



STAGES OF BECOMING BESPECTACLED

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Glasses are something a large number of us have grown used to over the course of our lives. However, for most of us, we hadn't always been visually impaired. There exists a process to a person getting used to their new set of eyes, and turns out, it's a pretty common one.

STAGE I: DISCOVERY

"Wait, you can see that from here? Huh." That one statement is where it begins for a lot of people. It's the moment you realise someone around you can actually see something you can't. Our sight doesn't just decide to stop functioning perfectly overnight. It's a gradual process and it usually takes a while before this realisation even takes place. Once it does though, you can't ignore it. You face a couple days of reading signs from a distance. Each one you read feels like a little reassuring pat that you might have been mistaken about your diagnosis. Each one that you can't read, however, you just look away from those as quickly as possible.

STAGE II: DENIAL

There is a fear that settles into every teenager's heart after they've made the discovery. You now have a secret. You can't let your family know that you are having trouble seeing, because then you'll be forced into your worst nightmare: wearing glasses. You try to convince yourself that you don't really need the glasses. You sit at the front in class, and try to forget about the problem. You squint a lot and, unlike before, you now begin to notice whenever you do it.

STAGE III: CONFRONTATION

Someone notices something's up. It may be your parents, or a sibling, or some other adult you didn't manage to slip past. They find you with your face practically inches from the TV screen, and just like that, your little secret is out. Your parents come to the conclusion that you need glasses, and so, to the doctor's office you go.

The optician's office can be a daunting place the first time. You didn't know you had to go through so many rooms and processes before the actual doctor sees you. You don't have any idea how looking at the floating hot air balloon helps, but the contraption looks official enough for you to go along with it. The

next one however, is a lot more intimidating, although you don't know that till you've already placed your chin on the device. "You'll feel a puff of air in your eye" says the operator, and immediately you begin hyperventilating. In the end, you manage to make it through that as well.

What you don't know is that the real trial is yet to come. You meet the doctor, and you think that this process is finally

frame that you could live with. However, once you get home you keep looking at the mirror, and the more you look, the more you realise how different your face is with the glasses. All kinds of thoughts of how people will judge you go through your head, and that's when the reluctance to use the glasses takes root.

You now begin a game of wearing the glasses as infrequently as possible. Perhaps you'll put them on only in class

STAGE V: ACCEPTANCE

Although almost everyone I've talked to has told me they went through the reluctance phase, all those people also now wear glasses regularly. That is because the reluctance phase just gets awfully exhausting. Keeping the glasses in their box, or at least somewhere safe; always remembering to carry them around; making sure to clean them each time because they are worn and taken off so frequently; all of these actions take a lot of patience and effort. Alas, there's that one day when you've forgotten your glasses at home one too many times, and it's just the last straw. You finally accept that bespectacled is what you are.

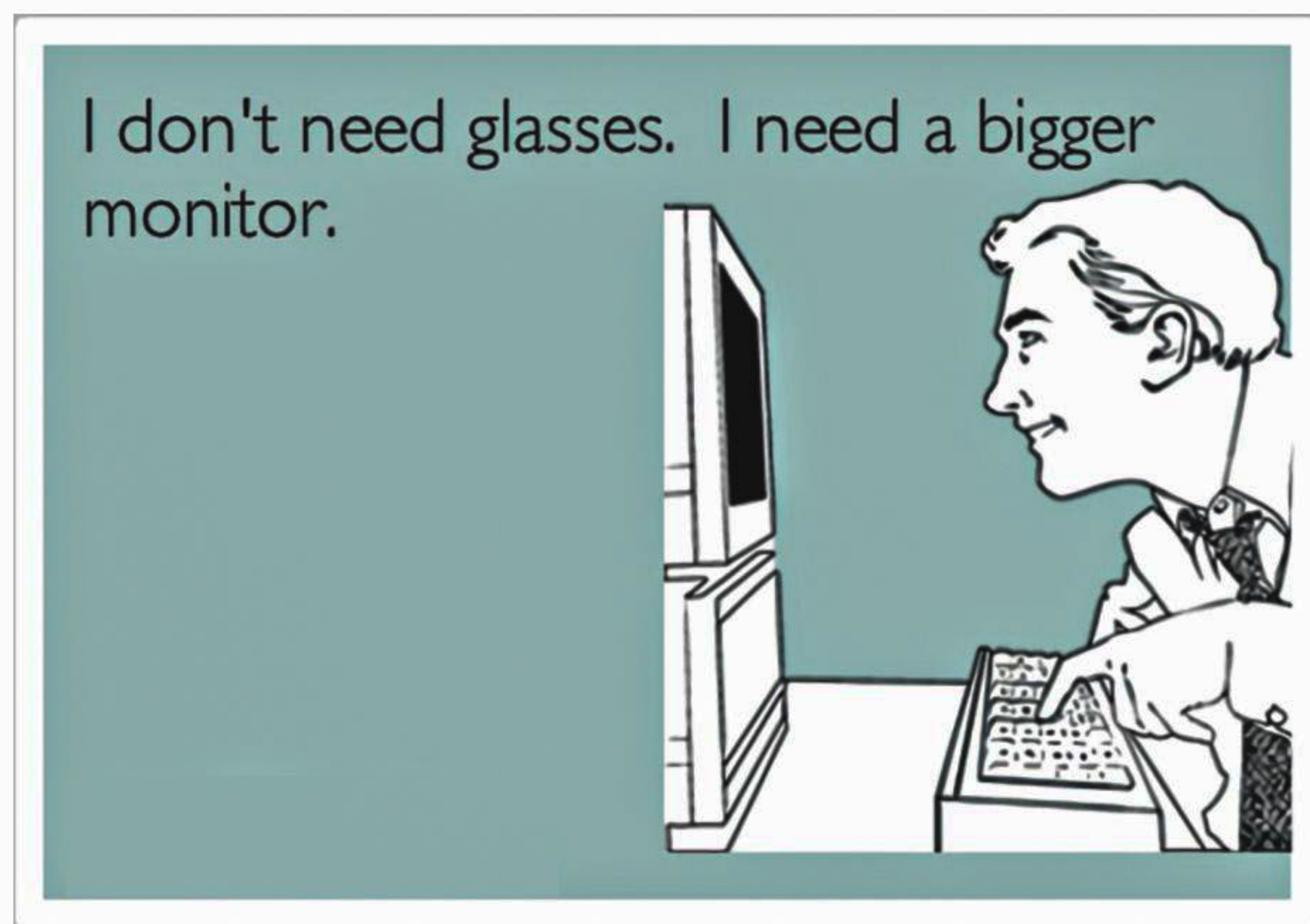
You no longer avoid wearing your glasses to parties. You stop caring about the box. Your bedside table is where the glasses stay when you take them off at night, and putting them on becomes the first thing you do every morning.

As the years pass by, you find yourself having several endearing moments surrounding your glasses. For example that one time you tried to look for them while having them on, or that one time you subconsciously tried to take your glasses off your face before going into a shower, only to realise you were pawing at your empty face because you didn't even have the glasses on. Not all the moments are endearing though. Some are just flat out ironic; like needing your glasses to look for your glasses.

BONUS STAGE VI: APPRECIATION

After a considerable amount of time, you might just have found a style for glasses that you actually like on your face. You buy a nice pair of frames, look at yourself with and without them, and finally, the very last revelation about glasses in the life of a bespectacled person is made: *Eh, I kind of like them.*

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moving along. You're placed in a chair and asked to read a couple rows of letters. *Easy enough*, you think. That is when the worst part of going to the optician reveals itself- deciding which amongst two essentially identical lenses lets you see better, all the while feeling like your entire life depends on this ridiculous decision. You weren't ready for such responsibility.

STAGE IV: RELUCTANCE

You've finally gotten those pair of glasses. You took your time and picked out a nice

when you really need to see that board, or when you are sitting in front of your PC. At all other times they are placed in their box and out of sight. In my case, I used to keep them in my bag, go to school every day without them, let all the people in my class see me without the glasses till first period began, and then finally put them on. The logic probably being that my classmates needed to know that I was still the same person and hadn't morphed into a different person who looked completely different from you, overnight.