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Recently, my dad was diagnosed with colon cancer, and I've been taking care of him as well as doing my job. I do his errands, I cook and clean for him, and take him to the doctor. He's about to start chemo, and it's been very stressful. I also take care of my brother, Chevy, who has kidney failure. It's been especially hard because my mom passed away two years ago, and we were very close.

My husband, Shannon, and I have four boys and five grandkids with another on the way.

My youngest son, Hezekiah, has cerebral palsy, so he needs a lot of support. I love my family, but I wasn't taking care of myself. I'm 47, I was eating badly, and I weighed 305 pounds. My co-workers encouraged me to take the Thrive Challenge, and I got started in September 2023.

I began cooking at home instead of buying fast food.

I'm doing Microsteps like swapping soda for water, and eating more veggies. The change was kind of hard, but now I'm enjoying the way I feel eating healthy meals. I make good broccoli soup, and grilled chicken with rice, green onions, and avocado. I also bought an airfryer, which I use instead of frying food.

In my job as an online shopper I already get in a lot of steps, and I'm going for walks in nature.

I stroll around my neighborhood after dinner. My niece gave me her bicycle because she didn't need it anymore and I'm really having fun. It's the first time I've been on a bike since I was 12! I ride around a pond in a wooded area close to our house. It's so peaceful and relaxing.

Dancing to upbeat music makes me happy — like I don't have a care in the world.

Music is my escape from all my worries. It puts me in a positive mindset. I love Drake, The Weeknd, and Rihanna.

I was so excited the other day when I got on the scale; I've lost 20 pounds.

It's amazing because this is the first time I've been successful. I've tried and tried to lose weight for years. Taking it step by step is working for me. I've noticed that my joints don't hurt as much as they used to, and I feel more energetic.



I make sure I take time for myself.

It's not easy, because I'm taking care of everyone else, but I go into a quiet room to relax and meditate, and I do breathing exercises. I also like to read the Bible and pray. I ask for protection and healing for me and my family and friends. My faith helps me overcome obstacles and gives me hope.

If I feel low, I call my sister Mechelle.

We laugh, we cry, and we talk about our memories about the good times. I live in a small town and she lives in Yukon, which is a city, so I love going to see her; there's so much to do. We'll go see a movie and try different restaurants. We just got tickets to see Wicked and I'm excited.

My luxury is getting my hair done now and again.

I get along with my hairdresser — she's been doing my hair for years — and we talk about life, all the ups and downs. Sometimes we might even enjoy a glass of wine!

Connection Microsteps are helping me when I'm feeling sad.

Hezekiah and I talk about everything; we're so close. And I'm asking for support from my family when I need it. My husband is helping out at home with the chores and cooking.

I'm feeling happier and I'm seeing progress.

I do miss my mom. I sometimes end up crying unexpectedly, but I think it's good to express my emotions. I tell myself my mother would be proud of me for what I've accomplished. And my dad motivates me. He tells me to take care of myself because he didn't do that for himself. He's made me rethink my life. It's easy to put ourselves last — and I'm not going to do that anymore.



THRIVE