

GUEST EDITORIAL

SHOES

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(with some help from Bartlett's Quotations)

Editor's note: For the full meaning of this article see "JBO Welcomes Associate Editors," in the News on page 161.

I was recently asked to consider gradually working into a position within organized optometry. This position carries with it a significant time commitment and much responsibility; a position which is currently held by a highly respected and dedicated professional. My first response was not to consider the workload, but rather the shoes, for those are large shoes to fill.

What if the shoes are too large? "A shoe too large trips one up," and I do not want to start that! There is no room for errors or tripping up in this business. What if the shoes are too small? "No one knows where the shoe pinches the wearer." I do not want to find myself constantly searching for remedies for sore feet because of shoes that fit so tightly that I can barely get them off. I found solace in the conventional wisdom of Publilius Syrus, who, over 2,000 years ago said, "You cannot put the same shoe on everyone's foot."

Still, I was assured that the shoes would fit. But I was not convinced that I even wanted a new pair of shoes. The last time I purchased a new pair of shoes I chose something "very dainty and super-refined, but really vile." That was a major problem because according to Sonya Bata, the great shoe heiress, "shoes hold the key to the human identity." I happen to like the shoes I am wearing at this very moment very much.

Sure, once in a while I have to replace the shoelaces, but that is a small price to pay for such a comfortable pair of shoes. I don't have to carry band-aids with me to cover the blisters or go for long hikes to break them in. "King James used to call for his old shoes. They were easiest on his feet." Obviously that man understood what's at stake here.

To make matters worse, I realized that the shoes might only lie at the surface of a much deeper problem. In the words of George Herbert, "For want of a nail the shoe is lost; for want of a shoe the horse is lost; for want of a horse the rider is lost." If I did not accept these shoes, would I set the dominoes in motion? Would I be responsible for losing the horse, the rider and maybe even the contest?

Then of course, I had to consider the lessons I had learned from Cinderella and Dorothy from Kansas. Cinderella's glass slipper was a perfect fit and she received rewards far beyond her expectations. Dorothy went to great lengths to recover her perfectly fitting ruby slippers from that nasty wicked witch. Ultimately, her shoes allowed her to rediscover her basic value system.

The pressure was mounting to make a decision, but I desperately wanted to make the right decision. "Between saying and doing, many a pair of shoes are worn out," and I didn't want to wear the shoes out before I even tried them on!

I was just about to ask for a shoe horn, when I was presented with a creative alternative. "Creativity often con-

sists of turning up what is already there. Did you know that right and left shoes were conceived only a little more than a century ago?" Of course! I decided to take advantage of this little known historical fact and asked only for the *right* shoe.

Why the right shoe and not the left? Was it because the right shoe is special—"a shoe for a discerning foot?" Not really. It was because Augustus Caesar was nearly assassinated one day when he put on his left shoe first. I do not want to wear ill-fitting shoes and I certainly do not want to be assassinated because I put on the left shoe first.

So here I am, with one shoe off and one shoe on and I all I can think about is that stupid nursery rhyme about "diddle diddle dumpling, my son John." Am I as foolish as I must look? Consider this as you ponder the answer to that question. "Before you criticize someone, walk a mile in her shoe(s). That way if she gets angry, she'll be a mile away and barefoot." But seriously, a little constructive criticism is a good thing, and now that I have decided to start wearing one shoe, I need your help. The words of Homer Simpson are so appropriate here. "If they can send a man to the moon, why can't they make my shoes smell good?" Won't you help me have the best looking and best smelling shoe in behavioral optometry?

By the way, if you happen to run into Dr. Greg Kitchener, and he seems to be walking funny, looking downward, is he wearing but one left shoe?