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In the past few years I've moved five times. I love my work where I am, but being away from family and friends has been a big struggle. I started my current job just over a year ago. It was hard settling into a new environment, making friends, and building a new life from the ground up. I'm 28 and I felt lonely, low in confidence, and stressed.

I was eating fast food for lunch and dinner.

I weighed 255 pounds. I wasn't moving much and I had low energy. I downloaded the Thrive app because I wanted to get healthy, feel good about myself, and make connections.

First I focused on food Microsteps.

I began by planning my meals for the week. That means I have the ingredients I need to make healthy dinners. I experiment with one new recipe a month: this month's is baked salmon with veggies. Other Microsteps I've been taking are making healthy substitutions, like eating cauliflower rice instead of regular white rice. If you season it, it tastes great. I'm also eating smaller portions.

Thrive encouraged me to move my body each day.

I began with short walks, and once I was moving more, I started feeling more energized. Now I also go to the gym, and I've started losing weight. I spend 30 minutes working out, and that makes a big difference. I walk on the treadmill, and then I work on my legs and arms. I've struggled with my weight all my life and I never thought that I'd be able to do it. It's really helping my self-esteem.

I felt more confident and began talking to people and asking how they are.

I gradually made friends with other associates who are also on the Thrive Challenge — we're sharing recipes and sometimes lunches. I just made delicious Mexican street corn and shared it with my HR clerk, Miguel, a winner who inspired me to take the Challenge!

I'm also making sure I keep in touch with my family.

I fly home to Georgia as often as I can to visit them. I love to play with my three young nieces. We just celebrated my youngest niece's birthday. I planned the entire party; the theme was First Trip Around the Sun. It was amazing! Going home is also a chance for me to reconnect with my old friends. Spending time with people who know me well helps me to know I'm loved and I'm not alone.



Spending time with puppies makes me happy.

I've started volunteering for the charity Tails of Valor, which provides service dogs and therapy programs for veterans and children. Playing with puppies brings me a lot of joy because I'm able to be a dog mom again.

I'm taking time to breathe and I feel less stressed.

I'll take a break to watch a Thrive Reset, or I'll pause for a time out from looking at my computer, get out of the office, and just get a little fresh air. I use the Breathe in the Ocean Reset at night to help me fall asleep, too. In my breaks, I often read Thrive articles to learn how to manage my stress, boost my energy, and manage my money.

Affirmations are helping me feel good and connect with myself.

I have this great quote on a sticky note on my bathroom mirror and I say it out loud every morning: "I am bold, strong, and beautiful; so let me adjust the crown on my head and get my day started!"

The Thrive Challenge is motivating me to become the best version of myself.

I never liked the way I looked in a mirror, now I'm happier with myself. I tend to find myself smiling just a little bit more. I'm getting out of the house, spending time with people, and enjoying the world.



THRIVE