

A Journey Out of Blindness

by Melissa Moody

Meir Schneider, PhD, LMT, knows from experience that each of us possesses the innate power to take control of our lives and create health. Meir Schneider can see. People might say this is a miracle, but Schneider doesn't think so. As a Braille-reading teenager, he worked hard to acquire the visual behaviors that allowed his badly damaged eyes to see for the first time. Since then, he has guided thousands of people to recovery from vision problems and other health challenges.

Schneider was born with dense cataracts clouding the lenses of both eyes. Other conditions soon became evident—glaucoma, farsightedness, and nystagmus, an involuntary fluttering of the eyes. After five unsuccessful surgeries in early childhood, doctors gave up, and eventually he was issued a blindness certificate, marked "Valid Permanently."

At age 16, he met two remarkable people, a teenager who learned the eye exercises of the Bates Method from a book and used them to clear up his own nearsightedness, and a woman who created movement and self-massage techniques to overcome degenerative problems of her own and others. Against the advice of family and friends, Schneider practiced the eye exercises up to 13 hours a day. He added movement exercises and self-massage: the result was a full-scale exploration of the needs of his eyes and body. "It was bliss," he says.

After six months of enthusiastic work, his blurry world of lights and shadows began to sort itself into objects. For the first time he could even see the details of his own face in the mirror—teenage acne and all. Within 18 months, he started reading normal-size print. A few years later, he passed his driving test, "the happiest day of my life," he says.

As he discovered that his eyesight could improve—despite the certainty of his family, friends, and doctors that it could not—Schneider started to sense that the body as a whole has a much greater potential for recovery than anyone gives it credit for. He came to believe that many chronic illnesses can be overcome with simple exercises, and that pain and injury can be ameliorated, reduced, and even eliminated with a combination of deep consciousness and movement.

As he worked to gain functional eyesight, Schneider explored what he could do to help others with pain and limited movement problems—migraines, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, post-polio, arthritis and others. Just as he saw his vision could improve, he could see that others could improve or regain their function. And this could happen without medication or invasive surgery. Schneider points out that while conventional medical solutions "... have side effects, exercise and consciousness only have benefits." Eventually his discoveries developed into the Meir Schneider Method of Self-Healing through Bodywork and Movement, a healthcare system that he teaches worldwide, and with others at his School for Self-Healing in San Francisco.



"Above all, we're teaching an awareness of movement," Schneider says. "Most degenerative conditions, in my opinion, are diseases of insidious movement loss. We learn to tolerate long periods of immobility until we lose awareness of all the ways we could move and feel unwilling to move any more than we have to. Of the body's 600 muscles we grossly over-use about 50 and under-use the rest. In my work, we re-program movement habits, and teach a relaxed, balanced use of the body and eyes. It's a whole-body approach. If we loosen up a tight neck, we can help a headache, but we can also prevent glaucoma, retinal problems, and age-related blindness because these are complications of poor blood flow. To relieve back pain, we may teach a different use of the legs. I have learned that the body is more capable of healing itself than we can ever imagine."

This spring explore accessing, developing and believing in the ability to heal yourself. Movement, massage and vision improvement therapies, combined with visual-imagery, proper breathing techniques and inner work create a powerful, intuitive, effective regimen for improving health and function.

The School for Self-Healing is nonprofit 501c3 public benefit corporation at 2218 48th Ave, San Francisco, CA, 94116. 415/665-9574 or www.self-healing.org. Melissa Moody is Director of Education and Development at the School for Self-Healing. She used Meir's Self-Healing Method to recover from a near fatal auto/pedestrian accident causing nine years of total disability, melissa@self-healing.org

VISION
m a g a z i n e

1281 University Avenue, Suite G
San Diego, California 92103