

Shawanda Hunter

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\$5,000 WINNER

**Walmart Supercenter #7290
Crestwood, KY**

Before I started the Thrive Challenge, I wasn't healthy. I wasn't sleeping, I wasn't eating well, and I was going back into old habits from years ago when I used to purge. I was stressed and needed to figure out what it meant to love myself. I was not happy with who I was on the inside, which made me struggle to see my beauty on the outside. Cycles of pain and grief over the years came to the forefront one day. After being promoted to Academy Lead, I realized that I would never be able to effectively lead my team if I didn't get better.

I decided I needed to help myself.

I needed an accountability partner. I have a Master's in psychology, and for a while had my license as a therapist. It's always easier to help others, but when you're the one in the situation, you don't know where to turn. I had known about the Thrive Challenge from reading the books in the break room, and seeing my associates do it, and one day I said to myself, "You know what, Shawanda, it's your time to thrive — you help everybody else, why can't you help yourself?"

The first thing I did was to start meal prepping on weekends for the week. That helped me stop stress-eating to avoid pain or whatever I was dealing with. I limit my intake of processed foods and eat more fresh vegetables and organic meats. Cauliflower is my new favorite. I started doing power bowls, which I didn't even know was a thing.

I also walk every day and I push myself to go farther. I don't count steps — I just walk. I'm not focusing on my weight, as I'm happy with my size — I just want to be healthier as I get older.



Now I'm happy to wake up and get out of bed.

I'm sleeping eight to nine hours a night, versus five or six hours before. I set a goal to be in bed by eight p.m. — nine at the latest. I don't need as much coffee and I have energy to focus now. Before, waking up and getting out of bed was a struggle. I was depressed and wanted to stay in bed. Now I feel lighter, and wake up everyday with a newfound love for myself.

My family is far away, but I'm making more time to stay connected with them. COVID has changed a lot of gatherings with my family, but video phone calls can still make special memories.

The Thrive Challenge has allowed me to love myself.

I'm more grateful for life and how beautiful it is. I don't take what life has to offer for granted. Life is precious and I deserve to love myself and enjoy life to the fullest. I'm looking forward to stepping into my purpose and owning my destiny.

The Thrive Challenge has changed my life for the better. It's like I'm sitting outside now, taking in a breath of fresh air. It's like watching the leaves change — that's how your life can change before your eyes. At one moment, the leaves are brown — but as you start the Thrive Challenge, they turn into this beautiful flower.



THRIVE