Hadley

I lost my License and found acceptance

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.

**Eugenia:** What I realized, if I didn’t accept this help from other people, where does it leave me? It’s isolating.

**Douglas:** My name is Douglas Walker. You know, it’s common to feel really isolated when you give up the car keys. Today we’ll hear from Eugenia. Eugenia shares with us how learning to accept help from others has made all the difference.

**Eugenia:** Hi, this is Eugenia DeReu. I'm from the Buffalo, New York area. I'm 63. I'm legally blind. My moment that I'm talking about today is when I found out I lost my driver's license, which is three years ago, and I lost it because of my sight.

I've had my license since I was 17. And I was so excited to get it because it gives you a sense of freedom. You could jump in that car and go do anything. I could do anything anytime, anywhere I wanted. It was that freedom and when it was taken away, it was a big loss for me. And I'm used to being someone that does stuff for everybody. I grew up that way and my parents volunteered. They gave us this sense of community, family. I lost that and it's something I had to wrap around my head because I had to learn how to rely on other people. I was the one that always did that. But now I had to rely on family, friends.

I just felt guilty about it. What I realized if I didn't accept that help... I live in Buffalo. It's a very, very long winter. You can only do so much. So, it's isolating. And if I didn't accept this help from other people, where does it leave me? And I realized that if I accepted this help, maybe it could bring me back to a volunteering place, to a place where I can help people.

I'm slowly learning that I am getting out more for myself, which is a big part of this journey also. I am legally blind. I have to rely on people. I have to learn a different way of life, which I am. But maybe I can go volunteer at a food pantry. I can volunteer anywhere. There's something I can do. I know there is, and I can help other people.

And I think I realized that through my blindness and my family and friends, that I'm giving them that opportunity. I know that sounds odd, but it gives them the opportunity to help me, which I know it makes them feel good, and I had to accept that also. I just think the acceptance of help from your community is important. And I guess that's what I wanted to say. It's a big important to me because right now we are in the winter and I just started feeling isolated again. So, I have to start getting out there and really using those resources. And that's it. Thank you very much.

**Douglas**: You never know who might need to hear your story. If you’d like to share, you can leave me a voicemail by calling, 847-512-4867. Or, you can email me a recording to podcast@HadleyHelps.org. Again, my name is Douglas Walker. Take care and I’ll see you next time.