

DIABETES & MINDSET

The Diabetic Health Coach –
MINDSET TRAINING



Please note...

I AM NOT A DOCTOR, NURSE OR MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL.
I AM JUST A COACH AND BEHAVIOUR ANALYST WHO ALSO
LIVES WITH DIABETES. ALL OF WHAT I OUTLINE IN THIS
TRAINING IS BASED ON MY OWN RESEARCH, EXPERIENCE
LIVING WITH AND MANAGING MY OWN DIABETES. ANY
CHANGES YOU MAKE TO YOUR MEDICAL REGIME SHOULD
BE DISCUSSED WITH YOUR MEDICAL TEAM.

A LITTLE MORE ABOUT ME...

WHO AM I

- Lancashire born (hence the accent)
- 33 years old
- Lived with Type 1 Diabetes for 30 years
- Also known as 'The Diabetic Health Coach'

QUALIFICATIONS

- Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA)
- MSc Applied Behaviour Analysis
- BSc Psychology
- Level 3 Personal Trainer
- Nutritional Advisor



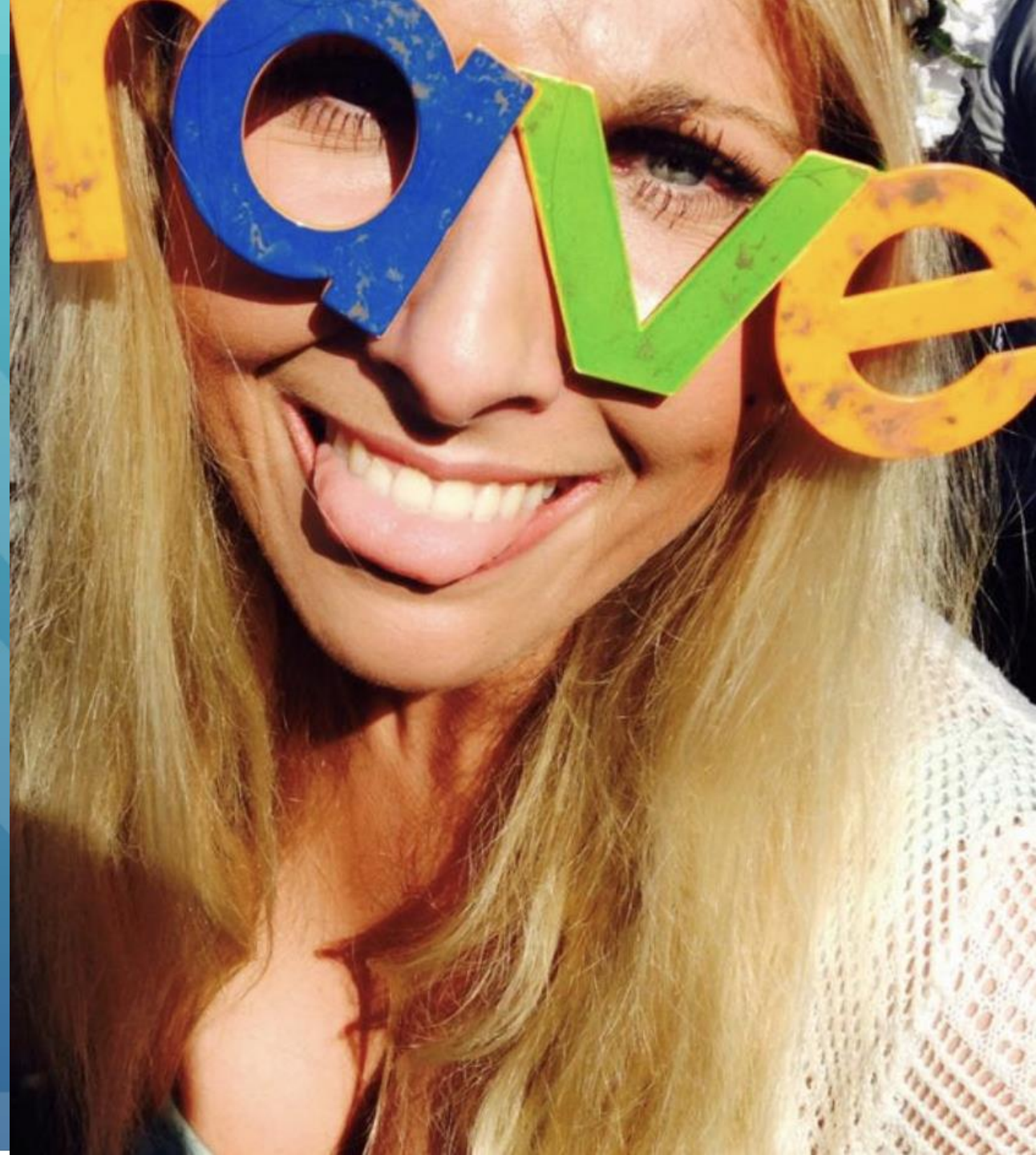
MY DIABETES JOURNEY SO FAR...

- Diagnosed at 3 years old
- Remember my diagnosis very clearly!
(even the doctors waiting room)
- Started testing BG levels 4 times per
day
- Injecting insulin with old school syringes
- Adapted quite quickly with mum and
dads help



THE DEFIANT TEENAGE YEARS

- Hard to accept and control
- Diabetes denial
- My Diabetes was easily ignored
- Limited glucose testing
- Wanted to be just like my friends
- Didn't know anybody else with Type 1 Diabetes...
- I look back now and know if I had a CGM, this would have made such a huge difference



TURNING POINT...

- Diagnosed with Diabetic Retinopathy and Maculopathy at age of 18...
- Was told if I didn't change, my sight could be impacted
- No more!



SO I STARTED TO...

- Check glucose levels more regularly
- Started to carb count consistently, improve my eating habits and also exercise more often
- I joined Diabetes forums to reach out and communicate with other living with the condition
- I started to volunteer for numerous diabetes charities



HOW THIS LED ME TO OPEN MY OWN DIABETES COACHING BUSINESS...

- Helping others with Diabetes to meet their health and fitness goals
- Helping others with Diabetes to accept and come to terms with their condition, improving overall mindset
- Helping others with Diabetes increase their healthy habits and behaviours
- Providing a community and consistent support



**HOWEVER, DIABETES ISN'T ALWAYS
PLAIN SAILING AS WE KNOW.**

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY THE HARDEST
THING ABOUT HAVING DIABETES IS?**



DIABETES IS A FULL TIME JOB...

- 180 extra decisions per day
- Constantly at the back of our minds
- High levels
- Low levels
- Unexplained levels
- Factors out of our control
- Anxiety around highs, lows, complications etc.
- NO SWITCHING OFF!!



DIABETES IS LIKE A CHANGING MOLE ON OUR BACK

We may try to ignore it and pretend it's not there... but ultimately it is just going to get worse if we do ignore it.



**WE CAN'T CHANGE OUR DIABETES, BUT WE CAN CHANGE
OUR MINDSET AND HOW WE THINK TOWARDS IT...**

**ESPECIALLY DURING THOSE DAYS WHEN THINGS AREN'T
GOING TO PLAN.**

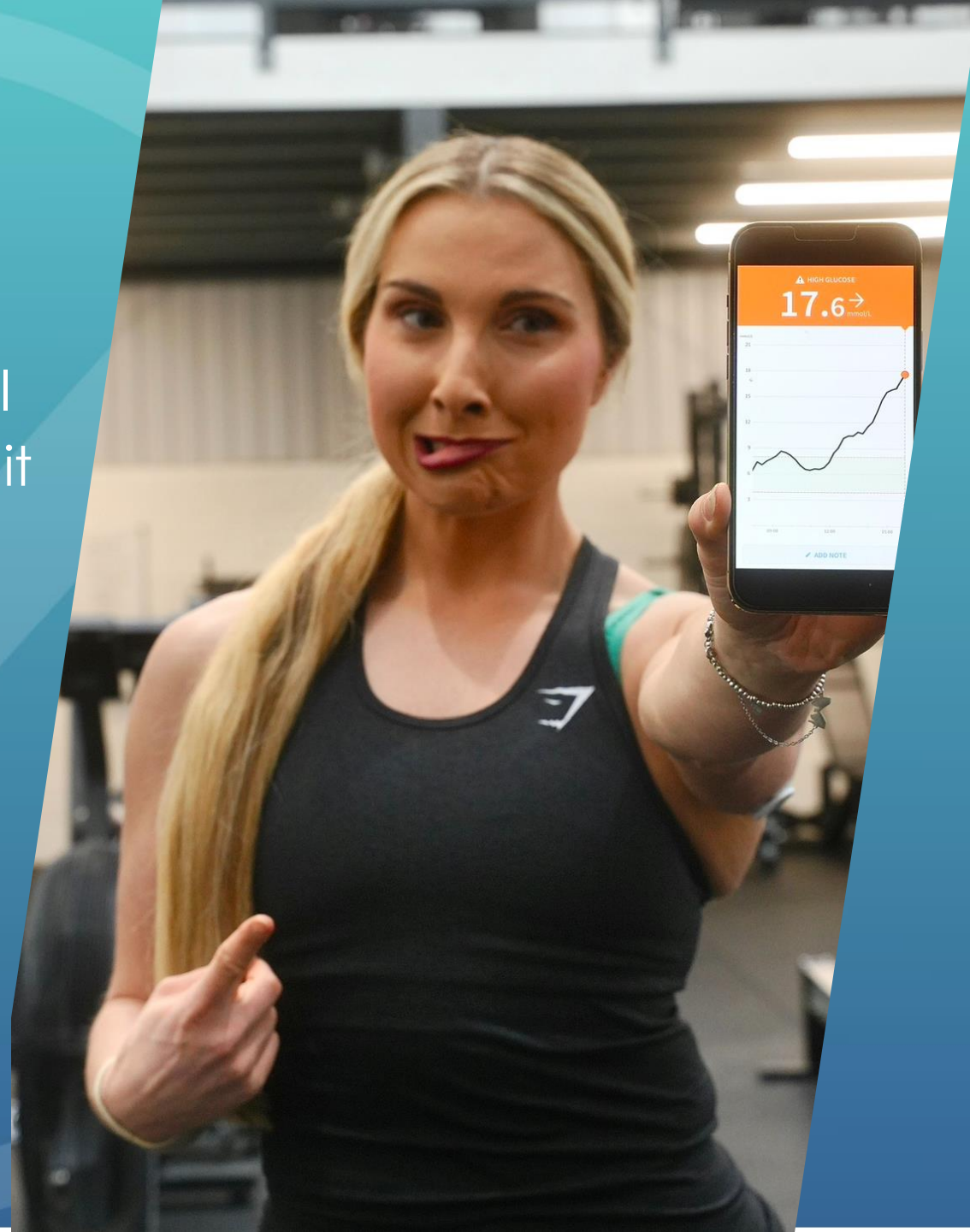
MY MINDSET TOWARDS MY DIABETES AS A TEEN

- I believed that I didn't have diabetes
- I switched off mentally from it
- I believed that complications didn't apply to me
- I believed that it would 'go away' the more I ignored it
- When I saw high readings, I would switch off completely from it



WHAT TRIGGERS NEGATIVE THOUGHTS TOWARDS MY DIABETES?

- When glucose levels aren't playing ball
- When I do everything right and still get it wrong
- When I am faced with confusing levels
- When I have a lot of other things/stressors going on that can cause me to switch off a little more from my diabetes
- At the end of the day we are only human...



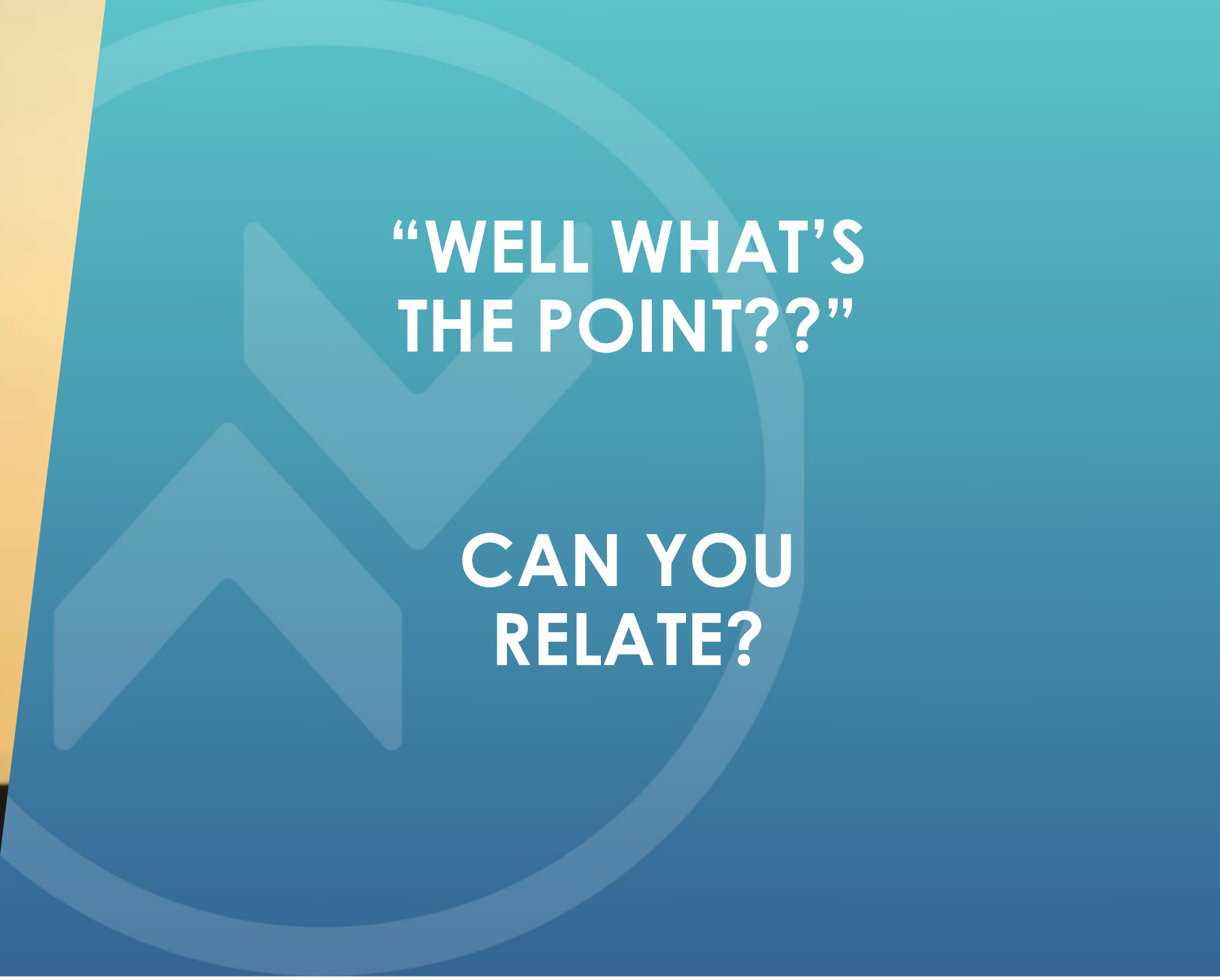
ALSO, DIABETES MANAGEMENT ISN'T THAT SIMPLE IS IT?

**FROM A BEHAVIOUR ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE,
SOMETIMES WHAT WE DO CORRECTLY, IS THEN
PUNISHED BY:**

- UNWANTED READINGS ON OUR GLUCOSE METER**
- UNEXPECTED DIABETES COMPLICATIONS**
- UNEXPECTED SYMPTOMS**

A silhouette of a person bending over, possibly stretching or in pain, against a bright orange and yellow sunset background. The person is on the left side of the frame, and their shadow is cast on the ground.

**“WELL WHAT’S
THE POINT??”**

A blue background with a large, stylized 'X' shape formed by overlapping geometric shapes. The text is centered on the right side of the image.

**CAN YOU
RELATE?**

PUNISHMENT IS DEFINED AS:

“Anything that follows a behaviour that reduces the likelihood of that behaviour reoccurring again in the future...”

For example:

- Behaviour - Carb counting & pre-bolusing
- Punisher - Sharp rise/high glucose level post meal
- Response – Much less likely to do the same next time (even though what we did was correct)

IF WE ARE CONSTANTLY
DOING EVERYTHING WE HAVE
BEEN TOLD TO DO, BUT
DEALING WITH UNWANTED
READINGS AND
SPIKES/DROPS, THIS WILL THEN
LIKELY CAUSE MOTIVATION
TO VERY EASILY DROP...

POTENTIALLY LEADING TO
FEELINGS OF OVERWHELM,
DENIAL ETC...

! HIGH GLUCOSE

05:00

21.7[↑]
mmol/L

mmol/L

27

24

21

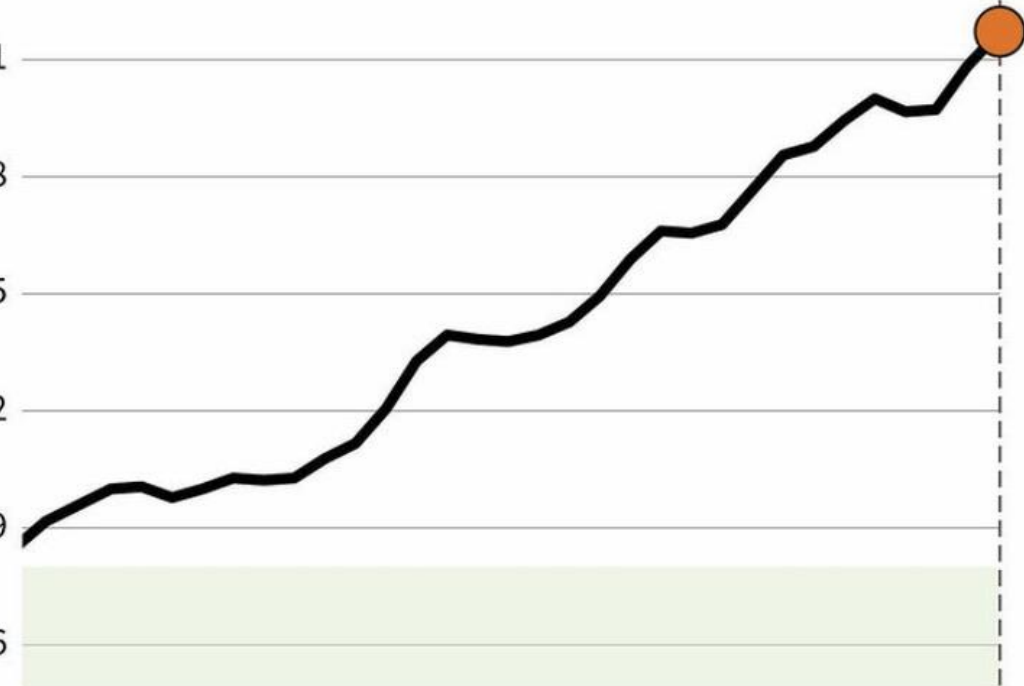
18

15

12

9

6



**SEE DIABETES MANAGEMENT AS A LONG,
WINDING AND NARROW ROAD...**





IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US
TO ACCEPT THAT THERE
ARE GOING TO BE BUMPS
ALONG THE WAY AND IT
MAY NOT BE A SMOOTH
JOURNEY.

BUT, IT IS ABOUT DOING
WHAT WE CAN TO KEEP
ON THE ROAD, AS
OPPOSED TO
COMPLETELY FALLING
OFF

ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT IT...

- Remember, we are the ones steering the wheel of the car that is our diabetes
- Some of us have manual cars, so of us have automatic, some of us have fancy electric automatic cars 😊
- If we choose not to focus on and steer the wheel, we will eventually crash
- The more we keep our hands on the wheel and try our best to drive it, we will get to our destination safe and sound
- Even with a few bumps in the road along the way

MY TOP STRATEGIES TO HELP IMPROVE MINDSET TOWARDS OUR DIABETES



STRATEGY 1 – PEER SUPPORT

- Speaking to others and opening up to others going through the same thing
- As a teenager, I didn't know anyone with diabetes, impacting my motivation to even try
- When I was 18, I spoke to someone with diabetes for the first time (instant sense of relief!)
- Instantly my motivation increased!
- Open up about our feelings, experiences and frustrations



**PEER SUPPORT IS
JUST AS
IMPORTANT AS
OUR
MEDICATION
WHEN IT COMES
TO MANAGING
DIABETES**



STRATEGY 2 – SWITCHING OUR THOUGHT PROCESSES

- Naturally as humans, we focus more on the negatives in a situation (survival mechanism)
- Switching a negative thought to a positive thought
- Switching from seeing a situation as a negative experience to an experience we can learn from
- For example...



STRATEGY 2 – SWITCHING OUR THOUGHT PROCESSES

NEGATIVE THOUGHT	POSITIVE THOUGHT
Diabetes has been too difficult today, I give up!	Diabetes has been tough, but I got through the day. It has increased my strength & resilience.
I hate having to think about everything I eat all the time!	Having to think about what I am eating is annoying, but it makes me so much aware of making healthier choices, benefiting my health in the long run
I wish my CGM alarms would leave me alone!	Even though the alarms are annoying, I would be lost without my CGM

STRATEGY 2 – SWITCHING OUR THOUGHT PROCESSES

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE	LEARNING EXPERIENCE
My glucose levels have shot up after doing everything I have been told to do, I give up!	My glucose levels have shot up, but it's ok as it provides me with an opportunity to learn what to do next time
I feel that everyone is just staring at my diabetes tech	People are staring at my diabetes tech, this might be a good opportunity to teach someone something new

STRATEGY 3 – ACCEPTANCE

- Practicing the art of acceptance
- **Actively acknowledging reality**
- Acceptance that diabetes is here and here to stay
- Acceptance that there will be days where glucose levels will be running high or low through no fault of our own
 - Illness
 - Stress
 - Hormones etc.
- Acceptance that there will be slumps in motivation



STRATEGY 3 – ACCEPTANCE

- Acceptance that there will be times we may feel a little in denial
- Acceptance that there will be times we want to throw in the towel
- Acceptance that these instances will happen more than once
- Acceptance that our diabetes journey may not be plain sailing
- Acceptance that all we can do is try our best

**ACCEPTANCE IS THE FIRST
STEP TO MOVING
FORWARD...**

**IF WE PREPARE OURSELVES
THAT TRICKY DAYS ARE
GOING TO HAPPEN, WHEN
THEY COME AROUND, IT
MAKES IT EASIER TO MOVE
FORWARD...**



IT IS IMPORTANT THAT
WE ALLOW OURSELVES
TO FEEL ALL THE
EMOTIONS THAT
COME WITH
TYPE 1 DIABETES, AS
THIS IS WHAT
STRENGTHENS OUR
RESILIENCE EVERY
SINGLE DAY



STRATEGY 4 – IDENTIFY THE WHY WHEN IT COMES TO GLUCOSE LEVELS

- It is frustrating... but when our glucose levels are not doing what we want them to do, there is always going to be a reason for it...
- Sometimes this is in our control, sometimes it is out of our control
- Once we identify the why, then we can make the changes that we need to help



IT COULD BE...

- Incorrect carb calculation > apps such as MyFitnessPal or Nutra check help with this
- Not pre-bolusing in enough time > I usually have to wait a minimum of 15-20 mins
- Not factoring in protein, fats or even insulin on board
- Not having the correct carb:insulin ratios
- Not having the correct basal rates for those on manual pump or MDI



IT COULD BE...

- Illness
- Hormones
- Stress
- Temperature
- Time of the month
- Pump malfunction



**SOMETIMES
THERE MAY JUST
BE NO
EXPLANATION...
AND THIS IS
NORMAL**



STRATEGY 5 – REFER TO PERSONAL VALUES

- Personal values are deeply held beliefs and principles that guide our thoughts, actions, and decision-making.
- They reflect what is important to us and shape our behaviour
- Many of us have one value in common.... **Health.**
- One thing to try and do each day, base everything we do on our values

STRATEGY 5 – REFER TO PERSONAL VALUES

- One of my main values is my health, so before I do something ask myself this...
- Does what I am about to do fall in line with my value of health?

For example:

- Eating a huge piece of cake without working out the carb total? >>> No.
- Deciding to not pre-bolus because I don't have the motivation to >>> No.
- Walking after a meal to help with the glucose spike >>> Yes.
- Making a healthy dinner choice instead of a take away >>> Yes.

STRATEGY 5 – REFER TO PERSONAL VALUES

- When we reflect actively on whether something we are about to do or not do falls in line with our values, this has significant impact on our choices (research supports this too 😊)
- Follow this task after this training:
 - Write down 3 core values you have (e.g. Health, family, happiness, rest etc.)
 -
 - Then, write down 5 behaviours or habits that fall in line with each of your values that you start to do can do each day or week.



STRATEGY 6 – NEVER COMPARE

- It is always easy for us to compare our levels or progress to others
- Especially on social media...
- But remember everyone is different and on a slightly different journey
- "There are 8 million people worldwide with T1 diabetes & 8 million ways to manage it"

STRATEGY 7 – FOCUS ON BEHAVIOURS, NOT OUTCOMES

- We cannot always control the glucose number that follows our actions.
- What we *can* focus on is whether we carried out the behaviours that support good diabetes management:
 - Did I carb count as accurately as I could?
 - Did I take my insulin?
 - Did I pre-bolus where appropriate?
 - Did I consider insulin on board?
 - Did I respond to the reading rather than ignore it?
 - Did I review what I could learn for next time?



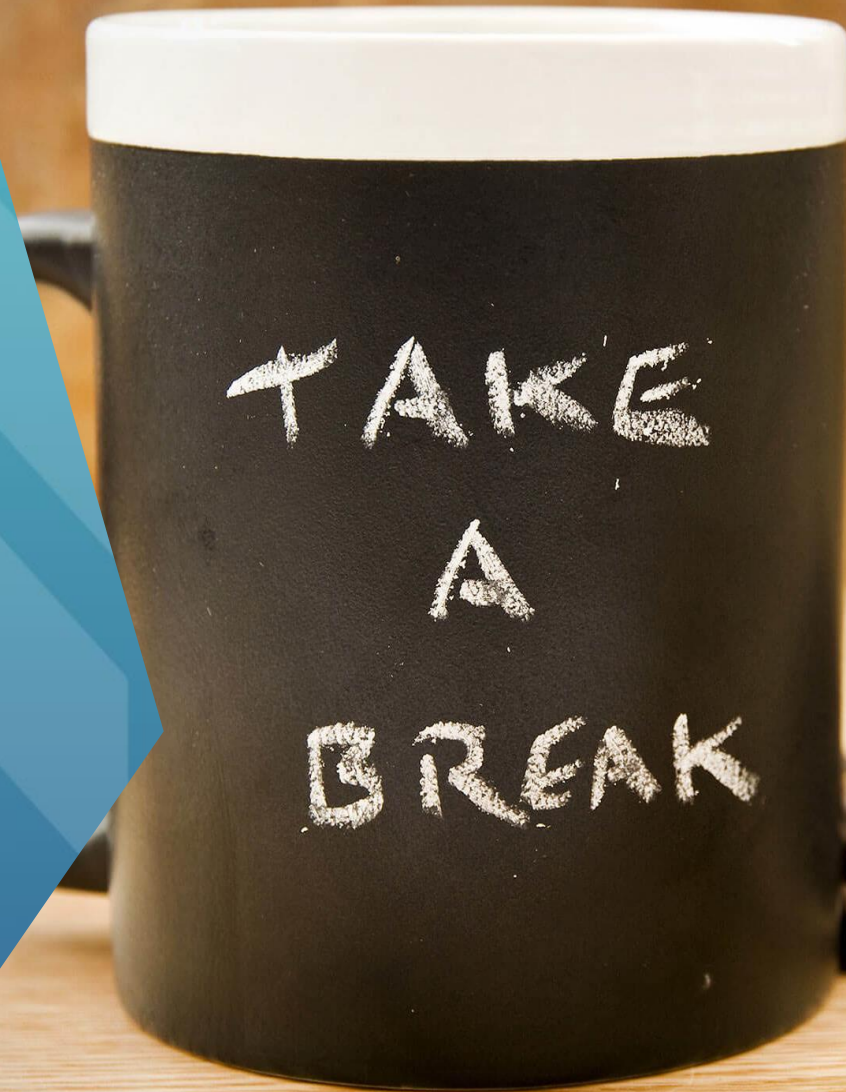
STRATEGY 8 – REMIND YOURSELF HOW INCREDIBLE YOU ARE!

- Give Jo Bloggs on the street diabetes for the day and he would not have a clue.
- You are doing the job of an organ, remember to give yourself some credit
- You are strong, you are amazing and you are not going to be beaten.
- Dominate your Diabetes, don't let it dominate you.



STRATEGY 9 – 90/10 APPROACH (GIVING OURSELVES A BREAK SOMETIMES)

- Sometimes I allow myself time off (that's right!)
- As long as I am on it the best I can 90% of the time, I allow myself the odd day or time period where I have a much more relaxed feel to things



A photograph of a man and a woman jumping joyfully on a sandy beach. They are holding hands and facing away from the camera, towards the ocean. The woman is on the left, wearing a white tank top and denim shorts, holding a beach ball. The man is on the right, wearing a light-colored t-shirt and denim shorts. The background shows the ocean waves and a cloudy sky.

STEP 10 – FOCUS ON WHAT HAS GONE WELL, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL

- Sometimes on bad diabetes days, as mentioned, it is hard to identify the positives
- But this is really important
- Training the mindset to look at what has gone well as opposed to what hasn't
- "Levels haven't been great but I did make the effort to pre-bolus, exercise and carb count"



STEP 11 – RESTART TOMORROW

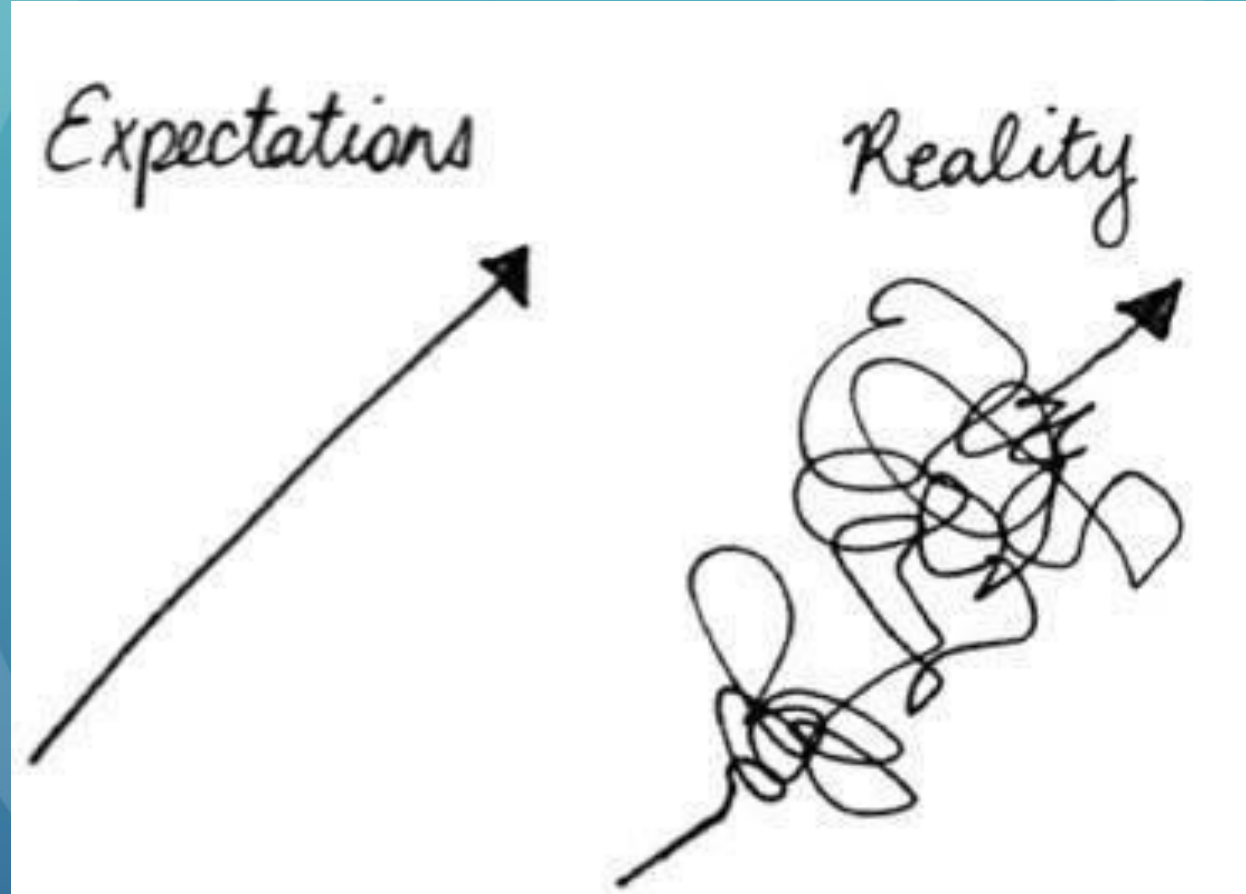
- If today hasn't gone to plan, focus on a fresh start tomorrow (having a level in range first thing always helps)
- Diabetes isn't going anywhere unfortunately, so it is about focusing on continuing to push forward as best as we can

REMEMBER ...

- When it comes to diabetes management... as long as we are trying our best, that is all that matters



REMEMBER ...



THANK YOU 😊
ANY QUESTIONS?

