

Diabetes can be an extremely demanding and, at times, a deeply frustrating disease. Some people just give up on diabetes altogether—often for years.

But then, even for many who have let their control lapse, something *clicks*. Their view of diabetes suddenly shifts and they begin to take back control of their health.

About six months ago, I wrote about this phenomenon. I asked you, our readers, to send me your stories. Had you ever given up on diabetes control, only to have something “click” that led you back to better control?

Scores of you responded. Your stories were powerful and touching. My colleague, Dr. Susan Guzman, and I pored over your stories, looking for common threads. Five major themes emerged.

1. Discovering better tools for diabetes care. Sometimes, a technological innovation can make diabetes care more effective or less burdensome. When this happens, attitudes can change fast. One woman reported how she began to get back on track after receiving “that most marvelous gift,” her first insulin pump. Another respondent “gained a great deal of control and flexibility” when his physician switched his insulin regimen to Lantus and Humalog.

2. Being “scared straight.” For many people, something *clicked* when they were forced to face the true threat of diabetes. One woman reported that she “woke up” to better diabetes care after a sudden, severe infection led to five days of coma. For another, the problems of other family members with type 2 served as the wakeup call. “After my brother’s stroke and my dad’s heart problems, I decided to start taking better care of myself,” she wrote.

3. Realizing that someone is depending on you. Diabetes care can suddenly seem less difficult when you realize that your loved ones’ welfare, not just your own health, is also at stake. “I never cared about myself enough to take care of my diabetes until I was blessed with my daughter,” one reader wrote. “I want to be here for my daughter.”

4. Finding someone in you life who is rooting for you. After many years of feeling unmotivated, one woman reported, “I met my wonderful husband, James, who insisted that I take care of myself. I started out managing my diabetes better for him, but now I do so for both of us.”

5. Discovering a new way of thinking about diabetes. Even seemingly insignificant events can lead to startling changes in attitude. For one fellow, who had been at war with his diabetes for many years, it happened during one evening in college. He and

his friends were quarreling about cars, arguing about the relative merits of automatic versus standard (manual) transmissions. Our respondent favored the standard: “As I argued against a car’s transmission operating in autopilot (automatic) mode, I heard a little voice in the back of my head. ‘You have more control over your blood sugar than that guy does. You’ve got the standard transmission pancreas!’ As quickly as the thought soaked into my consciousness, my attitude turned all the way around from anger and resentment to acceptance and a new resolve.” Now two decades later, he is still maintaining that resolve.

Our experts—those of you for whom something clicked—have taught us that love and emotional support are powerful factors for inspiring people to gain better control over their diabetes. So are having the right management tools and developing more positive ways of thinking about diabetes.

Those struggling with their diabetes care should take heart from these responses. Better diabetes control may be only a *click* away for you, too!



What “Clicked” For You?

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