

# Craig Parfinski

## **\$5,000 WINNER**

**Walmart Supercenter #4597,  
North Tonawanda, NY**

I lost a lot of family to COVID, and it weighed on me a lot. I tend to self-isolate and take it out on myself when things don't go well. I was feeling a lot of anger and frustration, but I didn't know how to handle it on my own. My coping mechanisms were unhealthy and it took a toll on my relationships with those around me. I lost who I was and isolated myself from the world including people that cared about me.

### **There was one week in particular where I knew I needed to change.**

I sat there trying to think of how to make things better, easier on myself. I thought, "I'm out of shape. I'm eating in an unhealthy way. And my mental health is declining rapidly. What can I do?" And on one of the roughest days, I was introduced to the Thrive Challenge by our Food and Consumables Coach, Hannah.

### **My first step was to start moving every day.**

I would wake up every morning at 6 o'clock and go for a walk. Once I did that, I noticed how much better I was feeling, and I decided to change how I was eating as well. I went to my AP Coach Gus for some advice on my diet and the first thing he told me is "no matter how hard you work out, you can't outwork a bad diet." I cut out sugar and reduced my carbs and now I no longer feel bloated or groggy. I feel more awake, more focused, and I have noticed that my memory has been improving every day. I've lost 35 pounds so far.

### **I made a decision to connect with myself.**

It sounds sad, but I didn't really know who I was. I sat and thought about who I wanted to be, what I was feeling inside, and how to deal with that.

### **Martial arts has helped me a lot.**

It gives me a safe place to take out my anger and frustration. I'm new to it, but I have a little family inside my gym. I've made a group of friends there that I spar with every day. The change in my mindset helped me find an amazing group of friends, we all push each other each day to make each other better striving to be the best version of ourselves we can.



### **People around me notice the change.**

Towards the end of my 21-day Challenge, someone came up to me and said, "Before you looked very angry all the time. Now, when you come into work, your presence alone lights up the room." I'm smiling more, and the people around me are people I want to associate with, which is a good sign!

### **The more confident I became, the more people wanted to be around me.**

Instead of being the gloomy AP guy, I am now the person who can help. I'm very personable, and if you need help, I will help. One guy in the deli came up to me and told me that I look a lot better, and asked if I had lost 70 pounds because I was carrying myself so much better.

### **I wasn't sure how the Thrive Challenge would work at first, but now it's become a lifestyle.**

My goal is to challenge for my next belt and keep going on the path my Challenge has set me down. I want to spend more time at the gym and save money. I've already saved \$1,500 just from not eating junk food.

### **The Challenge changed my life completely.**

I now have a routine every week that helps me better myself and all the relationships around me. My overall quality of life has increased a lot. I could not be more grateful for a community of people that keeps me on the right path.



THRIVE