

## Courtney

I was raised in Bed Stuy, Brooklyn, and I've been living in New York for the better part of my life, and I could really say this has definitely been a journey for me to this point in time in my life right now. This has definitely been a journey. When I first came in to BTC, I could honestly say like I was trying this. They offered me an alternative to jail, and I took it, not realizing how hard I would have to work to get to this point. Believe me when I tell you it took a lot of trips and snags for me to get to this point.

I came into treatment. I wasn't working. I'm usually the type of person that works, stay out of trouble for the most part, but I got lazy. I got lazy and decided to do other things to seek money and, it turned out bad for me. Things just happen to get worse and get worse. One arrest led to another arrest and this. All these things happened gradually at this point in my life. I'm 28 years old. I haven't been convicted of any crimes before. I really don't have a police record, but my decisions gradually ended me up here.

So, when I came into BTC, it was like it's going to be a breeze. I'm just gonna go here and do my little program, get it over with, and go home, and that's that. But, it wasn't like that at all. It wasn't like that at all. You had to make a con. I had to make a conscious effort had to make a conscious effort to really change my life around. I was in outpatient for about six months and in outpatient for about six months, doing pretty good. Do good. You know what I'm saying but still hanging around the people, places and things that really got me in the situation that I'm in right now...that I was in. So, you know that really got me in the situation I'm in. So, there's still people doing what there doing around me, getting high, slinging. And, I'm just letting them do it. I'm

like hey it's not me. I'm not doing it, but I'm still around it. I'm still around these places. I'm in these drug areas, these drug infested areas. I'm in these high crime areas.

So, six months into the program, I'm in an outpatient program. Six months in, I'm at a friend's house, chilling with a friend., relaxing. Everybody's chilling. And, I decide to spend the night. Mind you I got to work the next day, and this is two days before my court date. This is two days before my court date. I was looking forward going to court, telling Judge Ferdinand the good news. Yeah, I'm working doing this, that, and the third. I'm doing good. I'm asleep. I'm suppose to have been going to work at five in the morning, but I was like, I'm going to sleep an extra hour late. Why did I do that? The police came in and raided our apartment, found seventeen grams of crack cocaine in our apartment...17 grams of crack cocaine. I mean the feeling that I had at that particular moment was like no other, like I couldn't believe that. was happening. I was going to court in two days, just started working...worked one day. I couldn't believe that was happening.

I went to court I was extremely embarrassed. I didn't even want to face my counselor. I didn't want to face the Judge, but that's thing about BTC for real. I was facing two years, facing two years on my previous charge plus that charge. That would have been four years. That would have been four years I was facing... four years, going back and forth to court from Rikers Island and Ferdinand decided to give me a chance. Like I couldn't believe. I was almost ready to do my time. I was almost ready to do my time, because I was like this is crazy. She gave another opportunity to get my life together. I heard a lot of bad things. They don't care about you. Oh this is. This is a trap. This is this. This is that, but how is it a trap when somebody's

genuinely...well a group of people are trying to help you get your life together. It's like being jump started like a car, like a car needing a jump start. You know what I'm saying, and once that car gets started you just go about your business. So, she gave me another chance, and I was real grateful for that. I stayed in an impatient program for eight months. I'm was really grateful for that. I was really grateful for that because I could have been in jail, and it really just gave me time to sit back and assess what I'm going to do with my life. What I'm going to do with my life? And, I really appreciate BTC. This wasn't some years back, and I think this wasn't really an opportunity.

What I am saying for a lot of people, this gives people an opportunity to not go to jail. It gives people an alternative to not have a felony on their record. It gives people a chance. It gives you a chance to get a new start in life and it give you a chance to think about what you want to do with yourself. I'm a spiritual person, and I just look at this as my higher power guiding me, just trying to get myself together be successful be a productive member of society as well as a role model to others. That's just going through. A lot of people don't have this opportunity. I really appreciate it. I really do.