

The Healing Project: Journey from Self Doubt to Self

Discovery

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D-Amini Graham

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Abstract

When first starting this project, so many thoughts ran through my head. I wanted to create a project that documented people's views on love, life, and happiness, while traveling to Bali, North Carolina, and New York City. Unexpectedly, life changed for all of us in March. March marked the beginning of the global pandemic known as COVID-19. Despite the positive outcomes of the pandemic like spending time with family or healing one's inner child, it is extremely important to take note of the countless lives lost to COVID-19 and the simple fact of the matter, not everyone lives in an open and welcoming environment. Therefore, COVID-19 brought as much pain as it did joy.

All of that to say, when I thought of creating this passion project, I knew my focus and direction changed and wanted to focus on the importance of healing one's self. This important, yet vital, step is what leads to happiness, love, and long-term self-fulfillment. The goal and intention put behind every video and word is to inspire the next person to heal. There are three compact stages to healings: self acceptance stage, action stage, and the putting it into practice stage. Remember that nothing comes easy, anything that's great takes time and dedication. May this journey be as fruitful, unique, and healing.

Keywords: Psychology, Healing, Quarantine

Introduction

Quarantine was tough for me. Everything shut down and the energy of my city shifted, especially when you live in a lively city like New York City. As much as I wanted to run and escape to the next thing or place to be or do, I had nothing. After I completed my homework, I thought to myself what to do or where to go. I tried everything until I realized that I was avoiding the most important person aka myself. I became hyper aware of everything I felt, did, and said. I deepened my understanding on what it is to be Black in America and fell madly in love with my melanin during times I was meant to be against myself. Quarantine helped expose me to myself in ways I will forever be grateful for.

Self Acceptance

Self acceptance is the stage because it takes the most bravery. My healing process truly did not begin until quarantine where I was forced to look at myself without any makeup or extensions. In a blink of an eye, I lost sight of who I am and who I was before makeup, wigs, and any additions. Self acceptance to me represents being at peace with your inner child. This requires forgiveness and serious commitment to the future. This wasn't a pretty process. This process and stage required tears and honesty about things I buried so deep in my mind that I felt disconnected from who I once was.

During the beginning of quarantine, I had constant negative thoughts about myself, health, and image, I felt low and saw myself entering a state of depression. One night I broke down and realized the way I was living life wasn't working and I needed deep healing. That same day, I searched for a therapist using PsychologyToday.com. I emailed several different people with a series of questions to see which was the best fit for me. Getting a therapist marked the official start of my journey; I knew I needed to be extremely intentional about everything.

With that being said, I made a list of things I wanted to heal, work on, and improve, therefore everything is laid out on the table and I know exactly what I needed to work on.

My trust in God and spirit increased immensely throughout this process of self acceptance. I came to realize that life is happening for me and not against me, which drastically shifted the way I viewed pain and agony. The instances that I once thought everything was stacked against me when in reality God was preparing me for the good things to come. Thus, I learned to always be thankful for the good and bad. Knowing that a higher power, the same energy that created it all loves me unconditionally was healing and empowering.

Action Stage

Resources

In hindsight, seeking therapy was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Similar to other Black and West Indian households, I didn't grow up in a household that strongly and continuously advocated for mental health. Instead, I grew up in a household that believed in masking their feelings, especially when it came to letting other people who were not immediate family into their business. Thus, seeking therapy was a huge step for me. I knew that going to therapy was deeper for me, it was my cry and action to cleanse my bloodline and heal from everything that was meant to hold me back; physically, emotionally, and spirituality. All of this to say, I hope my testimony inspires someone else to heal and to choose themselves. Too often people bottle up their emotions in hopes that they'll vanish, but the truth is true bravery consists of facing your emotions with open arms.

I started to really embrace unapologetically who I am inside and out which also meant to establish clear boundaries. Boundaries are compact and heavy for most people to comprehend, especially after having access to you for so long. I struggled with this most when it came to

creating boundaries for my mental wellbeing. Some steps I took to regaining control and establishing clear boundaries consisted of understanding myself and continuously practicing self care. I had to realize that I was worthy of having meaningful bonds, however in having those equally yoked relationships, I have to prioritize myself. The first boundary I established was the boundary I created as a peer mentor. As a peer mentor, I encountered all different types of people and students; some were outgoing and others were introverted. When one of my peer mentee had mental challenges throughout the semester, she started to overstep the boundaries I set for myself by calling and texting at various times of night which was unacceptable. I realized that the more I was giving the mentee, the less I had to give myself. Thus, self preservation is self care and love.

Putting it To Practice

Spirituality

I would and could never stop praising and thanking God. During quarantine, I looked deeply within myself and tried to understand myself on all aspects. One aspect of spirituality that I practiced heavily during quarantine had to be meditation. Meditation, amongst other things, is extremely beneficial, in the sense that it enables you to sit down and focus on one thing at a time. I am very spiritual, thus I gravitated towards meditating for two primary reasons: increase reflection time and to practice self care. Thus, meditation is seen as an escape as well. I did not think meditation on a consistent basis required much and would be an obtainable goal I can complete from my bed every morning, night, or evening. I strongly believed that through meditation, I would be able to focus my thoughts and move more intentionally throughout the day, without all of the stress, worries, and concerns from being overwhelmed. Additionally, being spiritual, I believed that mediation would aid the journey of becoming more connected with my mind, body, and spirit. Meditation enables me to simply listen to my thoughts and body

without any distractions going on. I believe that the more I meditated, the more my focus and attentiveness will elevate and increase.

Self Care

I was always told to practice self care more and to love myself, however self care was great, but hard to keep up with in my everyday busy day-to-day life. Therefore, I had to redefine self care and what it was like to practice self care. Thus, self care for me was taking three deep breaths every morning and expressing my gratitude. Throughout the process of creating this project, I realized that self care wasn't something that had to be practiced on a Sunday or whenever you feel overwhelmed. Self care is an everyday routine for me especially whenever I'm doing something as simple as skin care or meditation. I challenge myself and everyone else that reads and receives this paper to practice self care everyday. Through practicing self care, I saw the changes in my body, before I stored all the stress in my shoulders and stomach. Thus, practicing self care has impacted my health for the better.

Reflection

As I close out the series of videos and journals, it is important to note and reflect on the process of creating and ultimately, manifesting this project. This project has held me accountable in ways that I can't even describe. There were days, I didn't meditate or feel motivated to record or write which I appreciate my advisor, Rebecca Swenson, who graciously met with me for consecutive weeks at a time. Writing and recording these videos were much harder than I fathomed in the beginning because I had to really sit and face everything I felt before while also continuing distance learning. There were points that I felt so discouraged and wanted to change the topic to something that wasn't so revealing to my internal thoughts and feeling being that it's easy to shy away from things than to face it.

However, this project especially the video helped me accountable and gradually face myself throughout the process: the good, bad, and the ugly realities. When I sit back and reflect there are a lot of things I would have done differently from technical to more journal prompts, but one thing that would have remained the same despite the changes would be my sense of purpose. The healing project is and was meant to inspire everyone who sees, hears, or comes across the video to embrace themselves holistically without distractions. And for that reason, I feel complete and forever grateful for the experience to call this my passion project and now it belongs to whoever comes across this paper or video. Take what you need and remember to embrace life openly with love and acceptance.

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