Hadley

I came full circle

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**Marc:** This is Hadley’s Insights and Sound Bites, where people facing vision loss share what has helped them cope and adjust.

**Annie:** Hi. My name is Annie and I'm from New Rochelle, New York. I lost my vision in 1993 from retinitis pigmentosa. Prior to that, I was a fully sighted person and lived my life with vision.

I think the hardest thing for me was to step out of the world of vision and step into the world of visual impairment and the shock of it really sent me into a depression. The one thing and one person that helped me the most to recognize that I was still a whole person was a mental health therapist who counseled me for about two years. The reason why I opted into counseling because I was newly married, I had a young son, and I was trying to do this blindness thing pretty much on my own.

Before I became blind, I really didn't know any other blind people. I didn't know much about disability or about resilience. And because I had somebody to help me navigate through the emotional and psychological trauma of sudden blindness, I was able to pull myself out and get myself back into living again. That meant going back to school and getting my high school diploma, then moving on to getting a master's degree in counseling. Incidentally, I ended up counseling people with severe trauma as well in my career, being a counselor for veterans for 10 years so I came full circle and I feel like my life is a blessing and everything that I've learned since I started losing my vision has helped me develop into becoming a strong and resilient person.

**Marc**: You never know who might need to hear your story. 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.