

Shanta Coleman

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\$5,000 WINNER
Walmart Supercenter #5823
Dallas, TX

Growing up, I was always the type of person to walk up to people and talk to them, but after I lost my mom in 2020, the world didn't feel the same to me anymore. I was closer to my mom than anybody else in the world. She was my best friend. Everybody has some kind of root person, and I always felt like my mom was in my roots. It was very hard for me. It affected my work, my relationships, and my mood. Even though I've learned to live with it, I still carry it with me every day.

I didn't want to connect with anyone for a very long time.

It felt like something had shut off in my brain, and I just distanced myself from everyone. I even switched to taking night shifts at work because I was struggling and wanted to be in a shift where I had to connect with people less. When you work overnight, there's less people there, so I was more comfortable that way.

Over time, I started feeling more ready to connect with people again.

I needed a push, but I started feeling like it was okay to enjoy being with other people, and that didn't mean that I didn't miss my mom. I remember seeing the pamphlet for the Thrive Challenge in the break room at work and I started reading it. I thought to myself, "These people have transformed their lives. Maybe it's time for me to make a transition in my life." I was also in debt at the time, and I wanted to get myself out of debt and start saving. One of my biggest goals is to own a home because my mom always wanted to own a home. It felt so out of reach, but I decided I'd give it a try to see if I could make a change.

My first step was working on improving my credit score.

My credit score was 634 points, so I went online and read some material about raising your credit score. I followed the advice I read, like increasing the amount on my credit card, opening a new credit card, and other small steps to help me save. I even read a few investment books and started reading about the stock market. I started saving more than I even thought I could. I had \$4,000 in my account when I started, and I got up to \$13,000.



I started working on my connections.

I realized that I didn't have to let my pain hold me back from connecting with people. I was holding onto my pain for so long because I missed my mom, but I started being more intentional about talking to people and being less angry inside. Talking to people again gave me some of my energy back and helped me take care of myself. Since I work nights, I sleep during the day, so I usually get a bunch of calls and texts while I'm sleeping. I remember reading the Microstep about keeping your phone away from your bed, so I started doing that and it helped me sleep better. I feel so much more energized now when I wake up.

I never knew I was capable of doing what I'm doing now.

I've been able to get my credit score to 744 points, and I never knew I could save this much money. We were pretty poor growing up, so now seeing myself do the things I'm doing has really shocked me. I'm still learning to budget and learn more about money and how to use it properly. Reading the finance books has made a huge difference. Owning a home always felt so out of reach, but now I believe with more steps I can get there.

I'm out of debt, and it feels like everything's been coming together.

I even just got promoted! I can now manage my time better, and I've started taking university classes online before my shift. I'm working on my Bachelor's Degree in Business Operations. I have new goals, and I'm grateful that I've given myself permission to connect with people again and learn about money. I still miss my mom and I'm not 100% back to myself, but I'm working on seeing the good and feeling grateful. It has given me a jump start to become the best I can be.



THRIVE