Hadley

I rebuilt my skills

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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.

**Axel:** Hello everybody. This is Axel Meier located in Oakland, California. So I was struck by a gunshot that went through my head, and that wiped out my vision from a hundred percent down to zero. So, I survived that and I started rebuilding myself after that. So how to start?

Now what I had to do is I had to first train my tactile senses so that I can imagine what is there in front of me, how to shape things up. And that's why I started to work with clay, because that can be reshaped at any time, as much as I want. And so that's where I started out making little things like bowls and pipes and what have you. So that's how I started.

And then a friend of mine who happened to be working with sculptures, he suggested to me to train myself a little further working with marble. And so, I started that with small pieces because it was hard, not too hard, but hard enough to change shape slowly so that I can grasp this easier, what was really going on. It's all about tactical training. And so therefore I rebuild slowly my handcrafted skills from stone carving, then wood carving.

And furthermore, I made music before, so I was able to play an instrument. I learned guitar like age 12 then I lost my eyesight. I started playing music again. And this also was important for me to form a mental balance, kind of concentrated meditation, if you will. It puts the mind on a total different framework. This also helps me to connect to other people, to other musicians. So that makes socializing much easier. That's helped me a lot.

**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.