

Alex Medina

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\$5,000 WINNER
Sam's Club #8149
Green Bay, WI

I recently lost a close friend to suicide and I felt lost. I was a workaholic and I wasn't taking care of myself. At work, I wouldn't eat at all, then I'd go home and eat pizza. And on days off, I'd stay in bed. I'm 29, and I wanted to be healthy, but everything seemed like too much. I was depressed.

My friend and co-worker, Terri Wagner, inspired me.

She had won the Thrive Challenge and told me that Thrive was about making small changes in order to create big differences in your life. And I liked that. She sat down to help me while I downloaded the app.

I started by drinking a cup of water in the morning.

I stopped drinking pop — I don't even like the taste anymore, it's too sweet. I've changed the way I eat. We always have fruit in the fridge, like grapes and strawberries. I'll have a Caesar salad for lunch.

My husband is a trained chef, and he's making delicious stir fries.

He'll make baked lemon pepper chicken with vegetables. We'll still have pizza night once in a while — I believe restriction is never a good thing — but I can't stand the taste of fast food now. I'm also cooking for my sister Marlene when I visit her. Our heritage is Mexican and I love making dishes my mom made for us when we were little, like tacos or rice and beans.

At work, I'm walking ten miles a day.

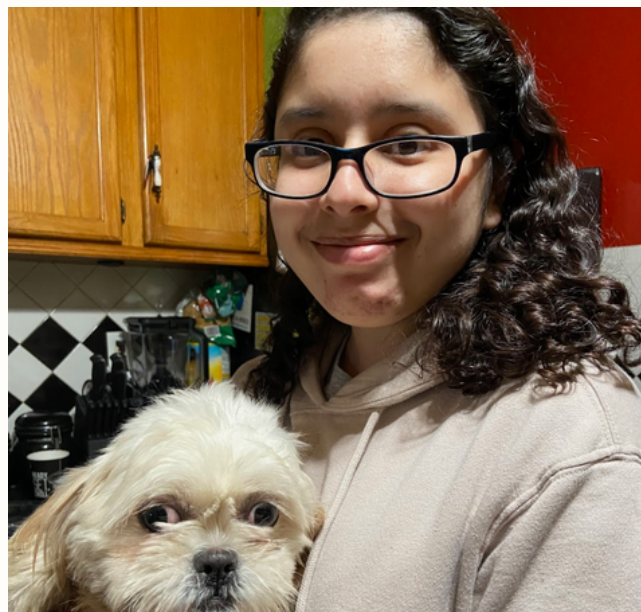
I'll get home from work and say, "Hey Jacob, put on your shoes, we're going on a walk." We'll walk around our neighborhood. We live in an amazing community and there are always people walking around, some with their dogs, and everyone's friendly. I'm also doing stomach crunches and push-ups at home.

Marlene and I are training for a half marathon.

I used to run in high school and I'd forgotten how much I enjoyed it. It feels great to run again. I started running just five minutes a day and began doing a little more every day.

I love the Microstep about planning something to look forward to.

I used to stay at work late. But now, I'll go to the coffee shop and read a book. I always loved to read and I've got back into it, and I feel so accomplished. I've read over 10 books since I started my Thrive journey. I read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho and I couldn't put it down. It's very mystical, about how life gives you different challenges and makes you a better person. Reading gives me a positive outlet.



My family and I are bonding.

I have four sisters and one brother. One of my Microsteps is checking in with a family member, just saying, "How are you doing?" I'm going with my sisters to see Taylor Swift in Chicago. We're getting a hotel and making a weekend of it. We're so excited.

My relationship with Jacob was always pretty great, but now we're bonding more.

We've been married for eight years and we're spending more time together. We walk without our phones, and we go on date nights. We took his 12-year-old nephew, Arrin, to WrestleMania. It's not my thing, but I joined in the fun. Arrin and Jacob were singing and screaming.

I'm taking time for my passions.

I took classes and got a real estate license because I want to buy a house, and I wanted to learn about the process. It was a great experience. Learning new skills helps me to grow as a person.

At work, I listen to my team instead of just telling them what needs to be done.

I'll say "Hey, how are you doing?" The other day an associate looked overwhelmed so I stepped in to help him out. I'll take the trash out or do whatever I can do to help. I love my job and one day I'd like to be a Sam's Club manager.

I forgive myself when something doesn't go right.

I used to dwell on bad moments and they would ruin my day. But I've learned to accept a bad moment for what it is (just a moment), and that's allowed me to continue to enjoy the day.

My life feels more balanced.

I have deeper connections — I'm happy and I'm excited about life. I know that as long as I'm part of the Thrive community, life will get better and better.



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