



\$5,000 WINNER

Marcela Sierra

Walmart Supercenter #5727
Bradenton, FL



Microstep

Listening to each other and learning to respect each other's point of view.



Outcome

"I'm connecting with my family in Colombia."

My husband Santiago and I moved to the United States from Colombia seven years ago. I had to adapt to a new culture and I couldn't speak English. For a long time I felt isolated and I didn't have any friends. Then six months ago, I lost my father. We were very close and I felt sad and depressed. Everything was even more difficult because Santiago and I weren't getting along. We both work at Walmart and a co-worker, Sunday Oguntoyinbo, a Thrive Grand Champ, encouraged us to start the Thrive Challenge.

We began taking connection Microsteps, like listening to each other and learning to respect each other's point of view. We started being more affectionate, saying thank you and I love you. We're taking turns cooking. To connect with our culture, we'll make typical Colombian food like chicken with beans and rice and plantains. Every afternoon we go for a walk with our dog, Lilo, and talk about our goals. We're saving to buy a house and hoping to start a family. I've learned that no marriage is perfect — it's about focusing on gratitude, and building resilience.

At work I'm making friends. It's been hard because of the language barrier; I felt like I couldn't have proper conversations with people. But I've been studying English and I feel much more confident talking to co-workers and customers. I greet them with a smile and ask how they're doing. On my break, I'll have lunch with friends in the grassy area outside the store and we'll enjoy the Florida sunshine. My best friends, Ashley, and Shanelly, and I go to the gym or for bike rides, and sometimes we'll go out for a smoothie or for dinner.

I miss my dad a lot. It's so hard being far from my family, but my mom and I talk all the time and I'm going back home for a vacation in July. My heart is slowly healing and I feel settled. I've learned how to connect with myself. I keep a journal and at the end of every day, I reflect on how I feel, and what made me happy, and I'll watch a relaxing Thrive Reset. Little by little I'm starting to let go of my fears and believe in myself. My husband and I just celebrated our seventh wedding anniversary and we're very excited about the future.