

Brooke's Story – I'm Not Satisfied

I'm NOT satisfied.

My entire being interacts with the food I eat. I watch my husband – much bigger than I – push away from the table feeling satisfied after the meal I've prepared, and I wonder at his capacity to feel satisfied. I'm not satisfied!

Insulin dependent diabetes struck me at age 39. For a year after my diagnosis, my life revolved around re-learning how to eat and manage this disease. My goal was to eat in a way that reduced the units of insulin I'd have to take in order to keep my blood sugar stable and feel good.

This was no small task. Diabetes is a chronic disease. It is with you every minute of every day, and there is no such thing as taking a vacation from diabetes. To keep blood sugars in the healthy range, you must think about every morsel of food you put in your mouth and take the appropriate amount of insulin to move the glucose out of your blood and into your cells. This takes a lot of work, training, and brain energy. I've had to deal with the lonely, sad, tired, dejected feelings when I just wanted what I wanted, not caring about calories or blood sugar effects. One day, I dug into a container of locally produced organic ice cream. How much more wholesome could I be! It had the added virtue of being a fund-raiser for the local school garden. Couldn't my pancreas give me special dispensation for a worthy cause? The holy ice cream did a terrible number on my blood sugar since after taking two small bowls of it, I went back to the freezer for the container and just mindlessly ate out of it while reading a pile of newspapers I had missed during the week. UGH! I knew I shouldn't be eating it, but it tasted so good and helped ease my anxiety.

Sometimes I actually fight with myself – in my head – in terms of what snack I will reach for. I know I don't want carbs and should reach for – and usually do – veggies, high fiber crackers, cheese, hummus, if I have some around, and chicken soup. I try to have a container of one of the Suppers soups on hand for any meal and in between. Since the Suppers soups are mostly protein, veggies with lots of fiber, and good fats, they're very low in carbs and do not result in much of a change in my blood sugars. I am trying to tailor–make an integrated approach for myself, combining good food choices and working with a counselor who teaches mindful eating.

Some of the initial exercises were very powerful and have stuck with me: Use nice dishes that make you feel happy and proud of what you are eating. Make it look nice. Chew slowly; put your fork down between bites; close your eyes and really taste the food, enjoy it. Of course, sit down to eat. But I am not always good at this. It seems so unfair that I have to be vigilant, while others like my husband are simply satisfied.

I have pursued many avenues to gain a greater awareness of my eating habits, including hypnosis, meditation and yoga, and other forms of relaxation and breathing. In the Suppers program I have accepted that my best chance at making good matches between my problems and personal solutions will involve identifying *all* the active forces that make me hungry, sad, and dejected. My experience with fish oils has taught me that certain changes are necessary but not sufficient to stabilize my mood. Taking enough Omega 3 fat produced the single most dramatic change in my mood since I started the program. My hormonal and menopausal depressions seem to have disappeared! Plus I just lost my taste for coffee and now start my day with a soothing cup of hot green tea. The tea does not seem to spike my blood sugars like coffee did every morning. I learned about the benefits of Omega 3s and getting off coffee from discussions at Suppers meetings and the successes realized by others sitting at the table. I don't know what my ultimate recipe for success will turn out to be, but I do know that slowing down and eating more mindfully will be part of

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the package. So will taking supplements for the things my body just doesn't have enough of.