Hadley

I Found Hope

Presented by Douglas Walker

**Douglas:** Hello, and welcome to the Insights and Sound Bites podcast, where people facing vision loss share insights about what has helped them cope and adjust.

**Voice 1:** You cannot do this alone. You need people who are experiencing the same thing.

**Voice 2:** Probably the hardest part was just navigating through the emotions of it.

**Douglas:** My name is Douglas Walker. You know, sometimes it can feel like we run out of options. Today we’ll hear from Chuck. Chuck will share with us how through a chance encounter, he found the hope he needed.

**Chuck:** Hello, my name is Chuck Ramey, I presently live in a little small town called Petal, Mississippi, a gorgeous little town not far from the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Lost my vision approximately 13 years ago, and it was a very devastating, trauma event. I was actually living in New York City at the time, Brooklyn, and I decided to move from Brooklyn to Jersey so I could slow down a little bit because it was getting more and more difficult to navigate the city. But I still had my doctor's appointments in New York City. So I found myself having to travel at least twice a week from New Jersey to New York City.

Anyway, one morning I was getting up to go to one of those appointments and I was out in Jersey and it had been snowing and it's very extremely cold. It was raining, sleet, cold, snow, ice, everything, all that together. And I got up that morning, I was feeling really, really bad and my mind was fighting off just thoughts of suicide, thoughts of taking my own life. But I just kept going, kept getting dressed, kept getting ready for the appointment. And once I got dressed and ready, I called the cab to get me to the train station.

And I'm feeling so miserable at the time and I'm walking on this ice and I'm slipping and sliding. And I finally made it into Newark Penn Station where it has to change trains to go to track one. So, I'm on track five when I exit the train. So, I'm having to go down into the station and navigate over to track one. And I remembered how to do that from before I had lost my vision. And even though it was difficult, I accomplished it.

And I remember getting into Penn Station and when I get off the train and navigate upstairs, pretty much following the crowd, get a couple of people helping me along the way. And I exit on Eighth Avenue. And I had to stand behind a line of people out of what they call a taxi stand where you have to stand and wait for a taxi. And mind you, we standing on top of ice and it's cold and it's wet and it's sleeting, raining. And I'm miserable.

I get out the cab and the guy directs me toward the door. But when I get to the door, I've been there many times before, but when I get to the door, I can't open it. It's a double handle, double-sided door. And I'm pulling, pulling and can't open it. And I'm frustrated. It's still early in the morning, about 8:30, and everybody is hustling and bustling in New York on that particular morning. Not many people really slowing down to even help anyone. But I was yelling, asking someone to help me. And a guy walks up and he was telling me that there was a sign in the window and the door saying that the doctor office had moved to 23rd Street and Eighth Avenue. And mind you, I just came from Eighth Avenue and 33rd Street, but now I'm standing there trying to figure out how I'm going to get over to 23rd and Eighth Avenue in this cold, freezing weather. And at that moment, I was just so frustrated and just so upset.

But while I'm standing there trying to think about how I'm going to get over to Eighth Avenue and 23rd street.

And in the distance, I heard a elderly lady yelling, "Sir, do you need any help?" And I said, "Yes, ma'am, I need some help." I wasn't sure if she was talking to me, but I responded and she came over to help me. And I told her and explained what had happened, that I got dropped off by a cab and the doctor's office had moved and I'm standing there. And she seen me with my...I had black glasses on and a white cane. And she said that, "Well, I know where that place is at and I'm going to walk you over there." And mind you, it's 8:30 in the morning, cold, freezing rain, New York City. What is the elderly lady doing out in that kind of weather? But she had a support cane herself. And I remember she said, "Grab on. Let's go." And I grabbed her right shoulder and we started down the street, walking.

And as we walked, she talked. She asked me where I was originally from, where I was born, where I went to school.

But when we get over to Eighth Avenue and 23rd Street, of course I'm pretty wet, not soaked, but wet. And I think the doctor's office was on the 10th floor. And once we get upstairs on the 10th floor, she takes me to the reception desk and she goes to the bathroom and comes back with these big brown paper towels, rough towels that they have in the bathroom. And I was using those to dry myself off.

And at the same time, I was trying to give the reception my information, my name and everything. And I was thanking her for helping me. And she said, "Chuck, I got to go." And I said, "Okay, thank you for helping me. Thank you so much." And she had gotten on the elevator and I yelled and said, "Ma'am, what's your name?" And she yelled back and said, "My name is Hope."

And as I stand there and the way she delivered that through her voice, it went all through my body. Because I was hopeless at that moment and this woman that had just helped me, I felt like it was special.

I remember after the appointment on my way back home, I had a different feeling, a different attitude, a different hope about going on, about living and about continuing my life. And every time after that I went out, I always felt the presence of Hope with me, guiding me and giving me that comfort and that support that I needed that day. Because at that moment, I didn't know what I was going to do had she not shown up. But she did. And she shows up every day in my life, every time I go out, every time I do anything that I do. Everywhere I go, I take Hope with me.

**Douglas**: Was there something that someone said to you or something that happened along the way that made all the difference in the world in helping you adjust to living with vision loss?

We‘d love to hear from you if you’d like to share with us, just leave us a message on our Insights & Sound Bites voicemail by calling, 847-512-4867. Or, you can use your smartphone or computer and email us a recording to podcast@Hadley.edu. Again, my name is Douglas Walker. Take care and I’ll see you next time.