


THIS IS A PROGRAM OF THE MENTAL  
HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN ATLANTIC  
COUNTY IN COLLABORATION WITH  
UNITED BY WELLNESS CENTER

 MODERN

SELF-LOVE 

 CAMPAIGN

2024

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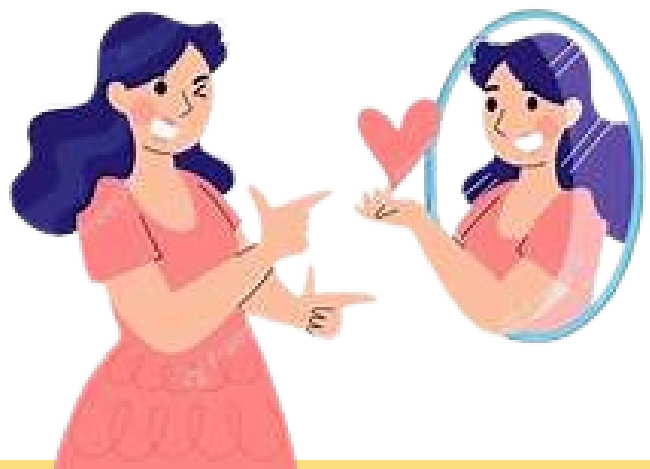
Thank you to all our  
participants!!!! 

# SELF-WORTH

I was eighteen years old and in charge. I knew I would not see this place unless it was dire or crucial to help myself in a separate situation. I had to align myself with my beliefs. I am not just talking about spirituality! I am talking about whole body wellness; the things, that I needed to learn were a platform and I was ready at all costs...so for nine years I did just that learning and cultivating who I was reinventing who I am and risking it all at the end to succumb to a second hospital stay but this time I would learn things like how to help myself throughout the difficulties of life and never say that this is the last time I would be here but speak of these moments as if they were already in the past. In reality I wanted to come back to spread around what I learned and there were so many, many, many, people that helped me adjust to a new beginning is what I would like to call it. My affirmations and reaffirmations within the cycle that I was in granted me peace for a short period of time I did go back to the hospital several times over but in a nutshell, I learned that life has its ups and downs and it's through those moments you realize who you are when the mirror is distorted you find not just yourself but who exactly is your anchor and who you depend on in circumstances that are beyond your control. This is my self-worth: a letter joint with who I am now am of happiness so that all can see who exactly you are in a mirror so dimly.

I believe in me

Chantele Olivo



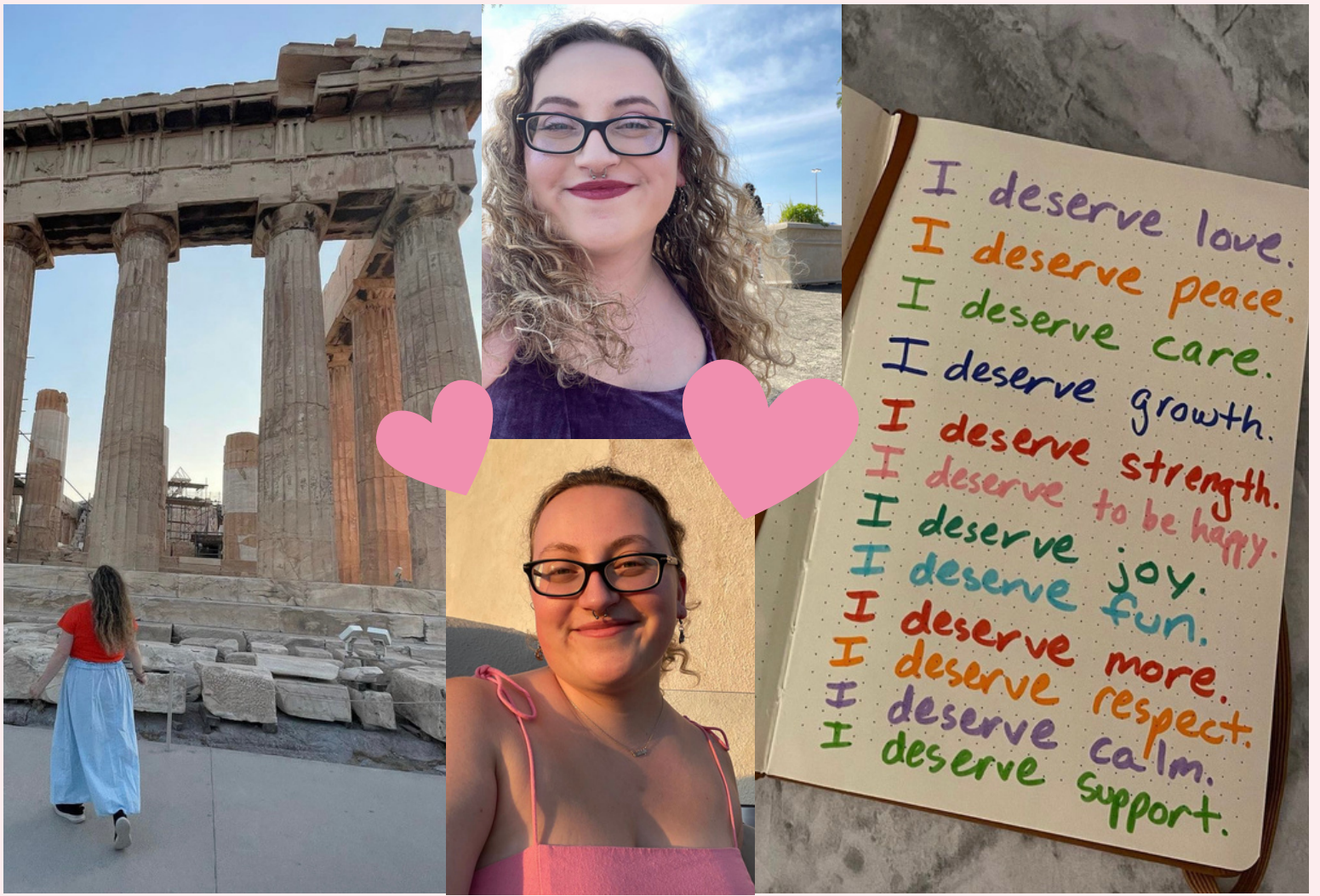
# Whiskers of Self-Love



I found self love through adopting two bunnies. I used to struggle to have a daily routine, motivate myself to get up (especially during covid!), and ground myself. When I adopted my bunnies, I had a reason to get up, to structure my day and provide parts of their routine, and something to do to disengage from technology and ground myself in the moment. They're free roam, so they don't have a cage and exist like a dog or a cat - and seeing them waiting for me every day when I get home from work and knowing they rely on me motivates me to take better care of myself.

Maryellen





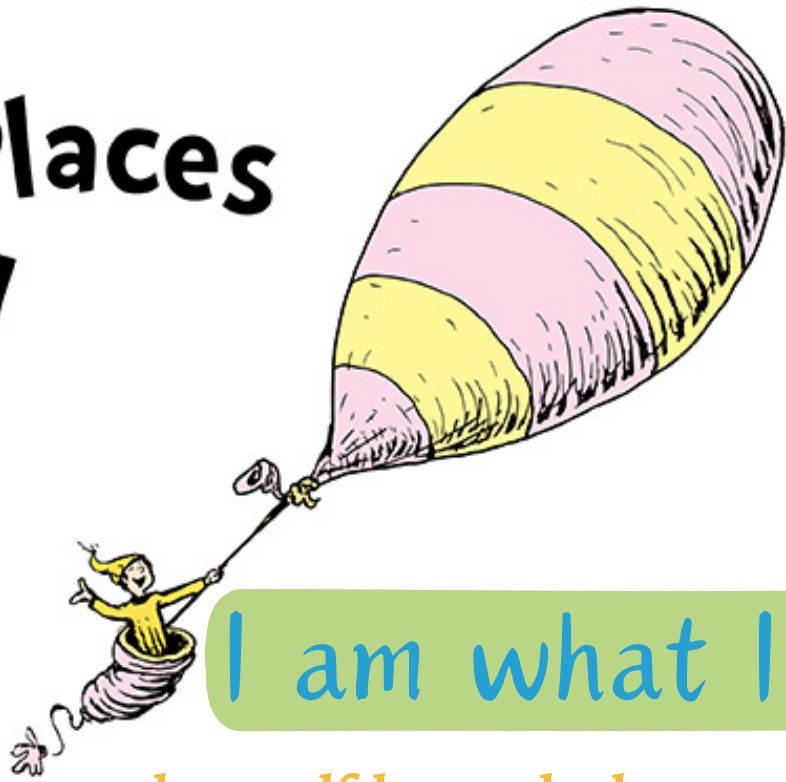
# THE YEAR OF SELF-LOVE

BY ASHLEIGH ZAPPALA

During 2023, I learned about self love the hard way. I was known for putting others first and myself last, until I could not handle it anymore. With difficult decisions and challenging conversations, I found myself again. Putting yourself first is not selfish, but necessary. I am grateful for every experience 2023 brought me because I learned lessons I will bring into 2024 to love myself like never before.

thank you <3

# Oh! the Places You'll Go!



I am what I am!

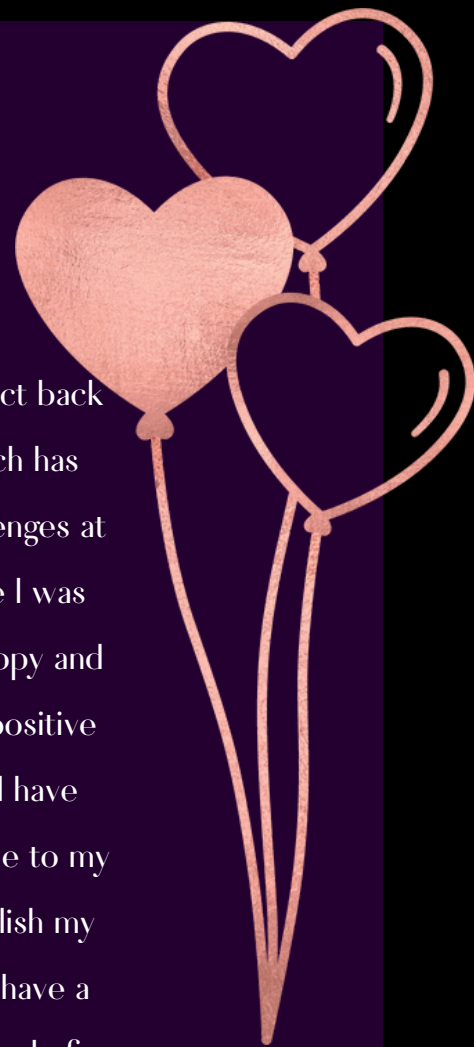
I wish I knew more about self-love or had more deeply absorbed what I have learned about it, but I am a work-in-progress in developing self-love. While it is hard for me to delight in who I am, the following Dr. Seuss quote certainly helps me to try!

"Today you are you! that is truer than true! there is no one alive who is you-er than you! shout loud, i am lucky to be what i am! Thank goodness I'm not just a clam or a ham or a dusty old jar of sour gooseberry jam! I am what i am! that's a great thing to be!"

**Randy Elfenbein**

# Self Love

2024



Every year I go to write a self-love submission and before I do so, I reflect back on the one I wrote the previous year. I am always amazed at how much has changed and how much I have grown. 2023 definitely threw some challenges at me that could easily lead me to label it as a "bad year". However, while I was scrolling through my pictures, I realized that there are so many more happy and positive memories that came out of 2023. My ability to recognize the positive and not focus on the negative has shown me how much I have grown. I have shown myself love by advocating and speaking up for myself when it came to my own mental wellness. I am taking steps to better my future and accomplish my goals. I truly could not have done it all myself and I am beyond lucky to have a support system who has been there for me through all the good and bad of 2023. I can't wait to see how much I learn in 2024.

Emily McCall



selfcare



# SELF-LOVE SHOULD FEEL FAMILIAR, NOT FOREIGN.

By Yvonne Tran

In 2016, I was introduced to makeup products and exercising at an intensity where I didn't know how to love myself without them. My relationship with these things became a disservice to my health and well-being, but it had already become a familiar and comfortable feeling. In 2022, I reluctantly decided to test my discomforts by coming to work and school without makeup and taking rest-days from the gym. Through it all, I realized that no one had treated me less than, except for myself. I knew it was time to change how I perceived myself and what defined me. Self-love should not be granted only when I look "perfect" every waking moment or when the number on the scale goes down. Self-love is not undeserved when I make a mistake or don't feel confident in myself. It took 6 years to finally **accept** what self-love was to **me**, and I wouldn't change the path or time I took to get where I am today.



Thank you to everyone who has come into my life and taught me to be compassionate and loving toward myself <3



## Carolyn's Selflove "Peace"

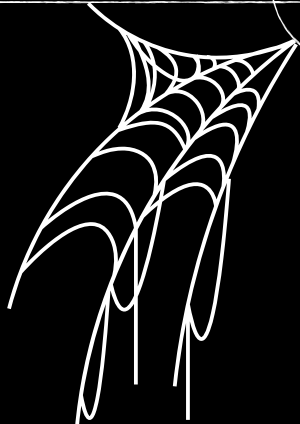
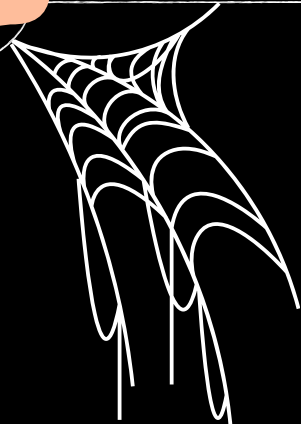
As I reflect on selflove in the past year I think about how I have started looking forward to my nightly skin/hair routine- its peaceful.

Some might think I do this to stay "young" because aging gracefully for women feels impossible let alone costly (this topic is a whole other essay!). But I find I spend those 10-20 mins unloading the day & thanking my body for getting me through it. Honoring myself for another day lived & all the people, experiences I've gained. I am caring for myself, no one else. I am taking the time to put serums on my face, do face yoga (It exists- I swear), put on "frownies", brush & braid my hair. And as I take the time I am loving on me. I feel better on the nights I do this. I feel loved. I feel cared for. I am only in my 30s and I am seeing how this whole aging process can be hard. But I am taking this opportunity to vulnerably show you me. Just me- no makeup , no filters. Just me as I have my "wonder women" mask on (my sweet husband called my frownies that- and I dont think he realized how empowering that was...)

*feeling at peace with who I am right now.*







# SELF LOVE

Please note we shared this as a story of hope to honor this person's journey. If you are in crisis or feel you are going to harm yourself please call 988 or 911

Sometimes it's hard to find what I love in me Often I fail to see the beauty there could be

I spend my days trying to see what others see Untill today I never really tried see what beauty is in me

I love my hair and color of my eyes

And that no matter how hard things get I continue to try

Even if most days all I want to do is cry Or that I keep pushing when I want to die



There are times when things get rough and I self harm But part of my journey is seeing my charm

I love that I can get up when knocked down And that I can help others when they frown

There aren't many things that I've learned to love about me But hopefully one day I'll learn to truthfully smile with glee I know that the process to learning to love me will be long But hopefully it'll feel as good as hearing my favorite song

-Anonymous



# Self Love

To me, self-love takes many forms. The biggest form being the way I take care of myself and protect my peace. I surround myself with people who add positivity to my life. I set boundaries to protect my mental health. And I set aside time to allow myself to breathe. Self-care leads to self-love, and protecting myself leads to loving myself.

ABIGAIL HAMILTON

# Oceanview Boarding Home

Following  
your education  
and  
focusing  
on your  
career

HAPPINESS,  
KINDNESS,  
+  
ACCEPTANCE

taking time doing things you  
enjoy!

Self Love is Loveing Yourself and  
respecting yourself and a smile makes  
me happy Love is patient kind...  
taking time to smell  
the roses!

I Love my self

# Self LOVE IS...

I care about  
the way I  
live.  
Love is  
comfort  
relax taking  
care of  
yourself  
kind  
nails done  
pedicure  
shower  
doing my  
hair  
loving my  
cat

I LOVE DOG'S  
I LOVE YOUR  
ALL HERE  
NOW

Seeing  
the doctor

# I LOVE MY LIFE AND YOURS

forgiving yourself  
when you make  
mistakes ♡

# Self-Love Is Not...

by Carolee Marano



Self-Love Is Not...

Self-love is not what I was taught growing up, that it is something that a woman should even think about - real women were givers, to everyone but themselves.

Self-love is not secretly sitting on my bed, pounding my 8 year old fists into my thighs thinking I deserved punishing.

Self-love is not believing I have to work twice as hard just to be half as good as anyone and everyone else.

Self-love is not giving to others more than I can spare because I am afraid I will be worthless and abandoned if I don't.

My struggle to overcome these beliefs has not been an easy one.

Today, self-love is a winding, wooded, unmarked path.

I will be on it for the rest of my days and nights, and neither expect nor ask to master it.

Sometimes my self-love will bloom, and sometimes it will wither from neglect, or be injured in a storm.

Like a garden, no matter how lush and full in the moment, if I do not tend to my self-love, it will become tangled and dry, and it's greatest beauty will never be revealed.

Self-love is a mindful journey through the weeds and the blooms, the dead, fallen leaves, the vibrant blossoms that will grow in their place, and the open sky above the trees that are so much bigger than I am, And I'm okay with that.

# Love After Darkness

One who has true self love has the world at their disposal because loving oneself is what God wants for each and every one of us.

We are all unique human beings who need love and support from other people.

I am grateful for the self love that I do have.

I would not love myself as much as I do, had I not gone through the darkness.

The darkness led me towards the light and that is where I am heading right now.

I am a work you in progress, rising from the ashes like a Phoenix.

Continuing to live in the darkness, with shame, blame and guilt is a very unhealthy way to exist. So I choose not to.

Working towards loving myself to the fullest is what I am striving for.

I am utilizing all of my Wellness Tools and support from the awesome network of people in my life.

I am able to be of service to others because of the true love that I have for myself.

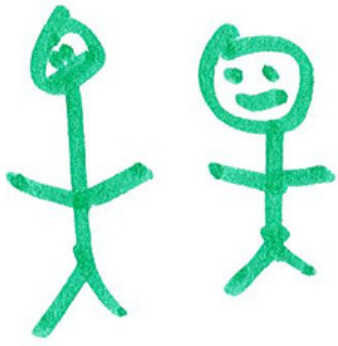
But I can't help imagining what I would be like if I loved myself 100%.

Right now, I believe that I am at 85%.

I am continue to be a work in progress, trying to grow within my soul and give love and compassion to others.

Without self love, that would not be possible.

Jennifer C.



etc ALL OF US AND  
more blessed than ever before we  
all are

Anonymous



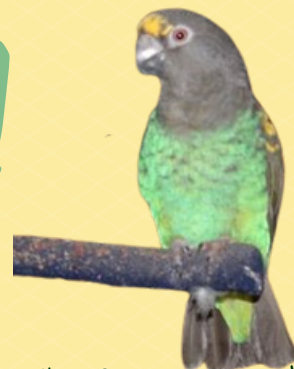
I Love my SELF



Anonymous

Day 14

# Happy Bird-day Maka!



Hi I'm Maka! My Mommy is Ann Marie. I'm 27 years old today! Yea! I'm a happy parrot, most of the time and here are the things I do to be happy.

I have lots of things I do for self-care. Every day I make sure I eat my pellets and drink my water because eating right helps me have really pretty feathers!

I preen each and every feather on my whole body every day. Keeping up my appearance makes me feel good and keeps my feathers healthy and beautiful. See how pretty they are?!

I love chewing on things. Mommy wasn't too happy when I was chewing on her fingers so she got me some empty tissue boxes to chew on. Oh boy, are they fun!!! Not only can I keep my beak trimmed but I can also make a big mess! I LOVE making a big mess! Too bad Mommy doesn't appreciate my artistic messes.

I love talking. People are always surprised when they hear me talk. "Did that bird just say something?" they say. Of course I did! I'm a smart parrot! I say "meat mop," which sounds weird but it's what I called grandma; apple; I love you; Hi; Hi, Maka. The best one is "night night." which I say all day and all night until I fall asleep. LOL! What does it mean? That's for me to know and for Mommy to figure out!

The best self-care I have is my Mommy's scratches. That's what bird people call petting. I'm really happy when I fall asleep under her chin. I feel so safe and secure. Everybody deserves to feel safe and secure!

Have a Happy Valentine's Day, everybody and don't forget to leave me some Nutriberries for my birthday!





# Me Time



**I show myself love by leaving an occasional opportunity for quality "me-time." I like to take a long shower, put on a face mask, watch a good TV show, and relax. Turning my phone off and disconnecting from any worry/stress from time to time is important. This simple relaxation routine makes me feel clean and put together, while giving me the opportunity to chill. When I feel like I need love from someone other than myself, I like to reach out to friends and family (and my dog!). Whether we're going out or staying in, spending time with people close to me makes me feel happy and cared for.**

**Gabrielle Carlamere**





# Photo Finish

My recovery process means more to me  
Than any first place trophy

Looking straight ahead, honoring my time  
Without focusing on the finish line

Audience in the bleachers, no one I knew  
Not even a few

Except my reflection, center in the box seat  
Believed these struggles, I could defeat

Almost tripped but continued my stride  
All my work to get this far, efforts gigantic, would provide

Caught a gleam of paparazzi gathering around winner who placed first  
My bubble did not burst

Going at own pace  
Special moment no one could erase

For in my heart I solemnly believed  
That when completing that last mile, inner smile, I received

When saw podium and medal was presenting  
Inner cheer for self, true applause, was unrelenting

BY: DONNA L. HARING

SELF-LOVE IN  
MODERN

BY:  
FILOMEN  
BAHBAH

SELF-LOVE FOR  
ME IS ABOUT ACCE-  
PTING MYSELF. DO-  
ING WHAT MAKES  
ME HAPPY. SUCH  
AS CREATING ART  
AND PERFECTING  
MY VISIONS. WHETH-  
ER IT BE ABOUT MY-  
SELF OR MY LIFE,  
SELF-LOVE IS SELF HAPPINESS!

LOVE YOURSELF



Julia Kirchner

## Modern Self love

I have very good self esteem loving myself with the support of others.

I am quite independent taking care of my daily routine. I do puzzles (Sudoku) very hard ones and I try to complete them which proves my worth.

I listen to music and do exercise. makes me happy I watch football and have good time talking to others.

**KAVAL RAO**

### Modern Self-Love by Kaval Rao

"I have very good self-esteem, loving myself with the support of others.

I am quite independent taking care of my daily routine.

I do puzzles (sudoku) very hard ones and I try to complete them, which proves my worth.

I listen to music and do exercise Makes me happy. I watch football and have good time talking to others."

I take care of myself

I take a bath at start the Day.

Also I get my cloth wash every Saturday.

I also get three meals a day.

I live day by day.

We play cards to get through the day.

I also we get to see the doctor.

if we have a problem we also take medication.

We also share TV ~~with~~ except when the game is on other than that we get along.

They don't like taking showers

Doreen R. Williams

I go to helping hands

They give us points to get stuff for alwene Highjean

"I take care of myself.

I take a bath to start the day.

Also I get my clothes wash every Saturday.

I also get three meals a day.

I live day by day.

We play cards to get through the day.

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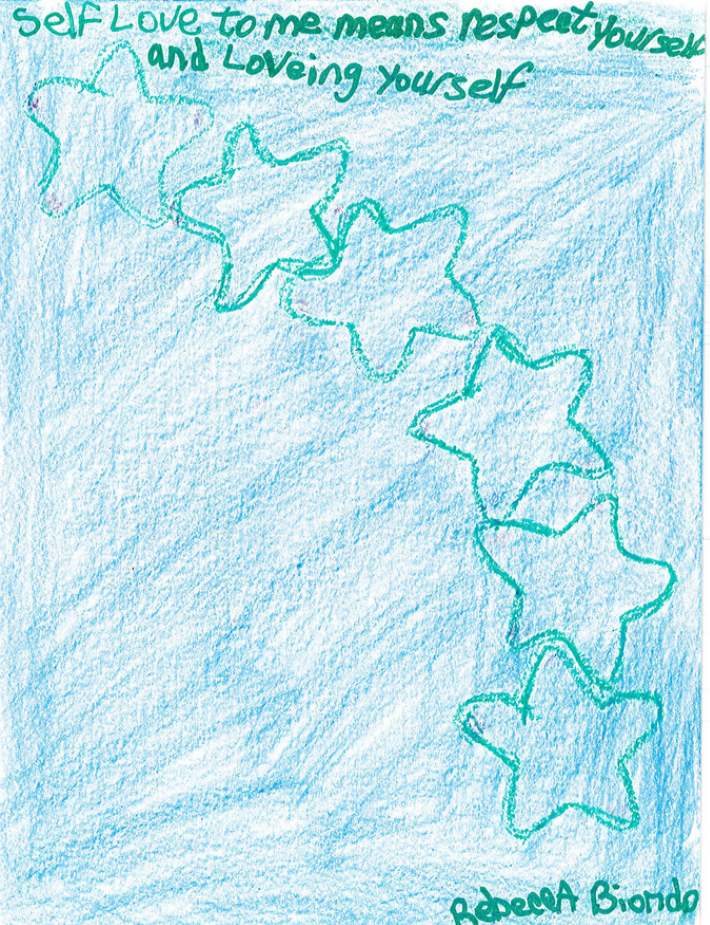
If we have a problem, we also take medication.

We also share TV except when the game is on. Other than that, we get along."

Doreen Williams

"I go to helping hands. They give us points to get stuff for our hygiene."

Self Love to me means respect yourself  
and Loveing yourself



Rebecca Biondo

Day 21

“Self-love to me means  
respecting yourself and  
loving yourself”  
-Rebecca Biondo



“My New Beginning”  
-Anonymous

# SELF-ACCEPTANCE: A DIFFERENT TAKE ON SELF LOVE

WHEN YOU LIVE WITH A CONDITION LIKE DEPRESSION AND OTHER DISORDERS, SELF LOVE CAN BE DIFFICULT. FOR YEARS, ALL I'VE HEARD WAS NEGATIVE TALK FROM MYSELF AND FAMILY MEMBERS. I BELIEVE, IN ORDER TO START THE PROCESS OF SELF LOVE, JUST ACCEPTING YOURSELF AS YOU ARE IS A LOT MORE ACCESSIBLE THAN IMMEDIATELY JUMPING INTO SELF LOVE. FOR ME, I'VE HATED THE WAY I LOOKED MY ENTIRE LIFE. BUT INSTEAD OF SAYING SOMETHING LIKE "I'M SO FAT!" I WILL SAY "MY BODY IS SIMPLY HERE TO KEEP ME ALIVE, AND IT DOES A GOOD JOB." GOING FROM NEGATIVE SELF TALK TO JUST NEUTRAL SELF TALK HAS BECOME A STEPPING STONE TO LEGITIMATE, POSITIVE SELF TALK LIKE, "I LIKE HOW MY BODY IS STILL HERE DESPITE EVERYTHING! I'M PROUD OF MYSELF FOR FIGHTING!" NOW I FEEL A LOT MORE CONFIDENT IN MYSELF AND I AM WEARING CLOTHES THAT I WOULD LIKE TO WEAR AND NOT JUST WHATEVER WOULD HIDE ME THE MOST, AND GOING OUT AND PUSHING MYSELF TO DO THAT CLASS, OR GO TO THAT SOCIAL EVENT. SELF ACCEPTANCE IS A GREAT WAY TO EASE YOURSELF INTO THE PATH TO SELF LOVE.

*-Julian Howell*

# *I choose Joy*

As part of my wellness journey, I came to a point where I realized I had zero clarity on things I loved about myself. I couldn't identify what were my own wants, needs, joys and well-being. I had to take the time to be with myself and my thoughts, and get insight on what those things actually were. This was very difficult for myself and actually created a lot of unpleasant feelings in myself at first. But writing down things that I was joyful and positive about, instead of just doing what others suggested or what I thought others wanted me to do, was the first step on getting insight in to how to love myself. I return to this list often, have incorporated it into my Wellness Recovery Action Plan, and now have greater strength on choosing myself in the moment and in more facets of my life, and I am glad for that.

-Catherine





# SELF LOVE JOURNEY

Self-love is something that is very important to me, and I have found myself on a journey of self-love over the past couple of years. In the past, I have let negative self-talk consume my thoughts and it impacted my self-worth. I have worked over the past couple of years to shift my self-talk into something more positive which I found to help boost my self worth.

When I find myself thinking negatively about myself, I reframe my thoughts. I remind myself that I offer a unique perspective to the world.

I also show myself love by allowing myself to slow down and take the time for the things I enjoy. Sometimes I feel that I am too busy to take some time out of the day for myself. I always feel so much better after taking a break and doing something I love. Some things that I love to do are going out to dinner with my friends, trying a new coffee shop, reading, petting my dog, and coloring.

Katie Lionetti

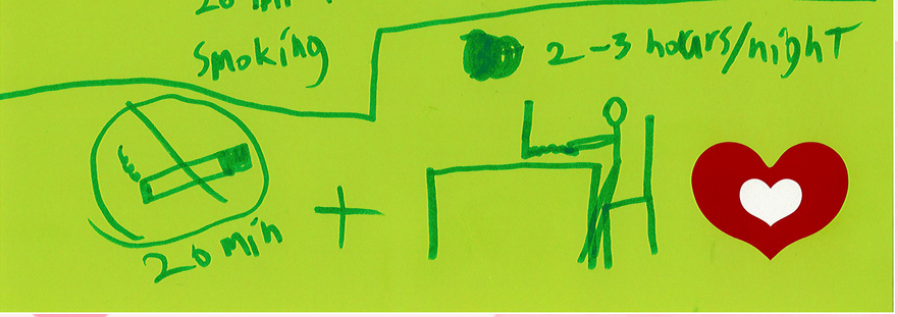


Day 25

# Self LOVE!



I Thomas Farinella,  
 Give myself permission to  
 Play 2-3 hours of videogames  
 each night and also will wait  
 20 minutes each craving before  
 Smoking



"I Thomas Farinella, give myself permission to play 2-3 hours of videogames each night and also will wait 20 minutes each craving before smoking"

Submissions from Lake Lenape Boarding Home



Day 26



Submissions from  
Hammonton Manor  
Boarding Home



I AM STRONGER  
THAN MY  
**FEAR**  
WILL  
EVER BE  
STOPSTIGMA

# JOURNEY TO SELF-LOVE

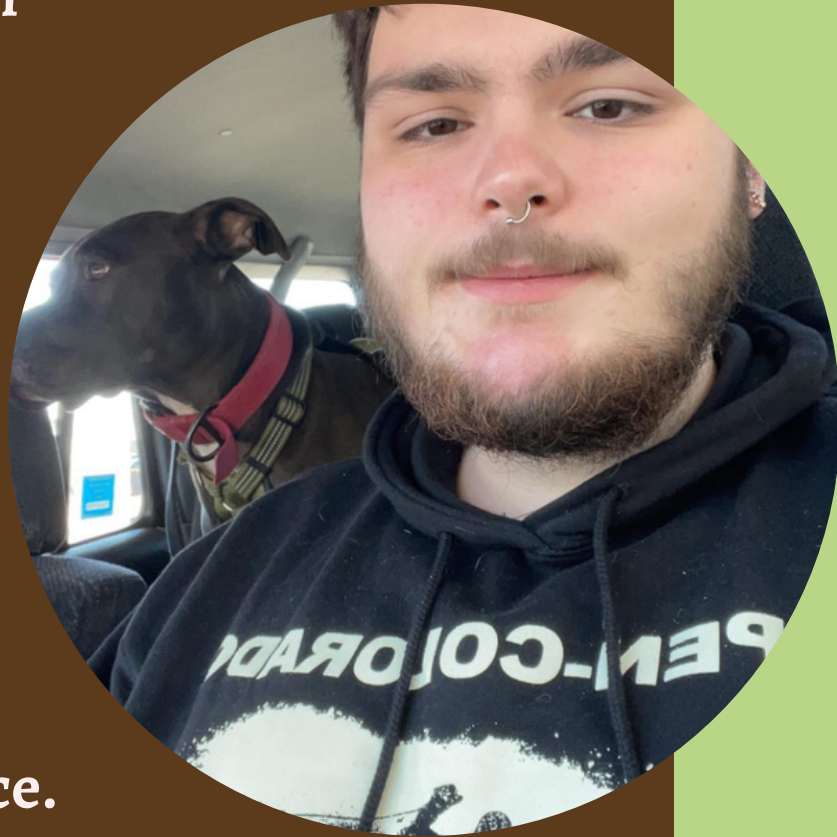
An uncharted expedition.

A voyage to a distance place.

Myself in the mirror  
the ordinary opposition  
I face.

Talk about ways  
I find in the days  
to stick hate to  
myself  
until it stays,  
like post-it notes  
taking up too much space.

But not anymore,  
No more self-hate  
I'll love myself  
with all my cracks and  
breaks.



By: Seth Edwards



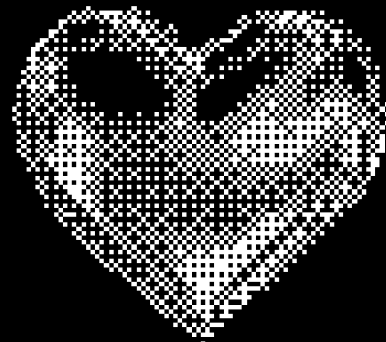
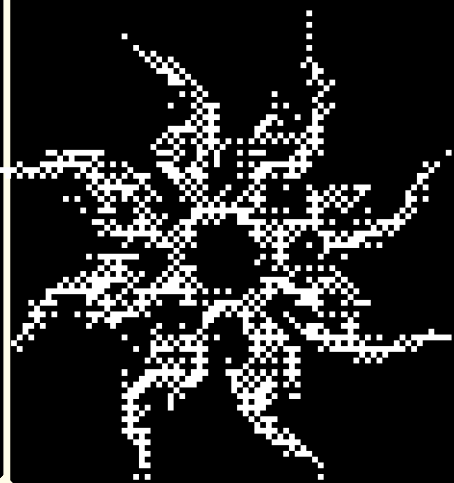
# MY JOURNEY ISN'T OVER

I SHOW MYSELF LOVE BY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT I'M PERFECTLY FINE AND THAT OTHER PEOPLE'S JUDGEMENT SHOULDN'T DEFINE WHO I TRULY AM. FOR YEARS, I LET NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT MYSELF RULE MY THINKING. THESE COMMENTS STOPPED ME FROM LOVING MYSELF AND LED TO MYSELF CONSTANTLY CRITIQUING ASPECTS OF MY PERSONALITY AND APPEARANCE. EVENTUALLY, I FOUND IT COMFORTABLE TO HATE MYSELF RATHER THAN TRULY APPRECIATE MYSELF FOR WHO I AM. TO THIS DAY, I STILL FIND IT HARD TO COMPLIMENT MYSELF WITHOUT HEARING MY NEGATIVE SELF-TALK IN THE DISTANCE.


MY SELF-LOVE JOURNEY GOES BEYOND JUST MERE WORDS THOUGH. MY POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS HAVE ALSO LED ME TO CARING ABOUT MYSELF ON AN OUTWARD PHYSICAL LEVEL. I CARE NOW ABOUT MY HEALTH AND TREATING MYSELF TO LIVING A HEALTHY LIFE. TRIPS TO THE GYM HAVE BECOME MORE FOR HEALING RATHER THAN FOR ANYONE ELSE. EATING DELICIOUS MEALS ARE NOW CELEBRATIONS OF BEING ALIVE ANOTHER DAY RATHER THAN A DISTRACTION. MY HOBBIES HAVE BECOME A WAY TO EXPRESS MY INDIVIDUALITY RATHER THAN A WAY TO ESCAPE FROM REALITY.

TO SUMMARIZE, MY JOURNEY ISN'T OVER, AND I DON'T THINK THAT IT EVER WILL BE. BUT EVERY DAY IN WHICH I FIND MYSELF HAPPIER WITH WHO I AM IS A VICTORY. AND THOSE VICTORIES LEAVE ME LOVING MYSELF JUST A BIT MORE.

-DONELL



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MODERN




SELF-LOVE



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2024

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Thank you to all our participants!!!!  
We are so grateful to have completed  
another February of self love!

