

Justin Solum

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\$5,000 WINNER

Supercenter #1735

Wheeling, IL

Last year I was overwhelmed, I had severe anxiety and I was depressed. I was eating fast food and weighed 350 pounds. I was hardly sleeping and it got to a point where I wanted to end my life. But my dad called, we talked, and I sought help at a behavioral health hospital, started therapy, and gradually turned my life around.

With help from my therapist, I'm thinking positively.

I began the Thrive Challenge to support myself on this journey — I can track how I'm doing on the app. Every day, I write down three things that I'm super grateful for, like my family — they're always going to be there for me. I'm grateful for my job, and I make a point of giving gratitude to myself.

My number one priority is my sleep, because it's the foundation for everything.

So when I'm ready to go to bed, I turn off my phone and play meditation music. I turn off the lights, and with nothing to distract me, I get eight hours of deep rest and I'm in a better head space all day.

I make what I call "Justin Goals," and write them on a board in the kitchen.

One is always working out. Exercising is a lot of fun, now. I bought a Peloton and now work out six days a week. Sunday's a rest day. But the biggest thing I've learned is that if I don't achieve all my goals, that's OK — it's about progress. I don't need to be perfect.



I researched what kind of foods I should be eating and created a great diet for myself.

I meal-prepare every day. For breakfast, I'll have oatmeal, eggs, and a protein shake. For snacks, I'll have yogurt, rice cakes, and an apple. For lunch, I have chicken, vegetables, and rice. And for dinner, I might have salmon with lemon cooked on my Ninja grill. My top tip: I think it's OK to have a cheat day once a week. For me, it's always going to be deep dish pizza.

My relationship with my family has improved.

It's night and day. I used to get anxious at family gatherings, and I was very self-conscious. But now, I'll talk to everyone and play baseball in the backyard with my nephews. I'm rebuilding my confidence. When I'm out or at work, I'll spark a casual conversation and I've found that people are extremely friendly. I'm trying to be more helpful with customers. For example, one customer who comes in every week told me she was going on a family camping trip. So I recommended fruit snacks and a s'mores kit for the kids.

I've lost 71 pounds and I'm the happiest I've been for years.

My biggest focus is becoming the best me that I can be. My goal: to be a store manager for Walmart. And I'd love a girlfriend. One day, down the road, my plan is to get married and have children.

