# Camila Virella

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**$5,000 WINNER**
**Walmart Amigo #3670**
**Toa Baja, PR**

I used to go through the same routine every day. I would get home from work at the same time, cook dinner, play with my kids, and then go to bed. And then the next day, I would do it all over again. I didn't take any time for myself because I felt like I just had zero free time. The truth is, I've always been pretty disorganized, and I wasn't making the time to take care of myself. I would procrastinate, end up on my phone, and then my stress would build up.

**My whole family got COVID last year, and my daughter ended up in the hospital.**
That was a wakeup call for me. I remember thinking, "What if something happens to me today and I haven't taken advantage of my life?" I knew that if something had happened and I was living my life the way I had been living, I would have regrets. I needed to get off my phone and be present with my family, and take time for myself. A co-worker of mine, Liliana Santiago, had told me about the Thrive Challenge, and I liked the idea that Microsteps were a way for me to start making the changes I had wanted to make.

**I started by incorporating a few minutes of movement whenever I could.**
I liked the Microstep about exercising while brushing your teeth. It was a good way for me to remember to exercise because I never forget to brush my teeth. Whether it was walking around or doing a few squats, it was a good way to get moving. I even started parking farther away from the mall so I could have the chance to walk more. It was those little things I hadn't thought of before, but when I considered them, I was like "That's a good idea."

**As a mom, I always thought I wouldn't be able to take time for myself.**
Even at the beginning of the Thrive Challenge, I remember thinking, "I'm not going to be able to do this, it's impossible." For example, I read the Microstep about putting my phone away before bed and I wasn't sure I could do it. I was asking myself things like, "What if something happens and I need my phone?" I was making excuses. But slowly, I started keeping it in another room when I went to sleep. It was difficult at first, but I saw that I really didn't miss anything. And I finally had time to just relax without getting distracted from notifications.

**Little by little, I was letting myself recharge and I wasn't procrastinating anymore.**
For example, I have an Apple Watch, and I used to take it off when I got home and then check my phone, but then I'd end up spending hours on it. I saw that that was time I could've been playing with my girls or taking time for exercise instead of being glued to my phone the whole night. I started putting my phone away when I got home, and it allowed me to have time together with my daughters without distractions. Today, we like to cook together and talk, and they notice that I'm so much happier now that I'm taking the time to give myself joy. When I used to be stressed all the time, you could feel the tension in the house and everyone felt stressed. When I'm happy, it gets carried over to my daughters.

**I'm most proud that I've been able to make time for myself.**
My energy is so much better now, and I'm not wasting time on social media anymore. I've realized that giving myself a break and some space to breathe, even if it's only 15 minutes, can make a big difference. I was always waiting for the perfect moment to do something different, but I've realized you can't just sit and wait. You have to take action. And you'll be so happy that you did.

THRIVE