

“Eye” Can See You!

Imagine, if you can, sticking a clear, semi-rigid dime into

each of your eyes. As a ninth-grader in the early 1960s,

46

that’s what I felt I will be doing with my first pair of contact

47

lenses. In those days, wearing contact lenses

was, truly a novelty. “Hard lenses,” as they are called, is an

48

apt description of those things, and equally so of the

frustration they cause in the pursuit of clear vision.

I was diagnosed in third grade as being near-sighted

49

and astigmatic. My teacher had noticed that something was

49

wrong because I stood about a foot away from a classroom

projection screen in order to read the captions on the

science slides. In those days, we learned through a sequence

50

of picture slides the teacher would narrate, kind of like a

rudimentary computer presentation. While most students

51

were thrilled to see the teacher dim the lights and fire up the

projector, I sank in my seat to avoid her attention once the

time inevitably came in order to read aloud the fine print so

52

fuzzy in the distance.

[1] When I was finally fitted with my first glasses at age

eight, I remember thinking how cheated I had been in my

young life; I had no idea that most people could see as

clearly as I began that day! [2] It was dizzying walking

Out of the optometrist’s office. [3] Objects were suddenly

more ridged and linear; colors seemed more intense and

striking. [4] For eight years, everything around me had been

one big blur and I hadn’t a clue! [5] I felt so alive! [6] My

eyeglasses became a sort of lifeline, the first thing I put on and the last thing I took off every day. ⁵³

Although they represent a less dramatic change, my first contact lenses six years later once again sharpened my focus and heightened my senses. Wearing contact lenses, however, took some adjustment; several weeks were required to build calluses on the underside of each eyelid. putting those saucers in each eye also proved a challenge.

Regardless, the old lenses were much thicker than today's
54
contact lenses.

While the lenses were difficult to insert,
they were easiest to pop out, especially when you least
55
expected them to. There is nothing like fishing a contact lens out of a toilet bowl or gingerly using the stopper to
56
retrieve a lens from the wall of the bathroom sink drain.

I probably lost and found at least a dozen lenses in the first two years of wearing them. Since I was virtually blind without my contacts, my immediate reaction was always to cry out for help in locating the missing lens.