# Mario Espino

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**$5,000 WINNER**
**Walmart Home Office**
**Bentonville, AR**



I've had a hard few years. I lost my stepfather, who was my father figure, and it was an emotional time. I'm 41 and divorced with two sons, 19-year-old Luis and 15-year-old Diego. I work remotely and I was very sedentary at home. I also travel a lot for my job and I'd eat fast food on the run. I gained a lot of weight and I was up to 320 pounds. I didn't feel good.

**A year ago, I started the Thrive Challenge.**
I got an appointment with a nutritionist to learn what to eat and how to make better choices. She recommended incorporating more protein and veggies into my diet, and having smaller meals. I used to avoid breakfast or I'd just have cereal; now I'll have eggs or yogurt with fresh fruit. I like mango a lot and I'll add chili to give it a kick. For snacks, I'll have dried fruit and unsalted nuts. For dinner, I make the boys what we call "Daddy's Spaghetti," but I try to avoid carbs. The center of my plate is always protein. I'll make grilled chicken with asparagus, carrots, and broccoli with couscous or black rice.

**The boys and I sit down for dinner every night when I'm at home.**
We're talking to each other without our phones and I'm learning a lot about teenagers. Luis tells me about his goals and ambitions. He wants to be a fitness instructor and he makes workout videos for social media. He's super excited about starting college in the fall. Diego's focused on friendships at school and he's very serious about soccer. I try my best to guide them both.

**We go to the gym together.**
They're both athletic, so it's great getting back into working out because I used to lift weights in high school and I like feeling strong. Luis is very knowledgeable about all the gym equipment and he's helping me with my cardio and weights routine. I've noticed a big difference. I absolutely have more energy — I'm focusing better and recharging my batteries. And I've lost 20 pounds.

**I'm enjoying hiking with friends.**
We live close to the Grand Canyon and it's pretty amazing. You feel so small in comparison to the vastness of the environment; it always brings a tear to the eye. We also like going to Tempe Town Lake. Sometimes I take my dog, Zion, with me. He's named after Zion National Park — I love visiting national parks.

**When I'm traveling for work, I'll always explore the trails and downtown areas.**
I was in New York for the first time last month. I went to Central Park and looked at the statues and went for long walks. I made time to explore the city; it was amazing learning about the history and looking at the architecture.

**I'm engaging with people and with life.**
I've been giving myself space to focus on myself and my family; my priority is my boys right now. But I'm slowly getting back into dating. I would not be opposed to a serious relationship in the future if the right person came along.

**It's important for me to be a mentor to my sons, but also to my team at work.**
I want to support the people who work under me, lifting them up so they can make better choices. I'm mentoring a young man here in Phoenix and supporting him in his career progression. We'll have great discussions over lunch. I'm also mentoring a new dad and offering some advice on the importance of work-life balance. He came back from paternity leave and I told him I was really happy he was making time for himself, his family, and the baby.

**Reading is my relaxation.**
I'll read articles in the Thrive library on the app. And I like books that make you think — I love The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho. I really enjoy faith-based books that are spiritual in nature.

**My life has changed for the better.**
We just had a family reunion in Mexico for my cousin's quinceañera. Three hundred family members got together at my grandfather's ranch. There were people I hadn't seen in 20 years. It felt special, reconnecting with people and my culture — just a big party with family, good food, and good friends. It made me reflect on how happy and fulfilled I am. Everything's going in the right direction.