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\$5,000 WINNER
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I lost my dad unexpectedly last December. We were very close and it threw me for a loop. Now, I'm caring for my mum who has scoliosis. My husband, George, is disabled with severe arthritis and I have a lot of responsibilities. I was always on the run and time management was my biggest problem. I'd eat fast food and wasn't taking care of myself. I'm 59 and I'd been doing the Thrive Challenge on and off, but I decided to commit to it.

I believe a good diet ties in with everything.

If your body feels good, you do everything better. So I stopped the drive-through fast food runs and began using my slow cooker. I make a big pot of chicken or beef stew with tomatoes, carrots and peas, and there are always leftovers. I sometimes make soup the next day. I prepare salads in separate little containers which I keep in my refrigerator, and I'll grab one for lunch on my way out to work. My energy levels have increased and I don't feel washed out all the time.

I set aside time to walk for 30 minutes every day.

We live on a small farm and I walk on the little trail in the woods behind my house. In fact, my dad created that trail, and it's healing for me to get back there and listen to nature. As we roll into fall, I've noticed the sounds change and the leaves and grasses are starting to look different.

My dad and I shared a love of horses.

We enjoyed riding together. My horse's name is Chip. My dad's horse is called Boy — he wasn't real creative with names! Now I have both and I love spending time with them every day. Riding is very freeing for me — it's about the trust and bond that I have with my horses. I feel good and let go of the stress.

I'm connecting with people who mean a lot to me.

There are lots of ladies my age who love horses as much as I do. My cousin, Cassidy, has offered to ride with me now I don't have my dad. My brother, James, is a great support. Like me, he doesn't have children and we're very close. My mom is my other support person and she's my buddy. She's so kind and wonderful. Before my dad passed, we'd go out to eat every Friday to her favorite seafood restaurant. We still do that and look forward to it every week.



I'm writing down memories of my dad in a journal, and I carry it everywhere with me.

I'm blessed with so many wonderful memories. When I was little, I told my dad, "I want a polka dotted horse." And when I was 13 he got me my horse, called Freckles! I played the piano and he used to put 50 cent pieces on the piano keys to get me to practice. It makes me cry remembering everything, but I usually end up smiling when I've written it down. It's a release.

George and I are spending more time together.

We go on day trips to the mountains and have a picnic on the Blue Ridge Parkway. We talk about how great a turkey and cheese sandwich tastes in the mountain air! Much better than any restaurant. We like to watch superhero movies and recently went to see Thor: Love and Thunder, which was great. We also enjoy watching football on T.V. together.

I've been at Walmart for 34 years and I love my job.

Now I'm taking care of myself, I'm more productive and less preoccupied with my problems. I'm more open. If you feel better, you'll do a better job.

In the evening, I take time to relax.

I used to push myself to do one last chore. But at 7.30 p.m. I tell myself my chores are done. They'll be there for me tomorrow. I take a hot shower, put my electronics away, and talk with my husband. I'm in bed by 9:30 and fall asleep easily.

I'm feeling more calm and hopeful.

As my friends say: grief doesn't get easy, but you learn to live with it. And that's what I'm doing with the help of people I love.



THRIVE