Hadley

You don’t have to see it to feel it

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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.

**David:** My name is Dave Lehman, and I'm from Massachusetts.

Well, I'm 67 years old. I have retinitis pigmentosa, or RP. I'm married for 43 years. My wife and I have been together for 51 years, actually, we were childhood sweethearts.

With RP, you're slowly losing sight. RP is a slow torture, you know. If I had to find a word for it, it's a slow torture, because six months from now your vision plateaus, and you get comfortable with it, and one day you're able to drive, the next day can't. One day you're watching TV, the next day you can't. And so, it's kind of like a slow torture. And then, at the end of all that, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is, you get to go blind. And then from there, you either have to really challenge yourself or go down that rabbit hole.

Then it comes push to shove, you've got to pick up the cane, or get a dog, or things like that, and now, there's no more hiding it. You're out there for everybody to see, and it's a hard pill to swallow, but sooner or later, it's what you've got to do.

Things that get me going, or inspire me, it might sound funny, but I love sightseeing. I love history, and I love people or things that inspire me. I listen to books about explorers.

I'll give you an example, one time I was reading about the Civil War and everything like that, and I read this great story about Gettysburg, and it was just driving me crazy out in Pennsylvania, and I said to my wife, "We've just got to go. We just got to go.” And you know, I didn't know how much I was going to like it or anything like that, because visually, I wasn't going to see anything.

So, I get out there and stuff, and we're seeing all the sites and everything, and I actually got to stand in Lincoln's footsteps, where he gave the Gettysburg Address, and I mean, it totally gave me goosebumps. The more I think about it, it's like, "Wow, that's one of those wow moments," and you really didn't have to see it to feel it.

**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.