

Matthew Colhoun

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\$5,000 WINNER
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I've always been a shy person and struggled with confidence. In college I changed my major four times; it took me an extra year and a half longer than it should have taken to get my degree in business management. I felt like a failure, like I wasn't going anywhere — even though, while I was working, I went back to college and got my master's degree.

Now, I'm 37 and I'm an area manager at Walmart, but life has been difficult.

My wife, Rebecca, and I have been married since 2008. We always wanted a family and we got pregnant, but Rebecca had a miscarriage. Then six months later she had another miscarriage and it turned out she had a molar pregnancy, which is a rare type of cancer. She had surgery that almost killed her. We went through chemo and Rebecca finally got her strength back. The doctors never told us we couldn't have kids, but we were both too afraid to try again — we don't want to lose each other. We adopted a little boy, Charlie, who's now nine, and we've just fostered a 13-year-old girl.

I love my family, but I still felt bad and lacked confidence.

I wasn't eating well. I'd cook microwave dinners like roast beef with mashed potatoes, as well as eating lots of snacks in between meals, and I'd drink pop. I tipped the scale at 408 pounds. I couldn't get off the couch to keep up with my children; I couldn't even take out the trash. Two discs in my back went out and my foot hurt. A few months ago I reached breaking point. I felt like I was failing my family and I wanted to be accountable to myself. There's a lot of Type 2 diabetes in my family and I decided to end the generational pattern of obesity.

Instead of pop, I drink water. I bought a huge water jug and don't leave home without it.

I've found spaghetti squash is a great substitute for pasta. I cook it and mix it with a meat marinara sauce and it's one of my absolute favorite meals, which is funny because I never imagined I would ever eat spaghetti squash! I'm not overeating anymore and when I do cheat, it's just some extra protein like cottage cheese. I feel like a better role model because the kids are learning to eat well too.

I have the energy to play catch with Charlie and take our three dogs for walks.

As a family, we attended two Chicago White Sox



games in one weekend. It was amazing and I actually fit in the seats. I took a big breath remembering how the last time we were there it was so hard because I could barely squeeze into the seat.

I'm a better husband, helping around the house.

Before I wasn't even doing dishes. The other day I cleaned the entire bathroom, I scrubbed down the shower and I had to stop for a minute and realize how much I've changed.

At work, I'm always moving.

My partner in the warehouse told me to slow down because he couldn't keep up with me! Another associate said, "Man, you are losing weight!" I've lost 38 pounds so far, I have much less pain, and I feel great.

For "me time," I love playing the guitar at church.

Our house was given to us by our church and in exchange, we work there — I lead the music program. But before I started this journey. I was worried I wouldn't be able to play anymore or even hold my guitar because my arms would fall asleep — the nerves would shut off. Now, it's so much easier — the guitar feels lighter. I get to church early and sit there for 40 minutes playing my guitar and singing song after song after song. I feel peaceful. It's a safe place for me.

My journey with the Thrive Challenge is blowing me away.

We're driving to Disney World for a vacation soon. I'm so excited that I'll actually be able to walk around with my family without any pain. I never thought in a million years I'd have so much energy.

I'm hoping my career will grow and I can progress to the next level.

I'd like to become an operations manager. And I have a constant yearning to share my journey and encourage other people. I'm starting to believe in myself.



THRIVE