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For as long as I can remember I've struggled with self-confidence, which goes all the way back to my childhood. I grew up with my mom, who had mental health issues and was depressed. It was tough because our home was unstable. My mom eventually disconnected from our whole family. I'm 32 now and married to my middle school sweetheart, Ryan. We've been together since we were 13, and we have a four-year-old daughter, Addelyn. Last October, my mom passed away and I went through every emotion under the sun, knowing that my daughter would never meet her.

I was having a hard time and I wasn't feeling good about myself.

I used to be a bodybuilder and I've always worked out, but I was unhappy with the way I looked in the mirror. My husband's a great cook and whatever he made, like his butternut squash ravioli with cream sauce, I would eat too much. We didn't have a lot of money growing up — you finished what was on your plate and that followed me into adulthood. It was the same for my husband.

I didn't need another weight loss program, I needed a mindset shift.

So I started the Thrive Challenge and I started listening to my body. When I was full, I'd tell myself: "It's okay not to eat everything." We used to eat steak and burgers, now we're eating fish and veggies. My daughter surprised me because she loves mahi-mahi. I've learned about portion control. The other day we went out for brunch. I had fruit and granola then ordered the restaurant's special donut with peanut butter and bacon. But I only had three bites. The old me would've finished it.

We're being good role models for our daughter.

She has Coats' disease and is blind in her right eye. Because kids can be cruel, we want her to be confident with the way she looks and feels, and we're helping her make Better Choices. Now, she's choosing apples or bananas for snacks.

I'm changing things up at the gym.

I've been working out and lifting weights for so long, I was stuck in a rut. Now when I'm on the elliptical, I bump up the resistance.



As a family, we go for walks with our beagle, Mick. My daughter loves animals and we take her to the zoo. And we're spending a lot of time playing with Legos. I didn't realize that at 32 I would love Lego so much! It's great for Addelyn because it helps with her dexterity.

I went for a vacation to the beach for my cousin's wedding and felt confident.

I wore blue jeans shorts and a black tank top on the boardwalk — normally I would wear workout pants. It felt great because I wasn't trying to hide myself. I've lost 10 pounds and when I get ready in the morning, I'm comfortable in my own skin. I'll smile and even strike a pose which I used to do as a bodybuilder. I'll say to myself: "You've still got it!"

I'm a better leader at work.

I've only been a manager for a year and I'm finding out that it's important to get to know each member of your team on a deeper level, asking them, "How are you feeling?" One associate is having marriage difficulties and she'll talk to me about it. Sometimes people just need you to listen; they don't even need advice. I want people to know they can come to me with any problems.

I'm planning to do an M.A., and a Ph.D. because I loved being in school.

I already have my bachelor's degree in psychology and I'd like to study organizational psychology. My dream is to one day become a college professor.

I'm grateful for my family.

I got married when I was 21. We waited a long time to start a family and we only wanted one child. I know I can give Addelyn the attention that I felt I never got as a kid. I've realized that everything that happens in life shapes who you are and who you become. So instead of looking back and hating the way that I grew up, I have more acceptance. I'm thriving. That means looking inward. It means looking in the mirror and finally seeing who I really am.

