

Years ago, a friend of mine who was over 80% blind told me, "It does not bother me that the majority of my friends are visually dependent. I understand and accept their disability." I now have a better idea of what she meant by "Visually dependent."

Shortly after I arrived back in Washington I discovered I had trouble seeing if a bright light was coming at me. Morning sun, afternoon windshield reflection, bright headlights at night, all caused me to become blinded by the light. It turned out that the clear cells that lie on the cornea had somehow decided not to lay flat and a wrinkle had been created. } "Think of it like a wrinkle on a rug," my optometrist said. She prescribed me an eye drop to be used every day and invited me to come back in six months.

Having not seen an entry ramp because of morning sun, and not seeing which lane of traffic I should be at because of someone's bright headlights, I opted for sunglasses during the day and night driving limited to residential streets where I could navigate by looking at the objects and parked cars on the right instead of the road before me.

Compensating as I was trying to go on with life was not working and my sight became worse. I found it more difficult to read and, of course, to write. The practice of each declined. And for someone who needs to keep abreast of real estate practices and law as well as to write life was becoming more and more disconnected.

The mind kept writing but without the habit of actually writing only headlines and bullet points were created and soon stacked up on a to-do list that was often viewed but not acted upon.

About two months ago I went back to my optometrist and she said, "Your eyes are changing fairly quickly. . . and not for the better. There is a higher pressure than normal inside your eye that indicates the possibility of glaucoma. Here are some eye drops to bring down the pressure and you should consider surgery."

In so many ways I live a blessed life. It turns out that one of the best eye surgeons in the world is about ten miles away in Portland. My brother had met him at a conference some years ago and had soon after had cataract surgery. He recommended I contact him but not to expect something soon as far as an appointment. I called and as luck would have it a patient had

canceled their appointment in the following week and the doctor had an opening. His clinic also accepts my insurance and soon I found myself talking to Dr. Mansberger.

I had the lens in my left eye replaced and have been watching my vision on that eye gradually increase from fog to nearly clear at this writing. My right eye still has the wrinkle and lights sparkle still but Dr. Mansberger has a team of cornea specialists who are going to evaluate the eye and perform what is best described as a scraping of it this tomorrow. After that heals Dr. Mansberger will replace the right lens and I will never again need glasses.

In the meantime though, the right eye is still as out of focus as it has been for years and because the left eye was corrected I can no longer use the glasses that I used to wear. So vision is still a challenge. But I am adapting and, no pun intended, the future is looking brighter.

The final point to this story as it has played out so far – and almost a reiteration of the luck remark. . . the hospital that runs the eye clinic where I have been going for vision correction is being shut down soon. Had I waited, none of this would have been possible.

I will keep you posted as to how things go. To those of you who have asked what happened to the writing and wanting more, thank you for the messages. I promise to be back in the saddle soon. The bullet points and headlines for stories are numerous. And while I would like to believe they are jewels just waiting to be polished. . . the other day I likened all of them to being like those kitchen gadgets that end up in a drawer in the kitchen – valuable and just waiting for an opportunity to be used appropriately.

Many people call that kitchen drawer a "utility drawer." I am hoping it is that and not, as my mother coined for the one in my childhood kitchen, a "junk drawer."

Only time and your opinion will tell. Until soon,

Keep Smilin;

Doc