Harmonising with Fear - A Peace Treaty of the Mind

by Zoe Woods

I have type 1 diabetes. My body doesn't produce insulin, a hormone that allows sugar to be used and stored by the body. I must inject insulin in order to live a healthy life. However, the downsides are that the foreign insulin can lead to low blood sugars. This can be life threatening if untreated with sugar or a glucagon injection.

In October 2023, I had a low blood sugar in which I nearly blacked out. This caused me to fall into a deep spiral of fear and anxiety. I shut myself in my room, and my nervous system was so much on edge that the slightest bodily sensation sent me into life-or-death panic.

I ended up convincing myself of the belief that taking insulin leads to drops in blood sugar, which leads to low blood sugar, which leads to death. The anxiety was debilitating. This was very unhelpful for me to live a fulfilling and prosperous life.

Through using Huna, I am on my way to recovering from this fearful mindset and working my way towards building a life that I can live comfortably.

Below is a recount of how I have practically used the principles to facilitate my goals.

Ike – I've had to change my belief systems to create a world for myself where the fearful ideas I had created were measured against raw and real evidence from myself and others' experiences.

Instead of worrying about *if* a situation might happen, I am learning to adapt to them as they come, and trust in myself that I have the tools and inner strength to not only get through these moments but influence them in the way that I want.

I tell myself, "If something happens, it could feel scary in the moment, but it will pass, and I will be okay." And I trust as my confidence and flexibility continue to grow, my beliefs will expand and change as well.

Kala – Part of my recovery included something as simple as exposure therapy to diabetics who are confident in their management and seeing their ability to get through what I view as difficult situations. Having examples of success in other people who deal with type 1 diabetes has been really refreshing and de-isolating.

I found myself struggling with the goals that my medical team was asking of me, so I decided I would seek out a different medical team. I've managed to find a support team of specialists who have been willing to adapt to my needs and make changes that feel safe and comfortable but are also pragmatic and health driven. They

reiterate that there is always a solution to help manage blood sugars to have a good quality of life, and they are there to help me achieve my goals.

Makia – In Huna, we bless the present, expect the best, and trust ourselves. My beliefs were encouraging me to expect the worst. And without evidence to prove the opposite, the fear grew and the beliefs became truer. But now, I have evidence that those ideas were not and are not true.

I found that my attitudes and beliefs were holding me back from making great changes, so by starting small and making consistent changes over a long period of time, with the support of my team, I've made leaps and bounds.

In this case, I have found the path of least resistance the easiest. I made little changes but kept myself accountable. I did this by maintaining my focus on the small step in front of me that I wanted to achieve.

I am now choosing to put my attention onto being more flexible, adept, and having a fuller life.

Manawa – At the start of this year, someone said to me, "See how far you have gotten in a few months, imagine how far you could get in a few more months." I wish I could see the face of myself back then if she could see how far I have come. I utilized every moment and decided to act towards my goals every opportunity I could.

I found that keeping my attention on my ability to influence the present was more beneficial than on the possibilities that could arise in the future. My focus was coming from a place of fear, and so my mind created some unfavorable futures.

Using this principle, I did what I could in the present moment to build momentum. The small steps that when built up over time, have manifested in an actuality that previously seemed unobtainable, clouded by my mis-judgement and fear.

Sometimes it feels like my brain is still catching up with the progress I've made and where I am today.

Aloha – Acceptance is a huge part of this journey. I spent a lot of time denying and resisting the fact that this is my *current* reality. Wishing it would change without wanting to adapt or grow, making my life smaller and isolating myself.

Truthfully speaking, if I had to live this over again, and decide whether or not to have diabetes, I doubt I would change it. Diabetes is a huge challenge, but it's taught me so much about resilience, self-compassion, health, and awareness.

I am happy to live in a day and age where I have access to the technology that alleviates the mental exhaustion of diabetes and the risk of low blood sugar is lower. The current life-expectancy for someone with diabetes is the highest it's ever been. There are so many positive prospectives for me as a person, before me as a person with diabetes.

Mana – People can tell you what to do, but unless you're willing to do it, then nothing is going to change.

I had to jump off the deep end and face some of the beliefs I held that were boxing me into a smaller life of fear. In doing so, I landed in a pool of assurance in myself, and through this, I've gained the confidence to make other steps, even small ones. Because they do all add up.

I made the choice accept my fear and see what it was trying to tell me. Instead of resisting it and falling into it, I was able to calm my nervous system, the one that was working overtime to keep me safe based on my heightened beliefs. In turn, I created a space between action and reaction. This space has grown and it gives me the opportunity to decide what behaviours are in alignment with the person I'm deciding to become.

I am still working towards where I want to be, but in doing that, I am learning to trust that I can deal with situations that feel scary, and once I get through them, I find who I truly am and how powerful I really am.

Pono – Every single thing in my day can affect my blood sugars. From quality or quantity of sleep to the way the wind blows.

I was trying to control every single factor that I could in order to keep myself safe. And you know what? I kept seeing these fluctuations due to factors that are seemingly out of my control. How effective is that?

I am coming to terms with the fact that the most effective thing I can do is work on my flexibility and adapting to whatever the factors are that are influencing my body. It is a lot less mental work that way. And leaves a lot more room for the things that I love.