‘WHAT??’
‘I said Hearing and Vision Go Together!’

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Mick Jaggar, Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel, The Who, Guns N’Roses, AC/DC, The Doors, Ozzie Osborne, Elton John, Journey, Queen, The Beatles, White Snake, Metallica, Aerosmith...you know the names...you were probably in the crowd, lighter high overhead, cheering for one more encore.

Those may have been the glory days of rock and roll, but they may also have been the beginning of your hearing loss. You know, your wife’s complaints about “you never listen to a thing I say,” the kids argument that “I told you where I was going.” It may be more than just “selective hearing;” you may really have clinical hearing loss.

A study conducted by the EAR (Education and Auditory Research) Foundation in 2004 found that nearly 76 million baby boomers born between 1945 and 1964 have some degree of hearing loss and 51% attribute that loss to “noise pollution.”

Half of those affected say they notice it most at home with their families, but 45% of them also complain of difficulty in social settings...that noisy restaurant or the neighborhood get together in Joe and Betty’s kitchen...no wonder the family has stripped you of the TV remote. Fully one third of those with hearing loss have difficulty understanding phone conversations, 24% feel misunderstood and almost 10% feel isolated by their problem.

Fortunately, many of these problems can be treated with modern hearing aids. The latest digital technology allows these devises to amplify sounds in the ranges needed most by the individual while at the same time dampening the background noises that can be so distracting.
Multiple mini-microphones can help with sound location so you can not only hear things, but also know from where the sound is coming...a much needed improvement over older technology. Today’s hearing devices are so miniaturized that no one needs to know you have them.

By now many of you are asking yourselves “a terrible problem, I agree, but why is an ophthalmologist, an eye surgeon, telling me about hearing loss?” Simply put, although 97% of us are familiar with hearing aids, only 15% of us with significant hearing loss are diagnosed and even fewer actually have hearing aids.

This may be one of the most under-diagnosed and under-treated maladies in our society today; the hearing aid industry has a distribution problem.

That is where eye clinics come into play. In the old days, hearing problems were addressed by an EENT (Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat) specialist...that’s right, the eyes and ears were treated together. And, as you might expect, new research shows a very strong association between vision and hearing...what’s old is new again!

A 2006 study showed older persons with visual impairment of 20/40 or less were more likely to have significant hearing loss, suggesting these sensory impairments could share common risk factors and causes. Additionally, studies have shown that virtually every glaucoma patient taking eye drops to lower pressure and all macular degeneration sufferers have significant and measureable hearing loss.

In a nutshell, those with vision problems are more likely to have hearing problems as well.

About a year ago my daughter leaned over to whisper something in my ear during church. Unfortunately, she was on my left side and I could not hear her. As I turned around so she could whisper into my right ear, I heard her say “defeats the purpose of whispering if you make it this obvious.” With that slap in the face, I realized my hearing loss was significantly affecting my home life and my family. Beyond that, how was it affecting those I work with or care for at the office? I
got my exam, got my hearing aids, and they have changed my life. I can hear all those snide comments my kids used to get away with, I don’t shout any more (unless I’m angry), and they let me have the remote again. Best of all, the devices fit behind the ear and are so small that no one notices them until I show them.

The concerts were great, the music was loud, and the party was fun, but those days have left their marks. Now you can fight back, take action, and hear again. Make the call and get a hearing test...it just might change your life, too.