

Brenton Jeffery

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\$5,000 WINNER
Walmart Customer
Excelsior Springs, MO

I had a charmed childhood. We didn't have a lot, but there was a lot of love. We're all creative in our family; we're all performers. I sing and dance, and in my 20s I worked in dinner theater. But things spiraled because I wanted success and I thought, "If I can't have the picture of success I have in my mind, I don't want anything." I started drinking and really throwing my life away.

I am an alcoholic and needed help.

I got fired from a job because I was drunk during a performance. In 2021, I was just a wreck. I was drinking whiskey and couldn't stay sober for any length of time. Sometimes before I'd go to sleep I'd think, "You know what, if I don't wake up, is that the worst thing?" My family worried that if I didn't answer the phone they'd find me dead in my apartment. I remember being on the couch for an entire weekend. I slowly got up and I was like, "Brenton, you're at the door of life or death." I said, "I want to live." So I started the Thrive Challenge five months ago. I'm in a wonderful 12-step addiction program called Celebrate Recovery, and I have a supportive church group. Alcoholism definitely runs in the family — my dad is three years sober now.

I avoid the local haunts where I used to go and be wild.

I started drinking flavored soda water in a tumbler with ice. I hear that sound of the ice and it's therapeutic for me. The temptation to drink is strong sometimes, but when I feel that grip, support is always there. Recently, I went to see a friend who's been in recovery for years and said, "Hey, girl, I need you to pray with me, because this is a bad time." She stepped right over, we prayed, and the craving went away. I know I'm not doing this alone.

I'm getting into yoga.

I got a couple of DVDs from the library, started practicing, and was like, "Wow, this is amazing." It's very mindful and I've learned how to use conscious breathing day-to-day to calm me down when my thoughts are going to crazy places. I tell myself, "Get back to your breath and assess the situation." I'm eating better and I've lost weight.



It used to be microwave pizza all the time, now I make protein shakes with frozen berries, and oatmeal. For lunch I might have a peanut butter and applesauce sandwich. For dinner I'll make a stir fry with green veggies.

Don't get me started on what I'm loving most: rollerblading!

I always loved rollerblading as a child and now I've gotten back to it. I just had to get past the fear of doing it again. It is such a rush and takes me back to those wonderful times I had as a kid. Sometimes it's just me and the road: sometimes I listen to music; show tunes mostly, from Starlight Express and Xanadu. When I'm rollerblading, I honestly feel like I'm flying: physically, emotionally, spiritually. I've heard it said that everything you want is on the other side of fear. And it's true. It makes me think, "Ooh what else is possible?"

I've got my whole family back — it's a miracle.

I'll go to my parents' house and we'll watch Barnwood Builders, which my dad loves. We'll talk and we'll laugh. My dad will pick up the guitar and my mom will sing and we'll all join in. My dad loves classic rock 'n roll like "Heartache Tonight" by the Eagles. Or we'll sing hymns like "Where The Roses Never Fade" or "It Is Well With My Soul." We're a Southern gospel family.

My dream: to write, write, write.

Writing a musical is a huge goal. And I'd love to direct. Right now, my pastor wants me to write a monologue about where I am in my life.

I'm 34, single, and really happy about that.

I'm not shutting the door to a partner in the future, but I'm finally at the point where I love being alone.

For the first time in my life, I'm okay being queer.

I finally said, "I'm here, I'm queer. Get used to it." That should be celebrated. I'm Brenton Jeffereys... no labels!



THRIVE