Diabetes Needs a Martin Luther King Jr.

March 28, 2014 By Charles Mattocks

Usually I am a decent writer and I try to get my message across easily but for some time now I have been thinking about other issues - issues I couldn't figure out how to pen down - but today I finally found the best way to discuss it. Many times we think about things we've done in the past and we feel we could have done them in a better way - a more innovative way. All of us go through these feelings more than once in our lifetime. How we feel about them and what we want to do with these feelings matter a lot because they're like an alarm, ringing and ringing, trying to wake you up to see what we're headed for and how we can use these feelings to get the most out of our present and our future.

Diabetes, as we know it, is dreadful but who is to blame? You? Your genes? The companies who're making millions of dollars by feeding us raw diabetes in form of fast food? Who has the power to stop it all? You can never clap with one hand because result is directly related to product. Think about it and ask yourself, "Who cares for me and what I go through?" Nobody knows what you go through because they aren't you, they'll never feel what you feel and they'll never know what it's like to live life with a bag of prescribed medications.

My fight is not just for the people, it's against the companies that can care less about us, but they are not to blame 100%. Yes they don't care, but are they entirely responsible for making us stop at fast food places to eat greasy foods? Are they forcing us to just take our daily prescribed dose of medication without looking for ways to control our condition? Are they preventing us from exercising daily to shed the extra weight off so we can live a healthier life? What do we do? We continue to donate to worsen our case. Isn't it time we woke up before it's too late? Have we come to accept illnesses and diseases as our lot in life?

The entire world is a big profit market. Big business with influence create the waste, they pollute the environment and then hire a medical expert to clean it up with chemicals. These days people use lots and lots of money to lure people into their trap - money that could have been used wisely instead to promote health awareness. Food processing companies make big banners and billboards asking you to come feast at their restaurant to feel happy and to make you happier, they give you a discount or a special prize - just to get you hooked. So what if they aren't heavy on the wallet, they're heavy on your life.

Let's talk about these marketing companies that have the job of taking the millions and putting it to use and the amount of waste that goes into making a commercial or a print campaign is shocking. Why give millions to Paula Deen and create commercials and print ads that never see

the light of day? Why should the influential and the executives fly first class, stay at 5-star hotels and get to have meals that costs in thousands when the same amount of money could go back into the people, back into research, back into the people on the front line that need the funds to help put together that church diabetes function that could help reach a few people?

Does anyone realize that just last year almost 5 million people died from diabetes? That's a lot of people - it's like the entire Norway - wiped out. Could we have prevented their deaths? Maybe yes, if we gave them what they needed - an alert, an alarm, a way to help them help themselves. What did we do instead? We just waited and waited more for things to change. Things won't change - not now, not ever, not until we make our choices and we help others to make theirs. Life isn't about saving yourself and having fun, it's about saving others and having fun together. Why are we in such mess have you realized?

I hate to break this out to you but approximately 400 million people worldwide suffer from diabetes - almost like the entire population of the United States. And it's spreading like wildfire because instead of saving people and preventing the disease from catching others companies have found a way to love us by making billions and billions of dollars through us. I heard some companies talking about diabetes with a smile on their face because this is the fastest growing condition that will bring in the most money, they are banking on us being overweight and having lack of self-control.

They are betting the house on us by asking us to consult a doctor so that we can continue to eat what we used to before the disease hit us. They can almost guarantee we won't make any real changes to our diet because they know about our desire for food so what do they do? They prescribe medicines, not one but at least four - for diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, pain killers and that's just to start. Then comes heart diseases and all the other conditions that follow.

I personally feel that if our Martin Luther king of diabetes is not done now when will it be done? Think about this, to be an advocate just like Martin or Malcolm you need to have backing, well who's backing folks like us, I say that because without support how can we do what we do, how can we fight for the people when we know that the big boys don't want us telling this story? They are quiet as church mice right now - but shallow waters are always deep. Think about it when's the last time you saw a diabetes commercial or billboard or anything that just shared the fact of staying aware and getting tested or eating right? With billions being made and millions being spent at big ad companies, when have you seen anything in the last 5 years that you remember?

We don't need old chefs that use truckloads of butter to come and be a face for a few hours, we need people that can move the masses and get the word out and move people to change. When will we start keeping our own interest at heart? Now I do have hope, I realize that if only a few of us come together and stop being so divided we can make a big change, especially in the black community. We have some amazing doctors and well known people and I know for a fact that if we come together we can be powerful and make some serious change. We have got to let these big companies know that we see what they are doing and that we demand better.

Don’t get me wrong I am not against medications for any conditions, but we should have a plan of action and allow people with hard work and dedication to come off of medications or reduce their medications. We should stop living a life filled with prescriptions - we don’t deserve it. We’re human beings not lab rats we have our own priorities and right now what’s important is that we see through these ads. We’ll find a truckload of benefits, huge money being distributed, lots of interviews and talk shows but in the end, it’s us against medicine. We should take some of the money that goes into research and put 30 cents on the dollar into marketing and awareness.

Coming back to type 2, if people knew about the condition, how to avoid it and ways to cope with it we would not need to spend billions on its complications. A few million could save billions and also allow millions to live. We have got to look into that mirror and say to ourselves, “it’s time to live my best life and start with making me over, from the inside out”. We need to lose the weight, we need to change the way we eat and drink and think, we need to not be the victim of our own bad health but be the victor in our own amazing life because the reality is that we will lose our life if we don’t take action.

Remember approximately 5 million people lost their lives last year so yes that number could be any of us that is living with diabetes, and we know that these type of numbers only go up each year. If we don’t make the changes we will die, they may not want to share this with you, and this may seem so far off from when you first hear you have diabetes or you have been on medications for a few years and all seems fine, but the reality is that most diabetics die from heart disease, so these complications are coming fast and furious.

I think that Martin Luther and Macolm X would have shared the same thing and threw out the politically correct stuff and gave you the reality. Now this won’t win me any awards I’m sure and I’m confident no big company will call me and say we have a check for you, but my goal is from a place of love. I never wanted to be the celebrity chef turned diabetes advocate because I was diagnosed with diabetes, because I never wanted to be diabetic. Trust me I fight each day, It gets rough at times, and I worry of my own health as I try and save the lives or educate others, but you know the best part? It’s worth the fight.

When I get the emails, or meet the people that I helped get on the right road, it means way more than all the rest of the ups and downs that one needs to deal with. And yes I’m sure making a comparison to those great men may not be the same, but if it allowed just a few to understand that this fight is for millions of lives of adults and children worldwide and that when it’s your mom or dad or sister or brother, it’s worth every bit we can muster up. We’re all made to believe that death is inevitable but only after a prolonged and devastating illness. Of course death is inevitable - but why die before you can make a change? It’s your turn now. Are you prepared?

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