

# Regina Cota

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**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Walmart Customer**  
**San Diego, CA**

I'm a single mom with a 13-year-old daughter, Mia, and I work as a patient liaison at a hospital. During COVID, my hours were cut, and to make ends meet, I started doing side-gigs working for Instacart and Uber Eats. But that meant I was missing out on time with Mia. I was always in a rush and I'd pick up fast food because it was easy. I started binge eating from all the stress. I'd eat a whole pizza myself. I gained weight and when I looked in the mirror, I was heartbroken.

## **I wanted to be a good role model for Mia.**

But she was picking up my habits — we'd both eat chips and candy and drink soda. Then my co-worker, Alisa Tiller, told me about the Thrive Challenge and I got started.

## **We're not buying fast food anymore and Mia helps me cook.**

We make a great barbecued chicken with lime, cilantro, and cauliflower rice. We'll have spaghetti night which is fun for my daughter, but I use squash noodles instead of pasta, with a ground turkey sauce and a side salad. For dessert, we'll get a little creative and make fruit salad with strawberries, grapes, and raspberries, and whipped cream on top. That's our treat.

## **Before it was go, go, go. Now we sit at the table to eat.**

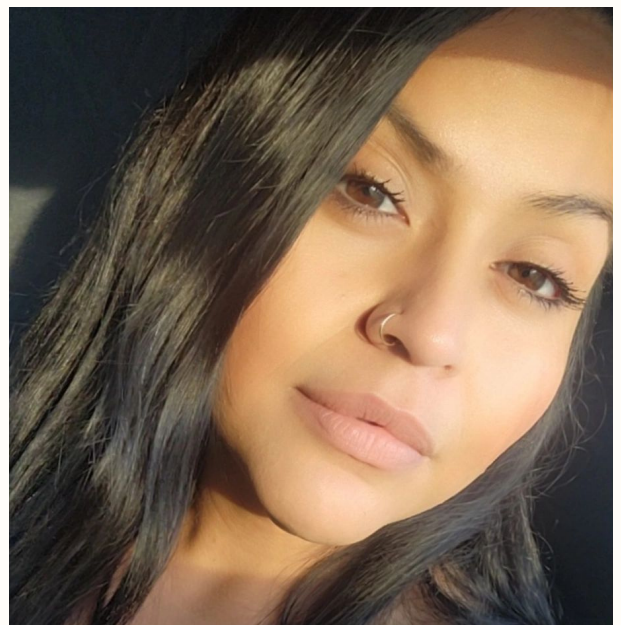
We're laughing together and Mia's telling me what's going on at school. She told me how she got into a fight with one of her best friends. I could tell it was hard for her to open up to me, but she did and I felt happy because I was there to support her and give advice.

## **I got Mia a little job walking our neighbor's dog, Milly.**

We'll walk together around the neighborhood and enjoy our time together. I also joined a gym — I work out on the elliptical and with weights. I have a lot more energy and my clothes are looser, which is exciting. I've lost 15 pounds.

## **Every morning, Mia and I have 20 minutes of quiet time, without hopping on our phones.**

We meditate and tell each other what we are grateful for. Mia might say she's grateful for her friends and to have me as a mom. I tell her I'm grateful for her and for my job. I also bought us both gratitude journals.



## **I'm reading before I go to bed, which I had not been doing for a long time.**

That's my "me time." I've just finished *The Mastery Of Love* by Don Miguel Ruiz. It was great! Sitting down with a good book makes me feel like I'm actually using my brain and learning new things.

## **My boyfriend, Carlos, and I have been together for three years and he's so supportive.**

He lives five hours away but we see each other a lot. If I start picking at sweets he's like, "Babe, you're not supposed to be eating that! You said to remind you." Those small things really help me out. And when he takes me out to eat, he'll do his research and look for restaurants with healthy options.

## **I'm smiling more at work.**

People come up to me and say, "There's a glow to you." And it's amazing because I feel it. My job can be stressful, dealing with patients' complaints and sometimes getting yelled at, but I have more patience now. One woman came in for her surgery at five in the morning but there had been a mistake and nobody had actually scheduled it. She was upset and crying, but I explained it was just a miscommunication and I helped her reschedule her surgery. She was grateful that she was able to vent to me and said, "Thank you for taking the time to listen."

## **Money-wise, I'm okay right now.**

I'm working full-time again at my job so I don't need the extra jobs. I've been able to slow down a lot. And we're saving \$100 a week. My goals are to keep losing weight, move in with Carlos, and buy a home.

## **I don't know how to explain how happy I am.**

At 32, I have a whole new attitude and I feel like a brand new person.



THRIVE