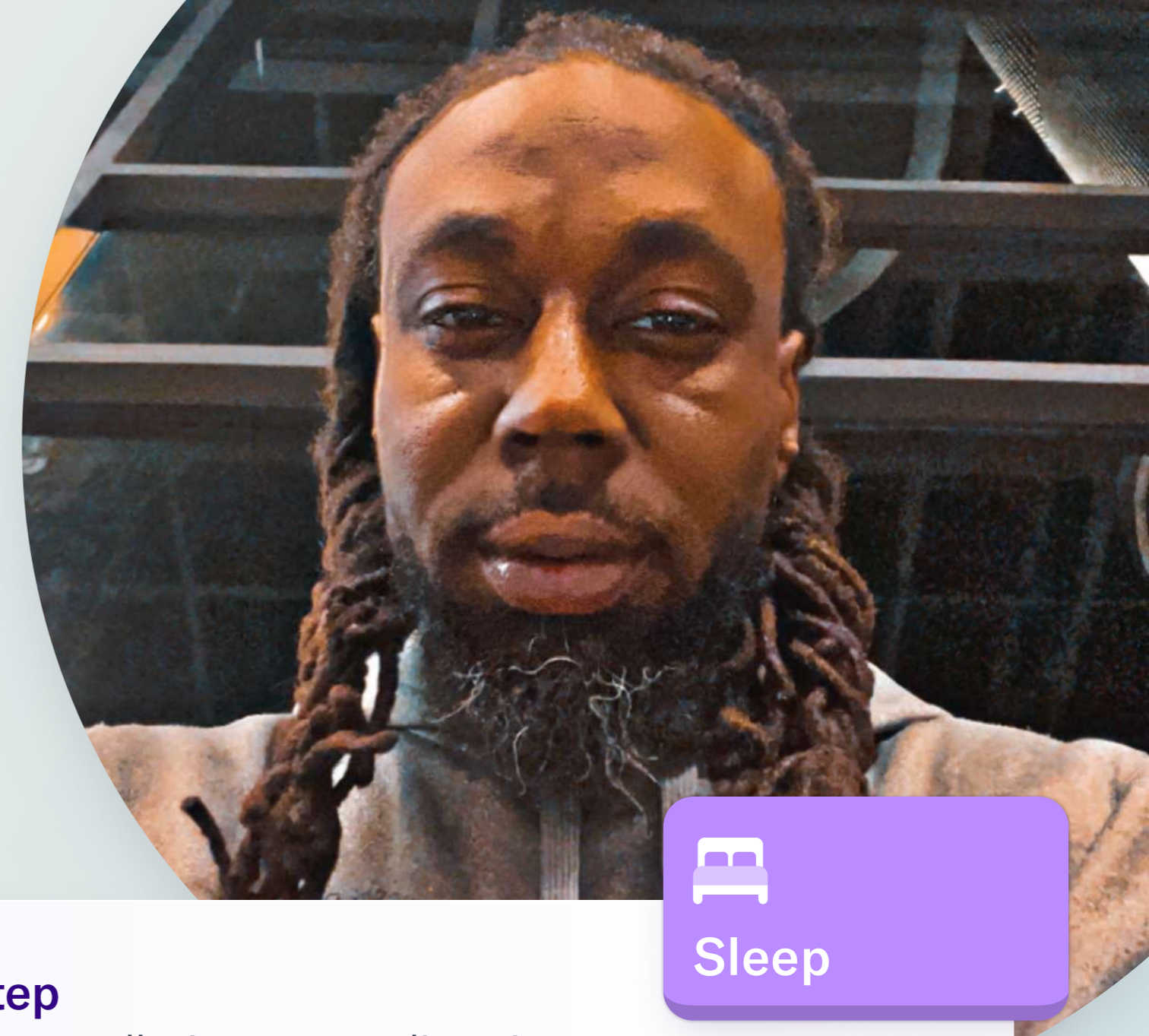


\$5,000 WINNER

Darrall Alcorn

**Distribution Center #6018
Searcy, AR****Microstep**

Taking short walks in nature or listening to calming music.

**Outcome**

"I'm sleeping better at night and waking up feeling more refreshed."


Sleep

The Thrive Challenge was introduced to me at an important juncture in my life. For months, I had been feeling an urgent need for change. I felt like I was treading water in a sea of mediocrity, and I wasn't living up to my potential. I was also lethargic all the time. I was stuck in a routine where I would go to work, come home, and fall into bed, completely exhausted. So when I read about the Thrive Challenge on social media this past May, I was inspired to give it a try. It seemed like the perfect opportunity to help me get unstuck from the place I was in, and to find a renewed sense of energy and self-discovery.

I started by implementing a "no screens" rule before bed.

After feeling exhausted for so long, I loved the idea of this Microstep because it seemed like a simple way to unwind at the end of the day so I could relax and get a good night's sleep; I hadn't had a real nighttime routine before. Plus, I'd learned from Thrive that the blue light from our screens messes with our natural sleep cycle. So about an hour before bed, I started tucking away all phones, tablets, and laptops, and instead opted for a relaxing bath or good book.

At first, it was tempting to reach for my phone.

But after a few nights, I started really enjoying the time to relax at the end of the night. Reading is a long-time favorite pastime of mine, and recently I've delved into mindfulness and self-improvement books, finding inspiration and practical tools to navigate life's challenges. I've even started jotting down a few things I'm grateful for in a small notebook before bed, which has been a great way to end the day.

I slowly started getting on a more consistent sleep schedule, going to bed and waking up at the same time every day — even on weekends!

It helped regulate my body's natural sleep-wake cycle, making me feel more rested and energized throughout the day. I used to only get about five hours of sleep each night, and now I get at least seven or eight.

This newfound sleep has brought a noticeable change to my mornings.

I wake up feeling refreshed and energized, and I'll try to do a quick meditation and a light workout. I'm even more focused now that I'm not so tired all the time. I used to have trouble finishing tasks, and now I find myself working through projects with renewed focus and drive. I also have the energy to do the things I love, like volunteering in my community for a local organization called I Make a Difference. I help tutor local youth and it's incredibly rewarding.

Unwinding and decompressing is now a conscious part of my day.

I've recently started embracing meditation. It's amazing how much positivity fills my mind when I focus on the good things. I've also discovered the power of other relaxation Microsteps, like taking short walks in nature or listening to calming music. These tiny moments of peace break up the day and help me stay grounded.

My whole family has embraced a "screen-free zone" after dinner and we're spending more meaningful time together.

We've been taking the time at night to play games, chat, or just enjoy each other's company. Sometimes we take walks together or listen to calming music as family, which is such a great way to connect and relax instead of scrolling on our phones all night. The Thrive Challenge has benefitted my whole family and we're all embracing Microsteps together. I'm proud that not only am I a better Darrall, a better father, and a better individual — but I've also encouraged my family to grow together. I'm excited to see what the future holds.