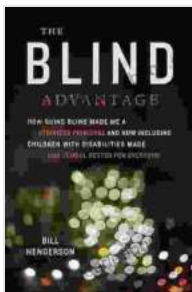


# How Going Blind Made Me a Stronger Principal and How Including Children with Disabilities Benefits All Students

When I was diagnosed with a rare eye disease at the age of 32, I was told I would eventually lose my sight. It was a devastating blow, but I was determined to not let it define me or my career as an elementary school principal. In fact, I believe that going blind has made me a stronger and more effective leader, and I am grateful for the unique perspective it has given me on the importance of inclusion for all students.



## The Blind Advantage: How Going Blind Made Me a Stronger Principal and How Including Children with Disabilities Made Our School Better for Everyone

by Darlene Mannix

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 626 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 202 pages



## The Power of Perspective

As I began to lose my sight, I realized that there were many things I could no longer do. I could no longer drive, I could no longer read with ease, and

I could no longer see the faces of my students. But I also realized that there were many things I could still do. I could still listen, I could still learn, and I could still lead.

In fact, I believe that my blindness has made me a better listener. I am more attentive to the needs of my students, and I am better able to understand their perspectives. I am also more patient, and I am more willing to give people the time they need to learn and grow.

My blindness has also given me a new appreciation for the importance of inclusion. I have seen firsthand how excluding students with disabilities can have a devastating impact on their lives. I am committed to creating a school environment where all students feel welcome and valued, regardless of their abilities.

## **The Benefits of Inclusion**

Research has shown that inclusion benefits all students, not just those with disabilities. When students with disabilities are included in general education classrooms, they make academic and social gains. They also learn to value diversity and to develop empathy for others.

In addition, inclusion benefits the school community as a whole. It creates a more welcoming and supportive environment for all students. It also helps to break down stereotypes and to promote understanding.

## **How to Create an Inclusive School**

There are many things that schools can do to create an inclusive environment. Here are a few tips:

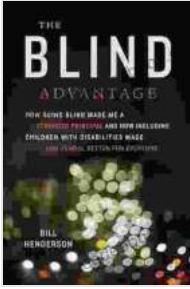
- Create a welcoming and supportive school culture.
- Provide professional development for teachers on how to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- Provide accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities.
- Involve students with disabilities in all aspects of school life.
- Partner with families to ensure that students with disabilities are getting the support they need.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as a principal for the past 15 years, and I am proud of the work that we have done to create an inclusive school environment. I believe that all students deserve to have access to a quality education, regardless of their abilities. I am committed to continuing to work to make our schools more welcoming and supportive for all students.

If you are interested in learning more about inclusion, I encourage you to visit the following websites:

- Understood
- Council for Exceptional Children
- National Council on Disability

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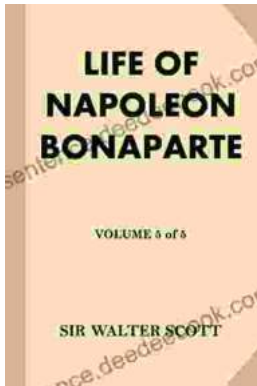


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