

THE MAN WHO DEFIED DIABETES MELLITUS FOR FORTY YEARS

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Pablito “Boy” Zerna is a known longsuffering Type 2 diabetes patient in a small town of Ayungon, Negros Oriental, Philippines. He is recognized because you can appreciate him walking alone every morning and in the afternoon along the National Highway. He is walking 8 kilometers everyday to combat his sickness – Diabetes Mellitus. He is now 73 years old and has been doing this in the past 40 years. He hiked 2 kilometers going to the town proper from his home and back, every morning and another round in the afternoon for a total of 8 kilometers everyday.



Boy as he is popularly known was diagnosed suffering from Diabetes Mellitus when he was 33 years old with his blood sugar at 360 mg/dl. He was not hospitalized but was advised to take his maintenance pills regularly. At the age of 40, he was rushed to the hospital and nearly lost his life because of hypoglycemia. Since then, he had his fear to take any medications. Because of this fear, he seek advise from his physician who told him to “Burn his Sugar” by walking normally until perspiration. He took the advice by heart. He never failed to see his doctor every three months and have his laboratory test during these visits.

For forty years he was able to maintain his blood sugar at 110 mg/dl by walking 8 kilometers everyday. Aside from a normal blood sugar level, his eye sight has also improved and his asthma has disappeared.

His routine would include drinking two glasses of water right after bed in the morning, and immediately taking a bath. He advised diabetes patients not to miss taking a bath every morning. It is a must according to him.

Between 6:30 and 7:00 in the morning, he had his breakfast consisting of rice porridge, boiled egg, and a piece of green native banana (Bulongan). He never drinks coffee or even milk during breakfast. Just plain water every after meal.

After breakfast, he prepared himself to walk. His attire to include: a T-shirt, a sneaker (rubber shoes), short pants and socks. He never had any drinking water or bottled water with him during his walk. He drinks water along the way when his lips are becoming dry.



At 8:00 in the morning he will begin his walk towards the town proper around two kilometers South from his home in Barangay Awa-an. He will start in a very slow pace until unknowingly walking with normal steps. Sometimes he stopped to answer hellos of passersby or taunts from those annoyed by what he is doing. People in the neighborhood believe walking is the privileged of the rich who can afford to waste their time roaming around. Why can't Boy make some chores in his house and perspire rather than just walking around like a rich man doing nothing, chuckled some onlookers along the way. Boy didn't mind and slowly find his way

at the town proper stopping at the municipal “kiosko” for a little rest after which he will start walking back to barangay Awa-an. As the soaring heat of the sun becoming hotter, Boy walked under the shadows of trees stooping along the highway protecting him from the sun. His cloths soaked with his own perspiration, he arrived home at 10:00 in the morning. He immediately change clothes and help his wife prepares their lunch.



His lunch and supper are mostly consisting of a cup of rice, grilled or cooked fresh fish (Inun-unan- cooked with vinegar and garlic, seasoned with salt and without MSG), boiled green leafy vegetables is a must seasoned with little salt, and a piece of native green banana (Bulongan). He prefer native chicken meat boiled with malunggay leaves (Moringa) seasoned with a pinch of salt than other meat.

What is unique with Boy is his desire to share his personal battle with diabetes to other patients in the town whenever he heard someone is suffering with the disease. He encouraged them to constantly move and discouraged them doing nothing in front of their television sets. He give encouragement to those who are depressed by cheering them up and to enjoy life to its fullest. His life in this small town became a success story for other people to share in combating diabetes mellitus.

Boy disclosed that diabetes mellitus is a disease that can be confronted with personal discipline and continuing exercise. His personal experience in battling diabetes maybe veritable

to his type or kind of diabetes sickness he have but the fact still remain that he was able to defy diabetes mellitus by the food he eat and his constant walking everyday.

Boy's recommendation for diabetes patients to take a bath every morning may contradict medical practice but for the fact that his personal test was positive to the betterment of his disease is worth trying.

There is no scientific evidence that the Philippine native green banana Bulongan can lower blood sugar level on patients suffering from diabetes mellitus. However, Boy insisted that patients with diabetes must avoid yellow bananas and recommended the native green ones.

The story of Pablito "Boy" Zerna maybe, is another success story for people with diabetes to take note and pay observance. Diabetes is becoming widespread around the world and people are suffering. The disease ranked number 6 among the most deadly diseases which causes death around the world. Sad to say, most of those who suffer were ignorant about the disease.

The story of Boy Zerna is hoping that ignorance is not an excuse for people with diabetes to suffer. We want to share his story for people to know that self discipline, exercise, and the food we eat are the important things we need in our journey battling the disease called diabetes mellitus.