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I used to live a really sedentary lifestyle and I was always stressed. I would turn to food to cope, and I ended up suffering from diabetes and obesity. I had no energy, always felt tired, and I got constant headaches. I would be in a bad mood at work and then carry that mood home with me. One day, I started noticing that I was giving my son junk food because it was the easiest option, and I was barely spending time with him anymore because I would be so tired that I would fall asleep right after work. That realization was the turning point for me. It was the push I needed to make a change.

I went to the doctor and found out my health was worse than I had thought.

I was told that I had high blood sugar and high blood pressure. I knew at that moment that if I didn't change my habits, my current lifestyle could eventually kill me. I remembered that a former supervisor of mine, Luz Rosario, had done the Thrive Challenge, and he had talked about the success he had. I knew that as a mother, it was my responsibility to try it out so that I could make better decisions for my family and myself.

The first step I took was eliminating sodas and juices from my diet.

I replaced them with water, and pretty quickly I noticed my energy was improving. I started reading more Microsteps, and I slowly made other changes to my diet, like cutting out rice, pasta, bread, and sweets. Instead, I started having more vegetables, salads, fish, and fruit.

I started noticing how much money I was saving by cutting out sodas and junk food.

In the past, I always felt like no matter how hard I worked, I was constantly running out of money and couldn't save up. Changing my diet made me see how much I was throwing away every month beforehand. Now, I prepare my food at home for the week and bring my breakfast and lunch from home in a lunch box. If I go out somewhere, like to watch my son's game, I take some fruit with me, and some water and other nutritious snacks. I've saved over \$360 so far just by making these small changes.



My whole family started noticing that I had more energy.

My mother, sisters, partner, son, and my brother-in-law have all been joining me on my journey. We've been sharing the experience as a family and we're spending more time having breakfast together, exercising together, and sharing recipes. Right now I love to make broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots, and try all the combinations you can make with vegetables. I recently made a lasagna with cabbage leaves by replacing the layers of pasta with fresh cabbage!

I started waking up in the morning in a good mood.

I used to feel fatigued in the morning, but recently I've been waking up with more energy and feeling well rested. My sleep is better, and I'm also able to walk longer distances during the day without getting tired. I have lost some weight but I am really focused on reaching my goals slowly and steadily.

My whole way of thinking has changed.

I am so grateful that I was able to take the first step and that my family has been so supportive along the way. It has strengthened our relationship as a family and has been such a positive influence for us. It has reminded us to value our lives and give thanks for the people around us. Today, I'm less stressed, I'm spending more time with my son, and I'm finally taking care of myself. I've learned to really trust myself and believe that I can achieve what I set out to do.



THRIVE