

NOW I CAN SEE BETTER

By John Wilson



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IT'S A SCARY THING FOR A television newscaster to consider letting someone pluck out the lenses of his eyes. I wasn't having trouble reading, but I started feeling like my contacts were sitting on bubbles, and then an infection got my attention and made me realize it was time to see my eye doctor. Since most of us will eventually face some eyesight issues as we get older, I'll tell you about my experience, now that I have two new lenses in my eyes. Although getting new lenses may sound invasive, complicated and debilitating, it was easier than a root-canal and not nearly as painful. Come to think of it, root-canals are not that bad either in today's world.

I've been using contacts for years, and I became so comfortable with them that I started leaving them in my eyes overnight. Contact lenses were my friends, but I would take them out on weekends to give my eyes a rest, as eyes like to have oxygen, which contact lenses restrict.

I feel like I read a "zillion" words a day in the newsroom or at home, as I scan the newspapers and read all the 'fine' print. I discovered that my eyes didn't like me to constantly poke them with my fingers to insert my contact lenses. They eventually got really mad at me for doing it so much, and then things began to happen. I found that contact lenses are a superficial band-aid that can correct a lot of vision problems, but when I got my first eye infection in

years, suddenly the evening news was harder to see. A little antibiotic took care of that, but I realized that since bacterial infections in my eyes were a problem, I considered a "fix" that my doctor had discussed with me that would eliminate contacts and, for most people, the need for glasses. He said it would improve both my 'distance' and 'up close' vision.

He was right! A new day has dawned. I didn't realize I was missing so much of the contrast, clarity and beauty of the earth. I had been struggling with what had become a daily ritual of waiting for my contacts to "settle down." By wearing contacts so much, I had caused microscopic 'ridges' to form on the surface of my eyes, so my contacts were not fitting flush with the surface of my eyes. My doctor used "Crystal Lenses," that were custom chosen just for me. He inserted them through a tiny, tiny hole with a very tiny instrument under a microscope. The delicate procedure only took a few minutes, or about the time it takes to say "supercalifragilisticexpialidocious," as a mild sedative kept the world at a distance. The actual procedure of removing my

lens and replacing it with a synthetic lifetime-lasting lens was about 15 minutes. I did one eye at a time, five days apart. I could have done both of them at once, but thought it would be better to do one at a time.

Once the Crystal Lens was in place, the world was suddenly in focus again. It was amazing. The same procedure is used to remove cataracts and clouded lenses, which inhibit the vision of more than 20 million Americans over the age of 40.

I was out of work for about a week, so I had the chance to clean out my garage and put in a lot of 'drops', both anti-inflammatory and antibiotic. But, my vision was virtually crystal clear almost immediately. I had been using mono-vision contact lenses for years, and my brain was already in the mode of automatically deciding what I wanted to see, close up or distance. The optic nerve, the brain and the eye constantly and instantaneously carry out a remarkable process of focusing all the time. It is miraculous, almost like the surgery. I wish I had done this years ago.

And good evening Tampa Bay. Here is the news. 

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Wilson co-anchors the Fox 13 6:00 News & Fox 13 10:00 News.