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The following list was compiled by Yisroel Lefkowitz and Rochel Y. Bodek as a presentation at the Insight Beyond Eyesight Shabbaton in June 2024.

Please note: we use the term ‘blind’ liberally in this article to represent anyone who has visual challenges to the extent that they have difficulty with the scenarios mentioned below-so it does not mean it is only for ‘totally blind’ people. Some people don’t like the term ‘blind’, especially if they have some usable vision and will rather resort to “Visually impaired”, “low vision”, “partially sighted”, etc. Yet Rochel Y. Bodek and Yisroel Lefkowitz who compiled these have come to the realization that the term ‘blind’ doesn’t bother them. “What difference does it make-I’m anyway sighted to the blind and blind to the sighted…”

<u>Ten Things Blind People (or their Family/caregivers) Shouldn’t Say to Themselves</u>

1. “I’m not blind…”
    - Sometimes, I avoid calling myself blind and use terms like visually impaired or low vision. But does it really make a difference? And do I want to hide my disability-will it really help me in the long run?
2. “I know it’s good for me or I should do it, but what will people say or think?”
    - I often worry about others' opinions, like when considering using a cane. Am I not using it because it won't benefit me or because I'm afraid of what others might think?
3. “I might get hurt or injured if I do this…”
    - I sometimes avoid trying new things out of fear of getting hurt. But it's better to risk minor injuries for greater independence. I should wear those “badges of honor or pride” proudly.
4. 4.“It’s so hard to ask for help—maybe I’ll just manage without asking or just not do or have what I want or need.”
    - Asking for help can be tough, but avoiding it limits my opportunities and independence.
5. “I’ll just let others say or do it for me—it’s less complicated or messy.”
    - Depending on others can hinder my skill development and independence. While accepting occasional help is fine, I should strive to do things myself for a more satisfying and productive life.
6. “I am incapable or too old to learn technology or Braille.”
    - I might feel too old or incapable of learning new skills, but trying and persevering can significantly improve my quality of life.
7. “I’m comfortable with my current skill level and don’t need to have hobbies.”
    - Engaging in hobbies and developing new skills can lead to productive occupations and future success. It’s worth exploring new activities for my health and well-being.
8. “I hope I’ll be able to see or see better with research, treatment, therapy, segulos, etc., so I won’t invest as much time or money in learning coping and independence skills.”
    - While I hold on to hope, investing in coping and independence skills is crucial for living a fulfilling life.

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9. “I think I see it—if you don’t see it, don’t say it.”
    - Pretending to see something can be misleading and unhelpful. It’s better to be honest about what I can and cannot see.
10. “But the professional said so…”
    - Professionals can be helpful, but don’t follow them “blindly”. I should use my common sense and seek advice from visually impaired friends or their family members who truly understand my experiences.

Bonus: “I’m waiting for my service provider, case worker, or counselor to call me…” - Instead of waiting passively, I need to be proactive. By doing my research and being persistent, I can ensure I get the services and support I need.
A good place to start is right here at the Insight Beyond Eyesight Shabbaton!!!