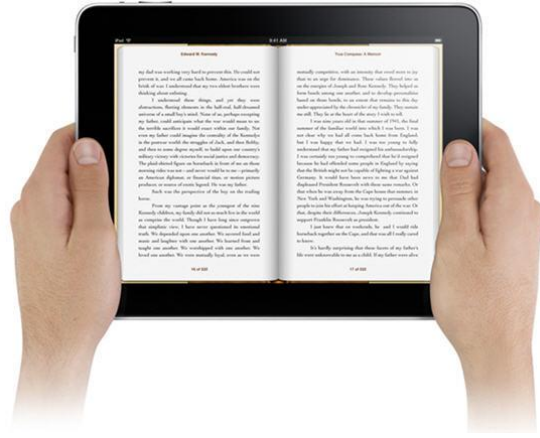


Welcome to my first eBook!

If you're reading this book, I suspect that your life has been touched by vision loss – whether you are experiencing it personally or if someone close to you is experiencing it. Potentially devastating, vision loss does not have to be the end of one's meaningful life. It is my hope to ease your path forward, curing with words what I cannot physically cure through medicine.



You or a loved one has possibly been affected by vision loss --- this eBook can be a vital resource to you

The good news is that you can restore your quality of life despite losing some part of your vision. I have met many people who have been an inspiration to me after losing their vision. I'll include stories about a few amazing individuals who have accomplished things which most people, even in the prime of their lives and vision, have not accomplished.

I want to start off by sharing two stories, which will hopefully establish my credentials. I'm not a licensed professional in vision care but I have very relevant personal experience. My first story involves the miracle of Lasik eye surgery.

I have experienced Lasik eye surgery and yes, I do consider it a miracle. I first needed glasses in seventh grade. By the time I graduated college, my vision had deteriorated to 20/400 in both eyes. (In order to establish a frame of reference, that meant I couldn't see the **E** at the top of the eye chart when I went to the eye doctor.) My wife knew I couldn't see well, but didn't realize the severity of my deficiency until an incident at the beach. My daughters and wife were exiting the ocean ahead of me one day. When I finally returned ashore, I walked up to the midpoint of the beach and began walking to my right. When I reached my family's umbrella, my wife asked what I was doing. I told her the truth. I couldn't see my family at all but knew we were about halfway up the beach. I told her I

figured I'd eventually walk close enough to see them. I was physically blind, but fortunate that my vision was fully correctable. If you're reading this book, correction is probably no longer an option.



You may not be able to regain your vision, but you can still regain your life

My second story involves a family member, a very close one at that. In the mid-1990's, my Mom called to tell me that she had macular degeneration. I had no idea what this meant, although I was rather sure that degeneration wasn't a good thing. The disease initially affected one eye, but in the space of a few weeks, she had lost much of the functional central vision in that eye. Macular degeneration causes loss of central, but not peripheral, vision. There are two kinds of age-related macular degeneration, dry and wet. Dry macular degeneration is far more prevalent, progresses much more slowly, and is less debilitating although there is no currently no treatment. Wet macular degeneration proceeds rapidly and when my Mom was affected, the only treatment used lasers that cauterized the leaking retinal blood vessels. More treatment options are now available which can slow the onset by many years under the care of an eye doctor. You can learn more about macular degeneration at this [VisionAware site](#).

My Mom was widowed and living independently in Florida. As an only child, I knew that much of the caregiving would have to be provided by my wife and me, if her second eye was affected. We prepared ourselves for that next call, which came five years later. My Mom had continued to work and live independently with one eye, but we knew she'd need our assistance now that she had lost central vision in both eyes. When she arrived in Pennsylvania, she was frightened and very limited in her activities.

Before the journey ended, my Mom's independence was restored, and she even traveled outside of the US for the first time in her life. These accomplishments were made possible through a marvelous local organization, [the Montgomery County Association for the Blind](#). Similar organizations are available in most

areas, and I would highly recommend reaching out to one of them as the trained professionals can be invaluable in restoring independence and confidence.

Important Note:

It should come as no surprise that a book about coping with vision loss will occasionally refer to someone who is blind or visually impaired. I will often use **PBVI** to refer to a person who is blind or visually impaired. This is not a standard industry term; however it keeps things simple and maintains “person-first” language. If you’re not familiar with “person-first,” it is the difference between “blind person” and “person who is blind.” The latter term suggests that we are all people, and each of us has distinguishing characteristics (such as blindness). In an ideal world, you would already be familiar with person-first language as the concept is applicable in settings beyond blindness and visual impairment. I believe the person-first concept first arose with disability rights movement professionals. The idea is to always (when grammatically practical) use modifiers such as “blind” after the word “person” rather than before. Many people use the expression, “blind person.” This immediately groups the person with all blind people rather than viewing him or her as an individual. Person-first phrasing makes him or her an individual, with all of his or her inevitable quirks, who happens to be blind. Most people find this shift very awkward initially. With time, it will become second nature. As noted earlier, I also think it reminds us to interact gently and remember to consider the other person’s perspective.



You are well on your way on a road to success!

As with so many things tied to disabilities, there are two distinct schools of thought. I will stick with people-first, even when grammatically awkward, as it is a constant reminder of how we should interact with people. Through the magic of the eBook, I also declare that PBVI is always grammatically correct (singular, plural, etc.). I’m writing this eBook to share the journey taken by my Mom and

my family. I hope to help you realize that you can return to most of your previous activities. Many people live marvelous lives even after dealing with vision loss. They turn a negative into something extremely positive by going above and beyond to live a meaningful, active life.

That being said, I would like to welcome you onwards to my ingredients for success.