taught in school years ago like…I'm enjoying myself for the first time.

And like I'm actually smile, I feel like myself smiling as I work. And like I step back and like yes. And it it's there because I'm not focused on any details. It's just the overall piece that is…

I just feel like it's a part of me now.

**Douglas**: Was there something that someone said to you or something that happened along the way that made all the difference in the world in helping you adjust to vision loss? If you’d like to share with us, just leave us a message on our Insights & Sound Bites voicemail. By calling, 847-512-4867. Or, you can use your smartphone or computer and email us a recording to [podcast@HadleyHelps.org](mailto:podcast@HadleyHelps.org).