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Vision as a Metaphor

By Martin Brofman

Vision as a Metaphor

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Why are our eyes called the windows to our souls? Why do we speak of the way that we "see" the world? Why do we say, "I see", in order to communicate that we understand? What is the understanding? What is the relationship between our vision, our eyesight, and our way of Being?

Eyesight is not just a physical process involving acuity. It is a multi-dimensional function affecting and affected by our emotional and mental state of Being, and linked to our personalities. That is, each type of vision impairment correlates with specific personality types.

All nearsighted people have something in common in their personalities, and all farsighted people share a particular character trait, and all those with astigmatism are working with a similar issue in their lives.

All kinds of impaired vision represent stressed ways that a person interacts with their environment.

Some say that stress is responsible for all emotional and physical imbalances, and stress reflects how an individual interacts with his or her environment in a way which is not "at ease". Stress is stored in the physical body in a number of ways, including stress or tension in particular muscles.

We can say, then, that physical tension is emotional or mental tension stored in the physical body, in the muscles. Tension in particular muscles is related to particular emotions and mental states. In other words, where you feel the tension is related to why you feel the tension.

In the case of vision, different visual disorders have been identified with excessive tension in particular extra-ocular muscles (the muscles surrounding the eyeballs), and with particular emotional patterns. To understand this process, let's look at how it works.

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Surrounding each eyeball are six eye muscles (see illustration). We use these muscles to move our eyeballs in different directions, and for a while it was thought that this was their only function. Then, it was discovered that these muscles are about one hundred times more powerful than they need to be to accomplish this, and since structure and function are related in the human body, it seemed evident that these muscles must have another function. They do.

The extra-ocular muscles also serve as part of the focusing mechanism for our eyesight, along with the lens. They cause the eyeballs to elongate or shorten, depending on what we are looking at, and what we are thinking or feeling. In this way, the eye operates more like a bellows camera, with variable focus, than a box camera with a fixed focal length.

Four muscles pull each eyeball straight back into the eye socket, shortening the eyeball. Excessive tension on these muscles, called the Rectus muscles, creates a condition of farsightedness, and is experienced emotionally as tension in the consciousness, as coming out of one's Self, focusing on Image. It may be experienced as suppressed anger, or anger at one's self (guilt), or a feeling that in

some way, the individual is not as important as other Beings.

Two muscles around each eyeball, the Oblique muscles, circle it like a belt, and when these muscles are tightened, they squeeze the eyeball, and it elongates. Excessive tension on these muscles is related to nearsightedness and this tension is experienced in consciousness as hiding within one's Self, retreating inward, as apprehension, fear, or non-trust as a perceptual filter, a sense of feeling threatened, not safe to be one's Self.

Uneven tensions on different muscles can create a condition of astigmatism, distortion of vision, by squeezing the eyeball unevenly in different directions, so that the eyeball is pulled out of roundness. This is experienced by the individual as a sense of being lost, as having uncertainty or confusion about their values, what they really want and/or what they really feel. Values from the "outside" have been included "inside", in a way which is not natural, organic, or real for that individual, and the stress of this situation is experienced in the person's consciousness as well as in the eye muscles.

Impaired vision comes about at a time in people's lives when they are experiencing stress in relation to their environment, and do not see clearly at that time, both literally and figuratively. When this goes on for an extended period of time or to an extreme of intensity, the eye muscles which hold these tensions may become temporarily "frozen", holding the eyeball in an out-of-focus condition. Since the tensions in these muscles correspond with tensions in the person's consciousness, this also holds the individual in a particular state of consciousness. These eye muscles can, however, be relaxed, and clear vision restored, using relaxation techniques and Hatha Yoga eye exercises (similar to what optometrists call "motility training.").

When the proper "tone" is restored to the eye muscles, the eyeballs are able to resume their natural shape, and clear vision can return. Tensions are released in the person's body and consciousness as well, and there is a return to an easier, clearer, more natural (for that person) way of Being.

The natural state of our vision is clear, and returning to clarity is related to returning to balance, and

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really being ourselves.

Since vision is a metaphor for the way we see the world, and related to personality, once the elements of a person's experience that relate to their impaired vision are identified, they can be released, and clear vision can be restored. Rather than being at the effect of perceptions we know to be distortions, we can decide to be at the cause, to consciously align with and choose those perceptions we know to be really true for us, and which will be more successful for us in our interactions, more in keeping with who we really are.

When we release the excessive tensions in our consciousness, the tensions are then released from the eye muscles from the inside, and the eyeball returns to its natural shape, and clear vision returns.

Naturally, since each type of vision impairment corresponds to a particular personality type, a change in personality may be expected to reflect the change in outer vision. The "new" Being will have the same Essence of Being, yet with a different way of interacting with the environment, a different "dance," without what had been excessive tension for that individual. It will seem as though the individual had awakened from a very real-seeming dream, and things will make sense in a different way. A perceptual filter will have been removed, a filter through which values had been determined, and without that filter, truer values will become evident. The "new" Being may even have different tastes in food and/or clothing, and different personal habits, yet will feel more themselves, being who

they really are. It will be a welcome transformation.

Approaches to vision improvement which have not considered the aspect of personality change have had only limited success. In cases where vision has been restored, the person involved has been through a transformative process and has, in fact, dropped a role, and become another Being, with another personality, more real, and with another way of seeing the world. The degree of improvement and the rapidity of improvement has been connected with the willingness on the part of the individual to accept the changes, to accept the new personality, to become the new Being, or rather, to become and live who they really are.

If we imagine that each of us is surrounded by a bubble of energy, our individual perceptual filters, we can see some metaphors. People who are nearsighted see what is close to them easier than they see what is far away. They are more focused on what is in the bubble, and less on what is outside the bubble, preoccupied inside, not looking outside. Energy, the direction of attention, is moving inward, contracting, toward the inside, away from the outside. Things must be held close to be seen clearly and comfortably. What one wants or feels is experienced as more important than what others want or feel. One's orientation is toward Self, to an excess for that person. "I" is considered more important in some way than "YOU," and from the individual's point of view, "WE" does not seem to include "YOU" as an equal consideration. An exceptional need for privacy may be experienced, a withdrawal from the world around them, a sense of being intimidated by their environment, a hiding inside.

The focus of thinking is forward, with fear or uncertainty as the emotional experience of that view. It is a preoccupation, keeping the individual from being totally present, in the here and now. The degree to which this is experienced is a matter of individual balance, and related to the degree of

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nearsightedness. Naturally, there may also be different compensations such as aggression to minimize the intimidation, or a forced extraversion to disguise the hiding within, but we are talking about the basis behind these outer actions.

With farsightedness, what is further away is seen more clearly than what is close. Farsighted people are more focused on what is outside the bubble and less on what is inside. Energy is moving outward, expanding, away from what is inside, and holding away or moving against what is outside. Things must be held away to be seen clearly and comfortably. What others want or feel is experienced as more important than one's own wants or feeling. One's orientation is toward others, away from Self, to an excess for that person. "YOU" is considered more important than "I," and from the individual's point of view "WE" does not seem to include "I" as an equal consideration. While a nearsighted person retreats in readily and easily, a farsighted person has difficulty doing this, since their attention continues to be directed outward. The person experiences more interest in other people's lives, and an avoidance of looking at their own. One's image is emphasized, and identified with, and gains more importance to the individual than the essence, who the person really is. The sense of anger that the person experiences is suppressed, so as not to offend others. The focus of thinking is toward the past, with anger and self-justification, or a sense of not having done the right thing, and is a preoccupation keeping the individual from being totally present. Again, the degree to which this is true is a matter of individual balance, and the degree of farsightedness, and there may be outer compensatory behavior, such as exaggerated saintliness to hide the guilt, or extreme kindness to cover the anger.

With astigmatism, the bubble is distorted, and uncertainty of wants or feelings is experienced, depending on whether the right eye, or the left eye, or both, is affected.

Metaphysically, the right eye (the Will Eye) represents seeing clearly what one wants, and the left eye

(the Spirit Eye) represents seeing clearly what one feels. In left-handed people, the traits are reversed. In a given situation, a person with astigmatism wants or feels what is true for them, considers it inappropriate, and changes it, and then believes the pretended change, no longer seeing clearly what was really wanted or felt. The focus is more on what "should" be wanted or felt, rather than what is real for that person, and a sense of confusion about who they really are. Who would they be if they stopped pretending to be who they are not?

Combinations of visual disorders are related to combinations of the qualities that have been mentioned. Astigmatism may be experienced in combination with either nearsightedness or farsightedness. Naturally, these qualities may be experienced by others without the visual disorders, but for those individuals with impaired vision, these traits mentioned are particularly strong.

Nearsightedness means seeing more clearly what is close. Farsightedness means seeing more clearly what is far. While in some rare cases one eye may be nearsighted and the other farsighted, both conditions may not exist within the same eye. When a person sees neither near nor far, the condition is one of rigidity of the accommodation mechanism, reflecting rigidity of consciousness, and relaxation techniques and eye exercises can restore flexibility. As a result, the individual will also notice greater flexibility in their mental process.

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We are Beings of energy, and energy is directed by our consciousness. Ultimately, we have the capability of choosing the direction of the flow of energy depending on the situation, choosing not to be directed by past patterns of actions or perceptions, but rather changing those perceptions which we know to be less than accurate or optimal, with a willingness to see things as they are, rather than through a distorting filter.

The flow of energy between the inside and the outside of the bubble can be changed, as can the nature of the bubble itself, which is in fact the perceptual "filter" through which we perceive our environment. A "stuck" filter predisposes us to particular patterns of interacting and perceiving. It's like a selective lens allowing through only those perceptions which agree with the basic beliefs we have chosen or accepted, and ignoring or discounting all others. Since we act on the basis of the information that gets through to us, we are then predisposed to responding to our environment in a fixed way. The selectivity of the lens is not the problem, though – the distorting quality of the emotional filter is what must be released.

When we are clear and centered, the bubble is clear, and so are our interactions. When we are in the middle of a strong emotion, we are not centered, and our perceptions change. Situations look different, and so we respond differently. The bubble is distorted with the emotional currents. When the strong emotions of anger, fear, confusion, etc., are suppressed, as is the case with those who have impaired vision, the bubble is also distorted, but the distortion is not recognized. The person has identified with the distorted view, and believes that it represents truth, and who they really are. In fact, it is not who they are, but just who they seem to be when functioning with the distortion. They can release the distorting aspect of the lens, and of their perceptions, and return to their true clear selves.

Nearsighted people can direct the energy outward by being more and more willing to be visible – to trust that that will be all right. In a given situation or interaction, they can see themselves as the others see them, in a sense to see themselves through the other person's eyes, so that they not only have the view from the inside looking out, but also from the outside looking in. This will give them the opportunity to step outside themselves, and see things from another point of view, and with the additional information thus gained, to use it to optimize their interactions.

It is also important to treat the other person as they themselves would like to be treated if they were in the other person's place. It isn't necessary to agree with the other person's perceptions of them, but just have the willingness to see that that's how they are being seen, and that the other person's perceptions are as important to the other person as their own are to them. In fact, the other person's perceptions might be very useful to know about.

The idea is to not feel threatened or intimidated by the environment in which the individual finds him/herself, but rather to focus more and more on letting themselves be themselves, and trusting that when they do what they really want to do, and let themselves be real, something wonderful always happens. And since that process is so important for themselves, to recognize that the same process is important for the people around them, also, that everyone is just getting better and better at being themselves.

From the nearsighted person's point of view, "WE" can really include "YOU" as equal to "I," and in fact,

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just another "I," just as important.

Farsighted people can direct the energy more inward by giving themselves the same consideration they give others. The idea is not to stop considering others, but also to consider themselves. There can be a conscious process of allowing themselves to receive without guilt – not to take, but to receive – and to express wants and feelings, and let themselves have. When receiving, there need not be the need to reciprocate, or to deny, but just to say, "Thank you," and accept unconditionally. Focus on accepting not only things, but also ideas. Notice any of the ways you have been holding things, ideas, or people away, and allow them to come closer. There can be more a focus on who they really are, in addition to their image. Image is important, but Essence must not be overlooked. Outer appearance is not more important than true sentiment, and people do appreciate honesty in feelings.

Consideration must also extend to yourself. Expressing love need not involve sacrifice. It's not necessary to come out of your space to be loved and respected. The role can be fun, but also remember the Being who is playing it, the person inside. From the farsighted person's point of view, "WE" can include "I" as equal to "YOU," and "I" can be seen as another "YOU," as well as separate and important in its own right.

Astigmatics can ask themselves from time to time, during their day, "What do I really want now? What do I really feel now? What's true for me? What's real for me? If I stop wanting to be what I'm not, who would I be? If I stop living up to other people's standards, who would I be?" If I stop pretending to be the person I've been playing, what would I be doing differently? The feeling may have been that the real person would not be accepted in the environment, by the environment in which the person finds himself or herself. Then, find out whether the feeling is real, by discontinuing the role, and being you. Either you will discover that the feeling was a misperception, and the role was unnecessary, or that the feeling was real, in which case you would then be able to migrate to an environment in which you can be yourself, and be accepted. Either way, the effect would be a greater sense of ease in being you.

There's a place in society for all of us, and if we let ourselves be real, there's a place we really fit in, where we are not only accepted, but also appreciated for who we are. We do not have to pretend to not see what's real for us. We can all allow ourselves to be more and more who we really are, to be more and more real.

With determination, and a willingness to change perceptions and their accompanying realities, any Being can transform his or her view of the world, both literally and figuratively, and return to a natural

state of clarity of vision.

Affirmations you can use (Choose one each day and repeat it to yourself that day. From time to time, read the list to yourself): My vision is improving now. I choose clarity. I know what clarity is, and I experience it more and more each day. I remember clarity, and I am returning to clarity. I notice that I see more clearly every day. I know I can see clearly now. I know that my experiences lead me to clear vision. I accept new ways of thinking and seeing which are clearer for me. Acceptance and love lead to clarity. I accept what I see, and I see more clearly. It's easier and easier to see clearly. I'm letting myself be real, and watching my vision clear. It's more and more comfortable to be myself,

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and see clearly. My mind is reaching out and bringing to my awareness any information I need to experience clear vision. I can have clear vision today. I can see clearly today. Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better. I see more clearly when I'm relaxed and centered. I see clearly when I am here now. Clarity exists here and now. Clarity is my natural state. Clarity is what is true for me. I enjoy seeing clearly. I see that everything is working perfectly. I love when I see clearly. Clarity is freedom, and being real. I see more clearly now. I see more clearly than I did before. Today I choose to see the love. When I do what I really want to do, something wonderful always happens. I trust being real, and I see clearly. I see clarity coming. I can notice clear vision today. As I clear my life, my vision clears. My vision is clearing now. I am free! My vision continues to clear as I adjust to my new state of consciousness. Instead of problems, I see solutions. I see the way things can work. Clearing my vision is easier than I thought. I know I can see clearly without eyeglasses. I agree with these statements. Affirmations always work!

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Martin Brofman, PhD, created the Body Mirror System of Healing, and A Vision Workshop, as the result of his research into the body–mind connection, and from what he learned healing himself of terminal cancer in 1975. He has been working with and teaching these methods around the world since that time. He is the author of *Anything Can Be Healed*, and *Improve Your Vision*, both published by Findhorn Press. His self–help books have been translated into ten languages.

He is the founder and director of the Brofman Foundation for the Advancement of Healing, dedicated to promoting healing in the world, and coordinating the activities of the various instructors teaching his methods. He believes and works with the idea that we are all healers, and that anything can be healed.

Poetry Techniques

By Gary R. Hess

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The style of writing poetry differs from person to person; long or short meters, three or four lines to a stanza. But the great thing is, no matter how a poem is written it still holds great emotion. Some techniques used in poetry are onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, rhyming, simile and metaphor.

Onomatopoeia is one of the easiest to learn and use (but not spell). The definition of onomatopoeia is a word imitating a sound. For example; "buzz", "moo" and "beep". This can be used in a variety of ways giving the reader a "hands on" feel.

One technique that you might be familiar with is alliteration. This procedure is used by starting three or more words with the same sound. An example of this would be "The crazy crackling crops." The three words don't have to have the exact same beginning to have this effect.

The next style is assonance. It is defined as a repetition of vowel sounds within syllables with changing consonants. This is also used in many different circumstances. One would be "tilting at windmills."

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Notice the vowels within each syllable sound the same.

Rhyming is probably the most well-known technique used. However unlike popular belief, it does not need to be within a poem to make it a poem. It is what it is.. a technique.

As for similes, they are often used within poetry. They are an expression that compares one thing to another. A paradigm of this would be "The milk tasted like pickles." This method is used in all forms of poetry and generally has the words "like" or "as."

The last but not least style is metaphor. A metaphor is a word or phrase used one way to mean another. Metaphors are sometimes hard to spot and take some thinking to figure out, but they give writers more power to express their thoughts about a certain situation. One famous case where a metaphor is used is within "The Raven" by Edgar Allen Poe. In fact, not only is it found within the story, the story itself is a metaphor of memory and the constant reminder of the narrator's loss.

These techniques are seen throughout history within both famous and amateur poems alike. To have a full grasp of poetry onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, rhyming, simile and metaphor should be household words.

Gary R. Hess is a writer for

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