

Noah Bourgeois

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I've had a lifetime of struggles. I started taking drugs when I was 17 and I've dealt with addiction for a long time. I ended up homeless for a while. My mom was on drugs too. I got off drugs and alcohol nine years ago and, thankfully, I've been clean and sober since then. My mom is also sober. My church really helped me, but I still wasn't feeling great. I was eating fast food all the time, I had high cholesterol, and my blood pressure was up. I'm divorced and live on my own. There was a lot of loneliness and I was probably eating my feelings, to be honest.

I stepped on the scale and weighed 260 pounds.
I'm 41 and my doctor said I needed to change my lifestyle if I didn't want to go on medication. My co-worker, Rhonda Collins, inspired me to start the Thrive Challenge. I said, "You know what, I can do this."

I started by staying away from cakes, candy, and soda pop and drinking more water.
I've stopped eating processed foods and I'm cooking for myself. I make a lot of stir fries with chicken and green vegetables, like broccoli and snap peas.

I love dancing — it's good for the heart and gets me going in the morning.
I'll dance for up to an hour in my living room to pop music like Dua Lipa, Justin Timberlake, and Katy Perry. It's such fun and makes me feel energetic. It's a way to express myself and feel better about myself. I have a stair-stepper at home and I use the treadmill and weights at the community center gym. My energy levels shot through the roof and I've lost 24 pounds.

To relax, I do breathing exercises and stretch.
Sometimes I'll watch a good television show that reminds of a simpler time like the 90s show, Family Matters. I also pray and read the Bible. I'm much happier and I'm loving who I am.

The fellowship at my church means everything to me.
I'm not judged for having tattoos, or for my past. They love me for me. I'm connecting more with people because I'm motivated to be a better friend. Also, Instead of saying, "Hey, what am I going to get when I go to church today?" Now it's more like: "What can I give when I go to church?"



I'm so grateful for my friend, Steve, and his family.
I met Steve and his wife, Grace, through our church. They're so supportive and have even let me live in their house several times through my ups and downs. They're family to me and their kids call me Uncle Noah. We have dinner together and play board games like Monopoly. They've shown me what a family can look like, because my parents got divorced when I was two and it was hard.

I've made a budget.
I make sure I have enough for my rent, my electric bill, and my phone bill. My dad died in 2019, but one of the things that he taught me was to take a notebook and write down the date I'm going to get paid, what bills I have to pay, and what I need, like food and gas. Then I know what I'll have left for entertainment. I'm doing that and I feel disciplined and organized.

At work, I tell everyone, "Hey, if you have a problem, I'm here to listen."
They can talk and I don't even need to say anything. The other day I had an associate come up to me because she knows I pray a lot, and she asked me to pray for her dog who was at the vet and was very sick. The next time I saw her, she said her dog was eating again and was healed. She gave me a high five, and we were both so happy.

I'd like to move up in my career and become a team lead.
I had a lot of management experience before working at Walmart and I think that now, I'll be a much better leader, somebody who'll be there for associates and who will inspire them. I'll be patient and kind and help build everyone up so they can be their best.

