

Self Love Campaign



2022

Thank you to all our participants!!!!

The Mental Health Association
in Atlantic County

Day 1 Self Love



BLUE KISSES

FROM DEPRESSION TO SELF
LOVE

Had a heart to heart
talk with self
Dusting off memories
on the mantle over
the chimney shelf

Sometimes stress
makes the arteries
clog
Was previously
downtrodden and in
a fog

Had to first define the meaning of love
Clarified that, when true, it fits like a glove

No yellow flags on the play
My self love, signed and sealed, sent my way

Deserve all the necessities and then some
For am worth the basics and extra fun

Despite the ups and downs and numerous falls
The ringing began with whispers of hope when answered
internal calls

Looking for an immediate fix seldom did
Instead cheering myself on and playing like a kid

All the warm and fuzzy feelings that I have
Keep protected with healing sauve

From floor to ceiling, hugs and kisses surrounded me
Matches my mantra of "Let it go, Let it come, Let it be".

-Donna Haring

Day 2 Self Love



REFLECTIONS

I see your love for me
Through your eyes
Filling me up with love for
myself
The beautiful things you say
To me, about me

Mean so very much

The appreciation you have

That I am here, helps me

Feel that I am so very much loved.

I can take that and spread that within

Myself where I can be free, where

I can be O.K. with just being me.

- Hope Tomko

Day 3 Self Love

Sometimes the ones that
you're closest to aren't blood

Blood makes you related
Love makes you family

When my sister-in-law came to my house to celebrate Christmas, she was very loud and clear about no hugging or kissing. Normally that would bother me, but unfortunately this time it bothered me even more. I had to respect her decision not to approach me in any way, shape, or form, but inside it was hurting me.

It was Friday and a week after quarantining that I discovered a lot of people in my same situation taken for granted so many that have died from this horrible virus. I tested negative, but that did not make a difference.

I do several things for self-care. One of them is to show my love and appreciation for my family by embracing them into my arms. A hug can go a long way. Self-care to me is not just going to Dunkin Donuts on a Saturday and buying a peach passion fruit refresher or a caramel latte from Starbucks or any place you may find yourself wanting or craving coffee or a drink to satisfy your need. It's also finding your niche, your place, not just in a family or amongst friends, but in society as well.

My family means the world to me I often wonder behind that mask is there a smile when I tell a joke or pain behind those hazel eyes from the N95 mask that they were wearing. I have not seen my friends because of their own stance on this virus. Now it seems that seeing them is a far cry from the self-care I need in being around others in a social perspective.

Throughout society each of us face this virus head on everyday. In my view, it's up to each person to decide whether their self-care is stifled by this virus. It's up to you to practice self-care, make it a priority, and discover what works for you.

-Anonymous

Day 4 Self Love



Daddy's Girls



It seems like only yesterday. You used to giggle, laugh, and play. We'd sit for hours on the bedroom floor. You'd open up that dresser drawer. And tucked inside in disarray, I knew right then it was time to play. You'd pour the Barbies from that drawer and scatter them about that floor. "But I'm a man," I'd think inside, "We don't play with dolls." I wanted to run and hide. But you'd ask, "Daddy would you play with me?" How could I say no... how could I flee? And so we'd sit upon that floor and play with all inside that drawer.

It seems like only yesterday, Daddy's girls would laugh and say, "Oh, Daddy, you are such a dork," or "Daddy, I'm afraid of the gork." Butterfly kisses upon your cheek, the times we would play hide and seek. You'd say, "Daddy, I'm a big girl now!" And I would kiss you on your brow. But that was ok and you would smile and if I told you to do something, it was "In a while."

It seems like only yesterday, when Daddy's girls would laugh and say: "Oh, Dad, I can't be seen with you! Do you know what my friends would do!" I'd smile knowing what you mean and know that God forbid you're seen, with your Daddy standing there. Should I tell them that I braid your hair?

It seems like only yesterday that Daddy's girls would smirk and say, "Oh, Dad, you don't know what to do, you don't know what I'm going through." I'd smile then and hold you tight, I'd hold you though you'd try to fight. I did know what you were going through, and Daddies do know what to do.

It seems like only yesterday, Daddy had to go away. I knew you wouldn't understand. Your Dad had always been the man. But sometimes people disagree, that's what happened with mom and me. And though that day was very sad, there is one thing I can be glad. I have two girls that I just adore and memories of that bedroom floor.

Daddy's girls have grown so fast and we share a bond that will forever last. We are closer now than ever before, but I still dream of that bedroom floor.

Love,
Adam

Day 5 Self Love

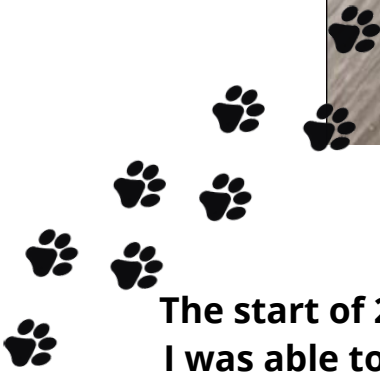


I can be supportive of other people. I also give supportive feedback. I don't love many things about myself except that I give lots of support to other people.

There's a lot of things I don't like about myself. I am working on trusting that what others say about me is true. Sometimes I trust and sometimes I have my doubts. I have hope. I hope that I can get to the point that when people say they like me I don't have to worry that if I make a mistake that I am no longer loveable.

- Sean

Day 6 Self Love



The start of 2022 brought in a new life.

I was able to adopt the cat I have been dreaming of having since I was a little girl. In August 2020, my childhood cat, Milo, passed away. In the midst of the pandemic, isolation, and anxiety, this was a huge blow. Now, a little less than 2 years later, a rescue cat brought that love back into my life. I know it is cliché - a rescue cat rescuing its owner - but it is so true.

2022 is already filled with cat snuggles, cat friends, and loving myself to love my cat fully. Pets are truly their own source of self-love.

-Morgan

Day 7 Self Love



I am going to be 60 years old this year, and I am not certain that I have ever fully experienced self-love. And then I remember that love is not just a noun it is a verb. And I remember that I invest myself daily in my recovery and in my well-being; that I have created a WRAP to help me do that; that I nourish my spirit through relationships, wisdom literature, art, and music (just to name a few things); that I have found my purpose and persist in pursuing it to my fullest ability; and that more and more I see myself as one of the living miracles that we all are. Perhaps I love myself after all.

-Randy

Day 8 Self Love



As I've been able to learn different coping skills over the years after the love of my life 15 years ago moved on from me, I've been able to find my voice and express myself through poetry and songs. These have been therapeutic for me through my journey to find my voice no matter who else have enjoyed over the time period but I've learned to make new friends and mend relationships along the way. As you find love and peace within yourself you'll find that you build a healthy support system, great love and blessings go out to my MHA family, I appreciate you all.

-Gracia



Day 9 Self Love

I never felt worthy

Of self love that is

I was taught that

I was secondary to others

I never even heard

Of self love as a child

As I child I was taught

Your love was not for you

That love

Was for those who needed you more

There was no place

For love for yourself

I was finally told by a therapist

That it was okay to have some love for myself

Though it went against all I had been taught

I began to try to love myself

Because I had nothing to lose

I decided I would learn to love myself

How else could I heal

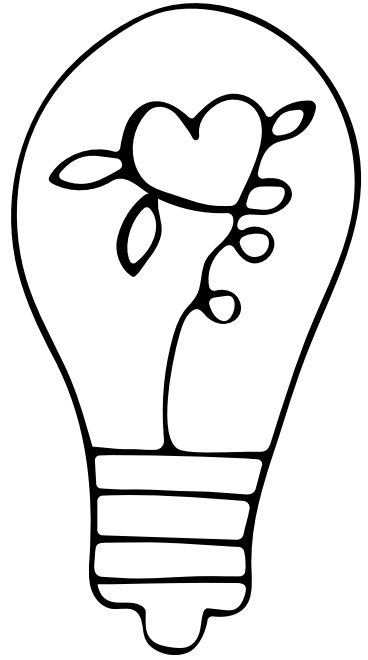
But to learn to love myself

How could I truly find peace

If I did not have love for myself

It has not been easy but I did learn to love myself

And what a ride it's been



-Courtney

Day 10 Self Love

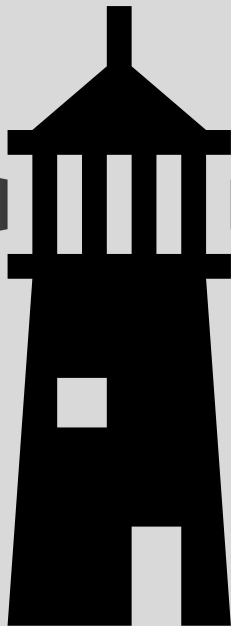


In September of 2021, my partner and I bought our first home together. It is a fixer-upper, and through the fixin', I have learned so much about myself and about life in general. I have done things over the last few months that I've never done before...and I have done them well! I have experienced so much pride in small tasks, such as fixing a tv, replacing faucets, restoring hardware, and so much more. This home is rebuilding me as much as I am rebuilding it. -Britt

Day 11 Self Love



*Strength (even if minimal)
Hope (towards everlasting love)
Faith (that we are always
healing).*
9/15/17



My mantra on a recent journey still stands today. It mentions all that was needed.

On this road there have been endless moments where STRENGTH was needed.

On this road HOPE. It has accompanied me.

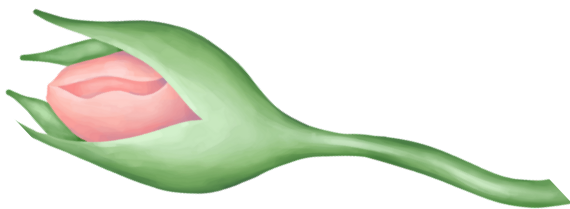
On this road FAITH has been kept.

I wrote the above to continue my submission from last year. I have had my spiritual journey enhanced by these mentioned above. Both in a physical and mental growth world. The power of words has proven to continue reaching for calmness, peace, and love of myself. This was not always present. This is a mindset that takes my full attention and my participation.

As this healing and growth continues it cannot be done without like minds that provide support and tools for all. Peer driven growth is key in my road to loving more of me each day!

Be well, Brian B.

Day 12 Self Love



My self-love journey started when I was very young. Growing up with a lung condition that required a lot of medication and treatment, I always felt different from everyone else. I was uncomfortable talking about my condition and the treatments that looked “weird.” I never wanted my friends to see the machines that I had to use because then I would have to explain.

As I grew up and started to understand that I am not alone in having health issues and having to do treatments and take medications every day I started to accept myself more. I also realized how lucky I was in regards to my illness as so many people with the same condition spend a lot of their lives in the hospital. I was so worried growing up that I would be judged when there are people with the same condition fighting for their lives in the hospital. I am fortunate enough to have a very mild form of this disease and never had to be hospitalized. I realized that I shouldn't be ashamed of it. I became much more open to talking about my condition, I love to educate people about it as best I can. I have learned to love myself and my condition because it made me who I am today.

-Emily



Day 13 Self Love

My Self Love Cheat Sheet

By: Ashleigh

In order to remind myself about self love, I participate in self care. These are different ways in which I take care of myself and feed into my self love!

- Writing stories
- Reading books
- Playing a video game
- Taking a hot shower with nicely scented soap
- Taking a nap in my warm pjs
- Meditating or Journaling about my day
- Singing a song
- Taking a walk in the sun
- Painting my nails
- Texting a friend or family member
- Petting my dog

This is a shelf that my sister built me! It holds all of my favorite books and acts as a reminder of how self love and self care are not only important, but fun too!



Day 14 Self Love



Me holding a picture of my younger, childhood self!

Self love has taken on an entirely new form for me. It seems that its meaning changes and deepens each year. My love for self deepens as I challenge myself more and more to show myself how truly brave and capable I am. When I make hard decisions and trust my intuition, I am sending a message to myself that I trust myself. Self love means listening to my body and trusting its wisdom. It's asking myself the hard questions and then doing what's authentic, not necessarily easy.

Doing what I need, not necessarily what I want. I didn't used to trust myself, I looked outside of myself for the answers. But, the more I listen to my own internal wisdom, the more I realize how cool, smart, and interesting she is (I am). It also means loving my inner child, loving my inner teen, and loving every version of myself that has existed unconditionally and sending myself love at every life stage.

-Bern

Day 15 Self Love



"What in the world is 'self love'?" I've asked myself this more times than I can count. I didn't learn it from my dysfunctional, yet loving, family. I didn't learn it from my friends, who were asking the same question. I certainly didn't learn it from media. I grew up in a time when women had to have their husband's permission to do just about anything. If you didn't have a husband, it was assumed that you would get one soon. Like you could buy a husband at the five-and-dime store. Women were expected to have children and take care of the house and that's it. No discussion was needed. It wasn't until I was in my 50's, after serious mental health challenges, that I learned that - SURPRISE! - it's ok to love yourself and be happy with who you are.

Now I understand that I am worthy. I am loved. I'm smart, funny, friendly and an all-around good person. Perfectly imperfect. I have had so many good support people and organizations. My friends, some of my family, even some media people, MHANJ and so many more. It was a difficult trip but now I am so happy with myself! I'm a peer support specialist, I'm in a number of clubs and organizations, I have an active spiritual life.

This is my advice for others who are still doubting themselves: You are worthy! You are the best you! You can do it!

-Ann Marie

A Self Love Reflection

One thing that I wish my younger self knew was to not worry about the opinions of others.

I was once drowning in a sea of insecurities with a riptide pushing and pulling me in different directions.

Be thinner. Too skinny. Be thicker. Don't be fat.

Show more skin. That's too revealing.

You're too loud.

Why are you so quiet?

My self love journey started when I swam out of the current.

I stopped listening to all the different voices telling me different things.

I learned to stand up for myself.

I'm more confident now and I don't let people walk all over me anymore.

Although sometimes it still gets difficult,

When I feel like I'm drowning again I remember:

At the end of the day the only opinion of myself that matters is my own

and I'm happy with who I am.

-Anonymous

Day 17 Self Love



SELF LOVE

Self love is loving yourself enough to LET GO of what is no longer serving you.

This can be terrifying and also liberating.

This can be as simple (or not so simple) as letting go of clothing or objects that you no longer need or want.

Or as difficult (or not so difficult) as stepping back from a complicated relationship or trying to change someone's point of view.

This past year has been a year of looking in... in at myself and loving myself enough to say "no." No, I can no longer be a part of that.

Yes, it did serve me at one time but now it does not.

My health, my mental health, is important enough to let it go.

I am important enough to LET GO.

So, I let go.

Naida Burgess

Day 18 Self Love



Melissa and her cat "Holly"



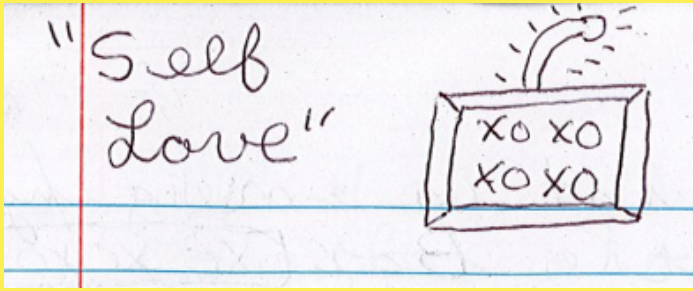
Modern Self-Love: Melissa's Take

Self-love is synonymous with self-worth and self-care. I am 31 and see that more clearly than ever before. Perhaps it comes with life lived and maturity. You see the value in yourself no matter what and that is beautiful. Far too often it is deemed selfish to value yourself, but it is not. Your own wellbeing is just as important as the wellbeing of others around you and giving yourself that same kindness and compassion that you give to others is of utmost importance. Little things go a long way whether I have book club with my darling orange tabby Holly for roughly 30 minutes every few days or I bake something for myself or someone else since I enjoy the act of baking so much. Grand gestures for yourself can be lovely, like having a personalized puzzle made that you take a little time each day to complete (I did this over the summer and am still super proud of it!), but tiny instances matter just as much. Remember not to be too hard on yourself. Give a little love to yourself everyday. You earned it.



This is the personalized puzzle she worked on throughout the summer

Day 19 Self Love



My name is Carol Sunshine. I was given this name because when I walk into the building I smile a lot. I am kind, happy, and I give good advice to people in my group. My best friend said I was a loving person. I belong to Journey To Wellness on Zoom. I love to say "Teddy Bear hugs" to all who are sad or happy. I do sketches and painting with acrylic on canvas. I made Christmas wreaths for all my friends I love, in total 27! I love to write in my journal, play cards, and meditate.

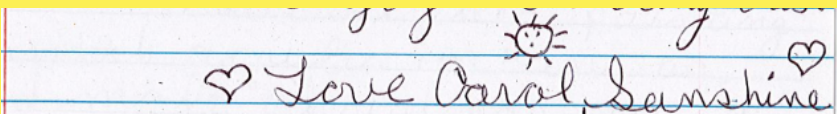
What is emerging from the box: xoxoxoxo hugs for my loving daughter Robin Marie. She passed away Friday, January 21st, 2022 of Covid pneumonia bacteria infection. This candle is for both of us in memory. RIP Robin, love mommy always.

This candle with orange, red flames being accented around the candle. Flame brings love to my daughter Robin's passing.

This candle smells like the sea breeze at the ocean. It smells like coconut lavender. I am at a far away island, it helps me to relax, dream of the good things in life around me. Helps to smell the candle when it's lit. I like when it glows at night. I get so relaxed staring at the glowing candle. It helps me get through my depression, sadness, numbing, being angry.

Robin's family and grandmother Sam loved her dearly. I was a military wife with 4 kids for 20 years, a great mommy. I've been married 44 years and separated!

I enjoyed writing this.



Day 20 Self Love

Stars in the Day Time

Like stars in the day-time sky, my self-love was always there. I just had to look into the darkness to see it.



Painting by Amanda Auble

In my perpetual pursuit of perfection, I denied that darkness ever played a part in my story. But the truth was that I had seen so many of my loved ones leave that I decided to go with them.

It made perfect sense to actively abandon myself. I saw the love I wanted everywhere but in my own hands. So I just closed my eyes and left myself in the dark.

I stopped eating and let fear be my only fuel. Be less so I could have more. But less got so low and more never came.

It was my body that made the choice to survive before my mind even realized I was fading away.

If I had really never known darkness, why did my universe feel so empty? When I couldn't reason my way back to solid ground, I screamed for someone to save me. My own voice echoed back to me.

Hope appeared like a blazing comet shooting through the night sky for the first time in ten thousand years. I opened my eyes to gaze up.

In awe of the speckled space around me I finally thought, "How bright the stars can shine when they're at peace with the darkness behind them."

by Kristine Auble

Day 21 Self Love



SELF LOVE JOURNEY ❤️

My journey on the road to self-love began with a tragedy. I was lost and broken after having my leg amputated. Feelings of despair filled my days. Negative thoughts consumed me. I wanted to change. I needed to change. I wanted to live, not just survive. I mattered. Motivated by positive thinking, I turned tragedy into triumph. Who am I and what am I capable of? I let my struggles become my strengths. I began loving life in a way I never thought was possible. I respect my darkest moments as it opened my eyes to see things clearer. I became empowered. Life's journey is never ending. A constant road of hope, learning, loving, and thriving. We all have wings to fly. Find yours and soar to new heights.

Jill F.

Day 22 Self Love



Self-love is a journey.
Traveling down winding roads, climbing
over huge mountains, and fighting against
any beasts in our way.
Enjoy the travel;
Feel the dirt beneath your feet
Enjoy the view from the bottom to the top
Show compassion to the creatures, they
might not be as scary as you think.
Look at your beautiful reflection in the
river
You made it. And you always will.
It may be a journey, but it is worth the
travel.

Day 23 Self Love



Self-soothing, I learn to manage

emotions, both brilliant and terrifying

Learn to accept my personality and character

flaws, my good deeds and bad.

Loving myself does not come easy

Only persistent self-care and thought changing

veers me towards a greater and greater

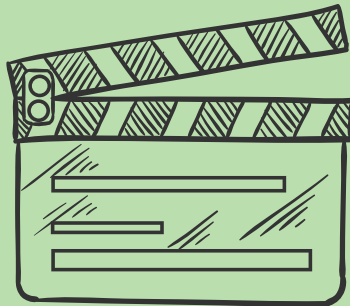
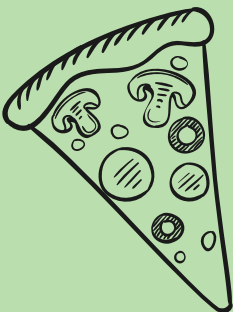
evolution towards love of self.

-Anonymous

Happy

Self-love is something I feel and practice every day because it is important to know and accept who I am as a person. I know that I am not perfect but being aware of my imperfections is very important to me. It makes me unique and who I am as a person. I find it much more tiring to worry too much about these imperfections instead of sometimes accepting them as who I am. I love where I am today no matter what people may think of me. It is all about what feels right to me and what makes me happy. I am the happiest I have been in a very long time and that's what is important to me, knowing I am happy with where I am today. That is what self-love means to me, knowing you are happy no matter what.

- Giovanni



Day 25 Self Love



WHAT SELF LOVE IS TO ME



- Going for a pedicure with my sister
- Watching a favorite tv show
- Having a hot fudge sundae
- Visiting my great nieces and nephews
- Going with family and friends to the beach
- Seeing my Grandson on Facetime and watching him Smile 😊
- Going on Facebook and looking at relatives, flowers, birds and funny jokes
- Reuniting in zoom meetings or in-person with my work family
- Looking at and playing with puppies
- Going to dinner with my husband

All these things bring me joy and let me take care of me!

Karen W.





The Ocean

When I experience blissful thoughts in passing
I think of you
Swept by the calming breeze
Touched by the scent of healing salt

I think of you
Raising your chin up to the sky
As the heat and warmth of the incandescent sun
Kisses you like a glaze from head to feet

I think of you
Immersed by the sound of billowing waves
Wildly caught like an iridescent pearl
Cast out to sea for all to see

I think of you, In love
Experiencing blissful thoughts in passing
For all that you have
With all who you love

-Rosemary Roque

Written on the topic of self-love

Day 27 Self Love

what is love?

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

-1 Corinthians 13:4-8



Day 28 Self Love



Can I be my own sun?

No longer a minor planet

Orbiting others

Giving to the point of

Eclipsing my very essence

Can I be the center of my own universe?

Giving to myself

Daring to even

love Myself!

~Maria

More Self Love



Ceres Park and Nature Preserve is a somewhat beautiful hidden gem. It is a 2.2 mi out and back trail located in Mantua township/Pitman New Jersey. It features a lake that has the most beautiful emerald green that I have ever laid my eyes upon. That is what drove my hiking buddy and I to seek it out on Saturday April 3rd, 2021. The reason why I said somewhat is because the trail management out there is not the best. When you thought it was a trail marker, it was graffiti and when you thought it was a graffiti, it was a trail marker. Even the trail on the surface was a muddy gray in the sunshine on that day. There was a lot of turtles out there basking in the sun on a log. We managed to catch pictures of a lot of them. We also discovered that they have very good hearing. So if you ever see a turtle on a log, don't open your mouth or step on a twig. They will dive off of that log faster then you can get your cellphone ready to take that picture. So as we hiked all over the park and the preserve that day. We found ourselves thinking and feeling that we were tricked somehow that there was no emerald lake and that we had just discovered the plain jane of trails. So almost towards the end of our hike. We found the path that we hadn't discovered before that led up this hill. There was no trail marker whatsoever. So taking a chance we started the climb this hill. We discovered it was an overlook. In a place like this we thought, you would never expect an overlook. As we got to the top of the hill there was this old old thick rooted tree in the middle of the path. It was sort of like the keeper of the trail. An old guardian that didn't keep you out but made you work for it. We had to climb over the roots but once we got into the middle of the overlook. That's when we discovered the emerald lake. It was breathtaking. We were so excited but we dare not jump up and down because the trail is very narrow. You would have fallen down to the water or backwards into the thorny brush below. The reason why I say to look outside the box is because even though things in your life might look muddy and gray be it depression or anxiety. Or it could be things that you may not be able to control. There's always a bright spot of a beautiful emerald lake out there for you to find and change your world. By using positive thinking and mindfulness meditation, or your Wrap plan. These things could be your emerald lake in this world. So always try to look outside the box.

Peace and love, CLS

More Self Love



Self Love

Self love is the love of yourself. You cannot have self love if you don't love yourself. You cannot love someone else. You have to love yourself first. I've had depression since 1978. I don't know what brought the depression on. I do know I was very sad and unhappy. It used to stand in the way of self love. I didn't have a lot of friends and I felt disliked by a lot of people. I felt like everybody was talking about me instead of talking to me. I was hospitalized several times for my depression. When my family would come to see me in the hospital, I would shy away from them and wish they would leave me alone and go home. That's so sad. I love my family more than anything else in the world. I am dealing with liver cancer now for about 2 1/2 years. Even though I have cancer it doesn't stand in the way of loving myself and my friends. I have love for a lot of people.

I have been through a lot in the past few years. I had rotation cuff, my knees drained because I had to have two replacements, constant surgery, 2 years of chemotherapy, numerous CAT scans and PET scans. I am still seeing my doctor every 3 months for the liver cancer and I am stable. I have also been through physical therapy twice. I feel that I have found self love again and looking forward to going on with my life.

The other self love is the love for my crafts. I make floral arrangements, floral wreaths. I like to paint birdhouses and different types of wood.

-Maryanne

More Self Love



One day the two babies that came into this world were so beautiful because they were amazingly loved with the sweetness of God's love. But, the first little girl, Josephine Kelly, missed the father in Heaven so much that while I was pregnant she just slipped into my tubes. It was a tubal pregnancy where the baby can't survive. And, the Doctor said we can't save her. So my baby went back to the Father God in Heaven. She was given the beautiful name of Josephine Kelly named after a woman police officer in Jersey City that crossed us children with Jean the other police officer coming from school and places. I dreamed of Josephine Kelly, my first, and how beautiful she is in Heaven with God.

Then I was pregnant a second time. I did everything possible for this baby. I loved. I ate right. Did everything for this baby to come into the world with her dad and mom to be family. Lisa Ann Marie, we loved this baby so much in my tummy, she stay for months. I was getting anxious to see my baby girl. God let me raise up to a beautiful woman today. I watched the Doctor's every move with my baby girl. Breast feeding her was so nice just watching her drinking my milk. Lisa's dad brought flowers to the hospital all different colored flowers, they were beautiful. Lisa had a port a crib to sleep in. Her dad brought her her first little teddy bear. I placed beside her every night she went to sleep. She loved it in her walker. When we were outside Lisa knew her dad was coming home from work and she rolled right down to the car. When he got out, Lisa rolled close to him, she was excited he was home, her dad.

We went to the park, Lisa loved the park and the swings. Laying on her belly was one of her favorite things to do. She was the cutest of all kids. She liked seeing the animals at the zoo at the park. Lisa was good in learning, once she learned something, she had it down. She picks up quickly what she learns.

It was upsetting times for Lisa when she was young, and now knowing her mom is sick. But we get by through thick and thin and the help of our God. I love my two daughters with my whole heart. And, I thank God for the chance to be a mom.

-Darothy