Hadley

Vision Loss Bloopers: Shopping Mishaps

Presented by Ricky Enger

**Ricky Enger:** Welcome to Hadley Presents. I'm your host, Ricky Enger, inviting you to sit back, relax, and enjoy a conversation with the experts. In this episode, Hadley's Chief Innovation Officer, Doug Walker, joins us for Vision Bloopers Shopping Edition. Welcome to the show, Doug.

**Douglas Walker:** Hey, Ricky. It is going to be a lot of fun today.

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, my gosh, yeah. Be prepared for lots of laughter. We had a staff edition of Vision Bloopers, and Doug, you were on that as well. We told some funny stories and invited people to share their own bloopers, because we know that these things happen and you can either feel embarrassed and wish it had never happened, or you find a way to chuckle about it. You may not be able to chuckle about it immediately, but you get there eventually.

**Douglas Walker:** Not at first, right? Yeah. You do get that initial, "Oh, I hope no one saw that," or heard that, or whatever, but then, later on, when you're talking with other people ... I think that's what today is going to be all about.

**Ricky Enger:** Yes. That's it exactly.

**Douglas Walker:** A lot of fun.

**Ricky Enger:** I know that we had so many bloopers shared that we actually had to divide them into categories, which is really, really cool.

**Douglas Walker:** That is awesome. Does that mean we're going to get to do this more than once, I hope?

**Ricky Enger:** I certainly hope so, yes.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. I hope so. That'll be fun.

**Ricky Enger:** Today's subject of bloopers is going to be shopping. These are things that happen when you're shopping or headed to the store or leaving the store, or just any number of things can go wrong when you are out and about shopping.

**Douglas Walker:** Anything and everything, right?

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, my gosh, yes. And I'm sure we could have parts one, two, and three on just shopping, and that would just be mine.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. That's what I was going to say, you and I could probably fill up several episodes.

**Ricky Enger:** Well, thankfully, we don't have to because we’ve had so many responses that we are delighted to share with people. Now some of these are spoken directly by the people themselves, and some of them Ed Haines was gracious enough to read for us. We're going to hear multiple voices on this one. And, yeah, I figure why listen to us babble on and on, why don't we jump right into the bloopers?

First up, we have Carol.

**Carol:** Hi, Ricky, Carol Mackey calling from Maine, and I love the idea of blind bloopers. Oh, my goodness, it makes me chuckle just thinking about it, and I have a couple, one in particular. Last fall, I believe it was, I went into a small gift store with a friend, and she was looking around and I was standing, I don't see well, so I was just standing, glancing around. When she was done shopping, she was going to check out. I was standing waiting for her and was just looking around, and next to me, I looked, saw a wonderful sweater. I thought, "Oh, what a beautiful sweater," reached over and started feeling the sweater. Well, the sweater turned around because the sweater was on someone, and the woman and I just started laughing, and she said, "Oh, you like my sweater?" We just were laughing, and that was the end of it. But it was just one of those things that happens, and it happens to us when our sight begins to go to hell in a hand basket. It happens.

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, wow.

**Ricky Enger:** Yes, it does. I have to say, at least she was saying something nice about the sweater. It wasn't-

**Douglas Walker:** That's true, "Ooh, this is really rough material. Who would buy something like that?" But it's really nice when people do notice, and they go along with it. That was really nice that the sweater actually had nice things to say.

**Ricky Enger:** Yes, when the sweater is able to laugh with you.

**Douglas Walker:** Exactly. Oh, that is great. I love that.

**Ricky Enger:** Next up, I'm sure lots of strange and funny things happen in Home Depot, and Jeff joins us to talk about a story that happened to him when he was shopping at Home Depot

**Ed Haines:** From Jeff. My blooper is Grandpa got lost at Home Depot. I was at Home Depot with my wife and my granddaughter. When we went into the store, my wife and I had to go to the restroom. She pulls the cart and I follow along, holding onto the handle. I had my cane folded up on top of the handle. I stopped to pull up my trousers, as my granddaughter calls them, and my wife, not knowing I let go of the cart, keeps going and makes a sharp right-hand turn to go to the restroom. And, after pulling up my trousers, I proceed to walk around Home Depot looking for my wife and granddaughter, who I lost. Luckily, I had my cane, so I was safe. But then my granddaughter comes up and asks, "Where's grandma?" But I didn't know where. My wife finds me, and we go to the restroom, laughing all the time about Grandpa getting lost in Home Depot, pulling up his trousers.

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, Ricky, I can't tell you how many times I have been lost in Home Depot or Lowe's, but usually mine's because I wander off to look at all the tools and everything. And the restrooms are always in different places, at the front of the store, at the back of the store, on the side, so anyway ...

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. You never know where it's going to be.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. I've spent many a time wandering around looking for my wife in Home Depot, that's for sure.

**Ricky Enger:** And that's where you're just like, "Should I start calling for her?" That's embarrassing too.

**Douglas Walker:** Hello, Douglas on aisle three.

**Ricky Enger:** You get lost all the time in stores. I always have weird things with shopping carts. I will wander off. I like to smell candles. I don't know why that one popped into my head, but I always let go of the cart if I pass an aisle and I think, "Oh, it smells like candles over there." I go wandering off and come back and put my hands on the cart, and then sometimes I hear just this ... nobody wants to say anything, but they're trying to tell me, "That's not your cart."

**Douglas Walker:** Oh. Oh. Or grabbing a cart with somebody and walking along with them, I guess. There's that too.

**Ricky Enger:** That, I haven't done yet, but there's time, for sure.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. I'm sure they'd be happy if we were to pay for what's in the cart for them, so there's that.

**Ricky Enger:** This next one, I know you're going to appreciate because it involves technology, so this is a good one. It actually involves the Seeing AI app, which if you don't know what that is, it is an app which will provide information about what is in front of your camera. You can use it to do things like read labels on product packaging, you can read postcards, things like that, but it's a really cool thing to use in a store. And next up is Celia, and she discovered just how great Seeing AI can be.

**Celia:** My name is Celia, and for many, many years I was a shepherd and a farmer and now retired. My sister and I, who were both widows, bought a little house in Spring Branch, Texas. I have glaucoma, and so my vision loss has been progressive, but then, suddenly, it sped up and it's out of control. I found Hadley and love you, but I attended one of the Tech It Out discussion groups, and they talked about the AI, so I downloaded it. I was playing with it all over the house, and I thought, "Well, this is really cool." We went to the grocery store, and I'm very brave in there because I have a cart that I can use instead of my stick, I'll just go right down the middle.

I took my AI thing and I put it up, and I was like, "This is so cool. I can read the numbers up there that says, 'Okay, the potato chips are in this aisle,' or whatever." And then, if you cruise down the aisle, it'll catch glimpses and it'll say pickles or dressing. I have severe allergies, so that was my big deal because I hated asking strangers or my sister to read all the labels to make sure I didn't kill myself. I'm going around, and I'm so proud that I'm independent and I'm using this thing, and I'm waving my phone at everything. The next thing on the list was salted butter, because I love to bake. I get over to the butter, and I have ADD, so my hands shake a lot, and evidently, it makes it stutter when you do that. I'm waving my phone over the butter section, and it got stuck on salted butt, and it's yelling it, because of course, I'm deaf, so I have it up all the way. It's yelling, "Salted butt, salted butt, salted butt."

And I'm getting tremendously embarrassed, so I tried to turn it off, and I was embarrassed and nervous and fumbling. I thought, "Well, I'll just shove it inside my shirt," but then it started talking about other stuff in there. I guess buttons were getting hit. Then I thought, "Okay, well, I'll put it in the cart. I'll just put it face down." But that little placard that's in the cart so that you don't leave your child was there, so it starts reading, "Do not leave child unattended in the cart," and it was really loud, and I thought people have got to be watching. I just started looking around like, "Hmm. Who is that? I wonder who that is." And then I walked as fast as I could out of there to the checkout.

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, my.

**Ricky Enger:** Salted butt.

**Douglas Walker:** Salted butt. That is so great. Oh, for all things for it to get stuck on.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. It couldn't be like, "Oranges, oranges."

**Douglas Walker:** I know. That's it. Don't we just love technology, Ricky? I know we both do. Yeah.

**Ricky Enger:** At that point, I would've just wanted to turn around and do all my shopping online from now on.

**Douglas Walker:** Hey, absolutely. That's a great strategy, though, that she used, just pretend it's not me, and just slowly walk away.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah, look around like, "Hmm. What's happening there? I think I'll leave now."

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, my goodness. Talking about shopping online, I tell you, I have something I'm going to talk about. I was using my favorite purchasing app, Ricky. You can probably guess what it is. It starts with the letter A has a Z in the middle, ends with an N. Anyway, I needed to buy some cat litter. My wife and have three cats, house full of cats. I found their favorite litter in the app, and cats can be pretty picky, so that's important. I added a 30-pound box of litter to my cart, and I checked my cart, nothing there. I go back and I select it again, and go back to the cart, nothing. I go back and select it. If it doesn't work, maybe I just need to double tap it a lot. I'm using VoiceOver.

I did this several times. It still doesn't show up in the cart. By this time, I'm getting pretty frustrated, so I close out the app and I think, "Okay, let's start all over, close it all the way out." So, I open the app back up and I find the cat litter again, add it to the cart, and it showed up in the cart. I was so excited. Yeah, so I'd been at this for a while, so I quickly went to, buy now and purchase, and about three days later, 240 pounds of cat litter showed up at my house, so eight 30-pound containers of cat litter. Apparently, it was showing up in my cart, and I was using VoiceOver, and I just wasn't swiping or flicking far enough to find it. Anyway, I think the cats were really thrilled about that. They never complained about too much cat litter.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. Well, at least they didn't change their minds, like, "We hate this litter now."

**Douglas Walker:** You know what? It didn't surprise me because that can happen.

**Ricky Enger:** Well, I think there are some things that just happen to all of us. You had one that was you had two different shoes and didn't realize and were walking around all day. And that one was apparently very relatable, because we had a bunch of people who responded having done the same thing. I think this next one from Kate, I find it very relatable. We'll see if you do as well.

**Douglas Walker:** Oke doke.

**Ed Haines:** From Kate. I have a little remaining vision, but one day, I was practicing my blind skills, and I was wearing learning shades, which are completely black. I went to the store with my husband, and I walked into a pole. Well, not being able to see, I thought I ran into a person, and I apologized out loud. My husband and a cashier were laughing out loud and told me I had just apologized to a pole. Many other stories have happened since my vision loss, but this was one of the most memorable and, honestly, embarrassing.

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, my goodness. Yes, several poles have hit me, but that does remind me. When I first started working at Hadley, they have these busts, these heads, molds of different people, and they were having some kind of get-together. And one of these was sitting on a pedestal, all by itself over there, and I'm thinking, "That poor guy is standing by himself. Nobody is over there talking to him." I made my way over there. It was a dimly lit room. I was going to talk to him and got really close and realized it was not a person, it was a bust, but I got caught on my way over there. It became a joke for a little while, "Do you want to go talk to the bust over there?"

**Ricky Enger:** I figure they're lonely, and again-

**Douglas Walker:** That's right, standing over there by himself, poor fellow.

**Ricky Enger:** Everybody's so polite, though. We haven't had any stories about someone cursing out a pole. No, everybody's always apologizing or coming to say hello.

**Douglas Walker:** Yep or apologizing to a mannequin. I've done that too.

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, yes, so many times.

**Douglas Walker:** "Oh, I'm so sorry."

**Ricky Enger:** Up next, we have Scott, who has a story that's a little bit similar, but not quite the same.

**Ed Haines:** From Scott. I walked into a dimly lit clothing store one day. I almost bumped into another person, quickly excused myself, only to realize I was talking to my own reflection in a full-length mirror.

**Ricky Enger:** That one sounds familiar, yeah?

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah, absolutely. I bet he's glad that the reflection didn't talk back. That would've been even scarier. But, yes, very similar to the mannequin and the pole. Yeah.

**Ricky Enger:** That happened in a clothing store. That seems to be just a common theme here is stuff that happens in a clothing store, and those are, like you said, with mannequins and various clothing and things that could happen. Stephanie is up next to share her story about something that happened in a store.

**Stephanie:** Hi, my name is Stephanie from Columbus, Ohio. My husband and I had walked into Old Navy. It was very quiet in there. He wanted to go look at the men's stuff, and I said, "Well, I'll take my cane and go over and look at the women's stuff." I was feeling my way around the different clothes, the things that were folded or hanging up, and it was really very nice and quiet. I didn't have to worry about anybody. And I came upon this quilted winter coat, and I thought, I'm talking out loud, by the way, saying, "Oh, this is really nice. I want one of these. I wonder if they have that in my size."

All of a sudden, the person that was wearing the coat was saying, "Oh, I like it too. This is nice, yeah." And I just felt like I was going to faint, and I was apologizing, because I was feeling the sleeves and the jacket and everything. It was crazy. And so, after I apologized, he just laughed and said, "It's okay. I understand." And I ran over to my husband the best I could, and I told him what happened, and he said, "I'm glad I wasn't there."

**Douglas Walker:** That's the best part of it. That sounds like what my wife would say, "Well, I'm glad I wasn't over there in the middle of all that." That's very similar to what happened to Carol.

**Ricky Enger:** What is family for?

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, absolutely. But I love how people are reacting and being nice. I think that's so great. We have a theme in this show for sure, with clothing in stores, clothing stores and stuff.

**Ricky Enger:** Yes. Although I have to say, it's a wonder that any of us ever go out shopping for clothing as much as can happen when we're doing that.

**Douglas Walker:** I know.

**Ricky Enger:** But sometimes you have to try something on.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. There is that, especially shoes or certain clothes. You want to make sure they fit just right. Try not to take them off other people in the store, but, yeah, there is that. Well, it's funny.

**Ricky Enger:** I was shopping for a special event one time, and I had my friend with me. I would much rather have ordered something and hoped it fit, but, no, I really needed to get it right. We had found a couple of dresses, and she was like, "Okay, go try these on." And you know how you go try the thing on, then you come out of the dressing room and twirl and model the outfit and say, "Does it look okay?" and all of that.

I went and tried on the first dress and came out strutting my stuff and, "Okay, is it good? Do we like it?" And my friend's like, "Well, I really like the way it fits, but the color just doesn't suit you as well. I'm going to go and see if I can find this same style in a different color. Meanwhile, you go ahead and go back and try on this second dress that we chose and see if that one works." Okay, so I had left my cane back in the dressing room because you couldn't easily get lost. So, I come wandering back to the dressing room and open the door and, oh, my gosh-

**Douglas Walker:** No, don't tell me.

**Ricky Enger:** ... it was not my dressing room. I startled someone, and she laughed after a moment or two, after getting over that initial shock.

**Douglas Walker:** I like how you started that by saying, "You can't easily get lost," unless you do.

**Ricky Enger:** Unless you're me.

**Douglas Walker:** Or me. Oh, my goodness. Yeah.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. And you feel so bad because there's that element of embarrassment, at least when I've done this, there was the element of embarrassment for me, but I feel bad because the other people who were involved don't always know what to do. They're getting over the shock or-

**Douglas Walker:** They're just stunned at the moment. All they know is somebody has invaded their space.

**Ricky Enger:** Exactly. Believe it or not, we actually have another clothing story. See, what did I tell you? These are really popular and very relatable. This time, we're going to hear from Linda.

**Ed Haines:** From Linda. This was years ago, when I was still legally blind. I was with my mother shopping in a store which sold clothing. Blue was the only color I could see with any degree of clarity, so when I looked up and saw a blue dress on a mannequin, I walked across the aisle and I said, "Oh, what a pretty dress," and I put my hand up to touch the sleeve. It was then that I realized it wasn't a mannequin, but another shopper. I'll be eternally grateful that I said something nice about her dress.

**Ricky Enger:** There you go.

**Douglas Walker:** That is the opposite of talking to mannequins when it turns out to be a real person, right?

**Ricky Enger:** Yes. But enough about clothes, do you have a food-related shopping incident perhaps?

**Douglas Walker:** I said I like to do shopping through apps and stuff, so this is another shopping story that involves a grocery shopping app. Ricky, do you like banana ice cream?

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, my gosh, I do. And I want to try and make it in my Vitamix. I understand you can do that.

**Douglas Walker:** Oh. Oh, neat. Yes. Yeah, you can. But my wife makes the best in the world. It is just the best banana ice cream. Everybody loves her banana ice cream. Even people that don't like bananas like her banana ice cream.

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, wow.

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah, it is so creamy. It's just so good. We were having company over for dinner, and the plan was to have banana ice cream for dessert, and it turns out we don't have all the ingredients. My wife kind of rattles them off to me as I put them all in a grocery shopping app. I went ahead and submitted the order. Anyway, our groceries showed up about an hour later, and we're unloading the groceries, and my wife says, "Did you order only one banana?" And, of course, I'm like, "Huh?" because the order calls for six bananas.

Now I distinctly remember, I promise you, Ricky, I zoomed in, and I saw a picture of a bunch of bananas. I used zoom. I didn't even think to select the quantity. It's just like bananas, "Oh, that's a bunch of bananas, get it." I would like to blame it on a mislabeled button or something like that, but no, I didn't have the six bananas. It all turned out okay because we ended up with just plain old vanilla ice cream and not my wife's famous banana ice cream. But, anyway, I heard about that one for a while.

**Ricky Enger:** Yeah. Ice cream is ice cream, though. You can't-

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. Now there is that.

**Ricky Enger:** Yes. Not related to clothing or food, we do have a story coming up from Pierre. Let's hear that one.

**Ed Haines:** From Pierre. It was in late 1989 or early 1990. I had just lost my vision and my O&M instructor and I were working in a mall using my white cane. He was behind me making sure I was clearing the ashtrays that were sticking out of the walls along with the light fixtures. You see, I'm six foot five inches tall. Anyway, we were going on our merry way. Then all of a sudden, bang, I got hit on my cane by something, and it was a lady that came out of the store with a baby stroller and hit my cane and ran into me. After composing myself and Jim getting my cane that flew out of my hand, the lady said, "Sorry, I didn't see you." And then I replied, "That's okay, lady. I didn't see you either."

**Douglas Walker:** I love that.

**Ed Haines:** After that happened, the lady, Jim, and myself just started laughing, and a whole lot of others joined in.

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, I love it. Again, that's where that humor is so important, being able to just lighten up and take it as it comes.

**Ricky Enger:** And that's always so helpful when everybody involved can laugh about it, not just the person that it happened to, but the bystanders as well, when they know, "Okay, yeah, it's okay. I can laugh."

**Douglas Walker:** Yeah. Yeah, that is so fun.

**Ricky Enger:** But I imagine that orientation and mobility instructors could tell some of the best stories, because you know they've seen a lot, right?

**Douglas Walker:** They've seen it all. They've seen it all.

**Ricky Enger:** I had one that was a bit embarrassing and actually involved an O&M instructor as well. One of the things that an O&M instructor will do is work with you to be able to travel safely using a white cane and such. They're teaching you not only these cane techniques, but as you progress, they are teaching you how to get from point A to point B and some things that you might do along the way, using the senses that you do have to figure out things about your environment. Also, what kind of surface your cane going across, is it carpet, is it concrete or whatever, do you hear anything interesting, do you smell anything interesting, all that kind of stuff.

I was working with an O&M instructor in a new area, and we had decided that, at the end of this route that we were doing and working on, we were going to stop for lunch. All I needed to do was make it to the Subway sandwich shop. I was like, "Yeah, I got this," and I'm really hungry. It's 2:00 in the afternoon, so yeah, bring it on. I want the food. I do the route and I get to the area where the store is, and I couldn't remember exactly how many doors down the Subway is, but I'm like, "I got it." I'm going to use all of my lovely powers of deduction and I'll be able to figure this out. I count three doors, because I was pretty sure that it was three doors down, and I open the door and I go ahead and walk in because, as soon as I open the door, I smell this really strong scent of onions and mustard and stuff.

**Douglas Walker:** This is it.

**Ricky Enger:** I'm like, "Okay, I found it." I smell this faint scent of bread, but those onions and pickles, "Oh, yeah, okay. Those are sandwich fixings. I made it." I stroll in, walk up to the counter. It's really quiet, but it's 2:00 in the afternoon, so I'm like, "Well, the lunch rush is over." Off I walk up to the counter and I'm like, "Hello. I would like a roasted turkey with mayo, pickles, lettuce, onion on wheat, please, and make that a six-inch." And I just hear silence. And you know how you can tell that a person is looking around, looking over at somebody else? I can tell something's happening, and I'm thinking, "Well, maybe she's looking at my O&M instructor and waiting for her to order as well."

**Douglas Walker:** Makes sense.

**Ricky Enger:** And nothing happens. Nothing continues to happen, and then, suddenly, I hear, "Welcome to Allstate. Do you have any insurance needs I can help with?"

**Douglas Walker:** Oh, great. Oh, my goodness. What was all the fragrances that you were smelling?

**Ricky Enger:** I guess, because the Subway was next door and that's what the person had had for lunch, because it was strong. It was like, oh, yeah, a lot of onions.

**Douglas Walker:** This is the place. Welcome. You're in good hands with Allstate there, Ricky. Should have offered you up her Subway sandwich.

**Ricky Enger:** Right. Do you have any of that left? I'm really hungry.

**Douglas Walker:** I know. Well, I think we've done that. I have definitely gone in the wrong store. Something I bet most all of us have done once if we've left the store, even if it's the wrong store, Ricky, we've ended up at the wrong car.

I tell you; I have done that more than once. I've actually gotten in the wrong car with people in the car, who said, "Can I help you?" But what's really shocking is, when you walk up to one and you set off somebody's car alarm by actually yanking at the handle.

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, no.

**Douglas Walker:** And then it's going off, the siren's going off, but, yeah, it's probably funny to see someone with a cane scurrying away from the car, the car alarm blaring. I can imagine that there's probably people thinking, "That blind guy's trying to steal a car over there."

**Ricky Enger:** What's he going to do with it?

**Douglas Walker:** "What's he going to do with that?" Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Wrong stores definitely, but definitely wrong cars. I've done a lot of that.

**Ricky Enger:** Oh, my goodness. Well, this has been so much fun. I know that I, for one, am always relieved to hear these things that happen to me, and I'm thinking, "I have to be the only one who's ever done this," because it is so embarrassing, it's so bad, and yet, nope, not just me,

**Douglas Walker:** A lot of people. And it is embarrassing, but a sense of humor really helps go a long way and helps diffuse all those embarrassing moments. Life is good, Ricky.

**Ricky Enger:** Yes, indeed.

**Douglas Walker:** Life is good.

**Ricky Enger:** If you can smile about it, at the end of the day, you've done something right, and if you can give somebody else a chuckle too, well, I'd say it's worth it.

**Douglas Walker:** I've done a lot of that too. Oh, this has been fun.

**Ricky Enger:** Absolutely. Thank you so much for joining me. I hope that this is one of many, because I would love to continue the conversation. And if you're listening and you have something that you would like to share with us, just keep listening past our closing here, and we've got that contact info for how you can call or how you can send us an email to share those funny stories with us. We'd love to hear it.

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