



\$5,000 WINNER

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Movement



Microstep

Walking on my break instead of sitting in the lunchroom.



Outcome

"I'm dancing every day and I'm enjoying moving my body."

In 2019, I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. I went through extensive treatment including chemotherapy and surgery, and I'm in remission now. But the last five years have been hard. I live alone, and I was lonely and depressed. I have a desk job and I didn't move around a lot. I see a therapist, but I still didn't feel motivated to take care of myself. At the start of the year I was inspired by co-workers to download the Thrive app.

My first Microstep was walking on my break instead of sitting in the lunchroom.

I'd also go for a walk after work, and being in nature lifted my spirits. I've always enjoyed photography and I started taking pictures of the amazing wildlife all around. Last week I came across an adorable armadillo; I didn't know they could run on two legs! After a few months I began walking with small weights, which felt like progress.

One of my passions is music, so I started dancing at home while doing the chores.

It didn't come naturally. I'd get exhausted and felt like I had no rhythm. But once I got up and started swaying to the music, I found it became addictive. My two cats join in on the action; they move to the beat too, and we have a lot of fun. My favorite singer is Dolly Parton. I put on "Jolene" and I instantly feel inspired. I actually met Dolly at a restaurant in Tennessee and she gave me the biggest hug! Her music is so powerful and always motivates me to move.

Once I got more comfortable moving, I signed up for dance classes.

I'm a shy introvert, but I know it's good for me to connect with others, and I'm making new friends while improving my skills. We do everything from zumba to swing. It was hard at first, but we're all beginners. We don't take ourselves too seriously — when I get the moves wrong, I laugh until my sides hurt. It's been a revelation for me. Who would have guessed that cardio could be this much fun?

I'm making time for my other hobby, glass painting.

I find vases at thrift stores and I paint holographic flowers or designs on the inside of the glass. When you fill the vase with water and the sun shines on it, there's an iridescent rainbow effect. It's really beautiful. I love ending the day covered in paint. Now that I'm making more friends, I can give some of the vases away as gifts.

Before I go to bed I write in my journal to relieve stress.

I often feel overwhelmed and worried that the cancer might come back, and I worry that I'm not good enough. Jotting down how I'm feeling is helping me lower my anxiety. I stop fixating on negative thoughts and instead I write positive affirmations. I've always found it hard being kind to myself, but I'm working on my self-esteem. I'll say "I'm pretty," "I matter," or "I have a positive impact on society."

At work, I'm smiling more and coming out of my shell.

I used to have a "head down and work" mentality, but connection Microsteps are encouraging me to reach out to people, instead of hiding behind my phone. We'll have lunch together and go for walks. I'm also getting out in my time off with two close friends, Michael and Francisco, who are helping me become more social. We go to anime conventions together. By taking small steps, I've come a long way this year. I have more energy, I'm a little more outgoing, and I'm starting to enjoy life. I'm 35, and for the first time in years, I feel like there's a bright future ahead for me.