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\$5,000 WINNER
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There's a big milestone around the corner. I'm about to turn 40 and I wanted to make some changes. One of my biggest challenges was money. It was stressful, which made me want to stress-eat sweets and fast food. Because of the physical demands of working at a warehouse, I would just grab fast food because it was quick and easy. I didn't have patience for my kids. Between us, my husband and I have five kids. I have a 15-year-old daughter, Amorie, and a 19-year-old son, Tristen. And I have three step kids and a one-year-old granddaughter. I lost a lot of sleep from anxiety — I felt overwhelmed.

I started the Thrive Challenge and began with Money Microsteps.

Brandon and I have financial check-ins. Also before buying things I ask myself whether the item is a "want" or a "need." It was hard at first, but stopping splurging on unnecessary things helped to lower my stress. And I stopped buying fast food, which saves about \$120 a week. One thing that saves money is that I've stopped going to the hair salon for weaves, which cost \$250. I'm taking the time to do my hair myself. Also, we're meal prepping which saves money and it's healthier.

We're eating more fresh food and lots of veggies.

My family loves my boneless and skinless chicken thighs with mushrooms sauce and herbs. We have yellow squash and green beans as sides. And I make a great chickpea and avocado salad. For snacks, I'll have bananas and yogurt, and I'll go for water instead of grabbing soda — that's another money saver.

Exercising helps a lot with stress.

I'm walking 2,500 steps a day. I set an alarm to remind myself to stretch. Another Microstep that I like is to lay out the clothes I'm going to wear the night before. I love dancing with my kids. I do some dance moves that my daughter finds outdated and embarrassing! The joy comes when we find ourselves laughing.

My focus has improved.

I write down priorities each day, and I've set boundaries to help me be more productive and get all my tasks done. In the evening, I take a social media break and turn off my phone.

Microsteps are helping me connect with people I love.

I have deep conversations with my teenagers. Phones are not allowed at the table. I see my friends and put time on my calendar for social events, so we can enjoy spending time together.



My friends and I support each other.

One of my friends was very sad because her mom recently passed away, so I am supporting her by letting her know she has a shoulder to lean on and can express her emotions. Another friend just had a baby so I do pop-ups on Mondays and help feed and comfort the baby while she catches up on things. In the past, I would go months without seeing my elderly grandmother. Now I visit her more to show her love and keep her company.

I no longer feel depleted and drained.

I noticed that the acne on my face has started to clear. I no longer feel jittery from consuming soda and candy.

I give myself time to relax with Thrive breathing exercises and Resets.

I take bubble baths and read the Bible. Reading daily scriptures helps me focus on gratitude. It's helped a lot with my kids. I'm more patient and I've found I'm more calm and understanding so I can help them with whatever they're going through. Also to relax, I take a walk in my local park after work.

Thrive is helping me focus on gratitude.

Every day I say out loud, "Thank you, God, I'm so grateful and blessed to live another day. I ask to be guided on the right path, to have patience and compassion." And I'll read this inspirational quote out loud: "God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind." I know I'm doing a great job with my kids because they're always thanking me, giving me hugs, and telling me I'm a great mom. Through learning and making mistakes as a parent I know I'm on the right path.



THRIVE