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I lost my mom two years ago from kidney failure. She was my best friend and my pastor. We were so close and we went everywhere together. We'd be on the phone about 20 times a day! I was also taking care of my granddaddy, but then he passed away. There's been a lot of loss in my life. I lost my eldest daughter, Mikki, when she was 12; she was hit by a car. I'm 53 now with two grown children, my daughter, Ebony, and my son, Jay, and three grandbabies — I call them my grand blessings.

Losing weight has been difficult and I was doing a lot of comfort eating.

I weighed 565 pounds, I had high blood pressure, arthritis, and type 2 diabetes. Mobility was a big problem and I really wanted to change. I want to live a long time to enjoy my grandbabies.

A few months ago I started the Thrive Challenge.

First, I stopped buying fast food. Microsteps — like food prepping — encouraged me, because they're easy to commit to. I get healthy hints on Thrive that have helped change my eating habits, stay alert, and notice what I'm putting into my body. I ask myself: Do you really want those chips?

I make delicious veggie stir fries and wraps.

I'll get roasted chicken from the Walmart deli. And I'm baking or pan-frying salmon. I'll have it with wild rice, spinach and avocado. Instead of chips, I'll have fruit — I love watermelon, I'm a Southern girl! I've been researching recipes that don't use sugar. I'm making delicious, healthy desserts like Greek yogurt with nuts and berries and a little dark chocolate.

Because I'm not eating out as much, I'm saving money.

I put the money I would have spent on fast food into a savings jar — and it adds up.

I'm getting up a little earlier in the morning.

I have time to move around doing cleaning and little chores — I keep my body moving and get my heart working.

Every day I exercise at home.

I use my hand weights, and I do squats and stretches. I'm enjoying chair yoga. I put on my gospel music, like Koryn Hawthorne and Kirk Franklin. It feels good to move my body. I'm also taking water aerobic classes. Being in the water is awesome. I feel light and I can move without any pain.

The Thrive Resets help me to stay calm.

I like the breathing Resets and the little self-massage videos. I've learned to take a step back from stressful situations and bring down my tension. I also love reading my Bible.



My church community is very important to me.

I do a lot of service, and I've just been promoted. I'm the Youth Minister — the head of our children's church. I can really encourage the children and move with them now. And I've had a big boost in my confidence and self-esteem.

At work, I'm connecting with my co-workers.

I love greeting everyone in the morning with encouraging words to help them to start their day. There's a nice group of ladies, and we chat in breaks. Since starting the Challenge, my managers have been so impressed with the improvements I've made. I'm also studying for my bachelor's degree in management and leadership through Walmart.

I'm connecting with my family.

I call them regularly and we talk and laugh. I'm the oldest of three children and since our mother's transition I've become the matriarch. Supporting my two baby sisters and their children are my priority, along with my own children and my grand blessings.

Affirmations help me stay positive.

I say to myself, "Girl, God got you," "I'm more than enough," and "Hello Beautiful." My self-care and self-love have gone through the roof.

So far, I've lost 30 pounds and my blood pressure has dropped tremendously.

Before Thrive, I wasn't motivated to move and make healthy food choices, now I'm consistently making good choices. I have more energy for my grandbabies. One of my dreams is to become the first of my mother's children to buy her own home!

And I'd love to take a vacation — I've never had one.

I want to go to Myrtle Beach; my mother and I always wanted to go, but we never got a chance. I'd take her picture with me, so it would feel like she was there. I feel hopeful now. I feel sincerely happy — I'm learning to live and enjoy life.



THRIVE