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\$5,000 WINNER
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I moved with my kids back into our family home to take care of my aging parents. My younger sister, Deann, passed away. I was feeling depressed and drained, and I had a lot of anxiety. I was grabbing fast food on the go, and my lower back and knees hurt. I weighed 340 pounds, and I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. The doctor prescribed antidepressants and diabetes medication.

I was sick of being sick and tired.

A year ago, I downloaded the Thrive app, inspired by my friend, Cynthia Hudson. I started parking my car farther back in the parking lot at work. And I added more steps month after month. At home, I started walking on the treadmill. It was hard at first — my knees hurt, but they stopped hurting as the weight came off, I began feeling better. My skin looked better too.

My 15-year-old daughter, Savannah, and I go for walks.

We hike in the beautiful state parks like DuPont Forest. There are waterfalls, and everything's blooming and coming alive. We talk without the phone or any interruptions. Honestly, it relieves a lot of stress and takes away my worries.

Everything is better at work.

We change tires and do oil changes, and it used to be hard picking up tires and walking up stairs. Now, I can do it all easily.

There's no more fried food at our house.

I'm baking chicken or salmon with lemon and olive oil. We'll have asparagus, and sometimes mashed potatoes — you gotta have some carbs! But everything is fresh. Savannah has a learning disability and cooking together helps her because she'll read out the ingredients.

I went on vacation with three girlfriends to St. Thomas.

Even getting on the plane was amazing. I was always embarrassed asking for a seat belt extender, and I didn't need one this time. My friends, Kim, Vicki, and Renee and I had a wonderful time. We went to the beach and I was so excited to wear my new bathing suit. I had a massage on the beach, something I would never have had the confidence to do before. It was very relaxing — I could hear the waves and the seagulls diving for the fish.

We chartered a boat and went snorkeling.

We swam from the boat to a floating taco restaurant. Then at night we went dancing to live reggae music. I felt more comfortable in my skin than I have for a long, long time. We even had a nighttime swim. Seeing the sunset every evening — oh my gosh! — the blue, blue water. For our next trip, I'd love to go to Italy and see the Sistine Chapel, and I'd love to visit Tuscany and Sicily.



I'm treating myself to new clothes.

I put money aside for myself to take outfits on my trip. I bought sheer pants with black shorts underneath, a silky black and white top, and black strappy sandals. I felt so good.

One Microstep that's really helped me is setting boundaries.

This is the time for me to say no to people. I love my mom, but I've told her she has to schedule appointments to the doctor and trips to the grocery store to fit in with what I need to do for myself. I had to say, "You know what? I am a 52-year-old woman and I have a life too."

I'm going to bed early.

I'll turn the T.V. off at 8 p.m., shower, and I'm in bed by 9 p.m. I read to escape my own life and relax. I like mysteries and romance. I've just read November 9 by Colleen Hoover. I'm getting nine full hours and I wake up refreshed.

In the morning I used to listen to the radio, and now I pray.

Spending time with God helps me feel positive. When I'm brushing my hair, I look in the mirror and see the new version of myself, just a little older, and I say: "You're beautiful."

The Thrive Challenge is helping me heal my body.

It's saved my life! I don't feel depressed anymore — I feel wonderful. I've lost 81 pounds and I'm well on the way to achieving my goals. I know that soon I will be off my medications. I'm 52 years old; I've probably been alive longer than I'll be alive in the future, and this next part of my life is my time to thrive.



THRIVE