Hadley

Not excluded from life

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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.

**Dennis:** Hi, I'm Dennis Wright. I’m 65 and I'm from Moberly, Missouri.

A couple of years ago, I woke up one morning with a little spot in my eye, in my right eye. I didn't know what it was. And so, I went to my family doctor and he just said I scratched it, and it kept getting worse, and within two weeks, I couldn't see anything out of my right eye. And, after a lot of tests with ophthalmologists, and then I started going to a neuro-ophthalmologist, they finally decided that it was what was called NAION. I can't remember what the abbreviation stands for, but it's basically my optic nerve had ruptured in the middle of the night.

So, they said that the eyesight that I got was either going to stay the same, it was going to get worse, it could get a little bit better, but it would never be the same. But they said, the good news, it won't happen to the left eye. A year later, it happened to my left eye, but it didn't rupture. It just swelled up and it cut a lot of blood supply.

I was a truck driver for 19 years, and then when I lost my right eye, that pretty much ended the truck driving career, but I didn't let it stop me. I started loading trucks up and stuff like that. I stayed in the trucking industry. But then when it happened to the other one.

I'm going, "Now what?" And the thing is, my ophthalmologist and the people that I've seen, the doctors that I've seen, never mentioned anybody that I can contact to help me with this problem.

And it's been kind of like a struggle. But then I started noticing more and more things about being blind and visually impaired, that the world is not really geared for us, especially in my little town.

It does make you want to give up, and I can understand because I didn't know where to go. I got to where I drove down the street and a car passed me, and I couldn't see it. And I turned around and I got my car back in the driveway and I said, "I can't drive no more." And that's hard when somebody has drove their whole life and their career was truck driving.

And I mean, the greatest thing that I've found so far is the audio description. I wish Congress would mandate that for everything that's ever put on TV. The first person that told me about that was a blind guy on the bus, and he said, "Once you get used to it," he said, "you'll love it."

The more I watched it, the more I loved it. And I've had a TV set ever since I was a little boy, and it's just habit, but it's just like I can tell what's happened…with audio description. I don't feel like I am excluded from life. It's the greatest thing since sliced bread.

**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.