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Tekst 10 Prosopagnosia

PROSOPAGNOSIA

The inability to recognize faces

What is *Prosopagnosia*?

Imagine that every person has a camera inside their head. Every time they meet somebody for the first time, they take a picture with their camera, develop the picture, and file it away for future use. When they meet the same person at a later time, they already have a record of the person which they filed away. They can compare the two pictures and say, "Aha, I know who that person is!" For me, I take a picture with my camera, but I never store it away.

I know what you mean. I can't recognize faces either.

I have encountered many people who have great difficulty with remembering names. However, there are very few people who are unable to recognize faces. Names and faces are two distinctly separate entities.

You can see, right?

I have no trouble seeing things. **Prosopagnosia** has nothing to do with sight. I have trouble remembering what I have seen before. This can, and often does, become easier if I have spent a significant amount of time with individual people. I tend to remember people better when I have something to associate them with, and the more time I get to spend with a person, the more likely I am to remember them.

Is it just faces?

No. I also have difficulty finding my way around places that I'm not very familiar with. I can hear you say, "Now wait a minute there. I have trouble finding my way around new places too." I doubt that it takes you three weeks to figure out your way around a college campus as I have managed to do. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Drew University, it is considered a small university.

Since the creation of this web page, I have made contact with another prosopagnosiac who tells me that he does not have difficulty finding his way around. However, the conditions of his situation are somewhat different from mine in that he was born with the condition. I guess there is a genetic tendency towards prosopagnosia but the catch is that for those people who acquire prosopagnosia genetically, it tends to be handed down in varying amounts, whereas those of us who acquire prosopagnosia through an injury tend to get it in greater amounts. He just recently discovered that he had prosopagnosia after a long battle with stress from school and work which he, for a long time, did not understand. However, by his explanation to me, he also has some distorted hearing and therefore has had to use sight as a major part of his battle to deal with the world. I had once suggested among our discussions that I had often considered that the prospect of being blind instead of prosopagnosiac had crossed my mind as perhaps being an easier thing

to deal with. He had vehemently disagreed on a personal basis because, without his eyesight, he would lose most of the information he is capable of picking up.

Also, as an example, if you were to ask me to describe a bird, I would tell you that a bird has wings and most birds fly. However, if you asked me to describe a robin, I would have a very difficult time.

I am able to remember the BIG details but I usually miss the smaller ones if they are not pointed out to me. Along those same lines, I will often miss important pieces of conversation because I am not necessarily able to see the facial expressions which are a large part of the interaction between people as they converse. A short glance without moving one's head, or a brief smile might be things that I would miss entirely in casual conversation. However, if somebody were to wave at me, I would probably see it because it is a big movement.

Is *Prosopagnosia* curable?

The answer to that question is no. Do I wish it was curable? I can't say that I don't.

Doesn't having *Prosopagnosia* bug you?

No, but it used to bug me a lot. I went through a stage where I truly believed the world was out to get me. Don't get me wrong...I still believe the world is out to get me, but the difference is that I expect certain things to happen and I am no longer surprised when they do. An axiom that I see often and live by goes as follows: If you are different, then you are bad. I have evolved into a pessimist by nature.

What really bugs me is when people don't ask me questions either because they think they already know all of the answers or because they don't want to "pester" me with questions. I am more than willing to answer questions.

How do you cope with it?

I think part of the answer to that question is that I don't ever remember being able to recognize faces. I had to relearn everything from scratch after I came out of a coma, but I never experienced the sense of loss and frustration that I hear is so common in similar situations where the person is significantly older than I was. They knew what they could do before and are frustrated that they were no longer able to do the things that they had always done. I had the time to "rework my wiring" and I never believed, until I tried enough times, that there was ever anything that I couldn't accomplish.

'www.anything-balloons.com/glenn/prosopagnosia.shtml'

Lees bij de volgende opgaven steeds eerst de vraag voordat je de bijbehorende tekst raadpleegt.

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- 1p 41 Blijkt uit de tekst hoe Prosopagnosia veroorzaakt kan worden? Zo ja, onder welk kopje? Zo nee, antwoord "Nee".