

Oumou Diallo

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### **Falling in Love with Me**

The last group session was about dealing with bullying in a school setting. During the group meeting, we pretended to act as children that were being bullied in school. This was a sensitive topic because I was bullied as a child. I was teased for having full lips. It took me a long time to accept my facial features. I was teased all the time for my appearance. I distinctively remember a young Latin boy pretending to be a monkey and curling up his lips to mimic my own lips. I always stood up for myself. Oftentimes, I resorted to violence. I would fight almost every day in school for being bullied by my peers. My brother would walk alongside me all the way home with my school letters in hand. I would beg him not to tell my parents. My brother kept it a secret for years from my parents. He saved me from unwarranted beatings from my parents for fighting in school. My parents never asked me about my days in school and so I never disclosed that I was being bullied almost every day.

I was at war from the time I was a child. Dealing with physical abuse as a child prepared my arms for battle. As a child, I dealt with bullying at home and in school. I grew up in a dysfunctional family and a toxic environment as a child. I dealt with a lot of trauma that affected me as an adult. I repeated the vicious cycle of abuse because it was what I was taught. I was emotionally conditioned to accept abuse until a life transforming event happened in my life last year.

I choose to love myself. Loving me has been a new venture. I never stood still long enough to listen to my own voice and thoughts. Embarking on a journey of

healing has helped me to be gentle to myself and to hold myself accountable for my own life choices. God has shown me that there is a pure way to live life. Living a life void of sin is possible.

I endeavor to learn how to love myself and to get to know who and whose I am. Loving myself had been an internal battle because I realized I allowed a lot in my life to transpire. I never realized my own power. My main prayer is to tap into my power. The power to love myself and to follow my dreams. I am weary. I have fought my whole life. Internal battles and battles against powers and principalities beyond my control. These last five years has tried my faith. All, I have is faith to stand on. I must believe in myself once again and make changes to my life.

Being bullied as a child changed my life. I have embraced my lips and I realize women pay a lot of money for full lips, like the Kardashians. I find it comical that my lips are now the most beautiful feature I have on my face. God allowed me to embrace my beauty and the way he designed me and knit me in my Mother's womb. I endeavor to break generational curses. I refuse to abuse my daughter. I have set a goal to tell her I love her every day, because I never heard it as a child. God has shown me how to trust him and him alone. I desire to love myself and to continue to heal and allow God's love to surround me. I have felt the Lord's presence deeply lately. I desire to deepen my relationship with God and the relationship I now have with myself. One must not run from pain, but to face it head on and deal with what is dealing with you.