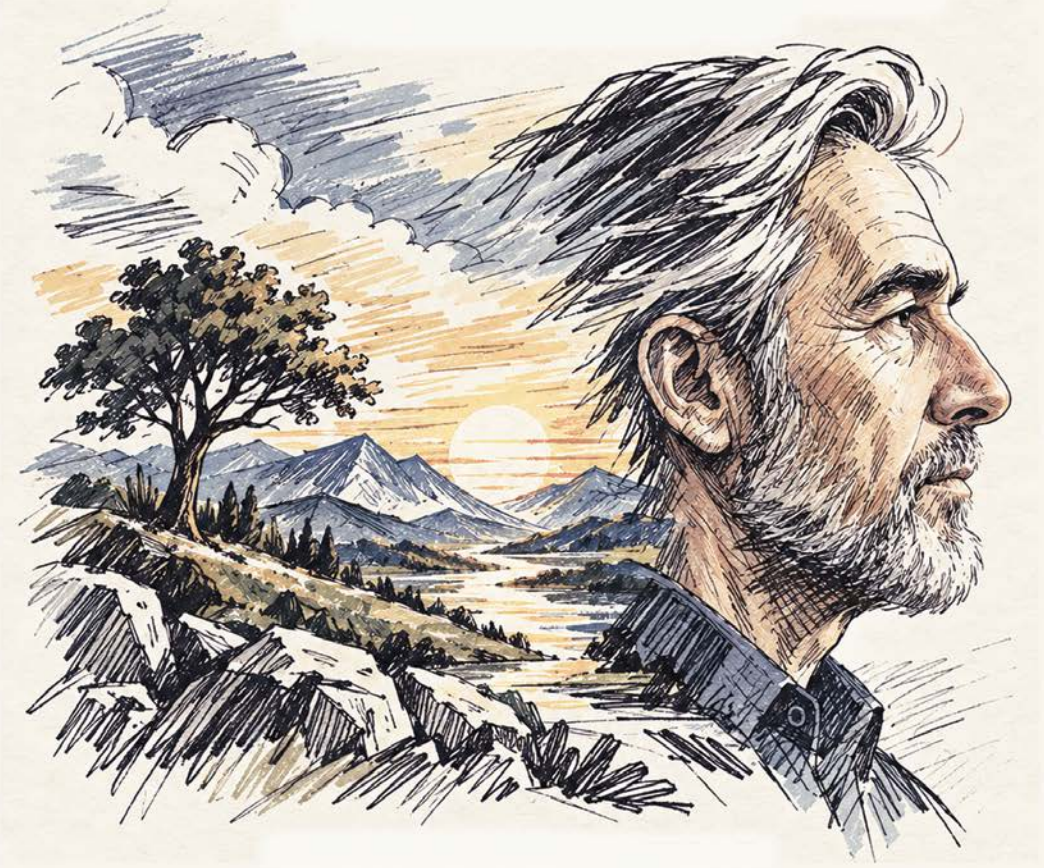
INTERNAL VISION

Finding Clarity, Regulation, and Stability
When the Future Is Uncertain



VADIM DEKHTYAR


IM PRESS

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INTERNAL VISION

Finding Clarity, Regulation, and Stability When the Future Is Uncertain

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Vadim Dekhtyar
Internal Vision: *Finding Clarity, Regulation, and Stability When the Future Is Uncertain*

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Contents

Medical Disclaimer 7

Preface. The Discovery Behind This Book. 8

Your Internal Vision Profile 13

Part I — Clarity. Seeing What Is Actually Here 19

Chapter 1
When Fear Takes Over 21

Chapter 2
The Pictures We Create 30

Chapter 3
The Voice Inside 39

Chapter 4
Thought Viruses. 49

Chapter 5
Beliefs 59

Chapter 6
Identity. 70

Part II — Regulation. Changing Your Response 81

Chapter 7
The Lesson of the Treatment Room. 83

Chapter 8
The Principle of Participation 94

Chapter 9
Fear of the Future. 104

Chapter 10
The Power of Movement 115

PART III — STABILITY. THE ABILITY TO RETURN 127

Chapter 11
Resilience 129

Chapter 12
Integration. 139

The 30-Day Internal Vision Practice. 147

Your Internal Vision Profile 171

Afterword
Your Internal Vision Continues 175

Appendix A
SIGHT Quick Reference 179

Appendix B
My Circle of Participation 181

Appendix C
Internal Vision Movement Practice. 183

SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS AND FURTHER READING 190

Medical Disclaimer

This book is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The psychological tools and practices described in this book are designed to support emotional regulation, adaptation, and continued participation in daily life for people living with retinal conditions and vision-related uncertainty. They are not intended to diagnose, prevent, treat, or cure retinal disease, nor are they intended to replace medical care, ophthalmologic monitoring, vision rehabilitation, or prescribed treatment plans.

Always consult your ophthalmologist, retina specialist, physician, or other qualified healthcare professional regarding medical concerns, changes in symptoms, diagnosis, or treatment decisions.

Do not delay seeking professional medical care because of information contained in this book.

The author is not responsible for medical decisions made solely on the basis of this book. Medical care should remain under the supervision of appropriately licensed healthcare professionals.

Preface

The Discovery Behind This Book

For more than thirty years, my professional life has brought together different ways of understanding health and human change.

I began in Western medicine, graduating from medical school and working as a physician and psychotherapist in Europe. Later, my path led me deeply into acupuncture and Chinese medicine. Today, as a Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine and licensed acupuncturist in the United States, much of my clinical work focuses on complex conditions, including retinal disease.

For more than fifteen years, I also taught neuroscience to future healthcare professionals, an experience that deepened my understanding of how the brain shapes perception, emotion, expectation, and behavior.

During those years, I often began discussions about vision by asking my students a simple question: "How do we see?"

At first, the answer seemed obvious. "With our eyes."

Of course, the eyes are essential. They receive and begin processing visual information and send signals through the nervous system. But the experience of seeing does not happen in the eyes alone.

It happens in the brain.

I would often summarize the lesson as:

> The eyes provide the visual information. The brain turns that information into the experience of seeing.

The brain takes incoming information and gives it form and meaning. It connects what we see with memory, attention, expectation, emotion, and what we already know about the world.

At the time, I was teaching neuroscience.

Years later, working with people whose vision had become uncertain, I began to understand that lesson in a different way.

The brain does not only participate in how we see the world around us.

It also participates in how we see what may come next.



These different disciplines taught me to look at the same human being from different perspectives. Western medi-

cine taught me to understand disease. Chinese medicine taught me to look for patterns and balance. Neuroscience helped me understand how perception, emotion, expectation, and behavior interact.

But clinical practice taught me something else: people do not experience a diagnosis as a medical fact alone. They experience what they believe it means for their future.

Over the years, working with people facing vision problems made this especially clear.

They came with diagnoses such as macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, Stargardt disease, and other retinal conditions. They brought test results, ophthalmology reports, questions about treatment—and often a fear they did not know what to do with.

Some had recently received a diagnosis. Others had lived with one for years.

Their circumstances were different, but I began hearing the same questions again and again.

People worried about losing independence, driving, working, traveling, recognizing faces, or becoming a burden to their families. Some monitored every visual fluctuation. Others began changing their lives in anticipation of losses they had not yet experienced.

The retinal condition was real.

But something else was happening around it.

The uncertainty had begun affecting how they saw their future—and sometimes how they saw themselves.

I began to realize that while we were working with External Vision, some patients were losing another kind of vision.

They were losing clarity about what was actually happening. They were losing the ability to regulate the fear surrounding it.

And they were losing stability—the sense that they could remain themselves, adapt, and continue moving forward even when the future was uncertain.

I began calling this **Internal Vision**.

> Internal Vision is the capacity to maintain Clarity, Regulation, and Stability in the presence of uncertainty.

This book grew from one question:

How do we help a person preserve Internal Vision when External Vision becomes uncertain?

The answer took me beyond the eyes.

And that is where our journey begins.

How to Use This Book

This book is meant to be read—and used.

It is organized around three capacities of Internal Vision:

Clarity—seeing what is actually happening and distinguishing it from what fear predicts.

Regulation—influencing your response when fear or uncertainty begins to take over.

Stability—adapting, regaining balance, and maintaining direction when circumstances change.

The chapters build on one another, so I recommend reading them in order the first time.

You will also encounter **SIGHT**, a simple process that develops throughout the book. There is no need to memorize it immediately. As you move through the chapters, you will learn how to use it with fear, thoughts, internal images, uncertainty, and difficult moments.

Some chapters include questions or practices. Try them, notice what happens, and continue. Internal Vision develops through experience, not through doing every exercise perfectly.

Before Chapter 1, you will complete a short Internal Vision Profile. It is not a medical or diagnostic test. It is

a snapshot of where you are now in Clarity, Regulation, and Stability.

After the 30-Day Internal Vision Practice, you will complete the same Profile again—not to achieve a perfect score, but to notice what has changed.

Later, you may return to individual chapters when you need them: before an ophthalmology appointment, during a period of uncertainty, or when something in your circumstances changes.

Read the book once as a **journey**.

Then return to it as a **resource**.

You do not need to master Internal Vision before uncertainty appears again.

You need to know how to find your way back when it does.

Your Internal Vision Profile

Before You Begin

Before moving into Part I, take a few minutes to see where you are starting.

Internal Vision is your capacity to maintain Clarity, Regulation, and Stability in the presence of uncertainty.

The questions below offer a snapshot of these three capacities today.

This is not a medical or diagnostic assessment. It does not evaluate your eyesight, retinal condition, or prognosis. There is no good or bad score. Its purpose is to help you recognize where your Internal Vision is already strong and where uncertainty may be having more influence.

Think about your experience during the past two weeks.

Rate each statement from 0 to 5:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Most of the time	Consis-tently

Choose what feels true now, not what you think should be true. Keep a record of your answers and scores; you will compare them after the 30-Day Practice.

Clarity

1. **I can distinguish what I know from what I fear may happen.**
   0–1–2–3–4–5
2. **When something concerns me, I can separate facts from my interpretation of them.**
   0–1–2–3–4–5
3. **Even when the future is uncertain, I can see what deserves my attention now.**
   0–1–2–3–4–5
4. **I usually have a sense of what my next useful step is.**
   0–1–2–3–4–5

CLARITY SCORE: _____ / 20

Regulation

5. **When fear or uncertainty rises, I can help myself settle.**
   0–1–2–3–4–5
6. **Difficult thoughts or emotions do not usually take over my entire attention.**
   0–1–2–3–4–5
7. **When I become upset, I can influence my response rather than being carried by it.**
   0–1–2–3–4–5
8. **I can experience uncertainty without feeling that I must immediately solve it.**
   0–1–2–3–4–5

REGULATION SCORE: _____ / 20

Stability

9. **When circumstances become uncertain, I can remain connected to who I am and what matters to me.**
   0–1–2–3–4–5
10. **I trust my ability to adapt when something changes.**
    0–1–2–3–4–5
11. **Fear about the future does not usually stop me from participating in life today.**
    0–1–2–3–4–5
12. **Even during difficult periods, I can maintain a sense of direction.**
    0–1–2–3–4–5

STABILITY SCORE: _____ / 20

Your Internal Vision Score

Rate each statement from 0 to 5:

Clarity:	Regulation:	Stability:	Total internal vision score:
_____ / 20	_____ / 20	_____ / 20	_____ / 60

Date: _____

Before looking at the total, notice your three individual scores.

Which is strongest? Which needs the most support?

Understanding Your Internal Vision Profile

The ranges below are reflective guides, not clinical or validated cutoffs. Use them as another way to notice your current pattern, not as a diagnosis or judgment.

46–60 — Strong Internal Vision

You generally maintain clarity, regulate your response, and keep a sense of direction even when uncertainty is present.

This does not mean you are fearless. Strong Internal Vision means fear is less likely to take away your ability to see clearly, regain balance, and continue participating in life.

31–45 — Developing Internal Vision

You already have meaningful internal resources, but some situations may still disrupt them. A new symptom, an upcoming appointment, difficult information, or uncertainty about the future may temporarily pull you into the fog.

Your foundation is there. The goal is to make these capacities more consistent when you need them most.

16–30 — Unsteady Internal Vision

You may experience periods of clarity and stability, but uncertainty can easily disrupt them. You may understand rationally that something is only a possibility while your body and mind respond as though it were already happening.

The chapters ahead will help you recognize where this happens and develop more choice in your response.

0–15 — The Fog Is Heavy

Right now, uncertainty may occupy much of your internal world. It may be difficult to separate what is happening from what might happen, settle after fear rises, or maintain direction when the future feels unclear.

This score is not a judgment. It simply tells you where you are starting.

When the fog is heavy, you do not need to see the entire road.

You begin by seeing the next step.

Your Three Scores Matter More Than the Total

Two people can have exactly the same total score and very different Internal Vision Profiles.

You may have strong Clarity—you recognize when fear is predicting the future—but your Regulation score may show that your body and emotions still react strongly.

Or perhaps you regulate yourself well but have less Stability: uncertainty has begun affecting your plans, confidence, or participation in life.

That is why this is a **Profile**, not simply a score.

Look at the shape of yours.

Where is your Internal Vision already serving you?

Where does the fog become thicker?

You do not need to change anything yet.

Just notice.

Then answer one final question:

If uncertainty about my vision had less influence over my life, what would I do differently?

Keep your answer.

At the end of the 30-Day Internal Vision Practice, you will complete these same twelve questions again.

For now, we begin with the first capacity.

PART I — CLARITY

Seeing What Is Actually Here

Clarity begins with a simple distinction:

What is happening—and what is happening inside me because of it?

When vision becomes uncertain, those two experiences can merge quickly. A visual change becomes a prediction. A prediction becomes fear. Fear changes the body and narrows attention, making the prediction feel even more convincing.

The first part of this book is about learning to see that process.

Not to deny what is happening with your eyes or convince yourself that everything will be fine, but to separate observation from interpretation, possibility from certainty, and diagnosis from the story that may begin forming around it.

Before we can regulate a response, we have to recognize it.

That is where Clarity begins.

Chapter 1

When Fear Takes Over

The Emotional Cascade and the Beginning of SIGHT

> "Sometimes the first sign of fear is not a thought. It is a heartbeat."

You notice something.

A word on the screen seems harder to read. A face across the room looks less clear. A familiar visual disturbance seems different today.

Almost immediately, something happens inside you. Your stomach tightens. Your heartbeat changes. Your attention locks onto your vision.

Was that different yesterday?

You check again, and the next thought arrives:

Is my vision getting worse?

Within seconds, you are no longer simply looking at a word, a face, or a visual sensation. Your mind has moved ahead—from what is happening now to what it might mean for the future.

This is how fear can take over. Not because you decided to worry, but because the mind and body can move from observation to alarm so quickly that the entire sequence feels like one event.

Learning to see that sequence is where Clarity begins.

The Emotional Cascade

Imagine dropping a small stone into still water. The stone touches one point, but the ripples spread outward.

Fear can work the same way.

Something happens. You notice it. Your mind gives the experience meaning. Your body reacts. Another thought appears, followed by another feeling and another interpretation. Soon, the original event may be almost forgotten while the reaction it triggered continues to grow.

I call this the **Emotional Cascade**.

It often follows a pattern like this:

EVENT → INTERPRETATION → BODY RESPONSE → THOUGHT → EMOTION → MORE INTERPRETATION

The Emotional Cascade is not a rigid sequence that unfolds the same way every time. It is a way of slowing experience down so that we can recognize some of the processes that may otherwise seem to happen all at once.

What matters is not the exact order.

What matters is that one moment can quickly become a self-reinforcing pattern.

Suppose reading feels slightly more difficult one morning.

The observation itself is simple:

Reading feels more difficult today.

Then comes the interpretation:

Something has changed.

Your body responds. Perhaps your breathing changes or you feel tension in your chest or stomach.

Then another thought appears:

What if my condition is progressing?

Fear rises, and attention becomes even more focused on vision. You test another line. Cover one eye, then the other. Compare. Check again.

Every difference begins to feel important because your nervous system is already looking for danger.

What began as an observation has become a cascade.



The Brain Does Not Wait for Certainty

The brain is built to respond quickly when something may be important or threatening. It does not always wait until every fact is available. In immediate danger, that speed can be useful.

Uncertainty creates a different problem.

When the answer is unknown, the mind tries to complete the picture. And when fear is already present, it tends to complete that picture in the direction of danger.

> *I noticed something different*
> becomes:
> *Something is wrong*.
> Then:
> *My condition may be progressing*.

From there, the mind can travel very quickly to work, independence, driving, relationships, and the future.

The first statement describes an observation.

Everything that follows may describe possibilities.

Yet once fear is activated, possibilities can begin to feel like facts.

This is one of the most important distinctions in this book:

> What you observe and what you predict
> are not the same thing.

When Attention Becomes Monitoring

For someone living with a retinal condition, paying attention to vision can be appropriate. Meaningful changes may need to be discussed with your ophthalmologist.

The problem is not noticing.

The problem begins when noticing becomes continuous monitoring.

You check a line of text.

Then check again.

Cover one eye.

Then the other.

Look toward a familiar object.

Compare today with yesterday.

For a moment, checking may reduce uncertainty.

But soon another question appears.

Was that really the same?

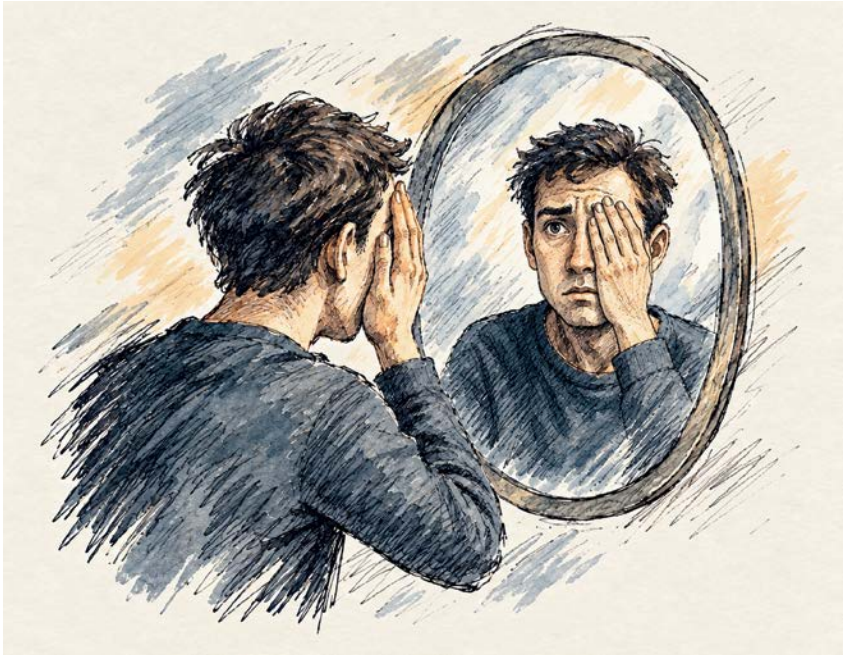
So you check again.

Now attention itself has changed.

Instead of using your vision to read, walk, work, cook, talk with someone, or experience the world around you, you are using vision to evaluate vision.

The more closely you monitor, the more variation you may notice. And when you are already afraid, variation is easily interpreted as evidence that something is wrong.

The cascade reinforces itself.



Fear Narrows the Field

Fear does not only influence what we think.

It influences what we notice.

When something feels threatening, attention narrows around it. This can be useful when immediate action is required. But when the threat is uncertain, narrowed attention can make the feared problem feel like the only thing happening.

A person worried about vision may begin noticing every fluctuation while paying less attention to everything that remains stable.

One difficult moment becomes more emotionally important than hours of ordinary functioning.

This does not mean the difficult moment is imaginary.

It means fear changes proportion.

And Clarity begins by restoring it.

The First Question

When you notice something concerning, ask:

What actually happened?

Not:

What does this mean for my future?

Not:

What if this is progression?

Not:

What will I do if it gets worse?

First:

What actually happened?

Perhaps:

This line was harder to read.

The room looks dimmer today.

I noticed a visual disturbance.

My ophthalmologist told me there was a change.

These are observations.

Now ask:

What did my mind add?

Perhaps:

This is the beginning of serious decline.

I will lose my independence.

The treatment is not working.

My life is going to change.

These may be understandable fears.

They are still different from the original event.

That difference is the beginning of Clarity.

A Patient Who Could Not Stop Checking

One patient came to me convinced that her vision was changing almost every day.

She checked constantly.

She read the same words at different times of day, compared one eye with the other, tested familiar objects across the room, and paid close attention to every fluctuation.

The more she checked, the more differences she found.

And the more differences she found, the more frightened she became.

Her checking felt responsible. She believed she was staying on top of the problem.

But emotionally, she was living inside a continuous examination.

We began with a simple distinction:

Was there a meaningful change that required attention — or was fear asking for another check?

She did not stop paying attention to her vision or ignore changes that might require evaluation.

She began separating appropriate observation from repetitive monitoring.

Sometimes, instead of automatically testing her vision, she stopped and asked:

"What do I actually know right now?"

The question did not remove every concern.

It created a pause.

And inside that pause, checking was no longer completely automatic.

Afterword

Your Internal Vision Continues

> "You may not know what the future will bring. You can know how you want to meet it."

When I began thinking about Internal Vision, I did not begin with the idea of writing a book.

I began with people.

People sitting across from me in the treatment room, trying to understand what a diagnosis might mean for their future.

They came with different conditions, different histories, and different levels of vision. But beneath the medical questions, I kept hearing another kind of question.

What will happen to me?

Sometimes it was spoken directly.

Sometimes it appeared as fear about driving, working, traveling, reading, recognizing faces, remaining independent, or becoming a burden to someone they loved.

And sometimes it was hidden inside a simpler question:

What should I do?

Over time, I came to understand that this question had two parts.

There was the medical question, which belonged where it should—with ophthalmologists, retina specialists, and other qualified healthcare professionals.

And there was another question:

How do I live while I do not know exactly what comes next?

That is the question this book has tried to answer.

Not by promising certainty.

Not by asking you to think positively.

And not by pretending that fear disappears once you understand how it works.

The answer I have found, both professionally and personally, is participation.

To see clearly enough to distinguish what is happening from what fear predicts.

To regulate your response enough that fear does not make every decision for you.

To find your balance again when life disrupts it.

And to continue participating in your own life even when you cannot control the outcome.

That is Internal Vision.

It does not belong only to people living with retinal conditions.

The eyes simply brought me to it.

Eventually, all of us encounter something we cannot completely control.

Health.

Aging.

Loss.

Relationships.

Change.

The future itself.

We spend much of our lives trying to make uncertainty disappear. We gather information, make plans, seek answers, and try to anticipate what comes next.

There is wisdom in preparation.

But there is also wisdom in recognizing the moment when preparation is complete and life is waiting for us to return.

Perhaps that is the lesson I most hope you carry from these pages.

Do what you can.

Ask the questions that need to be asked.

Seek appropriate care.

Learn.

Adapt.

Prepare.

Participate.

And then live.

Do not wait for complete certainty before allowing yourself to make plans.

Do not wait until fear disappears before doing something meaningful.

Do not let a possible future quietly become the author of your present.

Your life is happening now.

There may be moments ahead when the fog returns.

An appointment.

A test result.

A change you notice.

A difficult conversation.

A night when the future suddenly feels much closer than it did the day before.

When that happens, you do not need to remember every page of this book.

Remember what you have learned to do.

See what is actually here.

Find what is yours to influence.

And when you lose your balance, find your way back.

Then ask: **What is my next useful step?**

Sometimes the answer will be action.

Sometimes adaptation.

Sometimes asking for help.

Sometimes waiting.

And sometimes the next useful step will simply be returning to the life that was there before fear interrupted it.

I cannot tell you what your future will look like.

Neither can fear.

But uncertainty does not remove your role.

There is still a person here.

A person with experience, relationships, values, abilities, choices, and a life larger than any diagnosis.

Protect that person—not by hiding from uncertainty, but by continuing to participate.

External Vision helps us see the world around us.

Internal Vision helps us find our way through it.

You do not need to see the entire road.

Only enough to recognize where you are, remember who you are, and take the next step.

And then live.

Let the World Become Interesting

Now stop following any particular direction.
Simply look around.
Let your attention go where it naturally wants to go.
A shape.
A sound.
Light from a window.
A person.
An object.
Movement somewhere in the room.
Allow your eyes, head, hearing, attention, and body to work together.
You do not need to notice everything.
You do not need to see anything more clearly.
For a few moments, simply be present in the environment rather than evaluating your vision within it.
Then ask:
What did I notice?
Not:
Did I see better?
That distinction is the practice.

Returning Vision to Participation

Internal Vision Movement Practice is not about proving what you can see.

It is about returning vision to what it has always been part of: **your participation in the world.**

Scientific Foundations and Further Reading

The concepts presented in *Internal Vision* represent the author's original clinical framework, developed through decades of medical practice, study of neuroscience and Chinese medicine, and work with people living with retinal conditions. The following references include selected scientific publications and foundational works that informed the development of this framework and may be useful for readers who wish to explore these topics in greater depth.

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Dr. VADIM DEKHTYAR is a Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine whose professional journey has bridged Western medicine, neuroscience, and traditional Chinese medicine for more than three decades. After beginning his medical career as a physician in Lithuania, he continued exploring how the brain, the nervous system, and emotional responses shape the way people experience illness, recovery, and uncertainty.

Working with people living with retinal conditions and other chronic health challenges, Dr. Dekhtyar observed that while medicine could explain a diagnosis, many patients were left with another question: How do I continue living while the future remains uncertain? His own experience of living with uncertainty about his vision deepened that understanding and inspired the development of the Internal Vision framework.

Dr. Dekhtyar is also the author of *Conquering Fear* and the creator of the Vision Balance System. Through his writing, teaching, and clinical practice, his mission is to help people move beyond fear, remain active participants in their lives, and face uncertainty with greater clarity, regulation, and stability.

Life Balance Clinic | www.lifebalanceclinic.com

When vision becomes uncertain, fear often fills in what the future has not yet revealed. Internal Vision offers a practical framework for separating fact from prediction, regulating the Emotional Cascade, and continuing to participate fully in life—even when tomorrow cannot yet be known.

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