

Breaking the Silence:

My Journey with Diabetes

Ana Chavez

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Share what you know about diabetes.
2. What does it mean to “break the silence”?

Mysterious Symptoms

The symptoms started slowly. I started to feel very tired. The soles of my feet itched badly. I had anxiety, headaches, and *blurry vision*. I had to go to the bathroom six times every night. My *joints* ached. I wanted to sleep all day. I was depressed and overweight. My mouth was always dry, and I had no energy.

This went on for five years. My family said those symptoms were caused by *menopause*. And I took medicine for *menopause* for four years.

A Surprise

I finally went to the doctor. They did blood work and told me I had Type 2 Diabetes. The sugar level in my blood was 7.6. It scared me to find out I had diabetes. However, I should have expected it. I had *gestational* diabetes in both of my pregnancies. My grandparents, parents, and uncle all had diabetes.

I thought my life was over. I saw what happened to my family members. My grandmother and uncle went blind because of diabetes. My uncle had to have one of his legs *amputated*.

Action Plan

The first thing I did was to learn about diabetes. I took classes at the El Paso Center for Diabetes. I learned how to cook healthy meals. I changed my eating habits. I worked with a *nutritionist* to create a new diet for myself. I learned how to control my diabetes with diet and exercise.

Now, I am not afraid of my condition. I feel happy when I do what I must do. I exercise, eat well, manage my stress, and go to my doctor’s appointments.

However, for me, the most important thing is to teach my eight-year-old son how to be healthy. In my family, diabetes has been a silent killer. But no more! My family is learning to control diabetes for future *generations*.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. What is the sequence of events that happened to Ana?
2. At first, she felt like her “life was over.” But then she made an action plan. How did it help her to make an action plan?
3. Look at the words in bold italics. Use context clues to figure out what they mean.



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