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Growing up, my mom was on drugs. My parents divorced and I was raised by dad. I didn't get back in touch with my mom until I was 17. She wasn't on drugs anymore — she's actually a counselor now, helping people with addiction — but my childhood was difficult because I feel we all need a mother figure and I didn't have that. I never learned good coping mechanisms and when I got stressed out, I'd turn to food.

I'm 32 and didn't have the energy to play with my kids.

Aviana is three-years-old and Rayden's 11. I'd come home from work so exhausted, I'd just sit on the couch and watch T.V. One day, Aviana asked me to take her to the park and I said, "Maybe tomorrow." She said, "You always say maybe tomorrow." That was when it hit me — tomorrow never comes. I had back issues, and my doctor said I needed to lose weight. So it was time for a change.

My co-worker Arvis encouraged me to download the Thrive app two years ago.

We work at a veterans affairs clinic and Arvis is amazing. She walks around saying, "Come on, everybody, get up, get up!" She's the office fitness guru. She set up a little room where we can all take 10 minutes to jump rope or do weights, and she organizes walks at lunchtime.

My diet's changed. I cut out soda and I'm eating lots more vegetables.

I make great chicken fajitas with onions and peppers. I invested in an airfryer, and everyone loves my air-fried chicken with broccoli.

I've taken up pole dancing!

My cousin, Kanteese, has been doing it for a long time and she's been trying to get me to join her. When I first started, I was a little embarrassed, but now it's fun and a real confidence booster. Getting up on that pole, I've found upper body strength I never knew I had. It's a good workout and I'm learning choreography. I really like dancing to Chris Brown. I wear spandex for class. I've worked hard, so why not show off my curves?

I'm playing football with Rayden and I'm running.

I'll push Aviana in her stroller and Rayden will ride his bicycle.



Aviana helps me exercise — she'll lie across my arms and I'll do squats! She likes to be held when we're going up and down the steps because sometimes she thinks she's still a baby. There was no way I could carry her before.

I've been in therapy and it's helped a lot.

I decided to stop giving up on myself and realized that just because I have kids, it doesn't mean I have to stop living my own life. I'm important. I write affirmations in my journal to give myself encouragement, like "God will never let you down," and "I'm staying strong for the kids." I meditate every single day and give myself 15 minutes of quiet time to process everything in my life. It gives me peace of mind.

My mom and I don't have a perfect relationship, but it's a lot better than it was.

We missed too much time so now we talk every day and I've learned to love her for who she is. We're planning a family trip to Disney World with my kids, my brother, and his kids.

At work, I go above and beyond with patients.

The other day a patient had been accidentally canceled off the schedule. So I did a lot of running back and forth to talk to the doctor and make sure the patient could be seen that day. He was very thankful and I felt happy I could sort it out for him.

I'm getting my master's degree in technology.

My goal is to finish school and continue my career in healthcare, working with veterans.

I feel amazing.

I'm actually sticking to the Thrive Challenge, whereas in the past I would have quit on myself. My kids are happy and we're all in a good place.



THRIVE