

# LIVING WITH VISION CHALLENGES

THUKPA  
FOR  ALL

People of all ages live full and active lives with vision challenges.

Do you know someone who wears glasses? The lenses in these change the way light enters the eye, and/or magnify images for people whose eyes have some forms of sight problems.

Some vision challenges are so severe that eyeglass prescriptions alone are not enough to help people see. However, most people who are nearly blind can tell the difference between light and darkness and recognize some colors. That's why the caution mats in places like rail stations or at corners are bright yellow.

In *Thukpa for All*, we meet someone who is completely blind and can't use his eyes to collect any information. Like all of us, Tsering has a range of abilities among all five different senses, only one of which is vision.



It is not true that when one of our senses is disabled, the others become better than normal. What is true, however, is that when one of our senses is challenged, we take more care to pay attention to what information our other senses tell us. In *Thukpa for All*, we heard about how being blind did not get in the way of Tsering's senses of touch, smell, and hearing. These three senses became important ways for Tsering to collect information about what was going on around him.



All over the world, the white cane is a symbol of a blind—or a low vision—user. The color white is for everyone except the person carrying the cane. When we see a white cane, we know the person carrying it has vision challenges of some sort and may need help. Oftentimes, users of the white cane will tap the ground in front of them. The tapping allows a couple of things to happen: the cane acts like an extra long finger reaching out to make sure the way ahead is clear for the person's next step. The tapping sound and feel can let the carrier know if the ground is about to change up ahead.

Isn't it cool how much we can learn by paying attention to our five senses, even if one is impaired? You probably already know how your nose can tell you what's cooking for dinner even if you can't see the preparations because you haven't been to the kitchen. You certainly know the taste of your favorite food as well, even if you don't see it in front of you.



What about sound or touch? You certainly use your ears to recognize a lot of things and people when you can't see them. You can recognize your friend's voice on the phone. You can feel how soft your favorite blanket is or the warmth of a hug from someone you love.

Our senses are amazing!