

Pele Mase

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\$5,000 WINNER
Sam's Club #6342
Tulsa, OK

My weight has been my biggest struggle. I'd eat when I was happy and I'd eat when I was sad. I think it goes back to the trauma I suffered as a child. My mom and stepdad were drug addicts; I'm the oldest of four and I helped to raise my siblings and my cousin's eight kids. I had to grow up really quickly. I'm 39 and my husband, Paul, and I live with my mom, who's now clean and sober and so's my stepdad. Paul was also on drugs — but he's now sober too. Food has been an outlet for my stress. I kept gaining weight and at my heaviest I weighed 335 pounds. And along with the weight gain came diabetes and high blood pressure.

One day, my best friend, Lora, and I went to a water park.

But I couldn't go on the rides because they have a 250 pounds weight limit. I was ashamed and embarrassed. That was the moment I decided that next summer, I'd come back and go on those rides. My supervisor at work said, "You need to join the Thrive Challenge." And I was like, "You know what? I'm going to do it."

The first thing I did was give up soda.

It was hard for a couple of days but after one week, I noticed a big difference in my energy. Then I gave up candy — I was big on Starbursts and Skittles but now I just have fruit. My favorite, hands down, are apples. I started cooking lots of veggies. My fast go-to meal is taco salad. I fry ground turkey with onions, peppers, and mushrooms. I add taco sauce, and pour it all over a giant salad.

Every morning I get up at 5 a.m. and take my dog, Blue, for a walk.

Because I look and feel better, I'm getting outside instead of hiding in the house. For the first time in my life I did a 5K run. It was super-hot and intense, and I was pushing my three-year-old niece in a stroller. But we were doing it with Lora and her two sons and we all had a lot of fun. At the end, I felt so happy and accomplished.

I used to love getting on the dance floor as a teenager. I couldn't get enough of it.

So I've started dancing in my room to R&B and hip-hop. My go-to songs: "It's all about me," by Mýa and "Rude boy" by Rihanna. Dancing lifts my spirits and I get a rush of happiness.



My mom is amazingly supportive and there for me a thousand percent.

I moved from Honolulu to Tulsa five years ago and she came with me, then the rest of the family followed! Now, my mom's joining me on my journey.

On Sundays, everyone in our family comes over for dinner.

My house is the meeting place, because that's where my mom lives. My brother, Junior, is the chef in the family. He'll ask me what I can or can't have. He cooks a lot of Hawaiian and Filipino food with beef and pork, so for me he'll substitute the meat for turkey breast, which has less fat.

Anytime I feel stressed I stop to breathe and relax.

I love the Resets on the Thrive app. They're so positive and calming; you look at lovely ocean views and mountains. I also started meditating and I feel more in touch with myself.

I've lost 40 pounds and I'm so much happier.

I just got my latest labs back and the doctor's reduced my medications and my insulin. My nurse told me my blood pressure is now "amazing."

I want to do stuff that I only see people do on T.V.

I don't know if this sounds silly, but I want to be healthy enough to skydive. And I want to see the world. My grandfather was part Irish and he never got to go himself, so I'd love to go Ireland and connect with my roots. And I've always wanted to go to Italy.

I wouldn't change anything about the past — it made me who I am today.

I'm not bitter or unhappy. I feel like I'm a very compassionate person and I've spent most of my life trying to fix other people's problems; now I'm helping myself. This is my first step towards building a happier me. It's time.



THRIVE