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As a child there was always alcohol around the house and I was walking on eggshells. My father was a heavy drinker and a heavy smoker. My mom was loving and supportive, but she had a food addiction. Addiction runs on both sides of my family, along with diabetes and high blood pressure. We'd eat processed food like boxed mashed potatoes and box casseroles, and sugary drinks. At college I started drinking vodka and bourbon, and when I was 20 I had a DUI. I was actually studying criminal justice, and it stays on your record for seven years, so it was the worst thing. I was so depressed and so sad.

Drinking impacted my relationships because when I was drunk, I'd be a different person.

I would wake up the next morning and I wouldn't remember what I'd said. I'd constantly say, "I'm going to stop," but it's easier said than done. Then one day I went with a friend to a party and I got extremely drunk. I drove us back home and my friend has a kid, so it really scared her. I felt so bad, risking my life and other people's lives. After that, I decided to download the Thrive app.

My first step was to remove all the alcohol from my house.

I started drinking cranberry or pineapple juice when I felt like a drink, and after a few weeks I stopped craving alcohol. Now, after work, I go to the YMCA to exercise instead of going home, watching T.V., and drinking. I'll do a muscle conditioning class or a stretch class and when I'm done I feel like I gave it my all. I also go for walks in the sunshine to get my vitamin D. I don't have brain fog, my head feels clear, and I feel good.

I'm reading books about eating right and living a good life.

I've just read a great book called *Maat: Guiding Principles of Moral Living* by Tdka Kilimanjaro and a friend gave me a book I really like: *Dare to Lead* by Brené Brown. I also read *The American Dream* by Walmart's founder, Sam Walton, about entrepreneurship. Reading brings me peace and makes me feel calm. I'm learning a lot about the person I am becoming — someone who is kind and honest who walks with integrity.

I'm enjoying cooking tuna and vegetables in the air fryer.

And I've been making delicious roasted Brussels sprouts. I eat far less sugar and processed foods. I treat myself to yogurt instead of big pieces of cake. I've lost 20 pounds and I feel lighter in every way.



I have more energy, I feel more confident in my clothes, and I'm wearing fitted jeans and cute shirts with my slip-ons. I've also inspired my mom to eat better and lose weight and we are supporting each other now.

I have more confidence when I go into rooms and when I'm speaking to people.

And I have a belief that I can do anything that I want to do. Affirmations help me to stay positive. In the morning I'll say "Today I will be mindful of what I feed my body," and "Today I will not tell a lie."

I'm staying sober and staying strong.

I've changed how my friends and I hang out together. Instead of going to bars, we're going to parks for a walk on Saturday morning and grabbing coffee. Or we'll go to yoga classes together. When my family got together for my mother's birthday, it was hard because my cousins were drinking and having fun and offering me alcohol. But I declined — I made myself some green tea and sat by the fire sipping it. The next morning I was the first one up, drinking water, and coffee, feeling good and ready to start the day.

I'm showing up better at work and I got a promotion.

I'm more attentive and more present and I feel I'm more beneficial to the team. And I'm about to start a Masters in cybersecurity.

I love the Thrive Challenge because it's a judgment-free place.

I can track my progress without anyone saying "You messed up." I just get notifications saying "Well done." Right now my goal is to stay sober, and I'd like to start dating — definitely with someone who is sober.



THRIVE