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I wouldn't call myself the luckiest person. I got out of the army a few years ago and at the same time, a six-year relationship ended. My parents haven't been well and they moved in with me. My younger sister, Angelina, lives with us too. My dad has congestive heart failure, my mom has stage four kidney failure, and I'm their caregiver. I take them to appointments and make sure they eat well. I'm in charge of their medications. It's hard. I'm 30, and honestly, I've been neglecting myself. I was eating fast food and I wasn't getting enough rest. I was disappointed with life.

I woke up one day and did some self-reflection.

Nothing felt right. I was talking to a co-worker, Alex Hunt, a Thrive Challenge winner, and he told me what a great program it is, so I downloaded the app.

I started to work out in the morning.

I have exercise equipment at home and I began doing a variety of exercises like push-ups and squats, and I'd lift weights. At first it was hard, but soon it started to feel really good. I'll listen to fun, upbeat music with a good tempo for motivation, like the Red Hot Chili Peppers. I've added a 15-minute jog around the neighborhood. Working out has given me more energy throughout the day and better focus.

Swimming helps me lower stress.

I enjoy swimming laps in a friend's pool. I find it soothing being in the water. I give it my all in the pool and then lie down and relax. I live near a lake, and whenever I feel negative, I take a walk around the lake and breathe. I feel the wind on my skin, I hear the water as the fish are splashing, and aaah, I feel at peace.

Eating well was my biggest challenge.

I love food and it's hard to say no to really good chicken fingers. But I've just about cut out fast food. Everyone in my family loves ice cream. But instead of having a ginormous helping, I'll just have a small scoop of red velvet. I'll eat it slowly and really enjoy the taste.

I'm cooking on my days off.

For breakfast I'll have eggs and sausage with a cup of fruit. No more pancakes! My mom and I cook dinner together. We're big on baked lemon pepper chicken and we'll have it with a side of broccoli or zucchini. I love steak, but I only have a small portion now. I've lost 23 pounds and I feel so much better.



My big passion is riding motorcycles.

Recently I'd been too tired to ride — I just wanted to get to bed. But now I have more energy and after work, I get on my motorcycle. I cruise around with the wind in my face, with no particular destination — it's very freeing. I call it wind therapy.

I've met some wonderful people in my life and I'm connecting with them again.

I had distanced myself from everyone over the years. But now I'm more open and getting together with old friends, like Forrestt and Cody. We'll go to a bar and have a drink and catch up. Or we'll go for a swim in the ocean at Pensacola beach and race each other. I've learned I can rely on people who can relate to me and who understand what I've been through. I've learned how to be vulnerable.

My communication with my parents has improved.

We used to have some arguments. But I've been showing them that I don't see them as a burden, and that I'm doing okay. We've been clearing misunderstandings. We're laughing at the dinner table and getting on better. Also, my sister has seen that I'm happy and she's happier too. She's come out of her shell and is spending time with us.

At work, I'm more positive,

I'm communicating more with my team. They've been working really hard, so I saved money and bought lunch for everyone from Chick-fil-A. We took 30 minutes and enjoyed a meal together, just goofing around. I enjoy my job and I'd love to move up the ladder and become a coach. I'd also really love to attend trade school and qualify as a motorcycle mechanic.

I feel more optimistic and motivated in my life.

One day I'd love to find a good person to marry. I'd love to have a family and a nice home.

