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SC = Steven Choi

**Well I appreciate you taking the time today for this short call. So the objective of what I am trying to accomplish is to better understand resiliency and what are some common themes of resilient people. To accomplish this we are interviewing people from all walks of life to get a spread of subjects. Do you have any questions before we start?**

No

**Tell me a little about yourself? What do you do for work?**

Well I am 32-year-old single Asian American male that manages a craft cocktail bar in San Jose. I grew up in San Jose for the majority of my life and this is where I call home.

**What does resiliency mean to you? How would you define it?**

I thought a little bit about this and the first thing that came to mind was the proverb "Stand up 8", I am not exactly sure if it is Chinese or Japanese but the proverb is "knock down 7, stand up 8". In short, the ability to bounce back from a hard time.

**Was there a time in your life that you had to Bounce back from a hard time?**

About 6 years ago I was in a really dark place. I had just gotten fired from a job, I just moved out of parents house a couple years before, and I turned to alcohol as an escape. When I was drowning myself in my sorrows it never felt like I was running away from anything but just have a good time. I decided to take the next six months to travel and party. I traveled to Southeast Asian, Mexico, and couple places domestically. The common theme was alcohol was served in copious amounts. At this point I was spirally and there would be a huge event that would change the trajectory of my life.

I was coming back on a Sunday from the bars because it was the opening day for the NFL year. I was driving and I should not have been and it happened. I got into a 3 car accident about 2 blocks from my home. I would give more details about everything leading up to it but to be honest I do not remember. I woke up with people pulling me out of the car and thankfully no one hurt but the cars were done for. The cops came and I thought right there that my life was over. They took statements from all parties involved. I remember asking the police officer if I could leave because I had given my statement instead he told me "Sit your ass down. I can have you thrown in prison for this". That was biggest wake up call of my life.

**Are you saying that your accident is what helped you be resilient?**

Not exactly. It was definitely what started the change but it got worse before it got better. When the accident happened I had a 7 day lapse between car insurance policies, it was day 7 and my insurance kicked in on Monday. I had just gotten back from a trip and that's.....well that neither here nor there at this point.

Now I am 27, unemployed, six-months deep into unemployment, and I had a large bill on its way because I had no car insurance.

**Wow, that's a long string of bad luck. What got you through this?**

Well once the dust settled. I realized how lucky I was to get out of that accident with my life, without harming another life, and I really could have gone to prison. I was so lucky and I could not let this 2<sup>nd</sup> chance pass me. My motivations were 100% individualistic. I had to create a better life for me and be a contributing member of our society.

I would be arrogant to say that I did not have some kind of support to make it through but largely it was me taking the time to plan and reflect. I made realistic goals for my career and I would take regular days to myself to just reflect about what I did during the week or weeks. What can I do better? What did I do wrong? What did I do well? Who's life did I impact if anybody's? Who impacted mine?

I digress, the thing that has kept me resilient while I paid my dues for my mistakes was that idea that I was so lucky to be give another chance and I did not want to waste that chance. I had to make the most of this 2<sup>nd</sup> chance for me.