

Low Blood Sugar ~ Hypoglycemia

"Definitely Neurotic!" "Extremely immature!" "Just doesn't want to grow up!" "She's just looking for attention!" One doctor told my husband, "Lou, she's just trying to nail you to a cross."

As far back as I can remember, I was just never quite happy. There always seemed to be something missing. My thinking was continually negative, even though I laughed and smiled easily. This great weight seemed to be constantly upon me. My sensitivity to problems around me - mine or others' - was almost too much to bear.

Fears were the order of the day. Fear of the dark, cats, dogs, bugs, birds, of being alone, of being with people, of trying anything new, of making changes, of what might happen tomorrow, next month, next year. Oh, yes, I was always thinking ahead - so far ahead, my brain felt like it would burst. And then the endless tiredness! I was called "lazy" by my family, "exhausted" by myself. I wanted to do more, but I just didn't have the energy. Tiredness, tears and fears seemed to be the story of my life.

Then, last but not least, there were the sweets. Oh, what longing and craving I suffered! "Greedy" was the word used to describe my desire by others. However, I saw it differently. I was desperate. I felt like I would die if my craving wasn't satisfied. Coffee, chocolate, and butterscotch. Life wasn't worth living without these "necessities."

My earliest recollection of longing for sweets was when I was four years old. I knew that Daddy had Tootsie Roll lollipops in his bedroom. That was my treat if I was good. It was good that I wasn't allowed in that room, because I would have found and devoured them.

I think the thing that bothered me most was the preoccupation with the thought of death. Suicide seemed to offer a blessed relief from what I was suffering. Needless to say, I was singled out as the "dramatic" one in the family. Well, believe me, I didn't feel dramatic. I felt desperate.

To elaborate on my years of young adulthood would only be repetitious. The symptoms were the same; they just intensified. If people thought that I was difficult to live with, they'll never know how much worse it was for me to live with myself. In my early 20's, after the birth of my second child, I started down the psychiatric path. The conclusions of the psychiatrists were always the same: "Grow up!" I didn't believe that I was really that dishonest with myself, but if the "authorities" said so, it had to be true.

Things progressed from bad to worse. The smallest chore was just too much. By the time I got out of bed in the morning and walked down the stairs, I had to sit down and rest. And going to bed was something to be dreaded. It meant tossing, turning, thinking, but not sleeping. I used to think and worry so much that I got to the point where I took a pencil and pad to bed with me to write down things as I thought of them. I knew that if I didn't I'd be frustrated the next day trying to remember the things

I'd been thinking about all night. Of course, come morning I wanted to sleep. I was eventually spending about 14 hours a day in bed.

By my late 20's and early 30's, I reached the stage where I was blacking out. Over and over my children had to see me being rushed to the hospital by the police with an oxygen mask on my face. These black-outs were becoming more frequent, accompanied by constant thoughts of suicide. Sometimes, I would remain unconscious up to four hours at a time. Our family doctor told my husband that I was doing this to myself by over-breathing and making myself pass out just to get attention. He prescribed sleeping pills and tranquilizers. The sleeping pills woke me up and the tranquilizers made me hostile. When I told him this, he insisted that I was just trying to appear "to be different."

I voluntarily allowed myself to be put in the psychiatric ward of the hospital for help, because everyone was insisting that my problems were all psychosomatic. The psychiatrist who treated me said he just couldn't agree that my problems were basically mental or emotional. He said that he didn't know what was wrong with me, but he suggested shock treatments. I refused!

In one of our discussions, I mentioned that I wanted to check with my husband before I made a decision about a particular thing. He said, "Why would you do that?" I said, "Well, the Bible refers to the man as the head of the house." He said, "My wife would really laugh at that one!" And then he suggested that I find a new religion. He said that kind of thinking was too oppressive. With that , he told me that he was releasing me.

Picture yourself driving down a road that you drive down every day. All of a sudden, nothing looks familiar. This would happen to me over and over. I'd pull over and cry and wait for someone to stop to help me. One day I was on my way to work when this happened. A state policeman stopped to help. I certainly couldn't tell him I was on my way to work and was lost. So I just told him I was lost and the name of the store I was looking for. When he started to give me directions, I burst into tears again, because my mind just would not function. He looked at me as if I was a typical "scatterbrained woman" and said never mind, follow me. Imagine that! A police escort to work!

Whether I was driving in my car or shopping in a store, sometimes I would have to go to a phone booth to call my husband (I kept his number in my wallet), because I would become so disoriented that I did not know where I was. I couldn't even tell him what street I was on or what store I was in. He would ask me to read the number that was on the phone, then tell me to hang up. He would then call the operator, find out where the booth was located, and come and get me. We laugh about it now, but no one was laughing then.

Imagine yourself, a hard-working man at work, getting a call from your wife who is telling you in an exaggerated deadly voice that she has to kill your three-month-old baby because it wet its diaper. The work and energy involved in having to open the pins, clean the child, put on a fresh diaper, and close the pins again was too overwhelming. At this

time, I was 34 years old. When I complained to the doctor about my exhaustion, he said, "You are getting older!"

Another terrifying experience now presented itself. I began feeling that my body was separating from myself and that I was watching myself. I began hallucinating. I imagined that I saw cats and various things that weren't there. People's faces became distorted and it seemed that everyone was screaming all the time. But, of course, there was nothing wrong with me; I was just looking for attention.

One thing I did know enough to do was to keep consuming larger and larger bags of candy, especially chocolate! I was hiding it in my drawers and sneaking out of bed at night to stuff myself. I had bags of M&Ms under my mattress, in my drawers, in my purse. I would ask myself, "I'm a grown woman; why am I hiding this?" I just needed to know it was there!

Then, the depression, the tears, the fears and the exhaustion. However, I never realized the sugar connection. As I look back now, I remember that, as a little child, I would sneak out of bed in the middle of the night to hunt for something sweet or to eat out of the sugar bowl. The next day I would be crying in my mind that I wanted to die.

I had always been interested in nutrition. Not involved, but interested. I hadn't progressed much beyond the wheat germ and honey stage; however, I did realize the danger of chemicals in food and things of this nature. For this reason, after the birth of my last child, I began to frequent a little , privately owned health food store called Bragdon's Health Food Center in West Hartford, Connecticut. I went there to get natural vitamins for my baby, myself and my other children.

The owner was a very personable woman who had great compassion for sick people as a result of her own dramatic "nutritional deficiency" story. Because of her interest and kindness, we became good friends. I hadn't shared my problems with her because I didn't think that they were relevant.

One day when I was experiencing one of my horrific depressions, I just had to have someone to speak with. I dialed number after number, but none of my other friends were at home. In desperation, I called Mrs. Bragdon at the health food store. This was a turning point in my life. Sobbing, I told her how I just didn't want to live. I was convinced that I was losing my mind.

Mrs. Bragdon was just as convinced that this was nothing but a severe nutritional deficiency, a chemical imbalance. This was difficult for me to believe, because I had just spent a week in the hospital where they had done a battery of tests including a brain wave test to prove to me that there was nothing wrong with me. Mrs. Bragdon asked me to see a medical doctor in New Jersey, Dr. Samuel Getlin, who treated his patients with nutrition and mega-vitamin therapy.

Within a few days, my husband and I were there. Sure enough, my case was diagnosed as severe hypoglycemia. One of the first things he said to me was "I hope you are not taking any medication! In your situation,

sleeping pills will wake you up and tranquilizers will just make you hostile." Finally! someone who understood me without my having to persuade them! Unbeknownst to me, the doctor told my husband that I was probably going to die. He said that my blood sugar was so low that there was no scientific reason for me to even be sitting there!

Needless to say, refined sugar had to go. Surprisingly, so did fruits and fruit juices of any kind. Actually I found that in my case fruit sugar was just as destructive for me as refined sugar. Now, years later, I am beginning to tolerate tiny amounts of certain fruits. I still do not do well with grains and other starches. Along with my diet was mega-vitamin therapy, of course; the diet was not sufficient and had to be supplemented. Supplemented? three hundred vitamins a day to start with! Dr. Getlin said that there had been a lot of damage to my organs and it would take considerable time to repair them via the nutrients. As hard as I tried to stick to my regimen, stress or cheating on my diet would set me back. This was very discouraging at first. However, I found that, sticking for the most part to my program, my set backs became further and further apart.

At first Dr. Getlin had told me: "Not even one oyster cracker. Just high protein. No carbs." I said to myself, that's impossible! I'll die without my chocolate! What I didn't know is that the vitamins he prescribed would cut my cravings for carbohydrates. He didn't tell me until two years later that he had told my husband that he expected me to die. From then on, he called me his miracle. Interestingly, he told Mrs. Bragdon, "I believe it was her religious beliefs keeping her alive before I saw her. Something was driving her to keep going, and I believe that's what it was." I had no problem with that observation!

As a matter of fact, I was so thrilled with having found out what was wrong with me and how to treat myself effectively that I was eager to share my discovery with the doctor mentioned at the outset who felt I was trying to "nail my husband to a cross." When I called him, he facetiously responded with these words: "Please, Janet, you just finally grew up."

In retrospect, it took approximately seven years for my physical energy level to return to where I was able to accomplish the things I needed to do. I had to learn to pace myself. As for my vitamin supplements, I don't have to take anywhere near the amount that I did in the beginning. The most important thing is diet, diet, diet. Vitamins don't take the place of a good diet; they only make a good diet better. I keep it quite simple: chicken, fish, turkey, eggs (lots of eggs!), non-starchy vegetables, salads, some cheese, a little bread, seeds and nuts, and, very importantly, 8 to 10 glasses of water each day. I eat to live. My treat? Blueberries and a little sour cream!

I feel compelled to tell you that at one point the intensity of my depression was so great that I succumbed. I attempted to take my life. Mercifully, I woke up many hours later in the hospital to learn that my stomach had been pumped. I can't honestly say at that time that I was happy to be alive. Today, however, is a different matter.

What am I doing now? I own a health food store, of course! I'm enjoying the privilege of sharing my experiences and knowledge with others. I am trying to help people - with empathy - to know what it is to be glad to be alive. Yes, faith in God, a complete change in diet, vitamin supplements, and TLC from my doctor, family and friends have put me back as a contributor to the human race. I must admit that now I am "looking for attention;" attention to my experience by those who are suffering as I was is what I'm hoping for. Believe me, life can be worth living!

This August I'll be 75 years old. I'm still working in my health food store, The World Of Nutrition, in Newington Connecticut (Toll Free: 866-666-6863). We have been serving the community for 37 years. Most of our customers come in on someone else's recommendation. Sometimes their words scare me: "Are you Janet? My friends said that you would help me." I know that I want to help, but will I be able to? It's an awesome privilege but a serious responsibility.

Since I resigned as the General Manager of the Universe, my life is becoming easier. Although he is deceased, I always try to be motivated by Dr. Getlin's wise words: "Help those who want to be helped. As for those who don't want to be helped? Just love them." Because of that dear man, I'm alive today helping and loving people. I think that he would be proud of me if he knew that I took and propagated his insightful words of wisdom.

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