Hadley

I can make something out of what I have left

**Michael:** My journey began into trying to recover what was left and find out what still in front of me.

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

**Michael:** My name is Michael Stinger and I'm from Wichita, Kansas. I had a unknown heart problem, which caused me to have a very minor stroke, and, I just ignored it. I didn't think anything was going on really. It just, you know, pretty minor. And I didn't know that's what it was.

Go forward about 8 or 9 months, and I had a second stroke, and this one was pretty good. It, took out, a good portion of the vision in my left side, as well as a few other things like taste and smell are not working correctly. And I was diagnosed with a heart problem. So, at the time, I was a patrol sergeant for a police department.

And due to my vision loss, they kept me on for eight months trying to burn vacation and see if I could get better. And turns out at the 20-year mark, right at, I had to retire, because of my vision problems.

So, my journey began into trying to recover what was left and find out what still in front of me.

Luckily, I still had, resources. I'm currently labeled as a disabled veteran at the VA, and it took me about four years to get to the point where I actually asked them for help. Where they sent me to one of the rehab centers for low vision and got me some of the tools that I needed to get around, including a long cane and the support cane.

And it's been a long road and it's been uncomfortable, and I can't drive. And so, like most of you, I experienced transportation issues and whatnot. However, I do have friends who get out and do a lot of fishing, so I'm challenging myself. I've been challenging myself for the last few years to go fishing with them and learn how to tie these knots, mostly by memory and somewhat by vision with the tools that I have.

And I have found a lot of success for that endeavor. I actually won a national fishing tournament. And that was a major achievement, a bucket list, if you will. And that pushed me to the point where I'm not going to let anything stop me. I realized I can make something out of, what I have left.

So, I would say that I'm kind of a success story, but I haven't reached the success part yet. But I'm getting there, and I don't know when that will be, but I hope this encourages you guys. And thank you very much.

**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.