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I decided to go back to college at 39 — it was something I really wanted to do for myself. No one in my family has ever got a degree. Years before, I almost finished my bachelor's degree, but I ran out of funding, and together with my wife, Regina, I had three children to take care of. Walmart was offering free college tuition, so I said, "This is the time to go for it and accomplish my goal."

But I was finding it hard to focus on my work.

It was hard to concentrate on all the tasks I had to get done at work and at home. This struggle took a toll on my body, and I was stressed. Also, I was in a new job — I am a proud member of the Walmart Workers Comp Team. But I was always tired.

So I downloaded the Thrive app and got started.

I wanted to show the kids that you can accomplish anything by taking it one day at a time. The first thing I did was to make a sleep schedule. I began going to bed and waking up at the same time every day to ensure I got the rest I needed. I started to keep my room cool and dark, and now I set an alarm to wake me up in the morning with soft music.

I gradually cut down on caffeine.

I used to drink coffee all day and in the evening. I have ADHD and the coffee helped me focus. But once I fixed the sleep issue, I didn't need the coffee, and I have now cut my consumption by half. I don't drink it late at night anymore.

To lower stress, I eliminated my iPhone from my life.

I use a flip phone, and I've never felt better. It has no social media apps grabbing my attention and distracting me. When people need me, they text or call me. A lot of people thought I was crazy, but this is the best I've felt mentally for a long time.

I started to meditate for five minutes every morning.

It helps me feel calm. Then I would get ready for work. I'd look myself in the eye in the mirror and say a positive affirmation like, "You have today, and you can accomplish anything." Looking yourself in the eye is actually more difficult than you think! But now I do it every day.

Microsteps helped me focus on my studies.

When I'd come home from a hard day at work, I needed to study, so I'd have to set boundaries like not going out. My time management improved, and my mind became clearer.



Movement also helped lower my stress.

I started by standing every hour and walking away from my desk. Now, twice a day, I go for a 15-minute walk to get some air. The more I moved, the more energy I had and the further I walked. I just felt better afterwards, and I would end up smiling.

I completed my bachelor's degree in business in May this year.

It was a huge accomplishment because I did it at the same time as being a manager. I graduated with a 4.0 GPA, which was my dream. When I walked into my graduation ceremony — which was actually my first ever — I felt on top of the world. And I had a foundation to show my children that even in their busy lives they can achieve their goals. Also, several associates have been inspired by me and are now taking advantage of the Live Better U college program at Walmart.

Connection Microsteps help me communicate with my team.

I always ask people where they see themselves in five years, and we talk about what they need to do to reach their big goals. My journey has helped me become a better manager.

As I continue my Thrive journey, I'm connecting with my family.

All my kids know I have a flip phone and it can take a bit longer to text them. But this actually opened the door to more meaningful, real conversations. And we are enjoying game nights together, which are a blast. Regina is always in my corner. We've been married for 22 years. She's a mental health counselor and understands the importance of stress management. I'm so grateful for my family and my job, and I'm proud of my accomplishments.



THRIVE