Justin Overcame the Odds: Vision Therapy & Learning to Read as an Adult Transcript

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Justin's Early Life and Vision Challenges

I am Justin Levy and I'm from Boulder, Colorado. A couple days before I was born, my brain bled and so I born with cerebral palsy. In addition to having cerebral palsy, I also extremely dyslexic and didn't even read my first book until I 21 years old.

My life before working with Dr. Applebaum was really limited reading, very limited, and using a lot of coping mechanisms, programs to get through day to day in business, in school, with cerebral palsy, learning how to walk four different times in my life, going through multiple surgeries on my legs, my back, and struggling with balance, hand-eye coordination, and all the things that come along with it.

Growing up starting at about age two, I had surgery on my eyes for strabismus to try to straighten my right eye. I didn't have binocular vision, so I wasn't looking out of both eyes at once.

Decades later, I was introduced to Dr. Applebaum, now only about three months ago. I remember in the middle of the summer of 2024, meeting Bryce on Zoom for the first time, and he asked me to grab a pen.

And I barely read or wrote, so I had to go search for a pin.

Meeting Dr. Applebaum and Starting Therapy

And I held it up in front of my eyes for 10 seconds. And he said, you know, I don't want to over promise, but I can change your life if you come work with me.

I had to experience that in decades. You know there was a lot of stuff I did as a kid to be my best self. But after that I just sort of rocked and rolled and got used to what I knew from my body, from eyes, and from lived experience.

And so in October, I went and saw Dr. Applebaum and the team at my vision first. And on day one, we did an assessment that I had done many, many times in my life looking at the same pictures and which picture pops out at you, which one is more 3D.

The answer for me always was none of them, because I didn't have binocular vision. And so I remember meeting Bryce in real life for the first time and he said something along the lines of, I'm so sorry.

This must be so challenging for you, but it's really exciting for me because I know we can make an impact. And he said, you know, how tired are you right now?

And I said I'm ready to rock and roll. Like I've done those tests that they don't fatigue me. Right. And so I went in the next day and started a vision therapy.

The team was absolutely incredible, and really brought me along in that journey.

Breakthroughs in Vision and Reading

Realizing that I was a active participant in my own care with them and You know, I spent two to three hours a day during the intensive doing vision therapy and you know Bryce Bryce told me at the beginning of the week like you're just going to see some changes It's going start happening and I was here for it.

So I worked my ass off every day with the team and all the support and on the last day of my intensive, the last full

day of my intensive. I did the assessment again and it was really challenging and I was pretty frustrated because I thought I failed it again.

Dr. Applebaum walked into his office. He said, what's wrong? He says, I feel like I've failed. Said, well, you got the answers right and you couldn't have guessed them, which means you're starting to see change.

And I remember going back to my hotel room that night and I was sitting in bed right in the middle of the room and realized for the first time in my life I could see both walls to the right and left of me.

My right eye had turned on and started working. And one of doctors asked me, what's something you haven't been able to do? I said, catch anything. I didn't have depth perception.

The doctor walked across the room and threw 12 bean bags at me and I caught a lemon. And the hope that was sparked over those two days were completely life-changing.

I know I mentioned earlier that I didn't learn how to read until I was 21 years old. That's when I read my first book, followed by my second book. And it was so difficult.

I hadn't physically read a book since then. 20 some years, I haven't read. A book and one of the doctors at my vision first suggested that I would get a Kindle.

They said, don't try reading it at work too much because you need to be proficient. You need. To be fast in what you're doing. So just start reading at home.

Well, I texted Bryce the other day, I just finished a 375 page book. And again, the motivation and also the confidence that comes from that is incredible.

New Confidence and Daily Life Improvements

I was born with cerebral palsy, and went through 14 surgeries and learned how to walk four different times. Then I went to the gym and I did 44 squats on a BOSU ball.

without falling off. And, you know, these types of experiences keep adding up week after week. Sitting at a restaurant with a friend and being in conversation and almost getting startled because all of a sudden I can see what's happening over here.

I see people moving and I'm not used to it. And if this is happening now, I can't wait to see where we take it together. I went almost 39 years experiencing life through my eyes in the way that I saw it.

Struggling with balance, struggling with reading, having a hard time walking sometimes. and so much more carrying a coffee, right? The little things, and I'm so glad that I found my vision first because now I know with confidence that don't have to live life that way and that this new reality is not only possible, it's happening.

And after multiple decades, My world is opening up and I can't thank the team at My Vision First for believing in me and working so hard to make it possible for me, and so many others, to live life easier and better.

I would never want to change the challenges and struggles that I went through in my life because it beautifully made me who I am today. And I'm so grateful to now be a vital visionary.

with the team at My Vision First to not only continue the work that I do to make sure that kids and families have access to healthy food every single day, but also be an advocate for vision therapy and helping to shift the reality of so many so that they can live an easier life.