

Jimmy Miller

.....

\$5,000 WINNER

**Walmart Supercenter #1765,
Somerset, PA**

Last year, I became very depressed. I was experiencing rapid weight loss and sleep deprivation. I realized my sadness and anxiety were triggered by trauma and rejection from my childhood. I can't describe what happened when I was young without crying. There was fighting and abuse, and when I was three, my mother gave up her parental rights and left me and my sister with my dad. He remarried and my stepmom didn't care for kids. There was a lot of drinking.

My sister Kim and I were left to fend for ourselves.

We'd cook and get the bus to school. I married at 21 and my wife left me. Then my son decided he didn't want any contact with me when he was 16 and we didn't talk for six months. We're close now, but it was hard.

My fiancé left me last Christmas.

She had four kids and two grandbabies. I lost them all, and I'm so sad. That was the trigger that motivated me to start the Thrive Challenge. I wanted to work on healing. My goal was to connect with people — and with myself.

I started by moving my body and walking on a daily basis.

Being outdoors in nature is exhilarating, and it helps to clear my mind so I'm not consumed with my thoughts.

I joined a hiking challenge, walking 365 miles in 365 days.

But my goal is to hit the number by May, and I've walked 173 miles so far. When I'm hiking up mountains, it's very physically challenging. It's like doing Microsteps — taking one small careful step after another until you're on top of the ridge.

I hike with friends from my church, like Dick.

We walk the Mid State Trail in the Appalachians. We talk about life, our relationship with God, and how we encourage one another. Our friendship is awesome! Dick's almost 70 and his wife is grateful that I'm along for this ride with him because she's relying on me to keep him safe.

Sometimes we pause and take in the scenery.

It's indescribable. When you're on top of a ridge looking out over the valley, it puts life into perspective. I realize how grateful I am for my friends, my family, my church, and my job.



My relationship with my son, Ethan, is great.

He's 21 now and he's away at college, but when we're together we love to cook or pick a new restaurant. He's a great cook and said, "Dad, thank you for instilling this love of food!"

My family has done a lot of healing.

As a child, I don't remember a family Christmas. And last Christmas, for the first time, my sister, our kids, and both my parents were together. It was wonderful. What I've noticed is that when people you love see a positive change in you, they start to change themselves. My mom and I are communicating and there's more openness.

I sat my dad down and explained how hurt I was as a child.

It took a lot of courage. I forgave him for everything that happened. My dad has had two major strokes so he can't speak properly, but it was healing for us both.

Taking care of myself is important and I'm cooking more.

I'll supplement meals with a nutritional shake. I like to experiment — I'll make Indian food, pasta bakes, and salads. I've cut back on junk food and I've never felt healthier.

I'm studying how to create better habits.

The Thrive app helps. And I'm reading a great spiritual book *You Are Never Alone* by Max Lucado.

The Thrive Challenge has helped me connect with people and heal.

It's helping me to give back. That's what unconditional love is all about — giving without expecting anything in return. I still have bad days, yes, but now I have tools to cope, and I know I can overcome anything. At 45 I'm figuring out who I am. And I just want to love people.



THRIVE