

Anita Jones



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I got a horrible infection in my intestines last year, and the antibiotics I was put on killed all the bacteria in my stomach and caused me to get an infection (C. difficile) that just depleted me of all of my energy. I had to miss a lot of work and it was an ongoing battle. And on top of that, I started depleting my savings account just trying to stay afloat.

My sons Zach and Anthony moved back in with me during COVID.

I was also supporting my sister and her daughter Maria, who has special needs. They were displaced from their home in a really bad situation, and they had nothing. I was trying to keep five people afloat on my one income, and I was depleting everything. I would go and buy stuff I didn't need, like clothes and extra pantry items. I didn't need any of it. It's almost like I was hoarding things because I was stressed that someone might go hungry or need something. I remember thinking, "If something happens to me, what's going to happen to them?" I wanted to make sure everyone was taken care of but I was overdoing it.

It was hard having us all live in one small house, and the pandemic made it harder.

One day at work, I was talking to my co-worker, Patty Kennedy, who had won the Thrive Challenge. She thought it could help me get back on track. I didn't know if it would work, but I knew I had to start being more mindful of what I was doing. Zach and Anthony tried to help financially, but it was really stressful on all of us.

One night, I opened the Notes app on my phone and wrote down everything I was spending my money on.

Right away I saw a lot of stuff I knew we could do without, like our cable. We cut the cable off, and that saved us over \$150 a month. I also knew I could cut down on the grocery bill. I just thought, "Wow. I'm depleting myself to nothing after each paycheck, and there's so much we can save."



And it was \$500 in savings in the end, between just the cable bill and not eating out, not buying clothes, and not buying extra groceries.

I still use the Notes app to keep track and it's really helped us save.

I've actually had money leftover on my paychecks this month, which has been really nice. I don't feel like I'm having to struggle as much, and Maria's gotten her apartment and a job at a nursing home. I still have moments where I think, "Man, I could have done a little better here or there." But I just keep telling myself it's the big picture I need to focus on.

I'm still healing, but things are much better.

I still have abdominal pain here and there and I'm not where I was, but I am going to the doctor to take care of myself. I've also been doing some little free-weights and this thing called chair yoga, where it doesn't put pressure on your joints, which is good because of the problems in my abdomen. I'm trying to focus on something I *can* do instead of focusing on what I can't do. I've even been trying the meditations from the Thrive app. I tell my kids, "I'm doing my meditation moment," and they know to let me do it in peace. Taking a moment for myself really helps with any stress. I'm trying to celebrate the small victories, which will add up to a big victory. And don't beat myself up if I have a rough day.



THRIVE