

Lori Dawkins

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I had a heart attack four and a half years ago when I was 48, which was a big shock. Part of it was genetics, but it was also because of my lifestyle, I was a smoker and I wasn't eating well. I haven't touched a cigarette since that day and I started a heart-healthy diet. I eat a lot of chicken and vegetables. But I still wasn't feeling good. I was cranky with my husband, Kevin, and he was going through a lot too — he just got through lung cancer. We have 15 grandchildren between us and one on the way and I wanted to have energy for them all. But I was not fun to be around. I felt stuck.

Kathryn Carpitcher, this year's Thrive Challenge Grand Champ is my good friend.

I saw how her life had changed, she's amazing. She said you should absolutely download the Thrive app and get started so I did.

I began by getting up and moving.

At work, I walk 16 thousand steps. We got a swimming pool for our backyard and I do laps, running around the pool in circles, the neighbors must think I'm crazy! My 13-year-old granddaughter loves to get in the pool with me. We swim, jump around and float. It's a lot of fun.

I started a garden and I've been doing very well.

This summer we grew squash, peppers, and okra. I'm enjoying watering, digging and picking out the weeds. I find it very relaxing.

Kevin and I have a side-by-side ranger, we live in the country and ride on the dirt roads.

It's a new experience for us and we are enjoying it; being in the fresh air is much better than staying indoors watching T.V. There's always something new to see, like deer and wild turkeys. Our two dogs, Little Man and Lola, come along for the ride.

We spend quality time with our family.

We catch up with the kids and grandkids and we all like to play Clue, or Yahtzee, a dice game. We're kind of competitive, but my grandson, Isaiah, always wins!

When I wake up, I say: "It's going to be a good day, Lori, everything's going to be okay!"

Before, I was kind of cranky in the morning. Now I have a more positive mindset. I am no longer that person grumbling about things.

I don't snack between meals and I don't have cookies or sodas in the house.

We love making turkey and chicken street tacos with avocado on top and Mexican seasoning lettuce and tomato and salsa. It is so good. And we're not eating out so we're saving money.



I'm learning to de-stress.

I've incorporated meditation and Resets into my daily routine, the one with rain is very relaxing. When I come home from work I always need to decompress and I do box breathing, where you breathe in, hold your breath then breathe out. It's good for Kevin too because of his lungs.

Being around my family makes me 100 percent joyful.

We've bought a new house and we put up a Christmas tree which we haven't done for a few years. We spent a whole day decorating and putting up lights and I can feel the joy of the season. It's great doing it together because we used to take each other for granted. It makes my heart feel good.

Microsteps help me be more positive.

This is my favorite: "If you can do something in two minutes, do it immediately." So that could be wiping the cabinet down or putting clothes in the dryer. Just practicing the two-minute rule is amazing. The house feels peaceful and I'm not overwhelmed.

Every night I take a bubble bath.

I used to have a quick shower, now I just lie back and relax and let the day go. Then I set a timer and put down my phone at 8 pm. I'll do my breathing exercises and de-stress. It's been amazing; I get a good sleep.

The doctor is happy.

I've lost 42 pounds. My cholesterol is down and all my numbers are great, and my doctor says that's a lot to do with my lifestyle.

I love my life now.

Oh my goodness, our new grandbaby is coming in April and looking ahead, I'm just super, super happy.



THRIVE