

# Thomas Ramey

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**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Walmart Supercenter #103**  
**Shawnee, OK**

I used to be tired and cranky all the time. I'm 36 and my wife, Bridgette, and I both have management positions at Walmart and we'd bring our work home. My phone would go haywire with calls from associates. I love my job, but I never took vacations, and even on days off I'd be sorting out work problems.

**I was too exhausted to spend time with my family.**  
We have three kids between us: my 17-year-old Madison; Michael, who's also 17; and 12-year-old Aaralynn. We'd make plans to go to the amusement park, but then I'd end up going into work. I was also spending too much money on fast food.

**My co-worker, Kathryn Carpitcher, told me about the Thrive Challenge.**  
She's a Thrive Grand Champ and said, "You need to try this." Bridgette and I decided to do it together. We started with a Microstep: setting a time to put our phones away. The first week, it was hard because I was still getting work calls. But I decided that I wouldn't answer after 7:30 p.m. I'm a mechanic, and I trust that my associates are smart and can figure things out themselves.

**I stopped buying fast food.**  
I do most of the cooking. I make four-cheese tortellini with Italian sausage, or chicken with wild rice. Then I take the leftovers to work for lunch. It's a lot better for me than fast food, and I'm saving a ton of money.

**At home, we don't have our phones with us while we're eating.**  
We disconnect and talk to each other about our hobbies, like fishing. I love shooting pool and I'm trying to get Bridgette to come with me. We've been talking about a family vacation — we're planning to visit Bridgette's grandparents in Arizona.

**I'm more involved with the kids, and I share a different interest with each of them.**  
Aaralynn loves art and we go to a place in the mall where you can choose different canvases and paint for \$20. Last time we went, she painted her own interpretation of Van Gogh's The Starry Night in hot pink and white. I did a paint-by-numbers of Baby Yoda. I'm a volunteer firefighter, which means a lot to me — saving lives — and Aaralynn did a painting for me of the American flag with the thin red line for firefighters.

**I took the whole family to a water park and it was amazing.**  
We spent all day riding the big water slides. And I didn't have to worry about work because when you're in the water, you're not on your phone!



**I was 19 when my daughter, Maddie, was born and we're very close.**

I raised her for most of her life. We go fishing and we ride motorcycles. She helps me work on my truck — she'll hand me my tools. The other day we went to a swap meet in my truck. We both like country music and we'll listen to Luke Combs and Vince Gill. She's my little D.J. She'll say "Hey Dad, have you heard this?" She introduced me to Morgan Wallen, and now I really like him.

**Michael and I go to gun shows.**  
He'll ask questions about the guns and I'll say, "Have you ever heard of the M1 Garand that was used in World War II?" I'll pick it up and show him the mechanics. I try to teach him anything I know about guns that will keep him safe. "Don't aim a gun at anybody and treat every gun as though it's loaded."

**Bridgette and I are spending time together in the evening.**  
We always used to have our phones in our hands, but now we're looking each other in the eye. And we're watching T.V. together. We both like Yellowstone and Tulsa King. At work if we're on the same shift, we'll sit away from everyone else and have lunch together. I love those moments.

**I'm a whole lot less stressed.**  
I'm not even worried about whether the phone is going to ring at home. Before, my guys would say, "Oh Tommy will come in and deal with it." Well now that Tommy ain't dealing with it, they succeed themselves, and they're more independent. And I'm not staring into the phone when one of the kids is asking a question. I'm listening and connecting instead of half connecting. I'm much happier, and the kids are ecstatic.



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