

## What people are saying about *The Fearless Diabetic* . . .

A diagnosis of Type 1 Diabetes often comes as a bolt from the blue. One day you are living your life and the next you are confronted with a chronic illness that requires a lifetime of insulin injections, finger poking, and risk of blindness and kidney failure. It's devastating. Ben Milsom faced this very scenario head-on and tells the story in this book—with frank and courageous descriptions of the highs and the lows—of how he was more than up to the challenge. Ben tells of how he took on Type 1 Diabetes and has lived a life without limits. He gives inspiration, motivation, and tips to those who are newly diagnosed or who have lived with T1D for years. He does so with humility and humor. As my parents said to me when I was diagnosed with T1D, “You can do anything your friends do; you'll just need to work a little harder.” This is true, and Ben Milsom is living proof that it's possible!

—**Aaron Kowalski**, CEO of JDRF

I have gotten to know Ben both personally and professionally and he is both a friend and inspiration to me on a daily basis. He lives life with no limits and this book is a perfect blend of personal anecdotes, simplifying the science of T1D, and inspiration for truly living your own personal journey to the fullest extent. I can't wait to see how this book inspires and educates those with and without T1D to maximize every day.

—**Brian Killingsworth**, CMO, F45 Fitness

Ben Milsom's journey is a profound testament to the indomitable human spirit. His book goes beyond the specifics of living with Type 1 Diabetes; it's a universal call to arms for anyone facing life's toughest challenges.

—**Bob Beaudine**, national bestselling author of  
*The Power of WHO* and *2 Chairs*

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## CHAPTER 1

# Diabetes 101: If You Don't Know, Now You Know

*Never let the things you cannot do prevent you from doing the things you can.*

—JOHN WOODEN

### Fears and Myths about Type 1 Diabetes

The initial diagnosis of T1D can hit the patient and their family like a Mack truck. The person with T1D goes from feelings of discomfort—weight loss, thirst, constant urination—and the sense that something is wrong to hearing the doctor say they have diabetes. That's when fear sets in:

- What do you mean I have a disease?
- How am I going to cope with this?
- Who will help me?
- Do I know anyone with this condition?

The initial diagnosis is like pushing someone to the edge of a cliff. A happy, successful normal life is on the other side of a very large valley as soon that first diagnosis occurs.

## THE FEARLESS DIABETIC

At first, the bridge connecting the two is very wobbly and has a lot of holes in it. The T1D and their family are at a loss as to what resources are available. My hope is that the information in this book helps to create a concrete solid path to the other side. In the following chapters, I share stories of sunshine as well as some very dark stories. My intent is to help you understand that while Type 1 Diabetes is a 24/7 disease, it's not a death sentence. The following is a list of the most common fears and myths surrounding T1D:

### Fears

- You won't be able to live a normal life.
- You won't be able to have children.
- You can't swim with an insulin pump.
- You won't be able to play sports.
- You might have a seizure, which could be fatal.

As a healthy seventeen-year-old boy, my biggest fear was whether I would have the ability to play college football and have a normal college experience. Was I going to be able to stay up late and have fun with friends? Would this change my future plans? I also was really worried that I wouldn't be able to have a family one day.

Once I knew that with normal blood sugar control, I could live a normal life, I knew this would be something I could handle.

**I just needed a chance to fight it.**

## Myths

- Diabetes is only for overweight people.
- Diabetes is managed by a pill.
- Just don't eat sugar and you will be OK.
- An insulin pump will do all the work and manage your diabetes for you.
- You get diabetes from eating a lot of sugar.
- It's your fault your child has diabetes.
- Type 1 diabetes can be reversed with diet and exercise.
- Kids will grow out of T1D.
- People with diabetes can't eat sugar.
- I can control my blood sugar with cinnamon.

Before you can thrive with T1D, it's important to know as much as you can about what you're dealing with. There are a lot of misconceptions, such as:

- You develop T1D from eating too much sugar.
- You could have prevented getting T1D.
- T1D will slow you down and prevent you from living the life you want.

None of these are true. Above all, it's not your fault that you have T1D. The leading theory is that you were born with the gene, and it took a certain amount of time for that to develop into full-blown diabetes. This could have been triggered by an illness or some other life circumstance that causes the disease to fully develop.