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For years I've wanted to lose weight, but I couldn't stick to a healthy diet. I'd eat fast food and drink a lot of Coke. I weighed 278 pounds. I'm 32, and diabetes runs in my family. I've seen my older brother struggle with diabetes and I wanted to get healthy. My doctor prescribed Ozempic, which I started taking, but we also talked about how I could eat better and exercise. A co-worker told me about the Thrive Challenge which sounded like exactly what I needed, so I got started.

The big motivation for me to lose weight was when my best friend, Brittany, said she was getting married.

She asked me to be her bridesmaid, and I really wanted to look and feel good in my dress! Brittany is working on losing weight too, so we're supporting each other. We talk to each other and swap recipes. I call her my top chef because she's a great cook. She makes a delicious pan-seared salmon with fresh green beans and potatoes.

I've been cooking simple meals like sautéed chicken with seasoned steamed broccoli.

I find that seasoning makes a big difference, so I add garlic salt for flavor. And I started making good choices at work. During my break, I used to grab a bag of chips; now I grab a banana or a cup of fresh pineapple, my favorite fruit. And for lunch, I'll get a grilled chicken salad.

Microsteps have helped me cut down on sugar.

I've been drinking bottled spring water instead of soda. Sometimes I'll have naturally flavored, zero sugar tropical punch. It helped me stop craving Coke. I'm now down to just one sugary drink a week.

I started taking morning walks around the park and I go to the gym a few times a week.

I began with short walks and now I'm up to a mile or two. I love being outside in nature, watching the kids in the playground. I listen to gospel music or hip hop to keep me going like Beyoncé or Ciara. When we can, Brittany and I go for walks together. At the gym, I'll walk for a few minutes and then speed up and do a light jog. I also use the stationary bike.

On my days off I'm enjoying dancing, which is another great way to exercise.

I go to my cousin Nicky's house. She has Just Dance on Nintendo Switch and her young nieces come over for dance parties, which are such fun.

There are days when I don't feel like exercising, but checking into the Thrive app helps me stay consistent.

Also I can see a difference in my body — I look better. I used to get out of breath easily, and now I have a lot more energy. My faith helps me too. I say this daily affirmation: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."



I've lost 18 pounds in the last six months and I feel much more confident.

My doctor is so proud of me. She said, "Keep up the good work." And she encouraged me to keep on with the changes I've made.

Being on this journey with my best friend has made all the difference.

Brittany and I tell each other we are not giving up and remind each other you can do anything as long as you put our mind to it. Having a buddy you can call anytime for support is amazing.

My bridesmaid's dress fits perfectly. The wedding is in March and I'm so excited.

It's purple — Brittany's favorite color; it's very fitted with a halter neck. I still want to lose a little more weight, but I see it as a work in progress. And for the first time in a long time, when I look in the mirror, I like who I see.



THRIVE