Felicia Witten

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$5,000 WINNER
Walmart Supercenter #3726
Grand Blanc, MI

I was born with a hole in my heart, which doctors discovered when I was pregnant with my son, Andrew, who's now 23. I thought I had an eye twitch, but it turned out I was having mini strokes. Over the years I wasn't taking care of myself. Andrew works at Walmart with me and we used to go for fast food together at lunchtime. My doctors said losing weight would be easier on my heart. I weighed 238 pounds. I was huffing and puffing, and it was getting hard to tie my shoelaces. Also, diabetes runs in the family.

A former manager inspired me to start my Thrive Challenge journey two years ago.
And I started by cutting out fast food. I pack my lunch every day. I'll have hard boiled eggs, yogurt, pickles, and cheese sticks. I mix and match different healthy foods!

My husband, Todd, and I stopped eating calorie-packed frozen food.
I'm not much of a cook, but I'll make baked chicken or cod with veggies. And I'm eating smaller portions. I don't do special diets, I eat normally so I'll be able to sustain this lifestyle for the rest of my life. I believe pizza isn't going to hurt once in a while.

I do a lot of walking videos on YouTube.
I'll do high-stepping when I'm waiting for food to cook in the microwave. And if I'm alone, I put on music and dance through the house. I'm an '80s girl and I love Duran Duran, Van Halen, and Phil Collins. I've lost 90 pounds. I'm still stunned that I was able to do it.

Todd and I walk around the neighborhood every evening.
It's time for us to connect and talk about whatever's going on, like our finances. We're not spending as much as we used to and we've paid off some credit cards. And we talk about our plans for retirement.

Thrive Microsteps are the perfect tools to slip into your routine.
I like the one about connecting with someone and having meaningful conversations. If I see somebody in a cute outfit, I'll say, "You look lovely." I also love the one about writing down one thing that made you smile. Today, I wrote about a customer I saw who was dressed from head to toe in yellow and was standing right next to the banana display! He looked so bright and cheery, he made me smile and feel happy.

I'm shopping at thrift stores.
While I was losing weight, I didn't want to spend a lot of money on clothes, so I started thrifting with my friend, Samantha. I still love thrifting. With a good hunt you can find great bargains. I found a cute T-shirt with a quote from the T.V. show, "Friends." I never cared about brands, but I found a pair of designer capris with embellished pockets that cost me three dollars, and they look fantastic.

I feel absolutely amazing.
Samantha calls me Skinny Minny! One co-worker, Tameka, literally chased me down and said, "Girl, you're looking good." It's just a neat feeling to hear those compliments.

I set aside time for myself — I'm passionate about genealogy.
I tracked down a third cousin from my grandmother's family in Arkansas. She sent me original photos of my great grandmother; one was over 100 years old. I found out our family comes from Scotland, England, Ireland, and Wales. I'd love to visit the UK and Ireland. It would be amazing.

I'm volunteering in our community.
I used to be on the board of my son's high school marching band — he played bass guitar — and I'm helping out again at band fundraisers. We set up concessions on the sidelines at events, selling pizza and hotdogs. Giving back feels good.

Physically, I'm more energetic and overall, I'm happier and more confident.
I'm 57, but I feel much younger. At work, I'm the one climbing the shelves to reach things. When I saw my doctor after losing weight, he said: "You've accomplished what people pay an awful lot of money to do." (He meant weight-loss surgery!)

Lots of ladies I've known lived into their 90s, and that's what I want for myself.
I'm shooting for a long, happy life. Stories on the Thrive app about people who've changed their lives inspired me. And it would be neat If I could inspire people with my story too.

THRIVE