

CHAPTER TWO

THOUGHTS ON MAKING A CHANGE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE

Trying to make quality improvements on something as personal as managing your diabetes can appear to be scary at first.



Right now you may be asking yourself:

- Exactly what does “quality improvement” of your life mean?
- How can I improve the way I take care of my diabetes?
- Will it take forever for me to see an improvement?
- Can I really do this?
- Why should I go through all of this trouble?

Let’s look at a few of these questions, one by one.

What is quality improvement?

There are areas in our lives, and especially in our management of a chronic disease such as diabetes, that are not being managed to the best of our ability. You make “quality improvements” when you identify these areas.

Then we make changes that help us manage them better. The first thing you have to do is to identify one area in the diabetes management process that needs improvement.

Here is an example:

What do you do right now that you could do better, or that you should not do?

- You may look at the times you eat too many carbohydrates, how much fat you are eating, or even how much money you are spending on food during one month.
- Find the area you would like to change.
- Make the change that will help you make the best use of your time and efforts.
- Do not waste your time and efforts. Make it work for you.

How can I improve?

Once you have found an area that needs improved upon, right away begin to write down information.

The more information you are able to write down, the better you will be able to tell how to make the change.



This leads to the next question.....

Will it take long?

The bottom line is that improvement never really ends. It just keeps going. The good news is that by working on small areas, you are able to see the small improvements you are making along the way to your big goal. The little improvements will be seen quickly and then before you know it you are well on your way.

When you are thinking of improving your diabetes management, do something you can measure at least once a day. If you can only measure once a week it takes a long time for you to see if you are making progress.

So, if you are interested in eating healthier, instead of looking at what you buy when you go grocery shopping, look at what you eat for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. If you do not do the cooking at your home, ask the person who does to help you eat healthy.

Here are some helpful hints:

- Clearly define your goal for each cycle.
- Put it in writing.
- Keep a log or diary of your progress.
- Get information on it every day, as often as you can.
- Graph your information so you can see how you are doing.



Improvement comes from using what you know. Because of this, you need to increase what you know about the things you are trying to improve. Then you need to use what you know.

When you are thinking of improving something, there are three questions you have to ask yourself:

What are you trying to do?

Answering this question will help you focus your efforts by setting a goal.

How will you know that a change is an improvement?

If the results last over time, then you can say that the change you made is an improvement. Some examples may be:

- Better blood sugar control
- Weight loss
- Lower cholesterol level

What changes can you make that will result in an improvement?

Once you have decided what you will do, try your idea on a small scale. You may want to try it for just a few days. Feel free to improve your plan as you go along.



