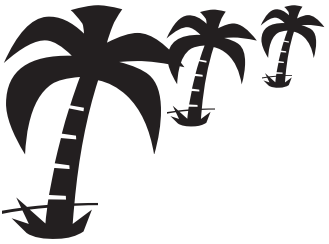

Lesson
3

Seeing Clear Images

How to
See
with
Perfect Sight
Your Comprehensive Guide

Beginning Rest & Focus

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Published by: Gloria Ginn, Founder & Director

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Lesson
3

Memory & Imagination:

Seeing Clear Images

by Gloria Ginn

> "When the memory or imagination is perfect, ... myopia is absent. When a letter or other object is remembered or imagined imperfectly, the sight is always imperfect."
>
> — William H. Bates, M.D.

Elizabeth was sitting in my vision studio, looking across the room at a blown-up photograph of a town in Norway.

The town was at the edge of a large body of water, and there were numerous boats near the pier. The roofs of the buildings were deeply slanted (to allow snow to slide off easily), and the town was surrounded by tall mountains.

But Elizabeth didn't see these details. She was nearsighted, and the photo looked blurred to her.

I suggested she use her imagination: "What kind of shingles are on the roofs? The buildings must have windows. How big or small are they?"

She scanned the photo while imagining possible details that could be in the scene. Suddenly she shrieked: "I can see the window frames! Oh, no! The whole picture is becoming clear! I can see it clearly! I can even see the masts on the boats."

When Elizabeth imagined the details in the picture, she became able to see them, and the whole photo became clear.

"Good," I replied. "Keep imagining the details."

"It's all gone away," she said. "The picture's all blurred again."

"Ignore that," I advised. "Just remember how it looked when it was clear a moment ago."

Within seconds, she squealed with delight: "It's getting clear again. There it is! I can see it!" She literally jumped up and down like a small child.

But in her excitement, she forgot the mental picture, and her vision became blurred. When she could settle down enough to imagine detail, her vision

sharpened up again.

She alternated back and forth in this way for quite some time. Every time she imagined the details, her vision cleared and she could see them. When she got too excited and forgot to imagine details, her vision would blur.

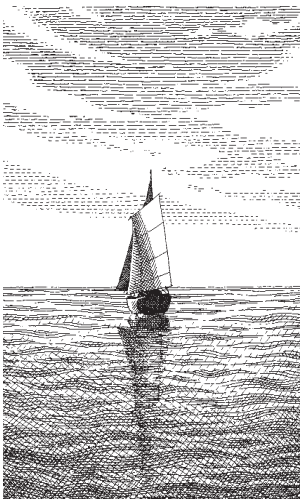
Elizabeth had discovered a truth about vision:

Imagination of perfect sight
causes perfect sight

Imagination is the missing element

Imagination is the missing element that people with perfect sight practice unconsciously, whenever they want to see more detail.

If you have ever watched a keen-sighted person look for a ship on the horizon, you have seen this in action. He leans back and shifts his gaze lazily across the ocean while he imagines the details of a ship.



The imagination of detail causes the eyes to make tiny, rapid, unconscious shifts, which enables them to see more detail.

After a few minutes of scanning in this way, the person

usually exclaims, “Oh, there it is!” as the ship comes into focus.

People with imperfect sight, on the other hand, don’t do this. Instead, they stare, strain, partly close the eyelids or in other ways try to see. The effort slows down the unconscious shifting of the eyes, and lowers the vision.

The difference between these two approaches is the difference between perfect and imperfect sight. Strain lowers the vision. Imagination improves it.

No matter how good your vision is, there will always be objects beyond your range of sight — objects too far away, too small, or in too dim of light. The question is: How will you respond to them?

If you try to see the detail, your vision will become worse immediately afterward. If you imagine the detail, your vision will become better immediately afterward. This is true whether you have perfect sight or imperfect sight.

At every moment of time, you have this choice: When looking at objects you fail to see, will you respond with a strain — or with relaxation and imagination?

Imagine a higher level of detail than what you see: the texture of the trunk, the individual fronds and

When she looked a the farther trees and imagined the fronds in perfect detail, she could see them, clearly.

leaves, veins on leaves. When you imagine smaller detail, your eyes make small, rapid shifts to find the detail, causing them to see it clearly.

Moment-to-Moment Imagination

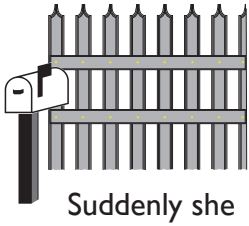
Elizabeth was a fast learner. After her experience with the Norway poster, she applied the imagination technique throughout the day.

She especially liked doing this with palm trees. She would look at the closer trees to get a good mental picture of the palm fronds. Then she imagined the same detail on the farther trees.

Because she had such a good imagination, this always brought the distant palms into sharp focus.

One day, she was getting a massage. Lying on the table with her head to one side, she looked out the window to the wooden fence on the other side of the yard.

Lazily, she began to imagine the texture of the wood, and the nails and knots. Suddenly she sat straight up and screamed, "I can see a nail on that fence!"



Suddenly she called out, "I can see a nail on that fence!"

The masseuse was surprised, and didn't quite know what to make of it until Elizabeth explained that her vision had suddenly become crystal-clear as a result of a vision technique she had been practicing, and the clarity of the vision had startled her.

Sensory Memories: Building Blocks for Imagination

Elizabeth could imagine details in a photo, the fronds on a palm tree, and the texture of a fence because she has seen similar details in the past. She had a memory of what these details might be.

Imagination is based on memory, although it goes one step beyond to combine two or more mental pictures into one new one.

For example, you have never seen a purple cow. But if

you have seen a cow (or a picture of one) and you have seen the color purple, you can put the two images together in your mind to create a brand-new image of a purple cow.

Imagination bridges the gap between the known and the unknown. If at some distance you can see a letter or object distinctly, it is possible to remember it clearly. This enables you to imagine the detail of similar objects at any distance.

Elizabeth's Imagination Technique

1. Look at object a distance at which you see imperfectly.

2. Imagine how the details would look if you were seeing them perfectly. For example, imagine the shingles on a roof, the bark or leaves on a tree, wood grain on furniture, individual hairs on a person's head, threads on fabric, etc.

   If looking at letters, imagine their blackness, the brilliant white inside and around them, the serifs or other details.

   * Start by remembering similar details which you have seen clearly at another time.

   * Then create a new mental picture of how those details would look if you were seeing them at the less favorable distance.

How Memory Improves Eyesight

> "A perfect memory changes the elongated eyeball of myopia into the shorter length of the normal eye. No matter how high a degree of myopia one may have, when he has a perfect memory of some one thing, he is no longer myopic, but has normal eyes with normal vision."
>
> — *William H. Bates, M.D.*

Have you ever tried to remember a name, and been unable to do so — only to have it pop into your mind hours later when you are relaxed and thinking of other things entirely?

That's because memory only works when the mind is relaxed. The same state of mind that produces perfect memory also produces perfect sight: A state of mental relaxation. Relaxation is the link between memory and sight.

When the sight is perfect, the memory is perfect. When the memory is perfect, the sight is perfect, because the mind is perfectly relaxed.

Perfect memory = Perfect relaxation = Perfect sight

The ease with which your memory comes to you, and the clarity the memory has, are indicators of your state of mental relaxation. The easier the recall

and the clearer it the mental picture, the greater the relaxation and the sharper the vision.

Because of this relationship between memory, relaxation and vision, you can use memory as a shortcut to improve your eyesight.

Using Memory With a Letter Card

Practice reading familiar letters in the distance every day. Even three to five minutes per day of letter practice can make a difference.

Here's how to do it:

1. Place a letter-card at a distance at which you can read at least half of the card. This may be two, ten, 15 or 20 feet away, depending on your vision.

2. Sway or do a head swing, and shift your gaze across the letters alternately from left to right. Keep blinking.

   Notice that the letters (with the whole card) appear to move in the opposite direction to the movement of your head and eyes.

3. Start at the top of the card and read each letter. Read the smallest letters you can, with each eye separately and both eyes together.

   When practicing with one eye, cover the other one with the palm of the hand. Do not put pressure on the eyeball.

4. Pick a letter from the smallest line you can read. Close your eyes and remember the letter, using one or more of the following approaches:

   - Detail: Trace the shape in your mind to get a good mental picture of the letter.
   - Color: Remember the blackness of the letters or the whiteness inside and/or around them.
   - Motion: Remember the motion of the letters and the card against the background.

5. Open your eyes and look again at the letter. Continue swaying or doing a head swing. If successful, the letter will be clearer, and you may be able to read letters on the next line.

6. Keep a record of your progress.

Daily letter practice restores the vision

Dr. Bates discovered that the daily reading of a familiar test card — all by itself — restores perfect sight in all children under age 12 who have

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* Children who have worn glasses take longer and may need additional techniques.

Tips for Best Results

- **Don't strain to remember!** If you make an effort, your memory will not be perfect. Perfect memory comes easily.
- **Shift to break the stare**. After you see each letter, close your eyes quickly, then open them and shift to another letter on that line or the one below it.
- **Keep your peripheral vision open**. Be aware of the periphery outside of the card. If you sway, this will be easier, because the peripheral objects will appear to move.

  Never try to concentrate, or "narrow in" your gaze. It is not necessary to block out the periphery to focus on a detail. You can only be focused when you see both the detail and its periphery.

never worn glasses.*

This system has been used successfully in public schools, in trials with thousands of children. A test card is placed in the classrooms, and the children read it every day using this method.

In the first year of its application at one school district noted a 71 percent reduction in the number of children becoming myopic.

The use of a test card formed the core of Doctor Bates' method. But you do not need an official Snellen test card. You can use any sign with various sizes of letters (see example on page 10).

Use Familiar Letters

Memorizing the letters is not cheating!
Memory helps vision

Concerned that you are memorizing the letters? Don't be. Contrary to popular belief, it is not cheating to use familiar letters. The mind relaxes when it looks at something it can remember or imagine from past experience. Familiarity encourages relaxation, which improves the eyesight.

The mind strains when it is confronted with the unfamiliar.* This mental strain produces eyestrain and imperfect sight. Dr. Bates explains:

> "When the eye regards an unfamiliar object, an error of refraction is always produced. Hence the proverbial fatigue caused by viewing pictures, or other objects, in a museum.
>
> "Children with normal eyes (who can read perfectly small letters a quarter of an inch high at ten feet) always have trouble reading strange writing on the blackboard, although the letters may be two inches high.
>
> "A strange map, or any map, has the same effect. I have never seen a child or a teacher who could look at a map at the distance without becoming nearsighted."

---

* The book **Magical Child**, by Joseph Chilton Pearce, describes why this may be so, due to the neural pathways of the brain and how they are formed.

Make Your World Familiar

Many people live in an unfamiliar world each day. They look, but they do not see. Even though they may drive or walk by the same sights daily, the details do not register on the mind, due to the habit of being inattentive.

The sooner you can make an object familiar, the sooner you can see it with perfect sight.

So notice details. Make them familiar. Memorize them, so you can imagine more detail in your visual world. And watch your vision improve.

"Just Like Iowa"

While in Hawaii many years ago, I overheard one tourist say to another, "Why look, Mabel — it looks just like Iowa!" At the time, I couldn't believe my ears. It didn't really look like Iowa.

Now, however, I understand. Those people were looking for something familiar, so they could relax and explore the unfamiliar.

Sensory vs. Abstract Memory

You can remember an apple without any sensory impressions of it, just as you can recall there is a clock in your bedroom, without having a mental picture of it. This is an abstract memory, and it is not useful for improving vision.

The kind of memory which does improve eyesight is sensory memory, the sensory impression recorded by one or more of the five senses: vision, hearing, taste, touch and smell. A sensory memory of an apple will include a mental picture of it, and/or the memory of the smell, taste, and/or sound produced when biting into it.

Any sensory memory helps

A sensory memory improves eyesight. Recalling a musical piece or the smell, taste, or touch sensation works as well as a visual memory. You may find that one of the nonvisual senses is an easier memory to cultivate, and therefore more beneficial for improving vision.

Three Visual Components

The whole world of perception can be broken down into three fundamental visual components. Each of these can be used as a memory device to improve eyesight:

1. Color (including light intensity, or value)
2. Detail (texture, lines, form)
3. Motion (when applicable)

Minds are different. What is easy for one person to imagine may be difficult for another, and vice versa. You may have more of an affinity for any one of these attributes (color, motion or form). So use what's easiest for YOU.

Five Ways to Improve Your Mental Pictures

> "Those persons with a high degree of near-sightedness may not improve until the memory or the imagination of one known letter has improved to a considerable degree."
>
> *— William H. Bates, M.D.*

A perfect memory produces perfect eyesight every time. What is a perfect memory? It is when the color, size, shape and detail are remembered exactly the way they were seen.

But even an imperfect memory improves the vision. The improvement thus gained makes it possible to imagine a clearer mental picture. Vision helps memory. Memory helps vision. And a positive cycle is set in motion.

Because the clarity of imagination determines the clarity of vision, you will benefit by improving the quality of your mental pictures. Here are five ways to do that:

1. Take Quick "Snapshots"

Light travels faster than sound. If you look at a detail for only a split-second, you must rely on your visual input to remember it. So quick glances encourage the development of mental pictures.

- Face a window or brightly-colored objects with your eyes closed.

- Open your eyes for just a fraction of a second, then quickly close them again. With your closed eyes, you may have a fairly good mental picture of what you have just seen, although the image may fade quickly when you first practice this.
- Repeat. With practice, your mental pictures will last longer, and gradually become continuous.

> "The more perfectly a letter is remembered or imagined, the better becomes the sight. When a letter is remembered or imagined as well with the eyes openas with the eyes closed, a maximum amount of improvement in the vision is obtained."
>
> *— William H. Bates, M.D.*

Starting with no mental pictures, Brenda practiced this for 10-15 minutes per day, and developed a photographic memory in two months.

2. Imagine Smaller Detail

The smaller the detail you imagine, the clearer your mental picture will be. Instead of trying to imagine a house, recall the wood grain in the door, or the shape of the doorknob.

3. Imagine Texture

It may be easier for you to imagine detail when looking at a complex, texture-rich surface such as leaves or bark on a tree, blades of grass, or tiles on a roof. The imagination of the texture within an object improves

the eyesight for all other objects, including letters.

To practice directly on letters, look at a newspaper ten feet away, and imagine the white spaces between the lines and words, or how the tiny letters would appear if you were seeing them perfectly.

4. Imagine Lines

If you find it difficult to imagine the texture of a complex surface, you may be able to imagine straight lines more easily.

One man's vision always improved right away whenever he looked at a line — any line — such as the horizon, the railing of a balcony, a window frame, the edge of a desk or the line formed where the ceiling meets the wall. Experiment!

5. Use the Sense of Touch

Using other senses helps the imagination for certain people. Here are some ideas:

- One woman's eyesight consistently improved when she imagined how it would feel to run her fingers across the surface of the object, such as a rock, the bark on a tree trunk, metal chain-link fencing, etc.

  By imagining how the texture would feel, she could imagine how it would look. And following her imaginary fingers kept her shifting from point to point instead of staring.

- Another approach is to hold an object in your hands, such as a child's wooden block with raised letters. With eyes closed, trace the shape with your fingers to stimulate mental pictures.

The Habit of Imagining a High Level of Detail

People with perfect sight are habitually curious about a high level of detail in what they see.

My brother always had 20/10 vision (better than normal). While we were hiking in Colorado, I noticed his eyes sparkled as he scanned the scenery on that clear, bright August day. "How's your vision?" I asked. It had been years since I'd seen him, and I wondered if he still had perfect sight.

"It's good," he replied, "As good as it's always been."

"What goes on in your mind when you are looking out there?" I asked.

He pointed two tall rocks with a thin gap between them, on the top of a hill about ten miles away, and said "I was wondering why that tree is growing out of the bottom of the right side of that crack."

I was amazed. I had noticed the rocks, but that's as far as my curiosity went. But he had such a high level of curiosity for such small detail, no wonder he had 20/10 vision.

Later, as we walked back down the mountain, he pointed to the spruce trees: “See how the needles at the ends of the branches are turning brown and falling off?” he asked.

“Yes — now that you mention it,” I admitted.

“That tells us there’s going to be a heavy snowfall this winter,” he explained.

He had noticed that the years when the trees shed some of their needles were followed by heavy snows. Makes sense, since the snow would drop off more easily, without breaking the branches. But who would notice? Obviously, someone with better-than-normal vision, that’s who.

No wonder the elders in native societies are looked upon with such great respect. They spent their whole lives noticing details such as this, and consequently are repositories of wisdom of great value to their community.

This high level of curiosity for detail always accompanies better-than-normal sight. Or it may be more accurate to say that better-than-normal sight always accompanies a high level of curiosity for detail.

Are you imagining — or trying to see?

The curiosity for detail can lead you down one of two paths: imagining detail or trying to see it. The first path leads to ever-better

sight; the later to lowered vision. Take your pick.

Many people believe they are imagining detail when in reality they are simply staring at a point, trying to see it.

The proof is in the result. If you are imagining detail, you will see more clearly. If you are trying to see detail, your vision will become worse.

When confronted with objects beyond their range of sight, the normal-sighted person imagines the detail whereas the person with imperfect sight tries to see it.

So imitate the person with normal sight. Get in the habit of imagining a higher level of detail in what you see. You will then have perfect sight continuously.