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I lost my mom two years ago to stomach cancer. We were very close — she was my best friend. I'd pick up the phone and call her for the smallest thing, or we'd watch a movie together. It was hard without her, and I was eating junk food all the time. I was sluggish and depressed.

I went to the doctor for a regular visit and found out my blood pressure was very high.

It was in the 2000s, and I'm only 38. I weighed 225 pounds. My doctor said, "I'm surprised you're still walking around — we've got to get this down." He put me on not one, but three different medications. I knew I needed to make some changes, and nearly a year ago I downloaded the Thrive app.

First, I started going to the gym.

I began with 30 minutes on the treadmill, three days a week. Then I increased my time. I started working out on the stair stepper, and with weights. There was less tightness in my muscles and I found I had more energy. Now, working out is therapeutic for me, and it brings me joy. The gym is my safe place.

I bought a bicycle and I ride on the beautiful trails near my home.

I also go for walks around the neighborhood. As I walk, I listen to music like Adele, and Anne-Marie, and enjoy the sunshine. I feel like I don't have a care in the world. Sometimes, my significant other, Stephen, comes with me.

We're cooking and we don't eat out as much.

For breakfast I have oatmeal with berries and almond milk. I cut out red meat. We make grilled salmon or baked chicken with veggies and black beans. Stephen is very supportive and helps with meal prepping. If I'm struggling to stay on track and I pick up chips, he'll remind me not to eat them! Now, I've learned to substitute Doritos with veggie chips. At first I didn't enjoy them, but now I actually like them. My hard work is paying off — I've lost 38 pounds.

My friends, Terria and Mieya, and I meet up and talk about our lives.

We encourage each other. They've helped me tremendously since my mom died. We sometimes go to a dinner spot called Sugar Magnolia, and I'll get salmon salad. Or we go to the river front and watch the ships go by. There's always laughter and no judgments.

To relax in the evening I listen to nature meditations.

I love the sound of rain — it's very calming and helps me get to sleep. I also do stretching and breathing Resets on the Thrive app.



Prayer helps me get through difficult times.

And I find different ways to deal with grief on TikTok. Sometimes watching the videos makes me emotional, but I am finding it's better to let it all out rather than bottling it up. I've learned how to cope with my grief, and I feel peaceful. I know my Mom is in a better place and she's not in pain. She visits me in my dreams and she lets me know that it's okay for me to live my life.

Stephen I plan our week. We write down our goals and check up on those goals.

We communicate better. We'll get in the car and go for a ride and look at the scenery. We went on a trip to Hilton Head, South Carolina for the weekend. We met new people and went for late night walks on the beach. We just enjoyed spending time together.

Since I started the challenge I'm more confident.

I've stepped out of my comfort zone at work, and I've taken on more challenges. And my health is better. My blood pressure is much lower and I'm down to one pill. My doctor says I'll be able to get off all the medication in another month or so.

I'm on the right path.

I'm going back to school to complete my nursing degree. And Stephen and I are working toward purchasing a home. We're also planning to get married and start a family. I know I'll be a great mom because I was raised by a great mom.



THRIVE