

JUST LIKE ANYONE

by **Marco Aizawa**

I remember the first time when I had my blood sugar level tested. The reading was 27.0 mmol/L and I had almost every symptom of diabetes mellitus. I remember my mum and dad saying that there is no history of diabetes in both their families, so how did I get it? We never found out the answer to that question, except a guess that it could have been linked to an autoimmune disorder.

Growing up with type 1 diabetes was bittersweet. I was apparently rather open to telling people that I had it. I administered insulin injections, even checked my blood sugar levels, in public. The stares from curious onlookers bugged me, though.

But I got used to them. Then I stopped being annoyed. And I began to seize the opportunity to share with them what diabetes is and how I live with it - insulin, blood sugars, cycling, sports and all.

Most of us, if not all, who grow up with diabetes will eventually face that one challenge in life - that is, to convince your employers and colleagues that you can perform at work, just as well as any ordinary person.

Wherever we work, whatever job we do, people with diabetes must be open to sharing about their condition. Be open to let your bosses and colleagues know, so that they can help you when you are experiencing low blood sugar levels or any other ailments pertaining to diabetes, allow you to go for regular meals on time, allow you to have a snack at work.

Remember this and remember it well - people with diabetes are not that different from any ordinary person. As far as my own person is concerned, while I need to know how to manage hyperglycaemia and hypoglycemia as well as how to eat right, I feel no worse off than someone who does not have diabetes.

In fact, I count myself rather fortunate that diabetes has taught me a great deal of life skills during my younger days - learning to accept who I am, getting organised for my overseas trips, preparing for my sporting events, managing my meals and time, setting goals and achieving goals and developing the determination and confidence to do my best at work and at play, in spite of diabetes. You can do it, too!