

## Jose

Hello my name is Jose. I entered Brooklyn Treatment Court at the age of twenty. I was living a crazy life, selling drugs and smoking massive marijuana. I was going to college, staying with my family out in Jersey, my aunt and my uncle, and I had stopped smoking marijuana for a good year. I went and got my GED February 2005. I was starting to make drastic changes in my life, because before that I was also selling marijuana. But, there was something inside of like the weed just kept calling me...calling me. And, I just...I just left Jersey. I dropped out of college. I just went back to marijuana harder then I was before, and the marijuana, it made me lazy. I didn't want to do anything, and I didn't want to go out and look for a job. And, I could get weed for cheap.

So, I was like let me just go back and do my little hustle thing, and only two months while I was hustling I got busted. One of my customers called me up, called me up for undercover and my customer. He had cocaine on him, so that made it ever worse. So, I'm going down for weed and cocaine, and on that day in June I got re...well I didn't get remanded. I was sent to the bookings, and I'm a diabetic. I didn't take any insulin, ended up going to the hospital, blood sugar hitting outrageous numbers. I was really destroying myself. I lost a lot of weight and messed up my kidneys. I was released.

Came back to Miss Ferdinand. She gave me a chance. She said, "Jose, are you ready to enter a program?" I was like yeah. That's when I met Ramon. It was like three days. I went to Brooklyn Treatment Court. I wasn't ready. I wasn't ready to make that commitment. I stopped coming...was smoking everyday. Maybe because my birthday was coming up, and I was like...you know what? I'm not ready to give up smoking. I'm really not. I really thought smoking was like the best thing in life. That feeling that I got from it was so beautiful. I felt like I was in total euphoria, a place of bliss, never ending bliss. But, as the days progressed, I just kept thinking about. "Oh my God. Oh my God. They're looking for me. They're looking for me." I became more and more paranoid. Every time I stepped out of my house, I would see a police car. They're waiting for me, and do all crazy type of MacGyver moves to get off my block. And, then in July I was rearrested in the sweeps, me and my so called friend, driving a car. We got busted with some marijuana of course, and I came back to BTC. I was remanded about a week on the island. Miss Ferdinand wanted me to really think about what I'm ready to do, and that remand, that really helped me.

It made me set up my priorities, what was really my necessities. I really needed to get my life straightened out, because the path I was going wasn't helping me. My health was a mess. My life was a mess. I wasn't doing anything for myself, and if I kept going what I was doing, God knows where I would be right now. So Miss Ferdinand said, "I must go to inpatient program." I did two months in a program called Camelot in Staten Island. I was progressing pretty well over there, but I was medically discharged because of my health. They felt they weren't medically equipped.. I had a lot of emotions through that because I got used to that program.

Once you get something, and you have to change, change is not something you take lightly. You

try to fight change, but because I went through thirteen months of treatment, I realized change is constant. The only thing constant is change. Like the temperature it changes. The weather it changes. Your facial features change. Your clothes must change. So, then I entered Odyssey house, where I had to confront a lot of my negative behaviors. I

was very sneaky. I would always go to smoke in the bathroom. Smoking in the bathroom is prohibited. It's a smoke free facility. I broke that rule, and whenever you break a rule in life, no matter what, you must face the consequences. And, in program you on contract. You scrub some floors. You wake up 5 o'clock in the morning, but it's better than when you're out there. You learn from your mistakes in there because when you come out, there are no contracts. You might not be lucky enough to get in a program. You might go do that prison time upstate. My father's doing thirty years already. I haven't seen him since I was six. I went. I had a birthday in there at twenty two, because I just finished getting off contract for bringing unauthorized sneakers. You see not going through the proper procedures, trying to be sneaky, did a little ten day contract. So, I was able to go home but I dealt with it. I was like, what I put myself in this predicament, and I just had to hold it now today in the present.

I've learned from my mistakes. I have learned not act on impulse. I learned to use my consequential thinking. You have to think about all the consequences in every action that you make. Is this action worth me doing this? Should I be breaking into this car? Is it worth going to jail? Is this really worth going to jail? What I'm just happy to see is the transgression that I've worked through this whole period. From the day I stepped into BTC till the day I'm stepping out, I feel I've become a better person. You know, I would just like to thank Shama, Ramon, and Miss Ferdinand for this chance to do a 360 in my life. Thank you.