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The Eyes and Sexuality: A Personal Tale

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Prologue

Two years ago I took off my glasses and stopped wearing them. For thirty-four years, except for rare moments, I had worn them day and night—be it conventional spectacles or various types of contact lenses. Without glasses, I would tighten up. I remember the terror I felt as a girl swimming in the ocean without them. I had a fear of the unknown, of not having a mooring. Later, these fears continued. If the phone rang in the middle of the night, I would put them on to talk. If I were hungry, I would put them on to go downstairs for a bite.

Given these anxieties, why would I stop wearing glasses? It's a question many people have asked me since. It was not a conscious choice. It happened three days after a particularly gripping therapy session in which I came face to face with the shame I had hidden for so many years. I no longer needed my glasses to shield me.

Initial excitement was followed by months of turbulence, more difficult than any I had gone through in eighteen years of psychotherapy. Nevertheless, the end result was dramatic—not only in insights gleaned, but in measurable change in my vision. I would like to describe this transformation, and also the biofeedback training I did along with psychotherapy.

Background

Basically, I am a compulsive person with an underlying passivity. I'm also determined and perfectionistic. I like towels folded neatly, groceries lined up scrupulously, weeds pulled regularly. For as long as I can remember, I have kept things in order. I remember preparing a massive report on Indians in Connecticut at age seven, an encyclopedia about leaves at age eleven, a wordy Ph.D. dissertation about who-knows-what at age thirty-five, and a compendium of "everything Alexander Lowen ever said" at age forty-five.

This penchant for organization is also reflected in my body. The overall look is that of a "cylinder," as I am tall and lean. With strong, tight legs and a set, determined jaw, I act as if I do not need anything. The narrow, upper half of my body suggests otherwise. By contrast, my hips are fuller, but the energy is held in them.

My ongoing analysis has been a long journey into unexplored territory to understand such rigidity. As it is not possible to be perfect and sexual, I knew the problem was related to my lost sexuality, that intense connection to my body and animal nature. I have had a passion to probe to the bottom of my psyche, to see the truths of my existence. Details were repressed, forgotten, or otherwise hidden, as if the information were too shameful a legacy to know. Yet revelation was necessary if I were to become more alive.

It all began in 1945, the year I was born. I was the second of three children; my sister was three years older, my brother four years younger. During the early years, I lived in the mill town of Willimantic, Connecticut, where life seemed slow and simple. My fondest memories are of my grandmother, who had a warm, maternal nature, an exuberant personality, and a lovely face; and of her old-fashioned back yard, filled with honeysuckle, forsythia, and grape vines. As a pretty, young child of three, with blonde curly hair and beautiful, bright eyes, I was happy and alive. However, this vitality did not last. I became overwhelmed by both painful images and events. I didn't feel important to my parents, and I felt left out of the relationship between my sister and brother.

I remember my mother as a cold woman with frightening eyes. She was attractive, social, "the life of the party," but unreal and not

interested in being a mother. Later, she became a social worker, but not, particularly, out of maternal motives.

My father, an electrical engineer, was soft-spoken and passive, except for occasional outbursts of rage, which terrified me. He had a flat, tedious, oppressive manner. Yet, he was more nurturing than my mother. He liked me as long as I was a little girl. However, when I made the slightest move toward becoming a sexual person he rejected me. Consequently, I soon stopped making many attempts.

As do so many parents, mine were perpetuating what had been done to them. What was unfinished, denied, or rejected by them was passed on to me. Although their unconscious hostilities were not handed down in a blatant manner, they nonetheless had devastating repercussions. Like most children, in order to grow up, I had to compromise my innate sexuality. I lost my spirited nature, bright eyes, and sex appeal, along with the ability to experience pleasure.

Instead, I have spent my life working. As a depressed, young "laborer," I quietly did what I was supposed to do—for myself and for my family. When I was only nine, I pushed a cart up and down the aisles at the supermarket. My father would drop me off and later pick me up. At last I had a purpose, along with a sense of capability and independence. Throughout this time I knew I was sad, although I did not know why. By eleven, however, I lost that awareness of my pain.

Shortly before, our family moved from the small town to a suburb thirty miles away. It was with great reluctance that I went, leaving the one person I felt loved by, my grandmother. It was a year later that I started wearing glasses. Our family became sophisticated and upwardly mobile. So did I. Finding it too difficult to stay real, I discovered a way to move beyond my emptiness. I decided to become "popular"—to smile and befriend everyone. I imagined that love and acceptance from others would fill me with life. On the surface, I appeared content. I even fooled myself; I forgot about the sadness locked within.

My strategy did have some positive aspects. I was well liked in

high school and college and had many successes—prom queen, class officer, cheerleader, dean's list—which helped me feel good. I achieved and was rewarded for my achievement. The more I did, the closer I thought I was to finding fulfillment. Only after I accomplished all I thought was needed to win that acceptance—B.S. degree, Jewish husband, two children (boy and girl), elegant house in the country, late model cars—did I realize I was never going to get what I was looking for. That was twenty years ago. At that point I began to probe within.

I started weekly bioenergetic therapy, a course of exploration I have followed ever since. I could not stop until I understood what I was about, until the turmoil was gouged out. Given my perfectionistic nature, it has taken me a long time to be satisfied. Now, in the aftermath of my second year without glasses, I feel such satisfaction. It seems wonderful to live without the agonies I had suffered. I am beginning to feel alive. Belatedly, I am becoming a sexual being. And I continue to achieve: as therapist, faculty member of the International Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis, and editor of this journal. But, the work now has pleasure associated with it.

The Extraordinary Day

Shortly before the extraordinary day—the day I discarded optical aids entirely—I had been to my optometrist and found I needed bifocals. In addition to not being able to see distances, I now couldn't see things well up close. I required reading glasses too, because bifocals were not comfortable for long periods. And I needed yet another pair to use over contact lenses for close work. Well, I was equipped with the works so that I could see “perfectly.” With a sense of resignation, I accepted the entire package. There seemed to be no other option.

About two weeks later, however, I did find another way: I stopped wearing them entirely (except for driving, television, movies, and extended desk work). It had happened quite by chance, precipitated by two particular sessions with Alexander Lowen, whom I had been seeing weekly for the previous three years. In the

first session, the theme was about robbery, robbery of pleasure by my mother—a familiar oedipal situation about which I was enraged. But more than that, it had something to do with my father, for he had let it happen. That was hardest to deal with. When I started screaming, “You are a wimp,” the shame I felt was unlike anything I had ever experienced. How could I say that? How cruel! How mean! The fury in me surpassed any other anger in my life. Why couldn't he stand up for me? Why did he kowtow to her?

I had known for many years that my father was passive, yet when I confronted him with those words in the therapy session, it was horrible. It pained me to say it. But I also knew it would kill me to not say it. I did not want to hurt his feelings; I loved him so. I had felt sorry for him. That is why I gave up my aggression. I had not wanted to see the truth: My hero was a wimp! That was what broke my heart. This was why I was depressed so much of my life. All my trying over the years had been an attempt to avoid this truth about my father.

In the second session, I couldn't keep it back anymore. All my held aggression was spilling out. I could kill. I could never have imagined the scene, but it was happening. Another truth was revealed: It was the bitch in me who could castrate the one I so loved. It was at this moment in the painfully long process that I realized I could lift my head and open my eyes. My shame had been uncovered, the shame that had sealed my “secrets” when I was a young girl of five, and later at eleven when I essentially lost my eyesight.

It was three days later that the casting-out occurred. As I woke up, a thought arose as if by magic: I did not need glasses. I sprung out of bed, and with glee went from room to room: upstairs, downstairs and downstairs, upstairs. I was free. There was no need to hide anymore. It seemed to be a miracle.

Aftermath

My joy was short-lived, however. Shame had held back the floodgates and unlocking it created an overflow, one which would take me through nine months of turmoil, craziness, and despair. I

would revisit every place I had ever touched in therapy, but on a deeper level.

I was already inundated with fear. It was a fear of softening, of melting. But more than that, it had something to do with hurt; a fear of feeling more hurt and rejection. Fortunately, my desire to live was also intense. I sensed the way to healing was through the fear. Consequently, I persevered.

Therapy sessions, which were ordinarily intense, turned into virtual tail spins with one breakthrough after another as I spiraled out of control. Every resistance, every feeling was felt with what seemed like 100 percent of me. Everything was vivid, sharp, and painful, emotionally and physically. The physical pains were excruciating—throbbing deep in my pelvis and legs whenever I would let go and soften. My eyesight might not be perfect—but my feelings were coming in 20/20!

I became all the more convinced that it was impossible for a person who wears glasses to be sexual. Glasses not only cut off feelings, but limited connectedness with others. Thus, I needed to continue without them, if ever I were to become sexual and more connected to my body; and if ever I were to feel more natural, graceful, and free. Glasses covered the truths of sexuality and maintained a denial. They made the outside world appear all right but they didn't heal inner wounds. Like medical prescriptions, they could fix the immediate problem but blocked the truth of the body.

Even without glasses my eyes were still blocked. I wondered why this was so. I knew that as a child my eyes had seen the trauma and sickness in my family, and that the problems had nothing to do with me. I knew I was an innocent person who had come into this world looking for a little pleasure. I had seen for a moment. Then I blinded myself. But what had I seen that was so horrible, that was now keeping me in agony? This was the mystery I wanted to unravel.

I researched the topic also, trying to understand more about a child's bodily reaction to fear. Dr. Alexander Lowen (1974) said: The child contracts, especially in the eyes, since each fear is momentarily experienced as a shock to the organism. Later, the eyes return to their natural state if the child can cry, scream, or

express anger, releasing the body from the shock. But if the incidents continue steadily, the eyes remain wide open in fear, the strain of which can not be carried on indefinitely. At some point the eye muscles become exhausted and the child gives up the effort to see. It is at this point that myopia sets in.

As a nearsighted person, I surmised that I had been thus shocked. It was different now. One by one, I was uncovering these shocks and at the same time passionately discharging my feelings. Yet there was no relief. In fact, my agony was increasing. Exhausted by pain and with no restraints left, I went to the next session. Safe in the office with a sense of Dr. Lowen nearby, I fell to the floor. Writhing in pain, I relived my nightmare. I was four years old. My father was all over me, like a vulture—wanting me, eating me, all of me expect for my head. And my mother, a vulture too—needing me, sucking me. Both seemed to be devouring me and tormenting me with their desires. So unbearable was the experience that I lost control. I went crazy. It was only at the end of the session, when I was able to bite during a therapeutic exercise, that I began to recover.

Shortly after, I started to link these memories with my lost sexuality. Anguished by such an onslaught as a young girl, I had stiffened. There was no choice but to move out of my body. If I had been sexual, father would nibble more; if alive, mother would cling more. They had so much craving for me that all of me became theirs. None was left for me. Having no choice to save my soul, I stopped moving and stayed in control.

What I resisted most, I realized, was seeing that my father had been against me. I thought he had been my friend, my source of warmth and pleasure. Instead, he was hot and cold, using me for himself, keeping me young, driving me crazy. So much was my desire for him to love me, I would never dare speak up to or differ with him and risk losing that imagined comfort.

In so doing, I lost my aggression, never grabbing, biting, or taking in the pleasures of life. It was now clear to me what had happened at the end of the session, as I was able to bite. For that instant, my vision became crystal clear. Aggression-with-teeth equaled sight, I concluded.

By evening, I felt content, having come to these insights. However, this contentment was short lived. The next morning I became desperate. No matter what I did, I was okay for only a few minutes. I was unable to go backwards or forwards. And I was unwilling to wear glasses or tolerate the segmented body that had been mine. It was as if the plug had been pulled on my life support system and I did not know if my body would take over on its own.

At this point five weeks had passed since the day I gave up glasses. Gaunt, with blackened eyes, with no desire to eat, I struggled to get through each day. My back ached and my legs hurt. It was getting harder and harder. At times I lost my courage. Not able to fight any more, not kick, or hit, or figure it out, I felt like a failure. I wanted to kill myself. Without a body there was no meaning. If I could not be sexual, there was no reason to live. Such were my anxieties.

Yet little by little my body started to fill out. Once again I had the sensation of emerging from forty-two years of "blindness." In successive therapy sessions, I felt, alternately, sad and joyful as I opened my pelvis, my lips, and my heart.

Vision Retraining

Meanwhile, I was beginning to feel my eyesight was improving. I was curious, so made an appointment to see my optometrist. I had last seen him three months before when we had organized that massive arrangement of glasses, with bifocals, reading glasses, half glasses, and so forth.

With disbelief, the doctor listened to my tale. But after he examined me, he said he was impressed that my eyes had changed so much. In January, my visual acuity had been between 20/300 and 20/400. Now, it was between 20/200 and 20/300. Healthy vision is 20/20—that is, seeing at a distance of twenty feet what one is supposed to see at twenty feet. My corrective prescription in January had been thirteen steps away from healthy vision (averaging the measurement for both eyes). Now, I was ten steps away.

The following day I had my first visit with another optometrist,

one who does biofeedback vision retraining. This is a highly mechanical method that works directly on strengthening blocked eye muscles. Having already adjusted to life without glasses, I thought I would be a good candidate. If I could have even more improvement, why not?

After examining me, the new doctor said he could get my vision to 20/30 within fourteen to sixteen visits. 20/20 was most likely out of the question! I was speechless. This possibility seemed like a dream, like sunlight bursting through clouds of darkness. "20/30 would be quite acceptable!" I said with delight, when I could speak again.

The doctor proceeded to explain the process. He suggested I stop wearing the glasses I was using for driving and replace them with a lessened prescription, only seven and one half steps from healthy vision, so that even when driving I would have to use my eyes more. Also, he recommended I do desk work without glasses. The program would include two hourly visits per week for the first two weeks and then once per week for twelve to fourteen weeks. Plus, at least a half hour a day practice at home with an eye chart in ten to fifteen-minute sessions. At the end, practice would be reduced to ten minutes a week with the chart; and glasses would be used only for nighttime driving.

That night, inspired by the visit, I stopped wearing glasses to watch television. At the same time, I was apprehensive. Would I be compulsive again, if I could see more? Over the weeks, since I was not able to see dirty windows, dog hairs, or specks of dirt on the floor, I had enjoyed the feeling of being more carefree. Would I again be inundated with more feeling? There were days these last weeks, when for hours on end I was besieged with anguish. Could I live through even more? Despite these anxieties, I was ready to start the program.

I began working with the Accomotrac Vision Trainer invented by Joseph N. Trachtman, O.D., Ph.D., (1984) which is designed to teach the client how to properly use the ciliary muscle of the eye. The machine makes a low, slow sound which speeds up and goes higher as the eye focuses. With one eye at a time I looked into the machine, my chin supported on a rest. The doctor,

on the opposite side, was able to see a number on the machine which registered the degree of focusing. For a few minutes, I just looked ahead. All I saw was a light in the shape of a big spot. The doctor said to look far away and fantasize—to use my eye to look. “Look at what?” I wondered. There was no focal point.

Continuing in this way for thirty minutes, with breaks in between to rest my eyes, I was convinced that nothing would happen. Then, a look at the eye chart. It was very fuzzy at first. I could not even see the rows. After ten minutes, however, much to my surprise, I read the 20/70 line. The clarity lasted only a second, but the doctor reassured me that as I was able to focus more, it would last longer.

At home, I began to look at the chart from a twenty foot distance. Nothing! Sitting up straight, with feet flat, and buttocks back in the chair, for fifteen minutes twice a day I would practice. As I exhaled I could see better so I focused on the exhale, pushing the breath out. The longer I pushed it, the better I saw.

One day, I suddenly saw, with perfect clarity, a line with five letters on it—P E C F D. I was so excited I ran over to double check. I had seen the 20/40 line! The excitement was like the wonderment I had had as a four year old while learning to read Hebrew. The letters were so new and magical.

What happened with the chart was so totally unexpected. So much so that I could not imagine more. Yet, the excitement extended to daily life, also. I remember the exhilaration I felt when reading a billboard at the train station: “M A R L B O R O. Marlboro!” I exclaimed. And the delight, when driving on the highway, when I could see each sign and each one became a challenge. And the thrill, at all times, when pure sight would come in for ten seconds at a stretch!

Trials and Tribulations

I had hoped that keeping my glasses off would help me look more within myself, to move outward from my body and feelings, rather than to search for direction from outside. And it was hap-

pening. Moreover, I was accepting vagueness and ambiguity. Recognizing that I couldn't fix all, nor control all, I was learning to live with imperfection.

In all arenas, life was new. I could reach with no effort, look with no effort, and move with no effort. Like a beautiful spring morning, with a flock of birds wheeling in the sky and the scent of lilies of the valley lingering in the dew, I too was coming alive. I sensed I had not felt this way since I was six months old.

During my next appointment with the optometrist, I looked at the eye chart with ease. The doctor suggested I open my eyes wide and relax them. I just let the images emerge. My eyes watered and I could feel the energy behind them. As I focused, they burned more and more. At the same time, the band around my entire head became increasingly more pronounced.

The following week, the doctor again reduced the prescription for my driving glasses. They were so much lighter and thinner than my old ones—only five and a half steps away from healthy vision. They were not similar to my old glasses in any way. This prescription was so mild I wondered how it would help at all.

My psychotherapy continued. Being able to move with ease somehow was also unleashing my earliest pains. Overcome by sadness, I became immersed in the world of my infancy. Experimenting with the sucking exercise in a session helped me more fully connect with that period. I realized I had never sucked before. Later, as a child, I had been humiliated for being needy. Ever since, I ran from the shame of needing. And from the sense of helplessness.

Then one day, while bending over to water a plant, my lower back went into a spasm, causing me to fall to the ground. I couldn't move. After five minutes, I pulled myself to a chair but I still couldn't get up. Lying back on the floor, I tried to stretch my knees to my chest, but couldn't. No one was in the house, not even the dog. I panicked. Beads of sweat were oozing from my face. My teeth chattered and my wide-opened eyes stared vaguely around me. Thankfully, little by little, I was able to rise. I was not helpless, after all. Rather, I had been breaking down and softening.

By now it became clear that glasses had served to mask early

traumas as well as the truths of my oedipal story.

My eyes continued to improve. One day, while looking at the eye chart, when I felt energy come to my eyes, I also felt it going to my feet. When I relaxed my genitals, that warmth increased all over. There are four points of contact with the world, I surmised—eyes, hands, genitals, and feet—and all are connected. The amount of energy in each is equal. As a child, I realized I had not developed enough strength in these points of contact. Now, I was starting to use them.

Week four of the vision retraining program began. Although I looked forward to working with the machine, I was becoming more and more annoyed with its beep. At times, I would think, “Okay, already, I’ll look,” just to shut the machine up. Nonetheless, I continued to practice the techniques—both in the office and at home. Some days were not as clear as others, but I liked the exercises themselves. I decided I would continue with them indefinitely as a way of grounding.

After two or three, full, exquisite, wonderful days, I slipped backwards again. Just as I was beginning to feel graceful, the woman in me emerging, I experienced an abrupt reversal. It was all over, I thought. No more woman. I was a stick again. In a therapy session I was shocked and went into a total abandonment and panic reaction. I couldn’t hold my ground. Once again my world seemed to fall apart. And then, with a burst of energy, I suddenly became furious and judgmental. I had been unable to do the necessary work; I was bad, rotten.

There was a silence. Afterwards, Dr. Lowen explained to me that I was trying to avoid the helplessness I had felt the week before. I needed to know helplessness and to accept it always, he said. It was not shameful; it was part of the human condition. Nonetheless, I felt horrible. I wanted to hide. I wanted my glasses. Distraught, and in a state of oblivion, I went home to bed.

Later, I tried to eat, but each mouthful choked me. After what seemed like an endless vacuum of time, I began to cry. Everything became calm again. Immediately, I felt more energy in my legs. They became hot. Feeling better, I did not even think about glasses. There was just me and my body. I didn’t have to try so hard.

No running, no pulling up, no traveling, no buying, no marrying, no kids, no shoulds, no oughts were necessary. Just being.

It was now midway through the program. I could see most of the letters on the 20/30 line. I began to see the whites in client’s eyes. In the day I was driving without glasses. And I went to my first movie. It was a film with subtitles no less!

Each day came with challenges—visiting New York City, navigating in an airport, leading a workshop, etc. Frightened, I nevertheless allowed myself to take the necessary steps. Each required a mindfulness, a new way of being. And each brought a sense of excitement, just when I thought I had reached the end of novelty.

In week eleven, I felt mercurial. On one hand, full of life and sexual energy. On the other, tight and compulsive. At times my eyes became so blocked, I almost could not read. And then, over the bioenergetic stool, I would break down. Sobbing and grateful for the change, I could breathe again. And see again.

By now I was growing weary of the ups and downs. I yearned for a tranquility that would last for more than a few moments. But instead, more distress was in the offing. It was week fourteen. This time I saw three letters on the 20/25 line! With each new letter, I became frightened. I could feel tension building. I was scared I would go crazy. I was scared I would have a heart attack. I wanted a tranquilizer.

I called Dr. Lowen. Ten or twelve weeks had passed without a session and now, there was too much in me to handle on my own. Dr. Lowen said that my heart had always “held”, and that now I was beginning to feel that holding. I had to experience the long forgotten longing, he said, and not block the pain. Since I was dealing with the emotional pain, he reassured me, I wouldn’t have a heart attack. It felt good to re-establish contact with him. I felt a glimmer of good feeling coming back.

Still, I wept for days after. There was such longing in me—for warmth and for contact. And there was no hope that anyone would give it to me. There was no way back to a loved one. Driven by a desire to prove that I was lovable, I had worked and I had kept busy ever since I remember. I could never stop. I could not bear to see that I was unloved and alone.

Many more days passed before I was able to live freely in my body again and before severe pains faded into mere aches. I began to have the sweet sensations of the three year old girl, who had been happy, loving and simple. I felt the desire to reach to my parents. I had always wanted to tell them how much I loved them when I was younger but I never did.

Week sixteen! I was glad to finish with the machine. I needed a break.

The Last Fall

The program was over. Nine months had passed since that momentous day in January, the day I stopped wearing glasses. I was new and I was separate. Yet, in a way I still was terrified to be alone. Something was still amiss. Finally, a break came in another session with Dr. Lowen. I had been miserable and almost fainted over the stool. Nothing made any sense. Lowen said not to try. The problem was still in my jaw, he added. I would not give up. I needed to cry and feel the despair. I knew he was right. I would always tighten my jaw and demand that the other be on my side completely and never hurt me. That other had to be 100 percent for me; ninety-nine percent was not okay. With that rigid standard I had kept despair at bay. But now, I was face to face with it—a dark, endless pit of night.

“Oh God,” I thought, as I drove home from the session. “I can’t do it. Dr. Lowen can’t do it.” This was the bottom. Yet, relief came gradually. No more trying to get them to like me, no more trying to stay busy, no more trying to stay away from the truths. For the first time in years, I was not overwhelmed with what lay before me.

Epilogue

Where am I now? Slowly, I am softening. At times, I am more free than ever; at other times, I am just as tight. But the ups and downs are never so extreme as they were during the first nine

months without glasses. I still feel anxious after every new expansion. However, I don’t write about it compulsively in my journal or try to figure it out. For the first time I’m able to ask for help. I even let others drive if I’m tired!

Vision varies from moment to moment, as does the rest of my body. To the degree I tighten or live mechanically, I do not see as well. I see best in natural light, especially bright sunlight. I see worst during the three days before my menstrual cycle begins. Although I continue to see 20/40 on the eye chart and sometimes 20/30, it is only for a few seconds at a time. Most importantly, I don’t try so hard to see.

I wear glasses only for night driving. My reduced prescription, still five and a half steps from healthy vision, lets me see almost as well as in the day time, but it’s harder to read signs. Occasionally, in an emergency or in bad weather, I use glasses in the day. But never if it’s just because I’m tired. If I’m tired that means it’s time to rest.

For the most part, I am no longer cogitating about my eyes. A few months ago, however, I became curious about the actual physical changes that had occurred. So, I made appointment to see my regular optometrist. From him I learned there really had been measurable change—in visual acuity, from 20/300 and 20/400 to 20/200 and 20/100 and in actual prescription, from thirteen to eight steps from healthy vision. It was not only that my psyche had changed or that my eyes had adjusted to fuzziness. The eye muscles themselves had actually strengthened.

Would this have happened if I hadn’t taken off my glasses? Or if I hadn’t persevered with the vision program? I don’t know. Perhaps other life events could have provoked me too. What I do believe is that it isn’t possible to go without glasses without evoking the underlying shocks that paralyzed the eye muscles in the first place. The key, of course, is in releasing these blocked muscles.

Even though two years have passed since the day I cast off my glasses, I am still amazed that glasses covered so many “secrets.” And so many fears. No wonder I did not want to see. No wonder I had spent by life running, endlessly and desperately, away from

torment and pain, and towards love and acceptance.

But now, my eyes remind me almost constantly of my feelings, my body, and my way of being. Enough so that recently, after so many years, I have been able to stop therapy. I feel more pleasure than ever before and on occasion, even joy.

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