

Journey of the Heart

I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at the age of 17, while attending a boarding school in Singapore. It was a very lonely time, and I had no one to talk with about the inner turmoil of my heart. There were days when I saw no reason to live, and would silently cry myself to sleep. And, while such an experience is harsh and painful, I found an inner strength growing inside myself as I faced the challenge of my own experience.

I have come to believe that it takes a lot of *COURAGE* to live well with diabetes, and it requires attention to our *Body*, our *Heart*, and our *Spirit*.



The Lifecycle of the Butterfly has come to symbolize that process for me. We all begin our lives as *Eggs*, and as we mature, like the *Caterpillar*, we must pay special attention to our bodies if we want them to grow strong and healthy. . . . And diabetes requires that we take extra special care of our *Body* by eating the right foods, as the Caterpillar requires the food of its Host Plant, in order to grow strong.

Diabetes also requires that we take care for our *Hearts*, for it is in taking care of our heart that we have the strength to become who we were born to be. Heart care is something only we can do, and it requires time. As the Caterpillar must enter the *Chrysalis* to become a *Butterfly*, we too must be willing to stay with the discomfort, the unknown, and the pain, long enough for it to transform us.

In *Journey of the Heart*, I chose the Monarch, because they are unique among butterflies. They migrate long distances, to a common location where they cluster in masses. In this way they provide for each other the warmth and support needed to survive the bitter cold of winter. Most of the Monarchs who start the journey must leave it to others to complete, but their willingness to support each other in the journey provides for all the life force necessary to survive. So too for those of us who have diabetes. Our strength is increased as we work together. . . . Not just with others who have diabetes, but with the world in which we live, making it possible for all to survive. . . . Just as the Monarch requires its winter host trees which are dependent on others for the protection of their environment, we too need the support of our families, our health care providers, our government, and our world if we are to survive.

And, as we face the challenges and pain of living with diabetes, allowing it to change and transform us into something very beautiful, we receive the *Spirit of a Butterfly*, with *Wings to Fly!*

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Art Work & Narrative Submitted to *Inspired by Diabetes*,
Creative Expression 2007-2008 Contest
Entry received 2nd Place US Health Care Professional Award

Monarch Migration

<http://www.monarchbutterflyusa.com/Migration.htm>

Internal Clock Leads Monarchs to Mexico

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/06/0610_030610_monarchs.html