

Upgrade Your Eyesight – Claudia Muehlenweg – Best of 2022

Dave Asprey:

Now our guest today is Claudia Muehlenweg. Claudia, I'm really happy that you're here, too, because most people don't even know you can hack your eyes. And it changed my whole brain when I did it. And I think that there's been some improvements in the field, not just the visual field, but the entire field of vision, since I did that work a long time ago.

Dave:

I really want people to A, know that it's possible; and B, know how to do it from this show. So give me the story. How is it possible? How did you get into this?

Claudia:

Okay. So, of course, I had glasses. I was three years old, when I got my first pair of glasses. I hated them. I got bullied. I got teased. I grew up in the '60s. I'm 61 years old, by the way, in chronological age. And back then, nobody wore glasses. Like one kid in my school had glasses who was super smart.

Claudia:

When I became a teenager, I was determined to get rid of them. And I found a book, literally. This is a book that was from a California woman that I found in Germany in a bookstore, the only book I ever found, and that was all about... It was called Visionetics. It was all about relaxing your mind, body, and eyes to see better.

Claudia:

And I started doing these practices, and it didn't take that long, and I was out of glasses. However, then I was in high school and my exams, super stressed out, really worried. I was not a good student. I had to practice like crazy, all the hours at the near point. And my vision got really blurry.

Claudia:

So I pulled the book out again, and it worked again. I was no glasses in my 20s. And then in my late 30s, I was in a very challenging marriage. I ended up getting a divorce, a single mom, no sleep, super stress. You can get the story, and I was back in glasses.

Claudia:

And then I thought like, "Okay. Now I'm 40, normal, like nothing you can do." And then I had this epiphany. One day I went to a party. I tried to date. It's Los Angeles. Right? Everybody's good-looking, and I felt really isolated and lonely. I got home and I took my glasses off, and my vision was so blurry, like worse than it ever was before. And I was like, "This does not feel right." Like it's worse than before I put the glasses on.

Claudia:

So I pulled out that book and I started doing the practices, and then eventually I found a teacher to help me restore my eyesight. And it took a little longer when I was in my 40s, than it was back then as a teenager, but it works.

Dave:

I really wish someone had told me this. Starting around sixth grade, I needed glasses, but I didn't want them for the same reasons as you. And things are a little bit more accepted now. But back then, if you wore glasses, it was just considered that you were a nerd. Actually I was a nerd, so there's that.

Dave:

But I just memorized the eye chart. So they'd take me in for the eye exam and I would just read with the finest line. It didn't matter. Right? Because you could just know what the letters were. And finally, in about eighth grade, I was like, "I can't... I even know why people sit in class, because you look up, it's just all this swampy stuff." You don't know your vision is bad. Right? Unless it's really bad.

Dave:

So I finally ended up wearing glasses through, geez, all the way through I think all of college. So it was one of those things that I probably would've been a much better student at a critical time had I either worn glasses or just done the exercises. Does eye training work for teens and for kids?

Claudia:

Oh, yes, totally. I mean with kids, it's really more about making it games, because... This is such a big topic really. Vision is all about curiosity and being interested and you have to be... This is the point of relaxation, I was making earlier. Our central nervous system can only relax when we feel safe.

Claudia:

And if you had like an adverse childhood event, or some trauma, or just being bullied is stressful for a kid. So you don't feel safe. And then your nervous system literally blurs out the world. It's not so much eye exercises for kids really. It's more finding like what is the root cause? Like why are they so stressed out? And sometimes it's just pressure to be good in school, or whatever it is.

Dave:

It's interesting. I look back at how much vision affects everyone's life. My grandmother, who just turned 100, tells a story of how she thought she'd never date or marry a man because she had bottle-cap glasses. I come from a family of nerds, if you guys haven't guessed.

Dave:

[inaudible 00:00:06:29] a nuclear engineer. How many 100-year-old nuclear engineer women do you know? Right? And she left her glasses behind on her first date, because she didn't want to be wearing them, and couldn't see any street signs to get home. So they ended up spending the whole night walking around Chicago, because she couldn't identify where she lived because she couldn't see. So maybe wearing glasses or not wearing glasses might get you a spouse. Who knows?

Dave:

But I look at the impact of it on that. And then all sorts of stress that people have, they don't even know they have. Because if you can't see something you're supposed to be able to see, you get stressed. But you don't even know why. Like something's not right. It's a remarkably foundational aspect to the way you interface with reality.

Dave:

And you actually went and studied at the College of Vision Education in London, which I did not know exists. Can you tell me what the coursework was based on? Like how did they know any of this stuff works?

Claudia:

Yeah. Basically all vision improvement is really based on the Bates method. And Dr. Bates was an ophthalmologist who lived 100 years ago. He was in New York. He was a professor at Columbia, and he got really interested in this, when he noticed that some of his patients improved their eyesight, especially if they didn't wear the glasses he prescribed them.

Claudia:

So he got really interested. He's like, "I didn't learn this in ophthalmology school." So he researched more and more, and he found that the root cause of vision problems is a strain. So when you think of the other senses. Right? Hearing, smelling, touching, we don't really make an effort. But somehow with vision, which is our main sense. For seeing people, it's the main sense that we use. There is other strains. So he devised this method, the Bates method, which is based on relaxation, and mostly relaxation of the mind.

Claudia:

Vision is 90% mind, and only 10% eyes. And he developed his own method. Of course, he was an esteemed professor. He actually found adrenaline. Like he was a serious researcher doctor. They kicked him out of the Ophthalmology Association because he was talking crazy stuff. Back then, even 100 years ago, they thought he was crazy.

Claudia:

So this is really what all vision improvement is based on, on this method. And now I forgot your question.

Dave:

It was mostly about what it was based on.

Claudia:

Yeah.

Dave:

And as a side note, I have done a lot of work based on Bates method. But if you go to Wikipedia right now, it says like almost every functional medicine and alternative approach that actually works... Wikipedia, which there's about oh, 100 angry trolls who control a lot of the content on there. And they call all of it quackery. So it says right there on Wikipedia, which is not a reliable source any more so than Google anymore, that the Bates method is bunk.

Dave:

That is not the case. It is shockingly effective. One of the other data points that made me want to have you on the show... Oh, I should mention that I first heard about you because you were on Anna Cabeca's

show recently as well. But the reason I wanted to have you on is... There's a guy named Meir Schneider who wrote a book called, *Yoga for Your Eyes*, many years ago.

Dave:

And I had him come and speak at the anti-aging nonprofit that I used to run. And this guy's had 200 surgeries on his eyes, and his retinas are like shattered mirrors. He should be legally blind, but he rewired his brain to see around all of that. And he has a driver's license, and is fully functional like anyone else. And I did incorporate some of his exercises, which are probably similar to the ones that you are going to show with some updates from all of your work.

Dave:

Guys, this stuff fundamentally works. And anyone who says it doesn't work, went through the worst, most religious dogmatic thing that so many scientists do now, which is, "That doesn't work because it can't." That's just irrational. It's anti-science. It's, "What evidence do you have that it works?" And it turns out there's a lot of evidence, and we've been doing this now for only 140 years.

Dave:

So, hmm. A Columbia University doctor. "No, it can't possibly work." It does. I wanted to give a little shout-out to the history of this.

Claudia:

But I love that you said that about Wikipedia, because there's actually a book that I love. And I know listeners cannot see this, but it was created by the American Vision Institute, which was three Behavioral Optometrists and a scientist. And they even wrote about the danger of corrective glasses.

Dave:

Wow.

Claudia:

And this was published by Simon & Schuster in the '90s.

Dave:

Do your eyes get weaker if you wear glasses? Is that just a rule?

Claudia:

They don't get weaker. Basically what happens is that... Like I said, the strain is the root cause. You're making an effort. Now the glasses allow you to strain, right, and still give you clarity. So I call the glasses pills for the eyes. You know, when you take pills for some kind of condition, for let's say heartburn. You eat all the bad foods and you get heartburn, but you don't address the root cause, which is your gut issues and your fat digestion.

Claudia:

So that's what happens. It's like you're straining and you still get rewarded with clarity. There's no feedback like, "Hey, maybe take a little break from the computer, or maybe go outside, or do

something." You know? It's not even so much getting weaker, if that makes sense. In fact, there's usually more tension.

Dave:

So it's about strain in the eyes. I didn't recognize where I carried tension anywhere in my body. I had massive problems with my bite alignment and I've covered how changing your bite can completely transform your health. And I had tons of visual strain. I was kind of seeing through a narrow tunnel vision. I had no peripheral vision to speak of. And I just didn't understand how much effort that I was using to see, because I had always used that.

Dave:

So if you're listening to the show right now, you have no idea how much effort you're using to see unless you know a different state. And a lot of biohacking is showing your body, maybe with technology, maybe with a certain technique, what it feels like to be in a state that's maybe better than your baseline. But until you felt it, your baseline feels perfectly okay.

Dave:

And this is literally, if you grew up in a small 10 X 10 cell, that's actually okay because that's all you've ever known. You just wouldn't know more. So if you ever ask yourself that question, "What else is possible?" Well, it's possible to have ridiculously good vision without lenses. Can people who wear glasses now reverse their vision problems to the point they can get rid of glasses, no matter their age?

Claudia:

I would never say that, to be honest. I say you can always improve your vision. You can always drop diopters.

Dave:

Yeah.

Claudia:

Can everybody at any age completely? I don't think so, really. I totally want to be honest. Because I have a 90-year-old in my program, and she doesn't wear glasses much, and her vision has improved. But can she get completely rid of glasses, I don't know.

Claudia:

Also, here's the thing. It's not a quick fix. It's not a pill. You have to do the work. And I don't like the word "work." But you have to do it. Right? You have to be committed to making this a priority for yourself, and not find excuses why... I always say, you brush your teeth twice a day, at least, I hope, for two minutes, and you floss. But sometimes you'd be like, "Oh, two minutes a day. That's too much time for my eyes." You know? So that's important. You have to make it a priority.

Claudia:

I do want to say thank you for reminding us of what feels normal. Because I call them strains and gains. And I always ask my students, "Do you notice that your vision varies?" And most people that don't wear

glasses yet, they're like, "Yeah, of course my vision varies. Like sometimes it's more clear and sometimes it's a little bit more blurry."

Claudia:

And some people are like, "No, no. My vision never varies. It's always exactly the same." And that's what you're describing. There's no sense of being in tune with your eyesight, or being in tune with your body.

Dave:

Anyone who says their vision never changes, it just means they're not paying attention to their vision. They haven't developed what one guest called meta awareness. Like having little will process observing the quality of your vision. And I noticed substantial changes, even from things like toxins. We know that when you're exposed to microtoxins from toxic mold, that it will actually change your ability to see subtle shades of gray.

Dave:

And it's one of the diagnostic things. Are you getting neurotoxins? Lyme disease does something similar. And you're not going to notice that, but if you look at a grid that actually makes it very apparent. You're like, "Oh, wow." So it's just about having the awareness. And in terms of ability to focus when your eyes are tired, or you're not making enough energy, you should see...

Dave:

Like when you're hungover, your vision is a little blurry. It's not because of a lack of tears. It's because of a lack of function in the cells. Right?

Claudia:

Exactly. And the liver. Yes.

Dave:

You said, "and on the liver"?

Claudia:

Yeah. I mean the liver and the eyes are connected. You know? And now even Western medicine realizes that. Like you said, the whole detox pathways. The eyes are the only part in the body where we can look inside without surgery. Right? We can look at the retina, and we can evaluate somebody's health. So that's very unique.

Claudia:

But also the eyes are one of the most sensitive structures. That's why often diseases are found first in the eyes, before any blood work or symptoms show up.

Dave:

We actually just had a study come out that they think they can spot Alzheimer's and Parkinson's in the eyes, way before you see any other symptoms, which makes total sense. What are the signs that someone should look for that they might have eye problems?

Claudia:

Yeah. The most common one is eye strain, and blurry vision, and headaches sometimes. That's the most common. What else would I say? That's pretty much it. If you notice your vision is more blurry, like I did. Right? I noticed when I was out of glasses and then I was at my high school exams, and I was reading. I was in the train looking up and everything completely blurry. And I was freaking out. I was like, "I have to do something. I don't want to ever be back in glasses."

Claudia:

Here's the thing. Eyes are the light receivers. It's just like our ears are sound receivers. So it's easy and effortless. Vision is, there's no effort. And if your eyes feel tired or strained at the end of the day, or even in the morning, then you know that something isn't right.

Dave:

Got it. And what about things like dry eyes? Feeling like you have sand in your eyes? I always had dry eyes, but it seems like after... I had LASIK in the late '90s, that really was bad for my vision. But I felt after that, they got even worse. Is dryness or itchiness related to vision?

Claudia:

So first of all, dry eye is a super common side effect of LASIK. Dry eye and also halos around lights at night.

Dave:

I got both of those for two years.

Claudia:

Yeah. Yeah.

Dave:

It was terrible. I don't recommend that surgery.

Claudia:

Yeah. I don't either. Here's the thing. I give you guys already a simple strategy, blinking. One of my dearest friends, he passed away three years ago at 101, and he never wore glasses. Always had perfect vision, despite both his parents were wearing glasses, and he blinked every second. And so I recommend every two to three seconds, but most people especially when you look on screens. You know that's like the staring happening. That is two to three times per minute. They even did studies.

Dave:

Yeah.

Claudia:

So sometimes it's as simple as blinking more, and then getting your Omega 3 fatty acids, and I know you're all about that. Right? Getting that into your diet. Because tears are not water. They have an oily, that's to them. Like a fat component.

Dave:

I just rub sticks of butter in my eyes, and I feel like I'm good all day. Is that normal? Okay. Maybe not. Now, it feels like dry eye can contribute. And I've seen the same studies that say, "Look, you just stare at a screen, and you stop blinking." So you can teach yourself to blink more often, although that's probably hard to do. I'm guessing it's an unconscious reflex, but I'm sure it can be trained.

Claudia:

It can be trained. I didn't used to blink. And initially, I had stickers on my computer. In my books, I had like bookmarks. When I'm trying to do like an Instagram, where I'm trying to stare, I can't even do it anymore. You can train it. It's like breathing. You can also improve your breath, even though it's an auto... What is it called? Automatic process.

Dave:

Yeah. Or automatic, or autonomic.

Claudia:

Yes.

Dave:

Now there's a bunch of different eye drops. Before we get into relaxing the eyes and some of the vision training things, are there any eye drops that you recommend as being helpful?

Claudia:

I mean, as homeopathic eyedrops, I usually say do something we're going to talk about a little bit later, as palming, resting your eyes, blinking more, doing the Omega 3 fatty acids, really making sure that you get that into your diet. Those things are what I usually recommend first. And I even had clients that had from LASIK, for instance, or even not LASIK, prescription eye drops. Completely weaned themselves off of the eye drops.

Claudia:

So if a doctor prescribed you eye drops for glaucoma or something, then please don't just randomly stop the eye drops. But usually homeopathic ones is what I would recommend. I always try the actual methods first. You know the better habits versus using eye drops, because you train your eyes not to tear as much, when you use eye drops. That said, before you get super dry eyes and you scratch your cornea, then, yes. Use the eye drops.

Dave:

Right. There's the eye drop for lubrication. I take some supplements: some Lutein and Zeaxanthin, and actually a lot of Astaxanthin, which comes with krill oil to support my eyes. A lot of it. Like 20 milligrams of Astaxanthin a day. But I also use Eyebright drops, which is an herb that helps your eyes.

Claudia:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave:

And I have used, but I'm not using Can-C drops, Can-C. And I've also used drops with Carnosine in them, that stop the yellowing and aging of the cornea. And so there's interesting things you can do to extend the life of the eyes. None of those are prescription. Those are all natural products, but they're not homeopathic. And I notice a big difference, especially with Eyebright, just in clarity, the next day after I use it.

Dave:

So it feels like there's ways you can probably support the eyes. There's MSM eyedrops. Any of those stand out as being useful? Or is that kind of outside of [crosstalk 00:20:49]?

Claudia:

No, no, no. You're right. You're right. Definitely Eyebright is a natural herb. I was kind of considering that as a homeopathic.

Dave:

Right.

Claudia:

Part of that protocol. I was talking more about the fake tears that... I don't recommend those.

Dave:

Yeah. I don't like those either.

Claudia:

No. What you mentioned is all good. And even Castro Oil at night in the eyes can actually help with cataracts, or just overall dryness. And Carbon 60 is a really powerful antioxidant that you can also use. You're absolutely right with what you're doing.

Dave:

You talked about palming, which is one of those really important things. But palming is only one of the three big things you talk about to have a healthy mind and healthy vision. Can you tell me the big three? And let's get into palming, what that is.

Claudia:

Well, so the big three, I can come up with a list of five and seven. But the big three is really light, rest, and movement.

Dave:

Okay.

Claudia:

So the eyes need rest that is calming. We need sunlight, and I know you're big on sunlight, too. We do need natural light, and there's so many studies now. And I think even traditional medicine, whatever

you want to call it, have now realized that sunlight is not as bad as we thought it would be. And then movement.

Claudia:

A really, really important piece of good vision is movement. Your eyes are basically moving all the time, if you have good vision. If you don't have good vision, you're probably trying to stop movement from happening. So those are the big three.

Dave:

Okay. So it's how you move your eyes or your body, or both?

Claudia:

Both. Really both. The eyes make these little vibrational movements called Socratic eye movements. And much like blinking and breathing, they can be improved with practices that I teach, another part of the Bates method. However, you do them automatically. They're the heartbeat of the eyes, except that we want them to be fast. We want the heartbeat to be usually slow. But, yeah.

Claudia:

People with poor vision have a habit of trying to see... Now we're getting a little bit into the anatomy. But they're trying to see a big area clear at once. And our phobia, which is the teeny, tiny part in the retina where we have perfect clear vision is about the size of a pinhead. So when I look at you on the screen here and I look at your right eye, yes, I can see everything else in my room.

Claudia:

But I cannot see your left eye as clear as your right eye. So I would have to shift my attention. So yes, you definitely want to move your body with your eyes, and that's also connected to stigmatism. You mentioned that earlier, that you had a stigmatism. So there's a research that was done in the '80s, actually. When people habitually move their eyes in one direction without moving their head along, that's the axis of the stigmatism that you develop.

Claudia:

And you can maybe look on your prescription, everybody listening, and see what kind of axis you have in your stigmatism, which is the... In your prescription, if it says axis and cylinder, you have a stigmatism.

Dave:

Interesting. So it's all about proper movement of the eyes. I've done a couple episodes recently on functional movement of your feet or of your body. And it turns out functional movement of your eyes is probably more important than either one of those. But they're integrally linked. When I changed how I moved my eyes, it changed how I moved my body kind of automatically, which was a little bit surprising.

Dave:

And that's why some of the exercises I thought sounded really stupid. Because they involved a physical movement and closing your eyes or palming your eyes. And I'm thinking like, "Why am I doing this? Is this guy making me move like a clown here?"

Dave:

But it's like, "Why am I exhausted for six hours after my eye training?" Because my brain was rewiring itself. So it was really profound stuff. That's hard to talk about without having you on the show as an expert. So we have rest. We have light. We have movement. Let's talk about some techniques that people can use to give their eyes real rest. What's your favorite?

Claudia:

Well, palming is kind of the key component of the Bates method. And so that's what I recommend and that works for a lot of people to just lubricate your eyes, to feel more refreshed, and rejuvenated. And do you want me to demonstrate it, or just talk it through?

Dave:

I'll tell you what, criticize my technique. I'll explain what I'm doing. I want you to tell me what I'm doing wrong. All right?

Claudia:

Okay. Let me see.

Dave:

Okay. So first thing I'm doing is I'm warming up my hands by rubbing them together. The Chi master guys, like Dr. Barry would be happy with that. After they're warm, I'm going to put them over my eyes. I'm cupping my eyes, so I'm not touching my eyes. I'm making a little cup over them. And if I open my eyes, I can't see even a tiny bit of light. And if I close my eyes, I can't see that. And then if I wasn't talking, I would take a couple deep breaths. How'd I do?

Claudia:

That sounds good. I would probably cross my hands a little bit more over the forehead, so that your nose has a little bit more space.

Dave:

Oh, okay. So I'm-

Claudia:

Yeah. There you go.

Dave:

Yeah.

Claudia:

Yeah. There you go.

Dave:

[inaudible 00:25:24]. You know what? I've always not crossed my hands, until you just taught me that. Thank you. See, I knew there was something to learn here. So this is kind of a cool look. Like take a

screenshot. So, yes. I look a little ridiculous. I have done this in board meetings, and people like, "What are you doing?" I'm like, "Restoring my vision." How long should you have your hands over your eyes to make it work?

Claudia:

See, this is a question. I always say, "It depends." You can do it as long you want, and you can do it for a minute, or just a couple of breaths. Everybody is different. And I noticed, for instance, in my own vision journey, when I did it in the morning, it took me just a minute for my eyes to feel really fresh and lubricated.

Claudia:

In the evening, it took me sometimes 30 minutes. Because I used to work as a designer in a job I didn't like, in a stressful environment. And I was just tired at the end of the day. So it depends. Some people do best with like five times a day for one minute. And other people do best with one little bit longer session.

Dave:

I like to do it when I'm driving. Is that a good idea?

Claudia:

That's a great idea, if you're in the backseat. Yes.

Dave:

Actually, here's a suggestion. I'm going to let you guys into my real biohacking secrets. When you go in and use the bathroom, you're probably going through Instagram, which is slowly rotting your mind away. Or instead of having to wash your phone, like you have to wash your hands when you're done going to the bathroom, you could just palm your eyes for a minute and see how much better your eyes get when you're in the oval office, so to speak.

Claudia:

Oh, my God. David, that's awesome, That's great, because I was just teaching an episode on habits and I said, how you can combine habits you're already doing. Like going the bathroom. So I coined like, "Pee and Palm."

Dave:

I love it. "Pee and Palm." It's another one of the unfair advantages that women have.

Claudia:

Or you can do toothbrush. Like "brush and blink." You know, when you brush your teeth. Like combine some things that you're already doing. And just remind yourself, "Oh, this is a great time to do some like quick butterfly blinking or something."

Dave:

I'm feeling sort of left out. Because if I tried to do palming while I was peeing, I could only cover one eye. It doesn't work the way it does for you.

Claudia:

Then sit down.

Dave:

Oh, I could sit down. That's too easy. I need government support for this problem. Come on, guys. This is at least \$1,000 a month in inflation of our currency that I should get. I mean, come on.

Dave:

Now, that was palming. And we talked about how long. Do at least a couple breaths, maybe a minute. And if you do it for a minute, it's kind of interesting. Your mind can wander and like, "How are my eyes?" And you really focus on your eyes and focus on your breath.

Dave:

And I do this sometimes as part of meditation practice. It's a real thing. And if I'm like in a big box store... Or movie theaters now have LED lights behind the projector, and they're really... Between the jerky cameras and the blinking lights that you can't see that are blinking, that are very rich and blue. My eyes get tired in something like that. So I'll palm my eyes in the middle of a movie during the boring parts, where there's kissing and stuff. Oh, gross. I'm just kidding.

Claudia:

I do want to say really important with palming is too that your mind is... I had a client. She always listened to CNN doing the 2016 debates. And like, "You want your mind to relax." So I always say you can definitely observe your breath or something like that. Or just like, like I do it in meditation as well. Right? But you can also just bring up a happy memory. Like something where, you're like, "Oh, yeah."

Claudia:

Like imagine you're at the beach, or you're at a favorite place, or with a favorite person. You want to relax your mind. Because if your mind is stressed or thinking about all the stuff you have to do, you're not going to get the same results.

Dave:

I do have the CNN palming technique, that I'm a big fan of. You rub your hands together and then when CNN is on, you cover your ears instead of your eyes. And then everything's better. Your body relaxes. It's crazy.

Claudia:

That's so funny. Oh, my God.

Dave:

All right. So that's the number one relaxation exercise. What are some other ways you can give your eyes a little break during the day?

Claudia:

Sunlight and movement are also relaxation practices. Just as palming is rest for the eyes. So other things you can do, obviously you want to shift your attention around. Your eyes were never meant to look at one point for a long, long, long time. So moving your attention around. I have my computer against the window. I just have to look up, and I look outside.

Claudia:

And your peripheral vision. This is another big topic we haven't talked about. Good vision is both the central focus, and the peripheral field. And a lot of times now, especially when you wear glasses, you might feel this kind of tunnel vision. Have you ever been next to somebody who's working on a computer, and you sat next to them.

Claudia:

And they're not even noticing that you're there, and you're like tapping them on the shoulder. They're like, "Oh, my God." This is a sign that you don't have peripheral vision. That you don't have an open field of visual awareness. So that's really important to practice, and we have different things that we do for that.

Dave:

Now, as I was hearing you say that, so I'm making eye contact with you on my screen. People think I'm looking at the camera. But what I do is I have a monitor about three feet behind my camera. So I don't have to look really close in, and I have your face on that, right behind the camera so I can see most of your face, not the camera body, and still I'm making eye contact, which is a focus thing.

Dave:

But I realize I'm constantly, it's a habit that I've developed because of the training, but I wasn't aware of it until you just mentioned this. That I'm simultaneously, just maybe every twice a second maybe sweeping my peripheral vision, which was not a natural behavior for me until I was 30. So even though I'm doing that, I'm very aware of, but not stressed about.

Dave:

You know, there's a window open over there for natural light. There's supposed to be a window open here, but it's closed, because it makes too much light on the camera. But I have mountains over there, and light over there, and that's by design. But what I don't do, is I don't have a window right behind my monitor, because I've heard that causes lot of eye strain.

Dave:

Because you have sunlight or bright light, and then a dimmer monitor, that you kind of focus in on the monitor, but then you're going to get too much light from the edges. Any thoughts about looking with a window behind your monitor, or next to your monitor?

Claudia:

So I have a, what is my window? A west-facing window. So now I have to have my blinds halfway drawn down. Because yes, the sun is about to hit this window. So in the morning, it's perfect. It depends on the time of day. I just simply like the idea that you can easily... You don't have to get up. You don't have to

look around. You can simply just look literally half an inch above your computer and you are out. You can look really far in the distance.

Claudia:

That's absolutely important because the harder... If you have your computer against the wall and you have to get up and look around, like how likely are you going to do that? You're not. You're just going to look at the screen.

Dave:

Right.

Claudia:

Yeah. If you have a window behind you that usually reflects on the screen... The side is definitely good, too. On the side is good, for sure.

Dave:

Okay.

Claudia:

And one more thing about periphery. Periphery, we only see movements. So sometimes if you have a second monitor, what you can do also is have a little... I never know if they're called gifts or jifts, but you can have a little... You know, something on your screen or a little teeny tiny YouTube video. Like one of those nature videos.

Claudia:

Have that on the second monitor or something in the corner, so that peripheral vision is kind of simulated by a little bit of movement.

Dave:

I just recorded an episode with the Upgrade Collective yesterday on eight different kinds of nature, and what they do to your nervous system and to your performance. But it's a really interesting idea to have in your peripheral vision, like wind blowing through trees or something. So you get a little bit of that natural motion. Intriguing. I might have to play with that.

Dave:

What I do have is one monitor that's kind of closer over here. And one that's further away, where you are. So I change my depth level. And my screensaver is a natural scene that changes the angle of the sun, I think 8 or 16 times throughout the day, based on what time it is. So there's a bit of circadian in there.

Claudia:

That's cool.

Dave:

All right. That's a really cool idea. No one's ever suggested having nature on a video monitor in your peripheral vision. I think that's a good idea. What is the name for the exercise you do, where you close your eyes in sunlight, and then turn your head towards the sun, and then turn away from the sun. So you feel the light on your face? Is that a movement exercise? Is that a relaxing exercise?

Claudia:

We call that Sunning, and usually you have your... So you basically face the sun. Unless you're super light sensitive, then you would go with a back to the sun. But the sun is not in the side. The sun is actually in the center, and then you do turn your head to the side. So basically what happens is that the eye that's turned to the side is in the shade and the pupils open and close just a teeny tiny bit behind the closed eyelid.

Claudia:

So this practices your pupillary reaction, which is really important in nighttime driving. Like I had such problems driving at night because the headlights were so bright. And when I started practicing Sunning and also ditching my sunglasses over 20 years ago, night driving was not a problem anymore at all.

Claudia:

So call that Sunning. You can also do your head in circles. It's nice for your neck. The traditional one is just like you said, you turn your head side to side.

Dave:

All right. You mentioned driving at night. I never had a problem driving at night, but now we've got these LED headlights that are extremely blue, very bright, and they have a flicker that most people can't see. I get tired when I drive at night. I just wear my 70% blue-blocking glasses, which is one of my companies makes them. That's easy. It's called True Dark.

Dave:

But if I don't wear those, I just get exhausted after like maybe 20 minutes of just super bright lights. What's causing that?

Claudia:

I mean, the entities, like you said. First of all, they screw up our circadian rhythms, especially at night. You don't want that blue light. And that's why I love blue-blocking glasses at night. I honestly don't feel like an eye strain from that. It's not like you look directly into those lights. But they kind of pass you by. But it said quick lightness/darkness, lightness/darkness.

Claudia:

We have built-in sunglasses, the pupils. Right? We want them to be really fast in their reaction time. And if you wear sunglasses all the time and especially the dark sunglasses, and you go outside and maybe inside it's kind of pretty dark, your eyes never practice the pupillary reaction. So then it takes you way too long for the pupil to close when there's a bright light coming on.

Claudia:

But, yeah. To me, the blue light is mostly the circadian rhythms thing, and obviously for the macular. You mentioned Lutein and Zeaxanthin. I never know how to pronounce that correctly, or Astaxanthin, too.

Dave:

Yeah.

Claudia:

Those are all important [inaudible 00:36:34] pigments that cover the phobia, the macular in our eyes, where we have the best vision. And if you don't get those from the diet and additionally from supplements probably...

Claudia:

That absorbs 60% of the blue light in a healthy eye. But if you are older... That's why age-related macular degeneration is often a lack of these nutrients. Do you know what I mean? And too much blue light.

Dave:

I probably was one of those '80s kids who listened to the, I Wear My Sunglasses at Night song. I wore sunglasses all the time, because bright light just messed with me. So you go outside, too bright. So I decided that I was going to solve that problem and I'd go out there and I'd do 30 seconds of bright light. Like, "Ah!" Like I can't stand it.

Dave:

Between taking the supplements, I also take Bilberry, which has really good evidence for improving your vision. It's another source of polyphenols that are specific to your eyes.

Claudia:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave:

And after doing that and all of the other mitochondrial enhancing things, your eyes have a lot of mitochondria, I don't need sunglasses. I can go out in really, really bright light` unless it's really bright, like diffused clouds. They're super bright. There's no directionality on that light. I still am like, "Give me at least some blue-blocking here."

Dave:

But otherwise, I just stopped using them. Maybe if I'm skiing or something. But it's kind of weird that it went from I couldn't dream of going without sunglasses, to the fact that, "Oh, it's sunny outside. Maybe I'll wear a hat," so my face doesn't get too much sun." That's all.

Claudia:

That's what I do now, too. And I was the same way. I was so light sensitive. And you really brought up a good point about... The sunlight has also the whole spectrum. And the mitochondria. The retinal cells have more mitochondria than any other cell in the body. They need more energy than any other cell in the body. Now they did studies at the University College of London with the infrared light. Right?

Claudia:

Now that has become a hot topic, because it's actually helping rejuvenate mitochondria in older retinal cells. And they say older is 40+. So we both qualify.

Dave:

Hey, hey, hey. Don't be insulting to my identity.

Claudia:

I'm sorry. I was...

Dave:

I'm a 28% year old. I'm feeling judged. Geez.

Claudia:

Even though you're 28 biologically, your retinal cells will probably still like the infrared light.

Dave:

Don't tell them. Shhhh. Right. So I think we've covered rest pretty well. And something about light. What else do we need to know about light?

Claudia:

I think you covered a lot about light. Eyes are light receivers. So the circadian rhythm, I know you talked a lot about that. It's super important to get light first thing in the morning into your eyes, and ideally in the evening. When you think of nature, nature is so smart. The way it's...

Claudia:

Also, the sunlight changes its wavelength over the day. It's not the same the whole time. So you definitely don't want any blue lights in the evening. You want like lights more on the side in the evening so that you... Because overhead lights signals our system, "Okay. It's daytime. It's time to be awake." I think we covered light pretty well. I'm trying to think what else I would say.

Claudia:

Yeah. We covered that pretty well. What we haven't covered much is movement, memory, imagination, and also glasses, and why they're not good.

Dave:

All right. Let's talk some more about those then. What do you have to teach us?

Claudia:

So I do want to talk a little bit about the Socratic eye movements and the fact that your visual perfect clarity is so tiny. That blew my mind. When I first... I was like, "No, that's not true. I can see the whole thing." And yes, you can see the whole thing. But if you look at a point on your computer, or just one letter. Notice how you see that letter better, if it's not sharp. I always say better, because sometimes people are like, "Well, it's not clear then anything else, even the letter next to that."

Claudia:

So improving those little Socratic eye movements with practices like the Swing, which is from the Bates method is super important. And like breathing and blinking, we can improve that.

Dave:

I always called the Swing, this Snuffleupagus. But talk to me about what's the Swing? Walk me through it.

Claudia:

So basically, you can do this just like Sunning in a similar way, where you just turn your head side to side. But you can also do a whole body movement, where you pivot on one foot and you basically turn your whole body in 180 degree circle. Now I'm getting too much, far away from the mic. And the idea is that your eyes are... Just think of your head being a brush or something. The eyes are just moving. They're kind of making these tiny, tiny, tiny, tiny movements, as you are moving in the circle, versus somebody with poor vision, the eyes would be like plum, plum, plum.

Claudia:

They make like a ping-pong ball. Right? They don't make these kind of smooth movements. So you want to improve of those Socratic eye movements. Other movements are tracking movements, vestibular ocular movements, which is kind of like what we don't want to do in this Swing. In the Swing, we want to... I know. Sorry, I'm too much.

Claudia:

In the Swing, we are going to go... Think of like a car turning. Right? Your eyes stayed with the nose. You want to kind of turn your head in that 180-degree circle. Another movement would be where you turn your head to the side, but your eyes still look in the center. So the eyes turn exactly the same degree, then the head in the other direction.

Claudia:

That's not something we focus so much on in our practice, but it's just another way of eye movements. And then also fusion. Right? How your eyes work together to focus on something.

Dave:

Fusion is something that most people wouldn't know they had a problem with. And I had a really severe one, entirely invisible, until I started training my eyes. It turns out that my brain learned a long time ago, because my eyes sucked at being teammates with each other. That's probably why I suck at being a teammate. Right? Anyone who works with me, will tell me. I'm kidding.

Dave:

But what happened was that it was so stressful to my brain to make my eyes work together, that it would just turn off my left eye, whenever it wasn't needed. So I was losing stereo vision much of the day without knowing I was losing stereo vision. And learning how to turn on my left eye was like grueling work in order to do it. And it made my light sensitivity worse, because now I had two eyes that had to get used to not wearing sunglasses.

Dave:

It made a really big difference. And now I'm actually working on testing out a VR system that teaches eye teaming really, really effectively. So you had a different word than teaming. What was it?

Claudia:

Well, I called it fusion, but I love teaming.

Dave:

Yeah.

Claudia:

Because I do talk about, "Are your eyes friends or foes? Are they teammates or not?" I do. I use that language, too. You use very similar language, actually. So is your question how to test this? Or how to know if you have fusion, or stereopic vision, binocular vision?

Dave:

Sorry. Is there a test that someone watching the show could do, or hearing-

Claudia:

Yes.

Dave:

... the show right now?

Claudia:

Yes.

Dave:

How do you know if your eyes work together well or not?

Claudia:

There's a whole host of tests, but one super simple one that everybody can do is literally just use two fingers. Use your two index fingers. Hold one, a little closer to you, and hold the other one in line with your nose a little further out. And now look at the one that's close to you, and do you see two fingers behind you? And otherwise, when you look at the one that's further away... The exact distance really doesn't matter. And if you look at the other one further away, do you see now two fingers in front of you, in the closer thing?

Claudia:

Basically, wherever you don't look, you see two; and wherever you do look, you see one. Even if you look at your phone, you should see four feet when you look down. Basically, everything doubles up where you don't look.

Dave:

This exercise was so difficult for me when I started this. And eventually I got to do the Beads on a String exercise. Do you want to walk us through that, if you agree with it?

Claudia:

Yeah. Oh, totally. The Box String is definitely part of my practice as well. So basically imagine a string. You can have a short one, that's arms- length. You can also have one that's like 20-feet or six meters long, and you have a series of beads on it and the goal is... So basically when you look at the string...

Claudia:

If you have even your headphones or your cable or something, you can use that, too. And you look at that with two eyes. Yeah, I have my headphones here. So if I look at-

Dave:

Yeah. Go with headphones.

Claudia:

There you go. Perfect. Perfect. And you hold-

Dave:

Yeah. And your nose, not your ear, like that.

Claudia:

You hold it under the nose, exactly. And then you look down on that string, and you should see... Well it depends on where you look. If you look in the middle, you should see an X. And both of those strings that you see should look the same. And if one is faint or weak,-

Dave:

What does that mean?

Claudia:

... then that might mean that eye is not... You know, either more challenged or is not participating. If you don't see two strings, you don't use two eyes. Yeah.

Dave:

So there you go, guys. If you're driving, don't do this, obviously. Or operating heavy equipment, or holding a baby. So don't do that. But otherwise it's pretty safe to do this. And the two fingers? Always make sure you're seeing two fingers where you're not looking.

Claudia:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave:

And if you want to do the string thing, you should see an X that's evenly strong on both sides of the X. And the string has to be between your nose, not just off to one side. And it is amazing how many people

go, "Wow. One of the strings is really faint." Well, there you go. That eye, your inputs from that eye are weaker than they should be.

Dave:

And you can teach your brain to turn that up, by doing that exercise some more, and doing some of the other things that are, and the things that you teach. By the way, your website is myholisticvision.com. Right?

Claudia:

Yes. Yes.

Dave:

Okay. Talk to me about regulating the nervous system, and how that's tied to vision.

Claudia:

Yeah. I mentioned that a little bit in the beginning. Our vision is best when we are relaxed and you all know this. If you have been stressed, if you've been late for an appointment, if you just had a car accident, your vision will be blurry. Your peripheral vision shuts down. Your pupils open up. You get this shot of adrenalin, and you are in this fight or flight mode.

Claudia:

And your vision will not be good, which is a good thing to have if we are in an actual emergency, to have this fight or flight system kick in. But if it becomes chronic stress, you will also start chest breathing. The more you do chest breathing, instead of abdominal breathing, the more your autopsias and your sternocleidomastoid, all those muscles in the neck and the shoulders, will tighten up. Maybe your jaw muscle.

Claudia:

And that creates... First of all, it reduces blood flow to all those tissues. And you create kind of, what do you call it? Like you consistently shut your peripheral vision down, and your vision will be more blurry. And that's what I mean with the engine light. If you now put the glasses on, you basically...

Claudia:

I'm sorry. With the pills for the eyes. When you put the glasses on, you don't address this constant strain and stress and the tension in your body. Yeah. I always say blurry vision is the engine light. It's like, "Hey, something is not right. So maybe check out what the problem is." So the only way we have relaxed vision and peripheral field is when we are in a relaxed state or the parasympathetic nervous system state, known as rest and digest.

Claudia:

That's the only time. And we can never all be relaxed all day long. That's not possible. Right? There will be moments when we have a little bit of stress, but that's fine. That's good. Right? We do need that little bit of stress. But then when the stress is done or over, then you should be back to your relaxed state pretty quickly. And that's really important to regulate, to really get into that.

Claudia:

And I teach breath practices, which I'm sure your listeners have heard about. You know, abdominal breathing. Just hold your breath a little bit. Little breath holds are really helpful, or focusing on your exhales, making those longer. That's just simple ways to tell your body and your brain, "It's okay. We are safe. We can relax."

Dave:

So creating autonomic response, or going out of the sympathetic fight or flight response and just into relaxing helps. I think even heart rate variability,-

Claudia:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave:

... basically exercises with feedback can really help your vision, just because the body chills. And for listeners, Episode 895, with the one of the world's top five power lifters, Mark Bell, we talked about what I would do for vision in some detail there as well. And I know quite a lot, as you can tell. But we have someone who knows 10 times more than me as our guest today. So you should start with this episode, if you're thinking about hacking your vision.

Dave:

And you can look at some online programs and all that you'll find from Claudia. Because there's really strong return on investment for spending energy on fixing your eyes. Because when your eyes work better, you use less energy all the time. And then that energy can go into folding mitochondria. It can go into being nice to other people. It can go into learning something. It's just free energy, but you're wasting it with bad light, and eyes that are struggling all day long.

Dave:

Your goal is to learn how to keep it so that you're mentally, emotionally and physically not struggling. You're just executing. And maybe you're succeeding, maybe you're not. But the struggle represents wasted energy that you didn't need to do. So that's why I think fixing your vision is such a big thing.

Dave:

Okay. So naturallyclearvision.com, and I'm sure there's links on the home page for that. So-

Claudia:

One quick thing that is... That blew my mind, too. So they did studies with people with Dissociative Identity Disorder, which used to be called Multiple Personality Disorder. And they found that people that have these different personas. Right? It's the same physical body, but they have these different personas or alters and they had...

Claudia:

They were like severely nearsighted in one persona, and had 20/15 vision in another. And even the eye pressure, the color perception was different. How can that be, if it's the same physical body? If the brain

would be the driver and our mind wouldn't be such a key piece in vision. And that's what Bates talked about 100 years ago, and neuroscience confirms all of this. We know all this now.

Claudia:

That the visual cortex lights up the same way, if you imagine something, or if you actually look at it. Like look at your hand, close your eyes and imagine or have a memory of your hand. And you have the same parts of the brain firing up. And he didn't know that 100 years ago. To me, it's just mind-blowing.

Dave:

This is the same body of research that shows cognitive improvement from either reading or listening to fiction. Because it requires you to do exactly that, and it exercises that part of the brain. So part of your job, and I've shared this with Upgrade Collective members on our biweekly calls.

Dave:

But part of your job is to spend 10 minutes every day, maybe 20 minutes, not listening to a podcast like this, but listening to an audio book and maybe one that has really interesting language or really interesting imagery. But the idea is you want to make your brain paint a picture. I don't know. Will that actually improve your vision, just making your brain paint a picture? Or do you have to really focus on the visual side of it?

Claudia:

No. I think that's really important, is painting a picture is perfectly fine. Or a black period, which is something that Dr. Bates used a lot because a black period is so simple. It's just a little tiny black dot. And can you imagine one, with your eyes closed?

Claudia:

And I find that people with poor vision usually cannot imagine a black period in their mind with their eyes closed. So using your actual imagination of clear vision is also really important. Because if you say to yourself, "Oh, it's all blurry. I can't see anything." Your thoughts have an amazing energy. And the more you repeat saying, "I can't do it. I can't do it. It's all blurry" versus imagining something clear.

Claudia:

And it literally can clear up using the imagination of clarity. And imagination always assumes that you have a memory. Do you know what I mean? I always use an example, imagine a pink elephant. You need to know what pink is, and you need to know what an elephant is and then you can create this new visualization or imagination from that.

Claudia:

So having a memory of a clear letter, and even if that's with glasses on, and then closing your eyes and continue to imagine the letter being clear, and how it looked like. Black against white, for instance. That's really probably the most important part of the Bates method that nobody talks about, is really the mental eye exercises, if you want to call those-

Dave:

Imagining black versus white, imagining that black dot on a white surface. Yeah. You can also play with the color and intensity of the white behind the dark as well.

Claudia:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave:

Now, talk to me about reading from a book versus reading from a screen.

Claudia:

So our eyes, again, are light receivers and having a book is a reflected surface. Right? There's a specific distance. And we didn't talk about that with the Box String, but when you use the beads, you can practice your targeting. So there's a specific distance. Like, I don't know, let's say 40 centimeters or 16 inches. But it was a screen, as a back-lit. It's like we have this fake 3D. Right?

Claudia:

I look at you. I see a room behind you, but it's fake. It's like a flat screen. And it's really tiring for the eyes, because there's no physical, exact... How do to [inaudible 00:55:11]?

Dave:

It's not fake. It's real. Look, It's not a background. Anyway, I'm kidding.

Claudia:

But you know what I mean?

Dave:

I [inaudible 00:55:18] the thing. Right?

Claudia:

Yeah. And you talked about flicker rate earlier. Computers have flicker rates and all these things. So it's definitely much harder. It's easier for the eyes to look at the edge of your computer, of the physical computer, than the actual screen, which is kind of this bottomless, fake depth, basically.

Dave:

If you're going to be reading an actual book on paper... And by the way, guys, as an author, if you buy my books or anyone's books on paper, we like that better than eBooks. Because eBooks don't pay authors as much. They pay Amazon way more. So they kind of squeeze you there. But Amazon also has a history of deleting your eBooks, when they're not politically correct. It's actually happened now where they have pulled content. I'm not saying for any particular recent realm of misinformation or whatever.

Dave:

But there was a big brouhaha about 10 years ago, when they edited stuff on people's Kindle devices. So you don't really own an ebook. You own it, as long as the ebook provider allows the app to keep working. So there you go. And if there's ever a big power outage or something like that, or I don't know,

governments that turn off the internet, when truckers do stuff, you might just want to have the important books on paper. And it's good for your eyes.

Claudia:

It is definitely better for the eyes. It's also good to read small print.

Dave:

Okay. That's good. So many people say, "Don't strain your eyes. Don't read like Abe Lincoln under the firelight and candlelight. You have to have super bright light and big print," like a fluffy pillow for your eyes. You like fine print. Why?

Claudia:

Yeah. Because it actually requires you to relax. And again, this is kind of the symptomatic treatment. As I see people with phones and in the text on the super bright, what is it? Enlarged size, like humongous letters. And it allows you to strain. And again, now you can read the text, but you're using bad habits. And I have my phone to the tiniest print settings, because whenever I do get tired and I'm not perfect. Right?

Claudia:

I get tired sometimes at the end of the day. And I look at it and it's like, "Oh, it's getting a little blurry. I guess I need to do some palming, or maybe I should just go to bed and get some sleep," instead of pushing through. Bates said, "You cannot read for print texts in candlelight, if you're not relaxed." So it's kind of a great way to check how relaxed you are, by reading small print and not making an effort.

Dave:

I have this amazing technology that I've been working on. It's a solar powered book that stays charged forever. And it looks like this. It's got these pieces of wood in it. That's just a healthy way to do it. So if you have to be a tech person, there you go. It's just a good old-fashioned paper book. What about the type of reading light people have LED reading lights. But bright light at night keeps you up, and you want to read before bed. So what's the right solution for that?

Claudia:

I'm not a fan of reading in bed, to be honest. That's just my personal opinion. Also, you want to look at things straight ahead. We didn't talk about posture. We talked a little bit about posture, but you don't want to lay on the side and read a book. You want to look at things straight ahead. And you also want to move your head like a little bit, even if it's not like a lot. But you're going to move your head a little bit as you're reading.

Claudia:

You don't want blue lights, for sure. At night, you also don't want super bright lights. So I do recommend like a little bit dimmer lights at night. However, if you then have to put glasses on, I wouldn't recommend reading then. I would rather have you read...

Claudia:

I mean, here's what I do in my programs. We always get into... We get glasses, and no glasses and start with bright light. It's starting to understand that you can actually see a lot better than you think. Right? Versus relying on the glasses. And then slowly, when you can read smaller and smaller print in bright light, slowly, we then start using dimmer light situations.

Claudia:

Bates was of the other opinion. He's like, "You have to start in the worst conditions to get people to relax." And Aldous Huxley who wrote a book, *The Art of Seeing*, because he worked with a Bates teacher called Margaret Corbett. He said, "Start with brighter light." And I find that easier.

Claudia:

People find it more encouraging that they can actually go from like really high prescription progressive glasses to like really low drug store readers or no glasses in good light, and then slowly get into the dimmer light situation.

Claudia:

So that's what I do. Or Pinhole Glasses, if you've heard of those. Some people like-

Dave:

I was going to ask you about that next. I didn't have mine present. So I just was going to pretend these were Pinhole Glasses.

Claudia:

Okay.

Dave:

You got a real pair to show off. That's good.

Claudia:

I got a bunch of different ones. I don't and use them myself. But I have a bunch here in my local practice, so that people can try them out. They have little holes. And see, these are square holes that I'm showing right now. And then there's some with round holes. So basically, they create a pinhole effect, much like you would do when you try to squint. Right? When you try to squint to see clearly.

Claudia:

They bundle the light for you. They don't distort, like an actual glasses lens, which distorts. Right? Reading glasses make everything larger, and nearsighted glasses make everything smaller. They just bundle the light for you. It's not a training tool per se, where you use those and miraculously your visual improve. But it's a great way to use as a transition, or as training glasses.

Dave:

What about reading under red light?

Claudia:

I don't actually have an opinion about that, to be honest. I never thought about that. I think as long as it's easy for you to read and you're not straining, that should be fine.

Dave:

There's a study actually, that it improves eye health and vision. And I'm trying to find it right now.

Claudia:

Oh, interesting.

Dave:

So I read under a red light. This is one of the ones. Oh, shoot. I just moved it. It was on the floor here, because I was using it. Here, no. Whatever. I have a little portable thing that we make, that's relatively dim, but a bright enough red light. Like a little red flashlight, kind of.

Dave:

And I'll have that, or just a red light on in the room. And then you read, you are going to get sleepier under a red light, which is not a bad thing, if it's before bed. But according to that one study, it made a difference. And there's a study I'm finding. It's not the one I'm looking for.

Dave:

But conserve visual capacity of rats under red light. So apparently your eyes last longer, if you using that to read.

Claudia:

It makes sense. I mean, Bates talked about the candle light. Right? It's a really, really warm light, too.

Dave:

Yeah.

Claudia:

So it makes total sense. Yeah. I didn't know about that study. I only knew about the infrared light study, with the mitochondria, but that's great. Good to hear that.

Dave:

What happens if we just don't move enough. If we say sitting down all day, what effect does it have on vision?

Claudia:

Well, if you don't move much, first of all, you're not practicing your balance. Right? Balance and vision is obviously intricately related. Because if you've ever tried to do a yoga pose on one leg and you close your eyes. So the more you sit or the less you move, the more you will probably not move your eyes. And also the blood flow. I mean, there's so many factors why movement is important.

Claudia:

I'm at a standing desk right now. And usually I'm on a little balance board when I'm standing, which I didn't want to do because I didn't want to wiggle around too much. But that creates automatic movement without doing the Swing or any of the vision practices. Just kind of moving around when you're standing. Right?

Claudia:

And your balance. I teach myofascial release. I use little massage balls in my trainings. You talked about feet earlier. Right? How we grounded, feeling grounded and feeling solid on the ground is absolutely affecting your vision. The more you're more unstable, you feel the more you're going to strain in your whole vestibular and visual system.

Dave:

It's so cool that you're talking about this. Because, I guess, on a very recent episode, where we talked about zero shoes, and proper footwear that allows your feet to move around. We talked about wobble boards. And I've talked about it on a few other past episodes, but standing on one of those or just using it some of the time, or a BOSU ball, it really does make a difference. But who would've ever thought that it changes your visual quality, to relax and get the body moving and-

Claudia:

Because you stop staring. Right? You don't stare. The second year moving, you are... Even if you wouldn't move your eyes that much. When your body is moving, your eyes automatically move. Right? So you don't even have to think about it. And so that's one reason why I love this, and I actually barefoot shoes and I recommend them as well. So.

Dave:

There you go. People are paying attention to the quality of their performance, whether you start with the eyes or you start with the toes, you end up coming up with the same answer, which is kind of cool. That's one way you can tell biohacking is interesting, when people from entirely different lineages of ancestral study or different scientific study, end up meeting in the middle going, "Oh, that's kind of weird."

Dave:

This appears to be a foundational and fundamental part of human performance, is vision. It's interesting that is trainable. And it turns out professional athletes, like people who are awesome at baseball or football or hockey, we have to see something. And if you judge by three inches, the difference in a throw that's coming from across the field, you might not actually catch it. Right? So that's when, in professional athletes, you see the most importance of that aspect of vision.

Dave:

But like you said, Bead and String. Oh, you mean I could focus both eyes right here, not behind it, not in front of it, at the same time. That apparently gave me a score that was pretty darned impressive for someone who's not really spent a lot of time with the scope.

Claudia:

That is very, very cool. And you have ball games. I do that a lot with children, and even adults. Like just throwing and catching, and occluding one eye, when you obviously don't have to have perception. But training your peripheral vision, all that is really important. And I started playing handball at 12 years old, and I couldn't wear my glasses, and I had to squint.

Claudia:

In other words, I had problems with depth perception, too, because my right eye was turned in. And I didn't want to get hit with a heavy leather ball. Right? We practiced a lot. And I think that was partly, in addition to the Bates method and practicing those relaxation techniques, really helped me to get rid of my glasses in my late teens, was the handball because... Right?

Claudia:

I couldn't wear my glasses and my depth perception. Like, yeah, you get hit by the... If you can't catch the ball, you're going to get kicked off the team pretty quickly. So I think that was part of it. Kids don't play ball games anymore. Like old fashioned, go outside in the park, and catch and throw stuff.

Dave:

As a parent, I highly recommend getting about five bean bags that aren't too heavy, and just throw them at your kids, and eventually they'll learn how to catch them. And if not, you can just laugh every time you nail them with it and they'll laugh too, which makes it more fun. And eventually that can lead to learning how to juggle, which I think also is really good for your visual system, in addition to the cross-patterning in the brain.

Claudia:

Yes.

Dave:

So if you're not going to play ping-pong, which is one of the ways Dr. Amen recommends improving cognitive performance, and I do have a ping-pong table for that reason. But I'm not great at juggling, but I got to where I could at least not drop it all the time. And I think it also helped not just cognitively, but I think it helped my vision. Do you have any thoughts about juggling?

Claudia:

Yes, totally. Juggling is absolutely... It gets into that flow and you focus, but you also have that peripheral awareness and the hand-eye coordination. So juggling is fantastic. I'm definitely not a good juggler at all either, but it's definitely... Like one of my colleagues, who was a teacher at the College of Vision Education. They don't actually. The college had to close. That's a different story.

Claudia:

But basically he, in his book, he talks about that's what he does with kids. He does basically juggling with kids to improve their vision. So you're absolutely on target, Dave.

Dave:

I like juggling with kale, because then I don't care if I drop it, because who wants to eat that crap. Right? It's just how it is. The stuff tastes bad and it's bad for you. So a different story.

Dave:

Now, do you have time for a couple questions from listeners?

Claudia:

Yes, of course.

Dave:

All right. Raise your hand. If you want to go. We have lots of really intelligent questions from our chat thread. Again, if you want to be on podcast and hear the entire discussion live and be able to have this opportunity, ourupgradecollective.com is where you can join this group of amazing smart people, except for Scott. Just kidding, Scott. All right. Catherine, you have a question?

Catherine:

Hi. Great information so far. Very quickly. Born cross-eyed. Had the surgery to correct it. It never worked in my left eye. I had to wear a patch. Cheated, because I was five. And my left eye, they sort of say I'm legally blind. I have a black thing floating around in there, that moves around inside my eye. Everything I do see is in perfect focus. I just wondered if any comments or protocols I could use to strengthen my left eye?

Dave:

Yeah. So as a kid, did I hear that right? They had you patch the so-called good eye, and then your left eye, you kind of had to work with the left eye by itself? Is that what you were saying?

Catherine:

Into walls, and everything. Because I couldn't see.

Dave:

Yeah. There's something black floating in your eyes. Is that just like a floater? Does it look like a little soft something?

Catherine:

It doesn't have edges, but it just takes over part. It's just there. It's like a black... Like it's a horror movie, and I'm walking through a very black, dense smoke.

Dave:

Is that like a retinal detachment or something? I'm just wondering if there's anything from like a pathological thing. Here's the thing, what I found, is the eye could use more rest maybe. Maybe it could literally use more rest. Like even one-sided palming could be helpful. Or you could be indeed be excited to kind of be on its own, when you cover up the other eye, or use occluder on the right eye.

Dave:

So I found both to be helpful, and it really depends. And I've had lots of students that have what's called Amblyopia, where one eye.... Lazy eye. Right? Where one eye didn't see as well. So sometimes working with that eye alone or even giving that eye just a little bit of extra rest could also be helpful.

Catherine:

Okay. All right. I'll give it a try. Yeah. They say if anything ever happened to my right eye, my left eye would come back, because my brain would heal it. So I think if my brain could heal it in that situation, why can't I just heal it then?

Dave:

Exactly. I love that. And also, doing those fusion practices, like we talked about. That could be helpful for you. There's a whole lot more you can do. But I wonder about the black patches that are floating around. I'm not sure that is. Have you ever gotten that checked out?

Catherine:

Yes. Every eye exam, and they say my eye's healthy, but... And I try to explain that black thing, and they're all like, "Oh, okay." Nobody really has anything to say.

Dave:

Sometimes there's neurological damage.

Claudia:

Yeah.

Dave:

Like I had, at one of the really special moments of my life. I got to spend a few hours with Stevie Wonder. And he's pretty open about how he got to be blind. And he got nerve damage from too much oxygen in an incubator. And that actually has happened to one of my family members, in just one eye. We talked about it quite a bit.

Dave:

And if the eye is perfectly healthy, but the connection between the eye and the brain has something on it, that can be it. And you might find information by doing a high resolution, a whole body MRI scan, where they can actually look at the nerve. Companies like Prenuvo, and a bunch of others do that. It's not that cheap, but you can use health spending accounts to do it. And maybe there's an abnormality physiologically that's outside the eye, that they might be able to pick up.

Claudia:

Yeah. That makes sense. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave:

Yeah. I also like the idea of playing a video game, like on an iPad or something with your good eye patched, because what that's going to do is the body doesn't really know you playing a video game. It just kind of, you associate with a little cursor thing, and so it starts to feel a survival need. "Oh, no. I got shot by a laser blast from whatever the heck." Just on the arcade games. And that oftentimes can train your eyes in a really interesting way. So I think that could be something that's unlikely to cause harm, and might be really beneficial.

Claudia:

And also are you left or right-handed? Also, there's handedness is interesting in dominance in your eyes. Your left eye could actually be the dominant eye, and the other eye has become the preferred eye. With those scenarios, it's usually a little bit more complicated, not in a bad way.

Claudia:

I love your suggestion, Dave, too. To just be interested. What is this left eye interested in? You know? How does it feel to just see with a left eye? You know?

Dave:

Beautiful. All right. Laura, you've got a question?

Catherine:

Thanks, guys.

Laura:

Yeah. So I of an age where eventually my eyes could not be corrected with glasses anymore. So I had cataracts and I have since had the surgery. I upgraded to the lenses where I can see distance and I can see reading distance reasonably well. Well enough to work. But it's the computer distance where I still wear glasses. And I'm wondering since none of it is 20/20. It's just good enough to get by. Do any of these things help?

Claudia:

Yes, they do help. So we've definitely had clients with a cataract surgery, implanted lenses. And I just want to be super clear. So you have the multifocal lenses implanted. You don't have one eye near and one eye far? Or is that...

Laura:

No. I refused the mono vision.

Claudia:

Good, good, good, because that's the worst thing they can get. So, glad. You made a good choice. Yes. You can definitely improve that, for sure. Because it's not just the lens that's a part of accommodation. And Dr. Bates talked about that a 100 years ago. And here's the thing, the science... I just read something on PubMed. Here it makes some sense that our outer eye muscles, our other six eye muscles, which are really strong, that they have something to do with the shape of your eyeball. Right?

Claudia:

So the eye muscles also have a contribution to your focusing near and far, and the middle distance. So there's definitely things you can do.

Laura:

Okay. And some people on the chat were talking about using Can-C to help. Oh, I also get some haloing, when I drive at night. So I try not to drive at night. It's not serious, but I prefer not to. So the Can-C, somebody said that could help with a haloing, as wearing as well as wearing yellow glasses at night.

Claudia:

Yes, for sure. I mean, halos are usually a sign, when you do have a cataract or LASIK. So what you said you had the cataract surgery. You still have halos?

Laura:

I didn't before. Now I do with the new lenses.

Claudia:

Oh, that is strange. And that's no secondary cataract. I mean, that's unusual. Usually the halos would be gone after the surgery. Okay. I don't know. The yellow glasses would probably be helpful. I would say that's a good idea to do.

Dave:

One other thought, for anyone considering getting a lens replacement with an implanted lens, you can get lens that do not block ultraviolet light. That would be a really good idea, given that we know ultraviolet light in the eye is a signaling molecule, or signaling wavelength that can affect molecules very deep in your eyes via creating something called melanin.

Dave:

So there's a need for that. And I don't think they should make UV-blocking implants because there are times you need some. You just don't need too much. So just because too much of something is bad, doesn't mean none of it is good. So I consider that to be a mistake. So if you have a choice, there's a reason to allow UV light into the eye. Do you agree?

Claudia:

Yes.

Laura:

... the eye doctor about that. And apparently, no. No mind block with UV.

Dave:

Yeah. Not much to do about it now. But for everyone else listening, if you have a choice, I got my mom to get the non-UV blockers, when she had a lens implant. So I like to think I did it right once.

Laura:

Okay.

Dave:

Okay.

Laura:

Thank you very much.

Dave:

You got it.

Claudia:

I don't know about the C-Can. I've heard different things. Some people had success, but there's also... I found the new study with a new... And I'm trying to remember what this thing was called. But there is a new drug out there that they think could revolutionize cataract treatment. It has to do with the proteins.

Claudia:

Because the proteins in the lens clump up when you get cataracts. And it's something to do with the proteins. So I have to look it up again. I forgot the name of this. But it's not out there yet. It's just research right now.

Laura:

And a couple of questions came up, and I'm interested too, in the chat. Floaters. Do you know anything you can do for that?

Claudia:

Floaters. Good nutrition, clean nutrition, everything that Dave already teaches. And also stress definitely has to do with floaters. So floaters are basically little debris. As we age. Right? The vitreous humor, which is the gel-like structure in our eye, behind the lens. It's called vitreous humor. It has nothing to do with being funny.

Claudia:

And that shrinks a little bit. Right? And sometimes the little pieces of that basically break off and they float around. So what floaters are. But if you have a good detoxification system, all these things will help you reduce the floaters and reduce stress, just overall. All the overall things that you're learning will be helpful.

Claudia:

There's no like vision quick fix that you can do to get rid of them, in terms of like, "Oh, do Sunning like five times a day. That will get rid of them." But all the protocols will help you.

Laura:

Thank you very much.

Dave:

There's one thing about floaters, I'd love to share my knowledge and then have you tell me that it's wrong.

Claudia:

Okay. No, go ahead. If you know something that I don't know, I'm always happy to learn, too.

Dave:

People who have chronic infections tend to get more floaters. And I certainly had more than my fair share of those when I was a kid. And there's stuff floating in the vitreous humor.

Claudia:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave:

There's some evidence that taking high dose proteolytic enzymes, things that digest protein like Serrapeptase or Nattokinase, over time may reduce floaters. And there's now a company that actually has a laser treatment. They can go in and they can shoot the floaters, which sounds really intriguing, but the risk of that procedure is higher than I want it to be, the last time I looked.

Dave:

And so I would be a little bit careful with that one. But if you're really being tormented by floaters, there is a laser treatment to go in and shoot them like asteroids.

Claudia:

I think the thing is with those laser treatments, every time you go into the eye, you destroy the homeostasis of the eye. And that's why they say even cataract surgery, now you at higher risk for other eye diseases. Because even though cataract surgery is really, really safe. It's probably the only surgery for eye diseases that actually recovers your vision. Because for the other eye diseases, they pretty much can't do much.

Claudia:

So I would not advise it, unless like Dave said, your floaters are so bad that you can't take it anymore. They're just all over the place, like a bunch of worms in your eyes or something. But otherwise, I would definitely not do something invasive for floaters.

Claudia:

And hyaluronic acid. I can never pronounce that. Hyer... Can you help me?

Dave:

Hyaluronic acid.

Claudia:

Yes. Yes. That's one of all those words. I just...

Dave:

Yeah.

Claudia:

That's supposed to also be helpful.

Dave:

All right. I have time for one more question from our members here, before it's time to end the show. All right. Who's next here? Was it Tracy, or was it...

Tracy:

Hi, Dave.

Dave:

Yeah. Hey, Tracy.

Tracy:

Hey, how are you? So question about addressing glaucoma. Do you have any recommendations for glaucoma issues?

Claudia:

Absolutely. Do you have low pressure, or regular pressure glaucoma?

Tracy:

Well, it's actually my mom and dad. They have-

Claudia:

High.

Tracy:

... high pressure.

Claudia:

Yeah. First of all, relaxation. So glaucoma is definitely from an emotional standpoint. It's kind of like a lot of pressure on yourself. Being a Type A personality, doing everything perfect. It could also be unforgiving for other people. When you think about Louise Hay, she... I found that more true than not. It's kind of like you really angry at somebody. You cannot forgive them. That's on an emotional level.

Claudia:

Also, like with glaucoma, it's really about relaxation. There is a German holistic ophthalmologist. She did these measurements of a relaxation. 30 minutes of just relaxation, audio meditation, measuring the pressure before and after. And it was either normal or way lower, after. So relaxation is key emotionally, physically relaxing, and really stimulating your peripheral vision.

Claudia:

Again, it could be occludes. It's a optic nerve disease. Right? So you lose your peripheral field, but not like people think. It's not black, but basically your brain fills in stuff. Like Photoshop content it were. It fills in like things. So that's what I would recommend. Really focusing on relaxation, physically, and mentally, and emotionally.

Tracy:

With chronic dry eye and allergies, which are affected by my environment. And my eyes turned bright red and they watered constantly. And I felt like someone had thrown sand in them. And I went to our ophthalmologist and he treated me with medication, and he put tubes in my eyes. Well, that didn't work.

Tracy:

So he sent me to a cornea specialist who was treating me with Lotemax and Restasis. And I went into this, knowing that the pressure in my eyes could go up, but that was five years ago. And now all of a sudden the pressure in my eyes has gone up and he wants to get me off the Lotemax, which I am not too happy about. Because I know what would happen. My eyes would turn red and they would water and I would be back in the same boat that I was five years ago,

Dave:

Tracy, I-

Tracy:

Can you recommend anything?

Dave:

Tracy, let's get a quick answer. And we can cover that more or in the Upgrade Collective meeting around mass cells and eyes. But is there a specific thing that you've heard for that situation that would be useful, Claudia?

Claudia:

Not that I know of. But I would also like maybe change your thinking, and not like, "Oh, my eyes would be red again." Who knows? You can also really imagine that your eyes are healthy, and vibrant, and happy and lubricated, but not watery. I think really changing your... If you're already predicting this. Do you know what I mean?

Claudia:

But I'm also not a medical doctor. So I do want to say that I'm not versed in those medications and I would not tell you, stop this or do that, for sure. I think Sunning could be really helpful for you, I think.

Dave:

Okay. Yeah. Thanks, Tracy. We'll go into more detail to help you out on the Upgrade Collective call. Claudia, I really want to thank you for bringing up Louise Hay. Because sometimes emotional stuff causes physical stuff. And you mentioned forgiveness there, and those are foundational at 40 Years of Zen, the neurofeedback program that I've been running for quite a while now.

Dave:

We actually have Louise Hay's books there. And if someone's having all sorts of weird forgiveness things they can't quite figure this out with neurofeedback guiding what they're doing, sometimes you just look it up and Louise has the answer. It doesn't always make sense, but it's there.

Dave:

So not a lot of people talk about that, but I love it, that you did that, and wanted to give you a little-

Claudia:

Yeah.

Dave:

... bit of extra attention for that, so. I much appreciate you being a guest on the show.

Dave:

Thank you for being such an expert on vision and for teaching people so much. I think anyone listening now understands how foundational this is. And you give people courses for free, which I think is really cool. Your main website, myholisticvision.com. And your free stuff and your other programs are, naturallyclearvision.com.

Claudia:

You have to put the www in front of the [naturallyclearvision](http://naturallyclearvision.com).

Dave:

Okay.

Claudia:

And also, I am on Instagram too, as [holisticvisioncoach](https://www.instagram.com/holisticvisioncoach). So.

Dave:

There you go. So guys that was information-packed. This is the kind of episode I love doing for you, where there's actionable stuff you can take away. And just to understand something might matter more than you thought in how you show up in the world, how you perform, and just how you be yourself.

Dave:

I will see you all on our next episode, where we'll cover more of the things that make you more you. And be careful, it might be dangerous.