

The Story of Life

By Bev Davey
Biokineticist, Diabetes Educator, CDE Parktown



Originally written by Bev for a Mom's picnic two years ago, the thoughts remain as true today as they did then...

Sometimes people come into your life and you know right away that they were meant to be there, to serve some sort of purpose, to teach you a lesson, or to help you figure out whom you are or who you want to become. You never know who these people may be - possibly your neighbour, a co-worker, a long lost friend, a lover, or even a complete stranger. But, when you meet them, you know at that very moment they will affect your life in some profound way.

And, sometimes things happen to you that may seem horrible, painful, and unfair at first. But, in reflection, you find that without overcoming those obstacles, you would have never realized your potential and current strength, willpower, or heart.

Diabetes is this 'something' for you and your children. I hope that through your diabetes Journey you can overcome the physical and emotional obstacles to lead you to the place of realised potential, and the strength of heart to cope with diabetes.

Everything happens for a reason...

Nothing happens by chance or by means of good luck. Happiness is by *choice*, not by *chance*...

So, although no part of the diagnosis you have received brings entirely happy news for you and your child due to the challenges, how you choose to manage and approach diabetes is your choice.

Illness, injury, love, lost moments of true greatness, and sheer stupidity all occur to test the limits of your soul. Without these small tests, whatever they may be, life would be like a smoothly paved, straight, flat road to nowhere. It would be safe and comfortable, but dull and utterly pointless.

The people you meet who affect your life, and the success and downfalls you experience, help to create who you are and who you become. Even the bad experiences can be learned from. In fact, they are probably the most poignant and important ones.

So, without an alternate choice, embrace diabetes and learn from it. Your child and you have challenges ahead, but your child is here, in full body, mind and spirit. Diabetes is not a physical disability; it does not limit capability or potential. If your child's diabetes is well controlled, he or she should not have a shorter lifespan or an ominous prognosis. They are just unique in their own way.

If someone hurts you, betrays you, or breaks your heart, *forgive* them, for they have helped you learn about trust and the importance of being cautious when you open your heart.

If someone loves you, *love them back unconditionally*, not only because they love you, but also because in a way, they are teaching you to love and teaching you how to open your heart and eyes to things.

Your child will always love you, unconditionally; he or she does not blame you for their diabetes - do not feel guilty about the diagnosis, it is not your fault, nor is it theirs. Most children have an overwhelming acceptance of their diabetes - it's usually their parents who fear and who do not accept diabetes well. They then pour that same negative energy into their child's perception and acceptance of diabetes and thus their child does not cope. Your children look to you for strength and acceptance of this condition - create a positive light about diabetes and then all your children will relax and accept the diagnosis with a bit more ease. Your child with diabetes will then be able to learn self-care, in a supportive family environment, which will lead to a better outcome for their diabetes.

Make every day *count*. Appreciate every moment and take from those moments everything that you possibly can, for you may never be able to experience it again.

Remember that your child is first and foremost a person and then he or she has diabetes. Don't make their diabetes all that they are. Don't let "What was your sugar today? or "Why is your sugar so high?", "What did you eat?" be the first question you ask after school or when you get home from work. Rather ask, "How was your day at school?" or "how was your cricket / soccer / hockey / netball match - did you have fun?" Make your children important by nature rather than by a demanding need because of their condition.

Talk to people that you have never talked to before, and actually *listen*.

Surround yourself with the people that teach and support you in the right way about diabetes

Hold your head up because you have every right to. Tell yourself you are a great individual and *believe* in yourself, for if you don't believe in yourself, it will be hard for others to believe in you.

As a mom and a dad with a child who has diabetes, you take on a huge role. Each one of you is doing an excellent job - pat yourself on the back, be proud and keep doing what you do. Well done you're all very special people.

You can make of your life anything you wish.

Your children need to know this - they are not limited by their diabetes, so don't let them be limited because of your fear. The more times that you encounter situations where people learn to handle and manage diabetes, the more empowered you and your child will become. Don't let them NOT sleep out, don't let them NOT go on camps. Teach them, yourself and others to manage the situation.

Create your own life, then go out, and *live it* with absolutely no regret, learning a lesson each day that you live. Most importantly, if you LOVE someone *tell him or her*, for you never know what tomorrow may have in store.

And, that's The Story of Life - I hope that you have found something about coping with diabetes in your family...

A fond farewell to a member of our Dream Team

By Hester Davel
Registered Nurse, Diabetes Educator, CDE Houghton

I first met Bev 10 years ago, a petite, young Biokinetic Intern only 23 years old, who was always peeping into my office and asking about the YWD Youth camps. She never gave up her interest and she kept asking if she could be involved... "I will pay for my own camp fees, but please may I come with...?"

Since then, I never looked back. We took Bev in under our wings at CDE and she turned out to be one of the best educators in South Africa. Nothing was ever too much or too hard for her – because of her competitive nature she will take *any* challenge on. She finished an Advanced Postgraduate Diploma through Cardiff University with flying colours. Many might not know this, but Bev completed two IRONMAN's, the Unogwaja Challenge, three Comrades marathons, the Salomon Sky run and the Extreme Dodo trail Challenge. As Endocrinologist Dr David Segal said, we know she's running, we just never thought she will run so far from us... ☺

Recently, Bev and her husband experienced a very traumatic, armed home invasion and robbery at their house. Thinking about the love and fear her husband went through when they took Bev upstairs and kept him below at gunpoint helps us



understand his instant decision to leave South Africa and start their new journey together abroad.

I am sad to say goodbye to Bev - she made such a huge difference in the lives of so many people, of all ages, living with diabetes. I will miss her compassion and her love. So many times she phoned me in tears when telling me about another child who been diagnosed with diabetes. She felt the families' pain, and shock, and with tears in her eyes, she always talked about them with so much admiration. Even though she could be a 'tough cookie' at times she never stopped loving, caring and wanting the best for her patients like all the BEST EDUCATORS. Bev dreamed with me... new ideas and new plans to create a happier place for children with diabetes. Although I know she will be far, far away, in Calgary in Canada, we will still share these dreams...