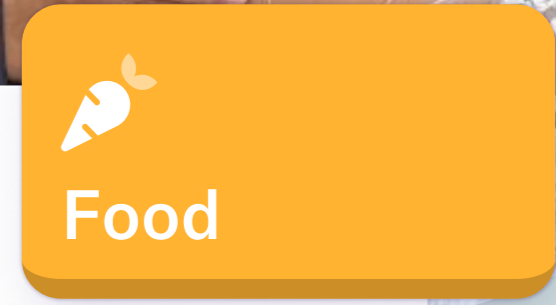


\$5,000 WINNER

Francisco Lozano

Return Center #9153
Waco, TX



Microstep

I decided to cut out alcohol and cut back on sodas.



Outcome

"I feel better physically and my clothes fit better."

I'm the father of three boys and I'm turning 49 soon, and I recently came to the realization that I'm getting close to the age in which my father passed away — 52. He had diabetes and suffered health complications. My mother has diabetes as well, and we recently found out that my wife, Maria, does too. Maria is a breast cancer survivor and has been through a lot, and it's all a reminder for me how important health is. I don't want history to repeat itself. I want to be healthy and strong for my boys and my wife, and to do that, I need to be taking better care of myself, so I started the Thrive Challenge.

I started with one Microstep: incorporating more steps into my day.

It was hard to keep up on the days where I was especially tired, but I stayed committed. I slowly started to make walking part of my day. I would walk around the neighborhood with Maria after work, or go to the gym in the evening to get in my steps. With all the issues our family has gone through in the past several years due to Maria's cancer diagnosis, I put myself aside for a while. I'd gained weight and hadn't put my health first, but walking more was a way to start changing that.

One Microstep that was challenging for me was drinking more water.

I drink sodas and an occasional beer, but I decided to cut out alcohol and cut back on sodas, too. I still have an occasional Coke, but I find that now that I'm drinking less soda, I crave other types of foods that are better for me. My wife is an amazing cook and she makes a chicken posole verde recipe with chicken breast and lots of veggies. We cook with olive oil and grape seed oil and we've cut back on bread and flour tortillas. The air fryer has also been a game-changer for us.

Thinking about my dad's passing has reconnected me with my mom.

I find that on this journey, I'm more connected to my mom than ever. I remember years ago she would always call me and I never made the effort to call her. But now, I love picking up the phone and reaching out. We talk about our family, and who my dad was. We talk about the boys and how I'm trying to raise them in the best way I can. My oldest, Daniel, is about to graduate college and my baby Gabriel is only 14, so they're all in different stages, but we all connect really well. After work, we go outside and play basketball together, and I ask them about their day. I put my phone away when I'm with them and try to be really present.

Today, my clothes fit me better, I have more energy, and I feel motivated to keep going.

I still have difficult days but I try to keep telling myself, "You can do this," and it helps me continue. My wife has also been an amazing support for me, and I'm so grateful to have her. With everything she's been through — and we've been through as a family — I'd love to take her and the boys on a cruise to celebrate.

Thrive has helped me feel better, but even more importantly, it's connected me with my family in a completely new way.

My wife has an app on her phone that has different prayers each day, and we do a nightly 10-minute prayer together before bed. It's a really powerful way to end the day and it's helped me become more positive. I used to get caught up in negative thinking when Maria was diagnosed. I would think about what would happen to our family if something happened to her, and what I would do with the boys. Now, I feel at peace knowing we're healthy and connected as a family, and I'm excited for what's in store for us.