

# Tonya Williams

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**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Walmart Supercenter #1809**  
**Jonesville, MI**

I'm a 38-year-old single mom going through a divorce. I was devastated when my husband left me, and I had a lot of anxiety. I felt like a hamster spinning in a wheel. That led to a strain on my relationships with my kids, Cora and Kaden, because we weren't interacting. I spend a lot of time driving for work, and my diet consisted of fast food because it was convenient. I wasn't exercising and I gained weight.

I downloaded the Thrive app and read about a single mom with a similar story to mine. I really related to her. She's healthier and happier now, and she inspired me. Since I've been on my own Challenge, so many things have changed. Where to even begin?

I'll start with food — every Sunday, I plan and prepare meals for the week. I make salads to eat on the road. My favorite is chopped salad with cucumber, green olives, pickles, and turkey. I cut back on soda and started drinking coke zero. But I've weaned myself off diet drinks and I only have water now.

In the morning, I'll make breakfast skillet with scrambled eggs, sausage and peppers. Cora, who's seven, likes to help me cook dinner. We all love rotisserie chicken with veggies and wild rice. My daughter is obsessed with baked broccoli. She calls it "trees!" The kids prefer to eat at home now rather than at restaurants. And it takes me back to my childhood! My mom always made dinner, regardless of what was going on. I feel so much better and I've lost 62 pounds in the past year.

Eating together brings us together. We sit down at the table without electronics, and we make plans. At dinner one night we decided to go skiing at Bittersweet Mountain. Last Sunday after church, we went there for the day. It was Cora's first time skiing. She's so determined and it was exciting to see her enjoyment. I think I blew up my camera on my phone taking pictures and videos!

Cora and I ride our bikes down the road when it's nice outside. When it's cold, I ride my stationary bike, and I'll do five-minute YouTube workouts. My daughter will be with me doing kids' workouts. We're having fun exercising together. And we go bowling as a family. I used to be in a league and it becomes super competitive between me and Kaden. Cora gets excited if she knocks down three pins!



I'm appreciating the little mom-and-daughter moments. Cora and I go for pedicures, which is something we'd never done before. I like neutral colors, and she goes for the sparkles. When I see her smile, it makes my day.

I'm doing 5K runs and I feel so accomplished. I run with my in-laws, Dave and Tam, my ex-husband's parents. We're still very close. We encourage each other and sign up for different races. I started doing more walking than running, but now I'm running the whole race. It's something I never thought I'd be able to do, and I love it. When I'm running, I don't have to worry or think about anything except getting to the finish line.

For me, this journey is not just about working out, it's about working on my soul. My faith is important to me, and every single morning, I read a verse from the Bible. That helps reduce my anxiety so I don't get overwhelmed.

On Wednesdays, I'm in a Bible study group with Dave and Tam. I also joined a women's group at church. We talk about the challenges of raising children in today's society. I've always believed in God, but now my faith is bringing me more joy. I got baptized last August. It was wonderful.

I have an inspiration board in my bedroom. It motivates me to do self-reflection. There are verses from the Bible, my baptism certificate, and photos. It's nice looking at it to remind myself how far I've come.

I love the Microstep about repeating a positive affirmation. This is my favorite one: "I'm ready to let go of what no longer serves and continue on my journey of self-acceptance."

I'm confident again. I start each day with a grateful heart, and I know I am in the best place I've ever been physically, mentally, and emotionally. I know God has a plan for me and there are good things to come.

