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I used to feel overwhelmed and stressed; I needed more energy, and I wanted to eat better. I'm 41, and I was feeling constantly defeated. I knew I needed to make some lifestyle changes. My husband and I started coaching my granddaughter, Isabella's, T-ball team. And the first week I was just exhausted, chasing around ten kids ages three to six. I wanted to feel better! I heard about the Thrive Challenge and I got started!

My first Microstep was to stop drinking soda and sweet tea.

I started by switching to diet soda, but then I cut soda out completely, and now I just drink water. I also pack my lunch instead of buying fried deli food. It saves a lot of money — and helps me make better food choices.

For dinner, we're finding great recipes we all enjoy.

We make crockpot taco chicken that the kids enjoy — it's super-easy, but really good. We also make a delicious orange chicken and rice recipe that only takes 20 minutes to cook.

I began feeling better and found I had more energy.

As the weeks went on coaching became easier and easier, and I was less tired. I love coaching T-ball, it's given me a reason to be active, and not just sit at home and watch T.V. I enjoy teaching the kids now and watching them grow — it's so rewarding. And it's even better that we do it as a family!

Because I have more energy, it's more enjoyable to get out and do things.

I love playing with my granddaughters, and chasing them around. I use a step counter and it's great seeing how active I am — I usually walk 12 thousand steps a day.

Because I'm moving more, I'm sleeping better.

Microsteps like going to bed at the same time really help me with my nighttime routine. I'm in bed at 10 p.m., and I'm getting eight hours of sleep a night. My body just knows when it's bedtime. And I stopped falling asleep with the T.V. on. I put my phone on Do Not Disturb. I keep my room dark and quiet and just close my eyes once I'm in bed. I found this helps me fall asleep faster and get a sound night of sleep. And I'm refreshed in the morning.

I'm taking breaks to relax, and I'm less stressed.

After work, I sit in my car for 15 minutes and decompress. That helps me to leave work at work — and when I get home I can focus on my family. I'm making sure I use all my vacation time (PTO), which I never used to do. I'm more focused when I'm at work, I'm getting quality time with my family, and I don't feel burnt out all the time.



We're connecting as a family.

My husband, Keith, and I are bonding and we're more affectionate. We never part ways in the morning or go to bed at night without a kiss and without saying, "I love you."

We took our first trips as a blended family this year.

Keith and I took our kids on a road trip to Washington D.C. in March. Then later in the year, we took them to Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, and Los Angeles. The trips have been amazing.

I'm more confident.

I remind myself every day that I am doing a good job, that no one is perfect, and that those imperfections make me who I am. I feel better about myself. I've learned that you don't have to change the world in a day, but every Microstep is a step in the right direction.

I have more energy to give back.

I really enjoy collecting and donating items for the military, and I send my sister packages. I send things like lotions, chapstick, card games and food items like crackers, breakfast bars, and candy; things that give them a taste of home while they serve our country. My rule of thumb is one box for her and three for her unit. They share the items with everyone.

The Thrive Challenge has made a big difference to my life.

It's so motivating. I am a better me for my family, my peers, and my associates. I am less stressed and happier — I feel better.



THRIVE