



\$5,000 WINNER

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Stress
Management



Microstep

Journaling has become an anchor on my Thrive journey.



Outcome

"I write about my emotions and how grateful I am for my sons."

In October of 2022, I lost my father. We were extremely close. He was my go-to person when I needed advice. My grief put me in a downward spiral of depression and anxiety. I was lacking in motivation, and low energy clouded my days. I was taking care of my two sons, but I wasn't prioritizing my own health. I wasn't eating well and I was too tired to enjoy being with my boys. I'm 29, and in January this year, I downloaded the Thrive app, setting out on a journey of self-love, with a focus on connecting with myself so I could be a better mom.

I began by journaling at bedtime.

I bought a notebook with a bookmark attached so I could keep my place. Keeping a journal is my favorite Microstep. It gives me an opportunity to reflect on my day and release my feelings and emotions. I'll write about the grieving process and I'll note down inspiring quotes I've read on the Thrive app. I write about how grateful I am for my family and what I appreciate about myself. Journaling has become an anchor on my Thrive journey, supporting me as I rediscover my purpose.

Repeating affirmations helps me feel confident and positive.

I'll say to myself out loud or in my head, "I'm capable of extraordinary things," and "I am intelligent." These positive statements serve as daily reminders of my potential, and they're gradually helping me dismantle my self-doubt. I keep affirmations on my phone for further motivation. I also keep a photo of my sons, Gage, who's 10, and Miles, who's 4, as my home screen. Seeing their faces makes me smile.

I began making time for activities that bring me joy.

I rekindled my love of art that I'd lost for a while. I'm painting with watercolors; it's a beautiful way for me to express my emotions in a way that's hard to do with words. I've been painting flowers and galaxies. I'm using lots of color, and I've found my art very freeing. Looking through my finished artwork makes me proud of my creative accomplishments.

I'm approaching food in a more creative way too.

My kids and I are connecting over meals and enjoying being together. I always make the table look pretty. Instead of depriving myself of certain foods, I'm focusing on celebrating meals and adding new, healthy foods into my diet. This has been a wonderful shift. I've found that I really enjoy sweet potatoes and strawberries. For the boys, I have fun cutting fruit into shapes like hearts and stars. One family dinner we all enjoy is my spinach and chicken pasta.

As a parent, I'm more present and less stressed.

I have more energy for the boys. We go to the playground, do art projects, and play with Legos. Miles and I look at flash cards together and he loves learning about farm animals. I'll often be belly-laughing with my kids when we see something funny. I'm always excited to come home to my children and my dog, Goose. He jumps up to greet me when I walk through the door. We "dance" in the kitchen and I get lots of doggy kisses.

The ripple effect of my journey extends beyond my immediate family.

I'm closer to my mother, which helps us both since the loss of my father. I enjoy going into work and walking with my head held high. I find myself saying "Hello" to people or sharing a welcoming smile. I've been spreading my joy and motivating my co-workers, and I'm more positive when difficult situations arise.

The loss of my father is still the most difficult challenge in my life.

But through my Thrive journey, I've learned how grief isn't a linear path; it's something I'll deal with for the rest of my life. What makes it a little easier is appreciating everything he taught me and teaching his values to my boys, like honesty and integrity. I remember my dad every time I drive to and from work; I notice the simple things, how the sky is so beautiful. I'm reminded of how proud he would be of me and the changes I'm making for my family, and I feel more positive about the future.