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My biggest struggle has been making enough time for my family. I put everything into work, and my home life was suffering. I'm 33 and I have two daughters, 15-year-old Tori and nine-year-old Mila. I was promoted, and I love my job, but now I have an hour commute. We only have one car and my husband, Nick, quit his job so he can drive me to work and pick me up. After work, I'd be on the phone all night and in bed, I'd keep the T.V. on because I found the background noise soothing, but I was sleeping poorly. I've always been an upbeat person but I've been really down and I was having dark thoughts — it was scary.

I decided it was time to make a change.

Sunday Oguntoyinbo encouraged me to start the Thrive Challenge and my first step was switching out energy drinks for water. I didn't need to lose weight but I wanted to eat better and the girls and I are cooking together. Tori's an amazing cook — we'll throw together a casserole or spaghetti, and we all love a good pot of chili.

We're sitting down to dinner without our phones.

Bonding with my family makes me happy — we're having conversations. Mila loves wolves so we're talking about going to the Seacrest Wolf Preserve in Florida next year. Tori tells us about her plans to go skating or to the mall. We'll talk about safety and ask her who will be there.

I'm spending time with the kids.

Mila dances and makes Tik Tok videos. That girl loves to be on camera! She also loves to make paper dragons and I'll help her cut and glue. She'll crawl on my bed and we'll snuggle and read to each other. She likes all the Goosebumps series, which she chose at the school book fair.

Tori got her learner driver's permit, and we're teaching her to drive.

We'll all get in the car together so she can practice. My children are polar opposites. Tori is very quiet, but I'm tickled because she's been opening up to me. The other night she was on the phone and told me she'd been talking to a boy she likes from school. Confiding in me was a big thing for her and for me.

We're taking our three dogs for walks on the nature trails.

I like taking pictures of the trees and water. I took a video of two snakes and Mila was thrilled because she loves snakes and knows a lot about them.



Nick and I enjoy going to thrift stores. Recently he bought me a mini antique wood cabinet with shelves that I love. Last week, he picked me up from work and we went out to dinner. It's been a while since we've splurged like that.

I've stopped scrolling on my phone at night.

We crawl into bed and turn the T.V. off and go to sleep in a silent house. I feel much better in the morning and I'll have more energy to make breakfast for the kids, usually French toast.

Because I'm happier at home, I'm happier at work.

I really love genuine interactions with customers. On my lunch break, I stopped to help an older lady looking for a pink bicycle, but we didn't have it in stock. Then I walked though into the back of the store and I happened to see a pink bike, which had just a little cosmetic damage. The lady and her husband were thrilled and so was I. She even got a discount. I live for those moments — I was on cloud nine.

I reconnected with my biological father.

My parents split up when I was two and I hadn't seen him since I was 12. I called him and at first we didn't know what to talk about. But at the end of the conversation he said, "I love you." It was very emotional and I was crying. The relationship is new but I think this is going to be very healing for me. He hasn't met my girls yet and we're planning a trip to Louisiana to see him.

I'm thankful for everything in my life.

I'm focusing on all of the blessings in my life. Simply put: I am a better version of myself. I'm so happy I'm on this journey. I don't know what I was waiting for and I only wish I'd started sooner!



THRIVE