

Marilyn's Story – Fixing My Numbers

I'm not sure how I thought I was going to fix myself, but I always held this belief that "some day" would come some day and voila, there would be a new me. I had a very clear picture of how I wanted to be and no idea at all about how I was going to get there. The word "osmosis" comes to mind.

Things didn't start to change until I sat down with a friend at Suppers and learned that setting and meeting goals is a skill set and that you have to practice it every day. If I wanted strength, I had to build that muscle.

I had been to my doctor, and some of my numbers were getting pretty scary, weight, fasting blood sugar, and something to do with my liver. The prescription pad was not the way I wanted to go, but the alternative was making lifestyle changes I didn't like either. Exercise makes me perspire, and the thought of lean meat and lots of vegetables for dinner is not my idea of a good time. I was filled with self-pity, but fear of the prescription pad just tipped the balance. Fear got me started.

A woman at Suppers who has been through all this took me aside and said she'd help me if I was ready to get serious about goals. She was a type 1 diabetic. There was nothing anyone could do to keep her off medication (insulin), but she clearly took great pleasure in assisting people who still had time to turn their ship around before type 2 diabetes set in. She became my "therapeutic friend," a temporary sponsor who would mentor me through the process of acquiring these skills.

We took my vague goals and defined them clearly: "I will walk daily, starting at 15 minutes and building up my capacity until I can walk for 45 minutes each day." "I will eat a high protein and vegetable breakfast daily and limit treats to one dessert after dinner," "I will have an apple and peanut butter snack every day at 3:00 (to avoid the typical pre-dinner crash).

We studied a Suppers handout on how to prepare for change and set good goals. We specified what, how much and how often I was going to make these changes. We introduced them one at a time. I went to meetings and shared my process and was surprised to realize that feeling accountable to the group actually felt good! Instead of harboring secrets and hiding from the other members, I had a cheering section of well wishers who had different but related challenges. They actually were given hope for *themselves* through *my* successes. And when I had little failures along the way, well, they understood. Just about everybody could identify with setbacks related to ice cream and chocolate. Together, we brainstormed strategies for steering clear of these roadblocks.

Initially my doctor was alarmed when I refused a new prescription, but she couldn't argue with my numbers, could she? There was a fork in my road and I picked the path marked "change." God gave me a hand to hold in my journey down that path, and my only sadness is that I will never be able to help her fix her numbers like she helped me fix mine.