

Bill's Story – How You Feel is *Data*

There is nothing that tells me when my blood sugar is high. If it's such a bad thing, you would think nature would give you some kind of signal. After all, when you're dehydrated, nature tells you exactly how to fix it, you get thirsty. If the bright sun is damaging your eyes, you squint. You don't have to say to yourself, "Gee, the sun is too bright, I better squint to protect my eyes." It happens automatically. In so many ways our bodies are brilliant and protect us by giving us clear signals.

Hot stove? Pain pulls your hand back. Danger ahead? Turn and run. Music painfully loud? Turn it down. The list of wonderful signals goes on and on. So where was my clear signal that my sugar was high and I was eating my way to diabetes?

There was none. Or at least I didn't know how to read the signals.

I found out the hard way that unless you've developed type 1 diabetes with outrageously clear signals like extreme thirst and desperation, the chances are good that your blood sugar will go high day after day and you won't know it. UNLESS you know what to look for.

"How you feel is data." I've heard this many times at Suppers. I've also heard about appetite foolishness, which tells me my body is giving me bad information if cravings for sugar or alcohol lead me to binge on them. So what am I supposed to do?

I asked someone at Suppers for help and she said to learn the language of my body. "Your body speaks very clearly if you'll just listen." Here is what I learned.

High blood sugar isn't so clear, but low blood sugar is really clear: Insistent cravings for carbs, mood swings, brain fog, sweating, palpitations are tell tale. If it goes so low I get these signals, chances are good it's because it went too high too. Peaks and valleys, only I can actually only feel the valleys.

Feeling immediate relief or immediate comfort from brownies or bagels, alcohol or even just a soda can be a signal that I'm eating or drinking to self-medicate for low blood sugar. The more I eat or drink to self-medicate for discomforts, the more I need to test my sugar.

Putting on weight, especially around the middle. Dead giveaway.

Now that I know what to look for – or feel for – I can tell when my foolish appetite sets me up to make these bad automatic choices about what I'm going to put into my mouth. It's *data*. And now that I'm starting to understand the language my body is screaming at me, I can turn this around. I'm not crazy. I don't have character defects. I don't have an eating disorder. I just have a long history of not understanding my body's language and not responding the right way to its request for fuel.

Now I know when I get those signals it's time to eat something like nuts, vegetables, soup, or chili. It's time to avoid the sweets and starches I crave that keep me on a roller coaster. It's time to take a walk or at least a deep breath and let the stress out. It's time to drink water.

Considering that it was my cravings that made it hard to eat right to begin with, I can tell it's going to take working a program to fix this. What other choice do I have? The difference between now and before is that at least I know the language I need to correctly interpret the data.