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My boss retired during the pandemic, and it was up to me to take on her responsibilities. Even though I have an excellent team, it was a lot of new work and there was a lot of stress that came along with it. It felt like everything changed at once and I started feeling really overwhelmed. I used to exercise all the time as part of my routine, and I just stopped one day because I felt like I didn't have the time anymore.

One thing I struggle with is constantly checking my phone and looking at social media.

I spend a lot of time on my phone at work because we have a lot of conferencing, but being on my phone all the time also makes it harder to focus. One day, I got home feeling so overwhelmed, and I remembered that a young woman at work, Liliana Santiago, mentioned the Thrive Challenge, and how it could help with small steps. I decided to download the Thrive app. I just said to myself, "I have to do something. I know I can benefit from it." I started with the Focus journey, and I saw the Microstep about not checking your phone when you wake up in the morning.

I decided that instead of checking my phone in the morning, I would spend time with my wife and our dogs.

At first, I thought it wouldn't work for me because I was so used to checking my phone for work all the time. But after trying it, I saw that it did work. It was difficult to make the change at the beginning, but I got better at it. Starting the day without my phone helped me make time for the things I liked to do before, like exercising and spending time with other people. It made me realize that you have to take time away from your phone to make time for the things that bring you joy.

I started setting a reminder to put my phone away during meals.

I had gotten to the point where even when I was eating I was looking at my phone. But I realized that if you're with other people or even just alone, it's important to enjoy the moment, and that's hard to do with your phone open. My wife even bought us a little "cell phone jail" where we put our phones when we want to focus on other things.



It has a timer that you can set, so that during that time, you can go for a walk, exercise, or just be together without the distractions. It's really cool.

Being off my phone has changed everything.

I realize now it was an obsession because I was always looking at it and checking it. Now, if I go out to eat with my wife, I put my phone away and look around, and everyone around us is on their phones. It really takes your free time away from you because you end up stuck somewhere else and you're not even talking to each other.

When it came to dealing with stress, there was one Microstep that helped me a lot.

I like the one that says: "Think of a specific time when you overcame an obstacle." When I first read it, I thought about my dad, who has survived cancer twice. He got better and he is still with us today. So I said to myself, "If I feel like I'm drowning in a glass of water, I'll think about what he went through." When you think about a person you admire so much and how they could survive that situation, it reminds you that you can survive what you're going through.

I'm back to exercising now, and it helps me concentrate and gives me a break when I need it.

My focus now is staying consistent and encouraging my team to try it, too. If I have a committed and focused team, we will do well together. I know that change is constant and things will always happen that we can't control, but doing these little things helps me feel calmer and more focused. I now know that nothing that feels hard in the moment is going to affect my happiness.



THRIVE