



*100 Reasons Why*

we are grateful for the  
discovery of insulin



SANOFI

## CHAPTER 7

# *The Power of Positive Thinking*



Visit <https://www.sanofi.us/en/about-us/our-stories/making-a-difference/american-diabetes-month> to read additional stories from others living with, caring for or committed to people with diabetes.



Visit <https://www.teamingupfordiabetes.com/> for diabetes facts, videos and resources to help you build a diabetes management game plan.



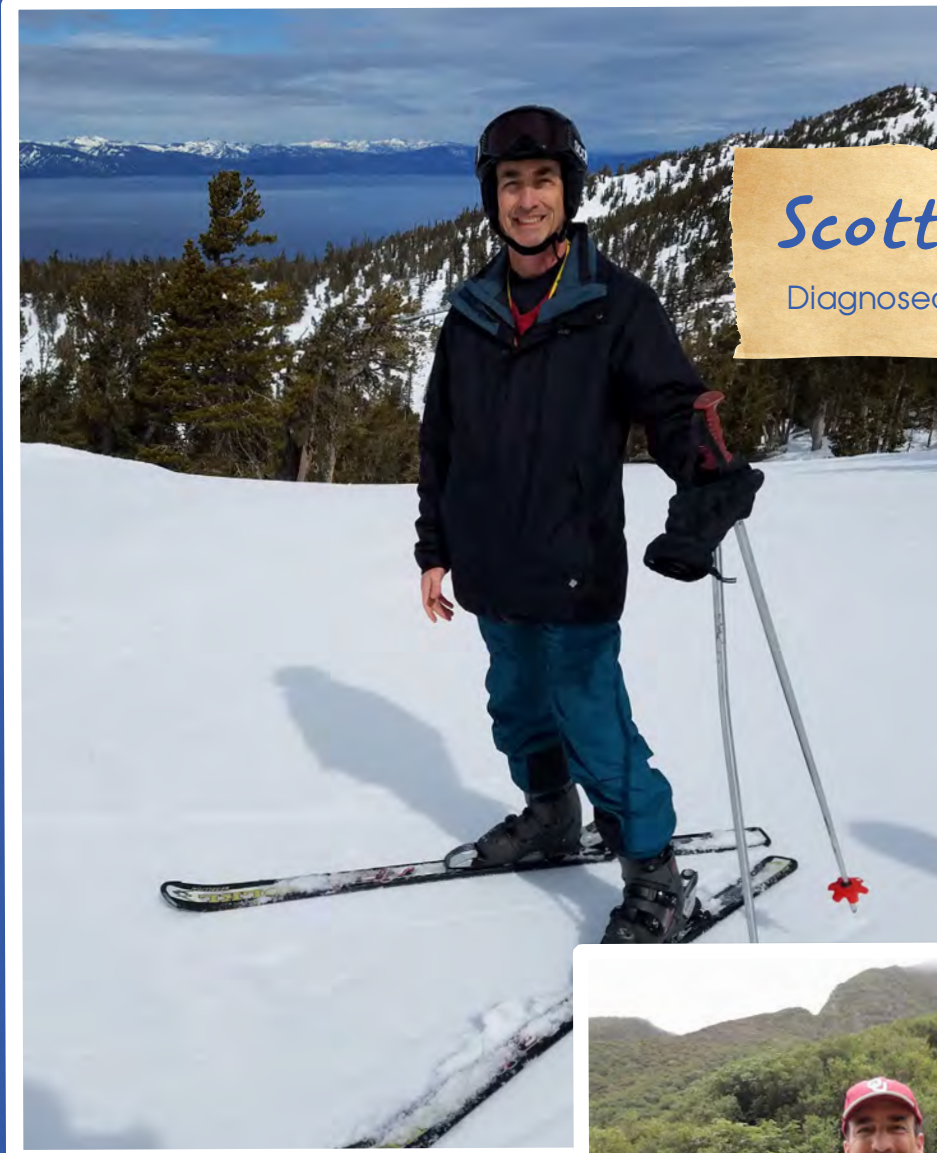
## Joe Burke

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1997

68

Diabetes instilled within me a motivation to understand my body and to learn how to help myself feel good and do the things that make me happy. A few years after being diagnosed with type 1, I realized that my choice to believe that all those injections were just a nuisance that must be tolerated was wearing me down. I had to reset. I began to focus on my well-being. I listened to what my doctor and his suggested literature was saying. I paid attention to how my body felt after meals, exercise and rest. I learned how to make insulin work to adjust my lifestyle to great success! It wasn't easy, and there have been plenty of dark and stormy days, but my understanding of how to help myself feel good was worth it!

# Choice



## Scott Simmons

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1995



69

Living with diabetes has made me a much more disciplined person. I cannot be as spontaneous as I would often like to be. I need to be more disciplined with eating habits, exercise, and day-to-day activities. I am always aware of my blood sugar and I always have snacks nearby in case I go low. Diabetes has also made me more health conscious. I visit the doctor several times a year for testing, I eat healthier and exercise more often. If I didn't have diabetes I may not be as motivated to do those things.



# Discipline

70

A Sysy, le diagnosticaron diabetes en 1994

Tener diabetes me ha enseñado que yo soy 100% responsable de mi misma, y por eso trato de tomar la iniciativa para averiguar como estar sana y disciplinarme para llevarlo a cabo. Como resultado, descubro que con frecuencia tengo habitos de vida mas saludables que las personas que no tienen diabetes, a pesar de mi gran desventaja. También he aprendido todo lo que puedo sobre como controlar mi diabetes, obsesionándome sobre como podría conservar mi azúcar en la sangre normal la mayor parte del tiempo y finalmente llegar a un lugar confiable. Cuando a mi hija le diagnosticaron diabetes tipo 1 hace dos años, mi lucha de toda la vida y el tiempo que pasé aprendiendo sobre la diabetes resultó valioso. Ella tiene ahora 11 años y se ha librado de los altibajos del azúcar en la sangre que yo sufrí cuando era niña y ella sabe mucho más de lo que yo sabía cuando tenía su edad. Eso hace que al final mi diagnóstico haya valido la pena.



*responsabilidad*

# Responsibility

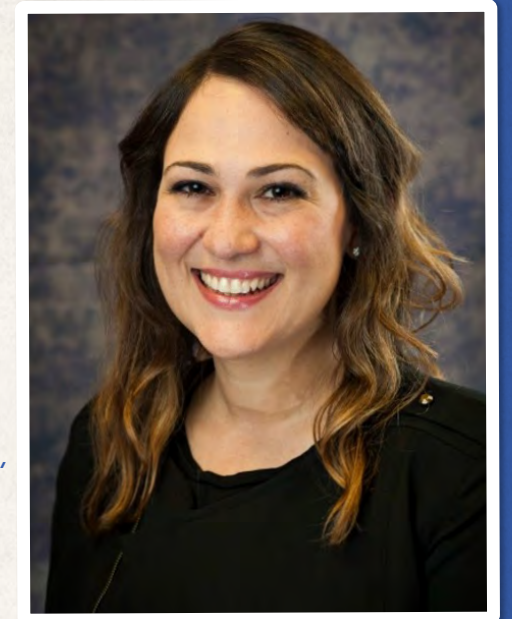
*Sysy Munoz*

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1994

Having diabetes has taught me that I am 100% responsible for myself, and as such I try to take the initiative to figure out how to be healthy and I use discipline to follow through. As a result, I find I often have healthier habits than people without diabetes, despite my great disadvantage. I've also learned all I could about how to manage diabetes, obsessing over how I might keep normal blood sugars most of the time, and eventually coming to a confident place.



When my daughter was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes two years ago, my life's struggle and all the time I spent learning about diabetes paid off. She's 11 now and has been spared the roller coaster blood sugars I endured as a kid and she knows so much more than I did at her age. That makes my diagnosis worth it in the end.



I decided to make an appointment with my doctor to find out why I was falling asleep at odd times of the day. After some tests, I was told that I had diabetes. It was such a shock to me! I had no idea what diabetes was and how it was going to affect the rest of my life. I worked closely with my healthcare team to learn as much as I could about diabetes, and then I took control.

Over the years, I have mastered my insulin injections and have adjusted my diet as needed. I also do my best to incorporate daily exercise. Diabetes has made me that much more focused and independent.

The key to living well with diabetes for me is to take it one day at a time and remind myself that being diagnosed with diabetes is not a problem, provided I take care of myself and follow my doctor's advice.

*Terry Pearce*

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1984



*Focus*



**Betsy Snell**  
Diagnosed with diabetes in 1988

Mindset

I was diagnosed in 1988, and felt angry and sad. I had been feeling lousy. I was tired, especially after I ate, was constantly going to the bathroom and extremely thirsty. I remember coming home from work and telling my mom how I felt. She immediately got my dad's old meter and tested my blood sugar - it registered high. The next stop was the doctor's office and then the hospital to learn about diabetes and insulin. Taking insulin was something I dreaded. I had seen my dad do it, but now it was me. I remember being scared. To my surprise, it wasn't hard or painful, but it also wasn't something I wanted to do.

My attitude began to change after I spent an afternoon talking to a friend of my mom's who had diabetes for 15 years and was in good control of his blood sugars. He was living proof you could live a normal life with diabetes. One of the most important things he told me was, "Betsy, don't be afraid of insulin, learn how it works in your body, give it at the right time and soon it will become routine like brushing your teeth."

I took his advice to change my mindset and learned a lot about insulin and diabetes, my doctor - of course - helped me along the way too! Insulin became an accepted daily routine for me and I found it to be a very good thing, a lifesaver actually! I'm very thankful for insulin and for the friend who helped shape my mindset around it.

*Patti Wong*

Care Partner to daughter, Kat



73

As a care partner, you have to know that there will be good days and bad. My approach has always been to make the good days outnumber the bad and to take the bad days and learn from them. It is very hard emotionally to watch your loved one struggle. Sometimes it is just important to listen and understand their need to vent. As my daughter got older and more independent, she took over most of her diabetes care. As this transition took place, I found that it was important for me to stay current with new progress in the treatment of type 1. I will always offer her guidance and the occasional (ok maybe OFTEN) reminders to be aware of her blood sugars and to stay prepared. Sometimes it is helping with the mundane stuff that helps. I will refill her prescriptions, deal with insurance, and anything that makes life a little easier for her. You may not always get a thank you, but trust me they are thankful. And any day I know I have helped make a difference in her life is a good day for me.

*Good Days*



I didn't always think so positively about life with diabetes, but I found some things to help me get to a good place. I started with diabetes classes to help discover ideas on living well with diabetes. Seeing such a positive side of doctors, nurses and other people with diabetes helping each other by sharing information about medicine, insurance, recipes and exercise really rubbed off on me. You can't help but think optimistically and proactively when you're surrounded by it. That attitude has served me



well for 20 years. In fact, in July of 2020, I began experiencing some lows at night-time. Because I had been so proactive about keeping up on medicine and technology, I asked my doctor about a continuous glucose monitor. Between that and a change in my treatment, the lows have stopped. My doctor is an expert in treating diabetes, but I'm the expert in my body, and researching technology and medicine empowers me to stay on top of the way it changes over time.

## Carolyn Wright

Diagnosed with diabetes in 2001



# Optimism

*Greg Pfaff*

Diagnosed with diabetes in 2000



75

Since I was diagnosed twenty years ago, staying motivated has not been an easy thing every day. Initially, my main motivation was fear. It was very emotional to come to grips with the diagnosis and the possibility of complications in the future that my doctor explained to me. Once I accepted that, I truly needed an honest to goodness, heartfelt reason to get motivated to start insulin and better control my diabetes. I got a big push from my daughter who said, "Dad you taught me to live life and you're not doing it." That became my driving motivation: to be there for her as a "regular dad" and not have my issue be her issue. Today, that motivation has morphed into wanting her kids - my grandkids - to live with a Gpop who unconditionally loves them and is there to help guide them and share the good things that life has in store for us all. I thank God every day for the motivation that He and they give me.

Everyone's support team looks different, but I found that in order to stay motivated, it's so important to have one.

*Motivation*

76

When I was diagnosed with diabetes, I was grieving the sudden death of my father and could not imagine living a life that I wanted to live with this dreaded disease. When I was admitted to the hospital, my A1C was quite high. However, by the time I went to my doctor for my first follow-up after being discharged, it was almost at my target goal. I could not believe that this was a direct result of using insulin regularly as suggested by my doctor. It made me feel empowered. I could take care of myself and live a great life.

*Empowered*



*Kate Lilly*

Diagnosed with diabetes in 2007

*Samantha Irvin*

Diagnosed with diabetes in 2005



*Resilience*

77

It is difficult to quantify since I have so few memories of my life before I was diagnosed, but I believe that diabetes has made me a more empathetic person. It has given me cause to be more scientifically inclined and even informed my decision to pursue a career in medicine. I try not to make my entire life revolve around my diabetes, but it does have a significant impact on how I grew up and has made me who I am today. I have also made some great friends that I may have never met if I had not been diagnosed with diabetes. One of my best friends told me how she struck up a conversation with me for the first time because she saw my medical alert bracelet. My diabetes may have limited some decisions in my life, but it has also opened so many more possibilities and opportunities to succeed elsewhere. Although I truly wish I did not have diabetes, it has prepared me to weather so many other challenges life has thrown at me. Diabetes has made me a kind person, as well as a resilient one.

The thing I love most about my husband is his absolute positive and open attitude. Frank has had diabetes for 21 years. It runs in his family, so he knew he had an increased probability for this diagnosis, however, he also had an extremely powerful role model in his grandmother, who lived into her nineties and made sure she always took her insulin and was mindful of her health. As a youngster he saw what happens when you take appropriate measures, as well as what happens when you deny the diagnosis and treatments. He was determined he would learn everything he could about diabetes and keep it controlled. The lifestyle changes we have made together are also very beneficial for me, especially a more balanced diet. My husband wanted to be on insulin in order to better maintain his blood glucose. He actually asked his doctor to start him on it! Today, he works closely with his doctor to learn about new devices. His attitude has made me more positive and more open to trying new things.

## Tina Atherton

Care Partner to husband Frank



# Positive Attitude



*Evan Kramer*  
Care Partner to son, Tyler

I would like to encourage a care partner of a newly diagnosed loved one to be thankful for the things you have. Although this may seem like a very difficult time, things will become easier and more understood as time goes by. This diagnosis can bring new and rewarding experiences from various sources: new friendships, social justice awareness, advocacy, health literacy and compassion for others. Don't let diabetes stop your loved one from experiencing life to its fullest, and stay positive. I can sum it all up with one of my favorite quotes, "Because tomorrow, the sun will rise. Who knows what the tide could bring?"

# Thankful



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