



\$5,000 WINNER

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Focus



Microstep

Completing tasks that take two minutes or less.



Outcome

"I'm spending time away from my phone, and I feel accomplished."

I wasn't taking care of my health and I was stressed. I felt like I didn't have enough time to do the things that really mattered to me, like connecting with my fiancée, Megan, and my 10-year-old son, Mason. I didn't have a clear image of my future; I was disappointed in myself and where my life was heading. I heard about the Thrive Challenge but didn't think I'd have time for it! My store manager, Paul Slaver, a Challenge winner convinced me to give it a try. He said Microsteps help with time management.

As soon as I started, the reminders in the app helped me stay on track with my goals.

I began writing down my priorities for the day and what I wanted to achieve. I realized that I was addicted to my phone, so I'd set reminders to put it down and disconnect. I stopped scrolling through social media and felt a great sense of relief. Now, I can leave my phone in the house for the whole day and go out and have fun without a second thought.

When I'm stressed at work, I take a moment to pause and breathe.

I'll watch a Thrive Reset video or practice box breathing, which helps me refocus. I'm scheduling time to move regularly. I walk the perimeter of the building a few times and eat lunch outside when the weather's nice. I've also started going to the gym. Even when I don't feel like exercising I've been inspired to go anyway — checking off my Microsteps gives me a sense of achievement. I'm learning how to prioritize what really matters.

I feel more confident and less stressed at work.

Before I felt stuck. Now I see the positive in myself and in others. I'm 32, and I'm on track with my goal of becoming a store manager in the next two years.

At home, I get things done instead of putting them off.

I used to be feel so overwhelmed after work that household chores would defeat me. The Microstep about completing tasks that take two minutes or less was perfect for me. I'll fold clothes and put them away, or pick up toys. They're easy fixes that amount to small accomplishments. Then I progressed to tasks that took longer, like cooking and doing the dishes. It feels great to be building positive habits.

Technology-free evenings have made a huge difference.

We have a family rule: our phones stay in the living room at meal times so we can focus on enjoying conversations. In the evening we'll play board games like Monopoly. At bedtime, rather than scrolling on my phone, I'm reading physical books. I've just finished *The Energy Bus* by Jon Gordon. It has great advice on overcoming life challenges. Before I go to sleep, I journal about my wins, like how I successfully navigated difficult situations at work, and what I'm grateful for. I've been getting better sleep and waking up ready to start the day.

Because I'm not glued to my phone, I'm present with my family on the weekend.

Megan finds cool places for us to visit, like farmers markets in nearby towns and new hiking trails. Mason and I go fishing and kayaking on our pond, or we'll take our dog, Wallen, for a walk. I'm connecting with my son in a deeper way, which is fulfilling for both of us. Now that I'm not pausing to look at work messages on my phone, he has my full attention. I'm also making sure I call my parents, who live in Illinois, regularly to find out how they're doing.

Megan and I are inspiring each other to be better people.

Our relationship continues to grow every day and we're planning to get married next year. I'm excited about the future and I'm enjoying life.