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Some people wake up and drink coffee with their breakfast. I preferred Pepsi. Oh my goodness, in an eight hour shift I'd have six cans. I grew up eating Southern fried food, like chicken and ribs. And as an adult, that's how I was eating. I weighed 295 pounds and I was tired and drained. I'm married to my best friend, Sirgeo. I have four kids and a stepson who I call my "bonus son." But I was sad and shut down. The children suffered because I didn't have energy for them.

Two years ago I found out I was pre-diabetic.

My doctor wanted me to lose weight. I didn't listen because eating was a comfort. But recently, I was diagnosed with full diabetes, and I'm 37. My hands would get numb, I felt jittery, and I developed a skin condition called hidradenitis. I lost my dad to a massive heart attack when he was 55. I was determined to beat those odds.

I said to myself, "Enough is enough."

I wanted my children to have a strong, healthy mom — I wanted to be their warrior. So I took off from there and downloaded the Thrive app in January. I woke up the next morning, I took the two liter bottle of Pepsi sitting on the counter, and poured it down the drain. I didn't look back. I only drink water now. Then I made the choice not to buy sodas for the children. I explained to them how important it is to take care of our bodies.

We're on this journey as a family.

My husband's the cook. I fell in love with salmon and Sirgeo will bake it with parmesan cheese. I make sure 50 percent of my plate is green — my top two veggies are asparagus and broccoli. When I'm craving something sweet, I'll have a bowl of fruit. It's totally fine to have a cupcake every now and then, but not every day. I've lost 12 pounds and I literally feel I've added years to my life!

At work, I'm walking a lot. I don't cut corners and I take laps around the store.

At home, I do yard work and I'm ready for spring. Sirgeo's an outdoorsy person, so we'll work together. I'm raking, trimming trees, and planting flowers. I really like mums and I love my rose bushes. I'm going to plant a tree in memory of my dad.

After work, I have more energy for the kids.

I'm not crashing from all those sugary drinks. When Kaiden, my 12-year-old, wants to go for a bike ride, I'll walk behind him. When the weather's nice, we'll be outdoors playing baseball and dodgeball, and Sirgeo might cook chicken on the grill. We're not on our phones — I want everyone's undivided attention for family time.



I'm finding out a lot about my kids and encouraging them.

My baby girl Madysen, who's nine, is an awesome artist. She just painted a cute picture of a cup cake. Kaiden's adventurous — he's into dirt bikes and motorcycles. He reminds me so much of my dad. I tell people my dad's still here because he's in Kaiden.

Reading the Bible in the morning is my "me time."

And in the evening, I meditate and do a Thrive Reset. I love the ones with mountains and birds — they're soothing and reassuring. I've also created my own Reset with family photos. Every two weeks, I schedule a manicure and hair appointment. Taking care of myself gives me confidence.

I put my phone away around 8 p.m. That gives me time to get the kids settled.

Then I meditate, which relaxes my muscles. I feel more rested, and I'm getting seven to eight hours of sleep a night. Before, I was only getting five hours a night or less.

My diabetes has improved tremendously.

My last glucose reading was amazing; my A1C is down from 7.8 to 4.3. And I'm off all my medications except one. My children deserve a healthy mom, and I've realized that I have a life worth living. With diabetes running on both sides of my family, I am breaking a generational curse and that makes me proud.



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