RECOVERY is a very personal process. Everyone has their own path. 3rd Street Beat is welcoming of all those viewpoints. The stories in this section are told by those who created them, in their own words.

Without a Care in the World: A Recovery Story
By Rafael Diaz
Hi, my name is Rafael. This is my story. I came to the U.S.A sometime during the spring of 1986 from the Caribbean island known as the Dominican Republic. I was only 11 years old. I attended school in a section of Brooklyn known as Southside and lived in an apartment building located on South 8th Street and Driggs. It was next to the well known famous restaurant Peter Luger. (continued on p. 6)
Step Away from Sabotage
By Omar Chandradatt
“I do nothing upon myself yet I am my own executioner “John Donne

Have you ever wanted something so badly, for long, tried so hard to get it BUT FAILED? Have you ever had goals and dreams and objectives that you just couldn’t reach? Did you ever wonder why you keep repeating the same patterns of behavior over and over again and keep getting the same fruitless pitiful results?

All of us at some point or another have gone through this. This is known as the cycle of self-sabotage. Because of this negative way of thinking we live below our own potential.

We tend to regret things we didn’t do - or have done in the past - yet wonder why we keep getting stuck in these limiting patterns that don’t allow us to reach our full potential. If nothing changes, nothing changes.

Self-sabotage is (cont. on page 4)
Is Therapy for Me?
A Recovery Story
By j.
Put another way, is my drug and alcohol use merely a symptom of a bigger/deeper Problem?

Here's my story.
Make no mistake, I am an alcoholic.

When I use I can't stop until all the money's gone, I've lost my job, lost my home, lost my self respect.

But it seems the "core" issue comes from my childhood abandonment. Maybe you had something traumatic happen in your childhood, or adult life that you haven't really dealt with.

For me the abandonment caused me to see life & relationships in a very distorted way. I built walls to protect myself, walked out on good relationships because I was scared I'd be hurt again.

After awhile I figured out I had a deeper problem that was fueling my unhappiness and realised I was using drugs and alcohol to self-medicate.

I tried to fix it. I mean that's what men do, right? "We fix it. I don't need no help. I got this." Well, that was 15 years ago when drugs & alcohol started robbing me of my life. It took me 15 years to realise I didn't have the skills or power to fix myself. That in itself was a relief to let go of all that pressure I put on myself to fix me.

Therapy or going to a psychiatrist doesn't mean I'm crazy or weak. It means I'm smart enough and strong enough to realise I need help - someone to talk to. I'm not a clinician, the therapist is. So, I made an appointment with a professional here at The Recovery Center on the 1st floor. The woman I'm working with is very nice, but the sessions are no nonsense. It's not always easy to dredge up the past and learning new coping skills is uncomfortable at times - but it feels good to know I'm doing something about my problems.

Working with a professional that went to school to learn how to help others is a lot more productive than what I've been doing the last 15 years. I had to go through all that to get here, though.

My advice is to give it a shot. It can't hurt. You can always stop if it's not for you. In the meantime you'll be trying something that might just unlock the door to your future life and happiness.

Peace.
Sabotage...

(Step Away From Sabotage, continued from page 2) any behavior, thought, emotion or action that holds us back from getting what we consciously want. Realistically, it is the conflict that exist between conscious desires, unconscious patterns of behavior, emotions, and action that prevents us from achieving our goals. Self-sabotage starts to become a safety mechanism built into our brains that protects us from disappointment, heartbreak and other emotional pains by keeping us in our "comfort zones" and not allowing us to prosper in our lives. We become our own worst enemy. ***I think it is worth explaining that "comfort zone" means whatever you are used to - even if it is rough. Comfort isn't always happy. It may seem obvious to some, but not to everyone.

Self-sabotage tends to manifest itself in our lives as low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, a feeling of low self-worth and not believing in ourselves and having faith in our abilities.

6 SIGNS WE MIGHT BE SABOTAGING OUR RECOVERY

#1: STRESS: Everyone in the world experiences stress, but for those us that struggle with addiction have trouble dealing with stress in a healthy way. We can’t just take it easy.

#2: NEGATIVE THINKING: For those of us with addiction issues negative thinking plays a big factor in our lives. When something in our lives is too difficult to deal with - or we feel hopeless believing (for whatever reason) that we're not good enough, smart enough or strong enough - the self-destructive thoughts start swirling around in our heads. We beat ourselves up.

#3: ISOLATION: In active addiction a lot of us would isolate and stay in our feelings. That loneliness brings up depression and anxiety. Isolating does nothing healthy for us except keeps us trapped in our own minds and the vicious cycle of self-loathing will continue. We think we are all alone.

#4: SELF-PITY: For us in addiction, self-pity plays a major role in destroying our lives. It takes our motivation, self-confidence and our passion for life. Instead of accepting responsibility and consequences of our actions, we blame others for our poor choices and feel bad about ourselves. An addict in our own heads is a bad place to be. Self-pity is different than from compassion towards the self. Self-pity is related to beating yourself up emotionally. Compassion for yourself is related to forgiving yourself so you can move forward.

#5: GUILT: In addiction, we are well aware that we didn’t just hurt ourselves but also those closest to us. Mulling over and denying the past keeps us from being proactive and free to do positive things. We develop the inability to say no to others and grow past our guilt and shame. We just can’t forgive ourselves. It’s investment in low-self-confidence to prevent change. Just as with self-pity, self-forgiveness is important to let go and move forward

#6: EMOTIONAL BUILDUP: As addicts we often struggle with expressing our emotions. Instead we’ll bottle them up instead of dealing with the problems at hand. When they do finally come to the surface we tend to lose control and become irrational and irresponsible with our actions and decisions. Sometimes we just can’t take it anymore.

KEEP IT UP

For most of us in recovery we must remember that we are usually coming out of a dark chapter in our lives. In order for us not to go back to that lifestyle we cannot afford to sabotage ourselves. They say that those that forget are doomed to repeat. We cannot allow our egos, our outside stressors, or enablers to take us back out there into the pain and suffering of active addiction. So please remember to surround yourself with sober, positive people, to stay busy doing good healthy activities, and keep the focus on you and your recovery.

Good Luck!

TURN THE PAGE FOR 3 WAYS TO KEEP YOURSELF RECOVERING

GENUINELY NEED A NANA NAP FROM HAVING TO DEAL WITH ALL MY SELF-SABOTAGE
### 3 Ways To Keep Yourself Recovering

#### #1: Stay Away From Unhealthy Relationships

People in our new lives in recovery can be a bit leery for some of us with trust and for some of us with trust or abandonment issues. But others in recovery can become lifelong friends if we are willing to accept them into our lives. Our old friends may be extremely hard to cut ties with. Because they often were with us for emotional support or perhaps helped us out with finances when we needed it or we were involved romantically at some point. In any case these friends that are still in an active addiction lifestyle could try to pull us back into our old habits and behaviors. By using around us or encouraging us to partake in using for “old times sake” can be a major trigger. Sometimes we just have to cut ties with some people to move on in our lives.

#### #2: Keep Busy

Some of us put a lot of our time into our active using lifestyle. Now that we are in recovery, we need to find healthy, positive, activities to fill the time gaps in our new lives. Things like exercise and writing are great for stress relief. Volunteering and recovery group meetings (like AA and NA) are great outlets for social sober support. They keep us from isolating. Creative activities like cooking and art are great ways to express oneself. We are finally free to pursue the things we always wanted to do.

#### #3: Relaxation

While in active addiction some us weren’t able to relax - or just take it easy - because addiction and the lifestyle that comes with was very stressful. Techniques like meditation and yoga can be very helpful because they give us time to get centered on ourselves and focus on how we feel. Forms of art such as painting drawing and music allow us a healthy and fun outlet to be creative. Things like reading a novel series or following a favorite TV show can help us to relax by giving us something to look forward to. Even something as simple as a board game - or perhaps even a video game - can help us to relax by allowing our minds to be somewhere else. We can have fun in our recovery.

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### It’s Never Too Late

Submitted by j.

According to the Huffington Post, as of 2016, the following post was shared over 200,000 times. We hope it will support your own resilience.

At age 23, Tina Fey was working at a YMCA.
At age 23, Oprah was fired from her first reporting job.
At age 24, Stephen King was working as a janitor and living in a trailer.
At age 27, Vincent Van Gogh failed as a missionary and decided to go to art school.
At age 28, J.K. Rowling was a suicidal single parent living on welfare.
At age 28, Wayne Coyne (from The Flaming Lips) was a fry cook.
At age 30, Harrison Ford was a carpenter.
At age 30, Martha Stewart was a stockbroker.
At age 37, Ang Lee was a stay-at-home-dad working odd jobs.
Julia Child released her first cookbook at age 39, and got her own cooking show at age 51.
Vera Wang failed to make the Olympic figure skating team, didn’t get the Editor-in-Chief position at Vogue, and designed her first dress at age 40.
Stan Lee didn’t release his first big comic book until he was 40.
Alan Rickman gave up his graphic design career to pursue acting at age 42.
Samuel L. Jackson didn’t get his first movie role until he was 46.
Morgan Freeman landed his first MAJOR movie role at age 52.
Kathryn Bigelow only reached international success when she made The Hurt Locker at age 57.
Grandma Moses didn’t begin her painting career until she was 76.
Louise Bourgeois didn’t become a famous artist until she was 78.

Whatever your dream is, it is not too late to achieve it. You aren’t a failure because you haven’t found fame and fortune by the age of 21. Hell, it’s okay if you don’t even know what your dream is yet. Even if you’re flipping burgers, waiting tables or answering phones today, you never know where you’ll end up tomorrow.

Never tell yourself you’re too old to make it. Never tell yourself you missed your chance. Never tell yourself that you aren’t good enough. You can do it. Whatever it is.

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(Step Away from Sabotage, Continued from page 4)
I was only fifteen years of age when I started running the streets. I dropped out of school and had my first daughter at the age of 16. Drugs and money - profit was abundant. There was so much money. It was fun and it was all good while it lasted - cars, women, disco clubs, partying like there's no tomorrow. I lived life my way - or what I thought to be my way - and what I thought to be my life. Drugs and alcohol owned it already, but I thought I was in charge.

One day all of that changed. My best friend got killed right in front of me; three shots to the head. My whole world stopped turning. I was in shock and felt... anger... fear... remorse... stress... blame... confusion. It was like I was given a sleeping pill, because I wanted revenge - but I wanted to die as well.

My daughter was only 3 months old. The mother of my daughter and I broke up. She took my daughter away from all the violence and drama that was going on in my life. Today I don't blame her. It was the best decision she ever made - and I'm grateful to her.

I ended up in and out of prison for many years. When I finally came home, God tried to show me that I still had a chance to be in my daughter's life and be a father to her. Instead, I was immature and angry - full of violence. I didn't know any better. My daughter was 4 years old the last time that I saw her. I still wonder what she looks like and if she even REMEMBERS me.

There was a point in my life that alcohol became my best friend and cocaine was my superman. I became indestructible (distructible). I ran the streets, got into fights, and lived a suicidal life until I got arrested and went to prison for 2 and a half years. Continued on next page
Without a Care in the World (Continued from Page 5) A few years later, I was no longer in the game. At this moment life started playing games with me. I was shot 3 times. It was and it is a very dramatic moment in my life. One of those bullets hit me on my face. Let me be exact - it entered my nose and stopped 3 centimeters away from my brain. The best part of all this - at the speed this bullet entered, the doctors don't know what made this killer bullet stop. Thank you Father for saving my life. Amen

It was around that time that the mother of my first born daughter decided it was time to run away because I became worse as time went by. When I was upstate in New York doing years 2 and a half years I was free of alcohol and free of drugs - but not free of violence. I needed to learn how not to be violent at all. It was hard while in prison, but managed to come home clean and sober. I moved in with my sister to finish my 2 and a half years of parole. Before I finished, I met a beautiful girl who would become my wife and give me my second daughter. I started working in plumbing with my brother in law. I was learning, but I didn't know anything about it.

Life was good once again - this time the legal way. Our marriage lasted around two years. It was the best two years of my life. God gave me a beautiful baby girl in January, 1998. My daughter's birth brought joy into my life - and a lot of responsibility. I was not ready, even though I thought I was, so I went on living a happy life in a happy marriage.

Once again my life took a toll on me and peer pressure started a new period in my life. I started drinking alcohol and partying and drugging to release some of my stress. I forget about my duty and responsibility as a husband and as a father to my kids. My ex-wife and I got divorced after 5 years. I continued my destructive lifestyle without a care in the world.

Around 2005, I became homeless for about 3 weeks. The process took me - or I should say - I got involved with the wrong people and ended up in jail for a crime I didn't commit. The fact of the matter is that I was with that person. That made me an accomplice to the crime committed.

I ended up in jail for a period of 1 and a half to 3 years. My whole world just turned upside down. I came home 18 months later. I was looking good, feeling good, and indestructible. King kong had nothing on me when on a rampage. For me, living my life to the fullest involved nothing positive and nothing good. I was my own boss and it felt good. As the years went by, and some family members stating passing away, I became depressed and was trapped in my own little bubble of "joy." Alcohol and cocaine became my best friends. I continued this lifestyle for many years. Friends and family gave good advice when they tried to help me and to understand my problem.

What was my problem? I didn't know what my problem was either. Even so, I am working on it as I write - my recovery and my life. I have not been easy on myself because of how many people I have been hurt by my life with my addiction. Alcohol took over my life and controlled me for many years. Because of alcohol, I lost so many good people, good friends, good jobs. Violence became part of my daily life. Family members distanced themselves from me - ex-wife, ex-girlfriend, and the most important people in my life - my kids. I lost respect for myself and others.

I lost my self esteem and confidence.
I stopped believing in me - the most important person in this story.
I stopped caring.
I became suicidal and lived a reckless lifestyle - without a care in the world.

Today I can proudly say that I have taken the first step towards recovery. I have accepted that I'm an addict, an alcoholic, and a drug user and abuser. I have accepted that I need help from God, first of all, and from real friends that specialize in these types of issues... problems... or as it's well known... a disease. After many years of being an addict, I decided to surrender.

I have tried and it has not worked, so I leave it in God's hands. He is the only one who can understand more than I do about the addiction that has dragged my life into it.

I found myself today.
I look forward to living a life free from all drugs and alcohol.
I look forward to seeing my kids and have a sober relationship with them.
I look forward to having my family back into my life.
I look forward to living and being alive. -The End
THE RECOVERY CENTER PROGRAM SCHEDULE  effective starting 12/10/19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S A.M.</td>
<td>Relapse Prevention (Juan)</td>
<td>Healthy Relationships (Juan)</td>
<td>Value Group (Joan)</td>
<td>Substance Use Education (Lee Ann, OT)</td>
<td>Look Out for #1! (with OT)</td>
<td>9:30am Open Discussion (Joan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 A.M.</td>
<td>Back to Work (with OT)</td>
<td>Anger Management (Sania)</td>
<td>Health &amp; wellness (with OT)</td>
<td>Spanish Speaking Group (Aida)</td>
<td>Weekend Planning (Joan)</td>
<td>10:30am Recovery and Wellness (Juan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 A.M.</td>
<td>Free Time</td>
<td>Free Time</td>
<td>Cooking Club (Lee Ann)</td>
<td>Free Time</td>
<td>10:45-11:00 Recognition Mtg and weekly raffle</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:00 Garden Group (with Eve)</td>
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<tr>
<td>After Lunch</td>
<td>Continue Free Time Through and After Lunch</td>
<td>2:00 – 4:00 Strategy Games (Lee Ann, OT) Starts 11/19</td>
<td>Continue Free Time Through and After Lunch</td>
<td>2:00 – 4:00 Newsletter Team (Lee Ann, OT) Starts 11/14</td>
<td>Continue Free Time Through and After Lunch</td>
<td>1:00 – 2:45 GAME TIME!!!</td>
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<td>5:15 P.M.</td>
<td>Road to Recovery (Sania)</td>
<td>Relapse Prevention (Aida)</td>
<td>Life skills (Lee Ann, OT)</td>
<td>What’s On Your Mind? (Juan)</td>
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<td>3:00 pm Peer Group (Juan)</td>
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The Recovery Center
8 East 3rd Street
Outpatient Substance Use Treatment Program
212-533-8400 x144 for Intake

Are you in need of crisis services or medically supervised detox?

24 hour Intake hotline
212-763-0596

Thanks for reading our newsletter, we hope you enjoy it!
The 3rd Street Beat is accepting submissions!

If you would like to submit a piece of art, your recovery story, or other work, see OT in the Recovery Center or attend the Newsletter Meeting at 2:00 pm on Thursday afternoons.