

Flashing Light Story

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Story Theme: "I choose to love myself."



- Ask the children to find the hidden hearts in this story.

UBC Early Childhood Education Conference:

When I attended a conference at UBC Early Childhood Education Department this quote, commonly attributed to Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, was mentioned several times.

- **"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."**

The choices and decisions we make with our mind can look quite different from the ones we make with our heart.



Today educators believe that how children feel about themselves from birth to age six will greatly influence how they interact in society. We all want the same thing for our children.

- **To be loved and accepted unconditionally.**
- **When children are born, they are lovable. That love never goes away, it stays with them forever.**
- **Children can say: "I am a gift of love."**



- **We are all born to love and connect with one another.**

When challenging life experiences cause a child to feel unloved, strong feelings surface because deep down children know they deserve to be loved.

- **Therefore, "Under all tears is love!"**



Even nature shares a flower called a "Bleeding Heart" which shows a little tear shape below the pink heart.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, American Lecturer:

- “A man becomes what he thinks about.”

David D. Burns, MD:

- “Feelings are not facts; they mirror the way you are thinking.”

Mirror Activity:

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Encourage children to be aware that when they see someone doing something negative, they can stop and ask themselves:

- “Have I ever done that?”
- They might not have noticed that they may have done the same thing.
- It's a mirror reflection offering insight into their own behavior.

- If someone says something that creates a strong reaction within you, ask yourself, "What is this about, for me?" Uncovering the answer to this question may also offer you insight into yourself.
- Whatever children are thinking, feeling, imagining and believe will be mirrored back to them by others.
- Sometimes we mirror the best of ourselves and other times well; we mirror something else.
- Thoughts + Feelings = How a young child will behave.

**Thoughts + Connected Feelings =
Co-operative Behavior**

Encourage children to discover their kind, caring, and talented selves through the activities in the Lesson Plans and your daily modelling. As children focus on these qualities, they will experience more of them and become self-aware.

- As children love, appreciate and believe in themselves, they will become more confident.
- They will feel wonderful when these inner beliefs and feelings are reflected back to them by others.



- Children will notice that when they see the goodness in another, at that moment they will feel good inside too!

**Thoughts + Disconnected Feelings =
Uncooperative Behavior**

Unfortunately, when children feel they don't belong, or they are not good enough, they do not feel good about themselves. They may see themselves as unworthy, distracted and overwhelmed by their feelings, worries or challenges.

- If children are consistently second guessing or doubting their value, building self-confidence is challenging.

Anytime you hear a child being doubtful, acknowledge their feelings and say:

- "I hear you saying ... about yourself."
- "How about you give yourself a new idea to think about."

You can say to yourself:

- "I am lovable."
- "I can do it."
- "I am smart."
- "It will work out."



Seeing the Best in Children:

As parents, teachers and caregivers repeatedly share with children the good qualities they hear and see, children will gain a new perspective of who they are while strengthening their beliefs about themselves. They will begin to recognize their value.

For this reason, the activities from this story and other stories in the Beaming Bright, You're a Shining Light Storybook and Lesson Plans help children to recognize their lovable self. As children do these activities, they discover a variety of ways to bring out their very best selves.

Self-Portrait Calendar Activity:

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This self-awareness activity helps children to record how they are feeling each day. If a child is experiencing a particularly challenging situation, they can now recognize it and be helped. Children can practice regular self-soothing breathing exercises and other activities to balance themselves and see themselves from a new, loving perspective.

- As children experience a variety of feelings, they can practice saying kind and loving words to themselves.
- "No matter how I am feeling. I wrap myself in love."
- It is a wonderful opportunity for children to love themselves unconditionally.





Baby Picture Activity:

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A baby's love and innocence couldn't be more apparent! It is always there no matter how old they get. It is important for us to remind them often!



- Have you ever noticed the peaceful loving innocence of a small child when they are sleeping?
- When we see peace, love and innocence in them we can feel it within ourselves.

I encourage parents to spend time in their child's room while their child is sleeping. See and feel the love. It is amazing! Another wonderful moment you can create for yourself.

I am lovable.



Encourage the children to take a slow, deep breath; feel the love in their heart and say the above statement with you.



Exploring Patience Activity:

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Children are encouraged to be gentle and patient with themselves when they face challenges. Children can, at times, be hard on themselves.

As children take one step at a time, in a more relaxed way, they can become easier with themselves especially when they feel stressed. This approach can help them to gain a lighter, more positive perspective, as they become gentler and kinder with themselves.



Encourage the children to take a slow, deep breath; feel the love in their heart and say the above statement with you.



In the story of "The Tortoise and the Hare", the tortoise remained focused and patient and reached the finish line before the hare.



Encourage the children to take a slow, deep breath; feel the love in their heart and say the above statement with you.

Explore Your Goodness Activity:

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Anytime you see children smiling, giggling, or laughing, bring it to their attention by saying:

- **"It sounds like you are having a good time."**

Ask the children:

- **Tell me about another time you were doing something you enjoyed?**
- **Draw a picture or write a sentence about this good feeling moment.**



As children become aware of the things they enjoy, they are gifting themselves with a powerful awareness of the things that bring them feelings of value.



Children who feel good about themselves attract healthier friends into their life. We are all familiar with the phrase, “birds of a feather flock together.”

I Choose to Love Myself Activity:

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It can take a lot of repetition and modelling for children to be gentle, kind and love themselves. This is what Social and Emotional Learning is all about. Each time a child does a self-awareness loving activity, they are one step closer towards recognizing their precious, lovable nature.

- **Our heart knows that love is who we are.**

- When we accept and believe that “love is who we are”, we feel secure, happy and free.



I choose to love myself.



Encourage the children to take a slow, deep breath; feel the love in their heart and say the above statement with you.

Ask the children to:

- **Draw a picture of you loving and appreciating yourself.**



As children focus on loving and appreciating themselves, they will believe in themselves. This belief will strengthen their self-esteem and they will reflect these feelings in their interactions with others.

- **Read picture books about love.**

As you are reading stories to children, encourage them to talk about how the children in the story are feeling.

If the children say the child in the story is happy or excited, talk about the pictures and say:

- **"Yes, I think that the little girl or boy is happy. They are smiling with a big smile as they are playing."**

If the children say the child in the story is sad or angry, talk about the pictures and say:

- **"Yes, I think they might need a hug, what do you think?"**
- **"Could we wrap all their feeling in a Blanket of Love and give them a big hug?"**



As parents, teachers and caregivers model unconditional love they will be teaching children to:

- **See themselves from a loving perspective.**



- **Be gentle, kind and caring with themselves.**



- **Love themselves as they are.**

Smile, enjoy and appreciate the precious moments you enjoy with children.



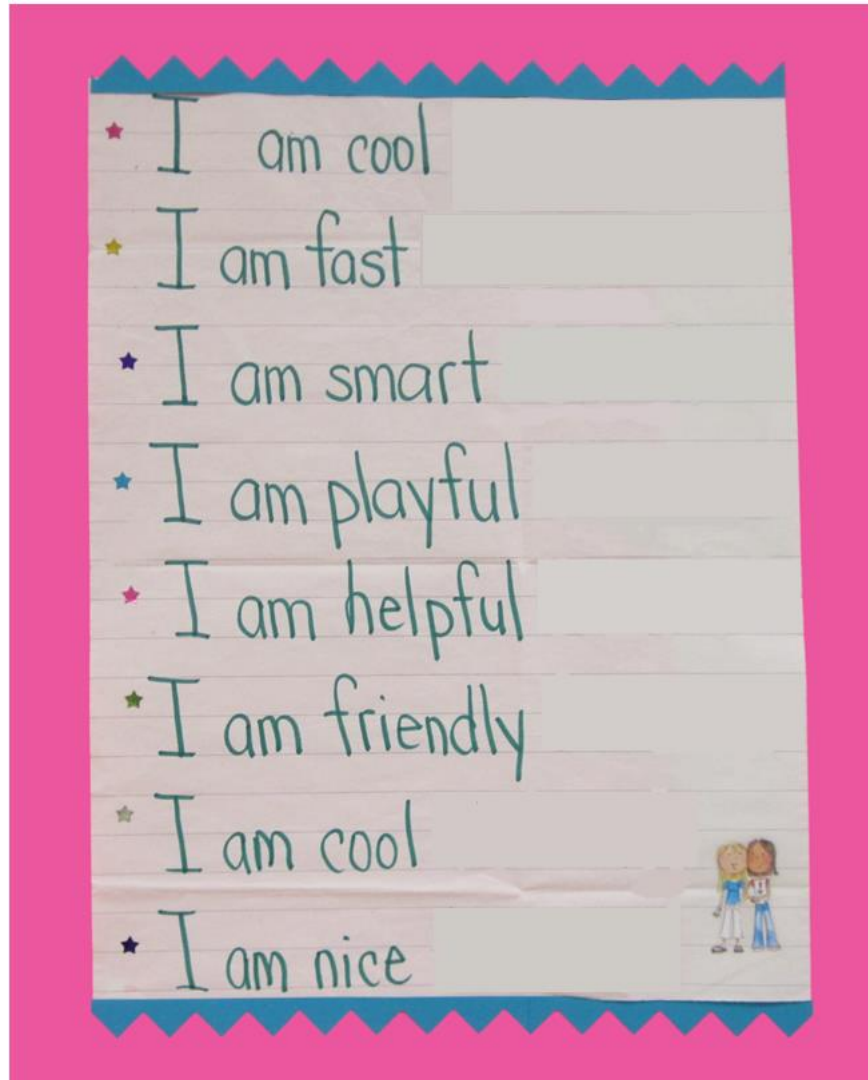
Learning to love ourselves is a choice that we all make moment by moment.

Shalini's Daily Sentences:

Shalini wanted to help children to envision and create positive beliefs about themselves.

She asked the children to:

- **Choose your own, "I am sentence."**



Every day at calendar time the children would point to their sentence. After a few weeks Shalini cut out the sentences and posted them around the room.

The children would find their sentence while holding a pointer and point to each word as they read their sentence out loud.

Next, everyone in the class would say the sentence with the child.

Child Unwilling to Say Her Sentence:

One of the children had a speech impediment and was very self-conscious. She would not participate in the daily sentence activity.

The class tried to help her choose a sentence.

I am cool, pretty, etc. however she was not willing to choose a sentence.

After several days, Shalini said:

- **"Well, the theme of this story is I choose to love myself. So, I will choose your sentence for you. It will be, I am lovable."**
 - This little 5-year-old girl gave Shalini the biggest scowl.
 - The child would not say her sentence.

After a couple of moments everyone in the class said her sentence for her. One day, when it was her turn, she walked up to her sentence with the pointer and said her sentence in a very quiet voice.

- **"I am lovable."**
 - She gave a little smile, then put down the pointer.

This experience was a journey for her. From scowling to being able to quietly say, "I am lovable." with a little smile. It was a very heartwarming day for everyone in the class.

Do One Nice Thing for Yourself Each Day

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Parents, teachers, and caregivers can talk about why it is important to do nice things for yourself each day. As children become self-aware of things they enjoy doing, they will begin to recognize these activities help them to feel happy and energized.

**I do nice things for
myself and others.**



Encourage the children to take a slow, deep breath; feel the love in their heart and say the above statement with you.

Children are learning everyone deserves to give themselves quality time as they value their unique self. Hopefully children will remember to keep this in mind as they grow older.



Parents, teachers, and caregivers can also share the favorite things they love to do, and how it makes them feel.

- Exercising, walking, hiking, canoeing, swimming, crafting, drawing, painting, singing and reading.

Self-Exploration Activity:

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Put on your heart glasses.



When parents, teachers or caregivers see children being friendly, confident, caring, happy or funny just being themselves; encourage this behavior. Do this by telling them the traits you are seeing or writing them a note. This is especially helpful for children who are self-conscious or feel challenged in some way.

Empower children to see themselves with new eyes. As they focus on seeing love and feeling happy, they will find more love and happiness.

- **The more love children feel within themselves, the more love they can extend to others. What they focus on grows!**



As children learn to question their negative thoughts and imagine themselves in new ways it becomes easier for them to begin to believe in themselves and love themselves.

- **Once they see love, they will discover it is unlimited and vast in the ways it can be shared.**
- **Love is the greatest gift children can give to themselves and others.**



- **The sky is the limit as to what they can accomplish. I wonder what loving gifts your children will share with the world.**

