

# LOVE YOUR TREE

*Cultivating Compassion Through Art*



## SELF-EXPLORATION AND CREATIVE BRAINSTORM

1. **What is your favorite kind of tree?** \_\_\_\_\_

You can explore various images of trees in print or online. Sometimes it can help to search for photos of your favorite outdoor places or locations and see which kinds of trees exist there. Can you recall any favorite memories related to trees?

2. **What is your favorite part of the tree?** Circle examples from the list below or write in your own.

Roots	Leaves	Bark	Rings	Shade/Shadow
Trunk	Blossoms	Fruit	Shape	Other?
Branches	Seeds	Knots	Smell	_____

3. **Write down three words to describe this part of a tree and/or describe why you like it.**

(Examples: colorful, bold, aromatic, peaceful, fun to play on, etc.)

4. **What is something that makes you unique or different?**

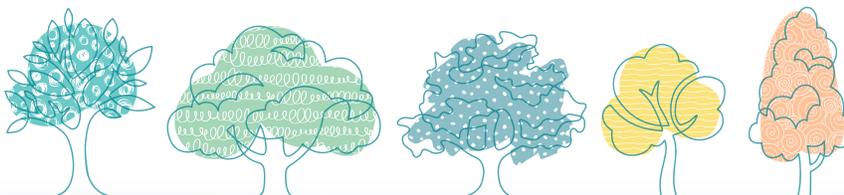
(Examples: interesting freckle pattern, great with dogs, an infectious laugh, passion for traveling, etc.)

5. **What are some communities or groups that are important to you?** Or who are the people in your life you feel most connected to? (Examples: church groups, friends, family, advocacy organizations, neighbors, etc.)

6. **What is something you are proud of or a challenge you have faced (or are facing)?** Have these challenges changed you in any positive ways? (Examples: seeking treatment for a mental health issue, trying a new hobby, healing from an injury, overcoming negative body image, healing from a toxic friendship, etc.)

7. **What makes you feel strong or in what ways have you grown stronger over the last year?**

(Examples: I feel strongest when I'm playing with my kids; I'm strong in my faith; I've started saying what I'm feeling and it makes me feel strong and confident)



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## 8. Where is your favorite place – or what is your favorite way – to spend time in nature?

(Examples: my backyard – around the fire pit, at the top of a mountain, listening to the waves at the beach)

## 9. What is your favorite part of your body? Circle examples from the list below or write in your own.

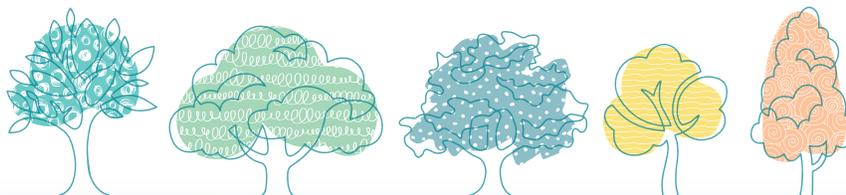
Head	Neck	Wrists	Knees	Heart
Face	Shoulders	Hands	Skin	Muscles
Eyes	Chest	Fingers	Calves	Nails
Hair	Brain	Waist	Ankles	Toes
Nose	Arms	Hips	Feet	Knees
Lips	Elbows	Thighs	Freckles	

## 10. Write down three words to describe what you love about those parts of your body or what they allow you to do.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. What are your favorite characteristics or parts of your personality? Circle examples from the list below or write your own.

Loved	Social	Intelligent	Unique	Honest
Different	Grounded	Outspoken	Authentic	Other?
Passionate	Beautiful	Confident	Reflective	_____
Comfortable	Resourceful	Fast	Artistic	_____
Creative	Complex	Resilient	Compassionate	_____
Natural	Strong	Flexible	Funny	
Respected	Determined	Trustworthy	Caring	



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**12. Artist Statement:** Based upon your responses to the above questions, how would you complete the following statements? You can choose one or complete all of the prompts as a way to experiment and explore your *Love Your Tree* messages.

Like a tree, I am... \_\_\_\_\_

Like a tree, I will... \_\_\_\_\_

Like a tree, I grow... \_\_\_\_\_

Like a tree, I provide... \_\_\_\_\_

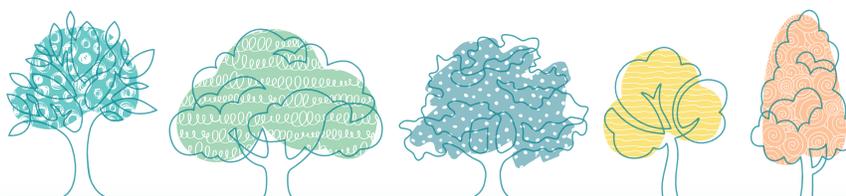
Like a tree, my body is... \_\_\_\_\_

Like a tree, I... \_\_\_\_\_

If you filled in multiple statements, review them and circle the one that you like best. It should be the one that makes you feel powerful, confident and inspired when you read it. It can help to visualize what that statement may look like as a poster.

The above statement can now serve as your artist statement. Use this phrase, along with all of your responses on the worksheet, to inspire your *Love Your Tree* poster or creative submission. Remember to incorporate the metaphor of the tree to do one or all of the following:

1. Celebrate your own resilience and/or strength.
2. Illustrate the importance of community and social connection.
3. Communicate gratitude for your body or celebrate what makes you unique.
4. Highlight the natural diversity of people and paths to healing.
5. Encourage mindfulness or self-care.
6. Challenge the media's narrow definition of success or beauty and dispel pressure to be "perfect."



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## SKETCHING PROMPTS

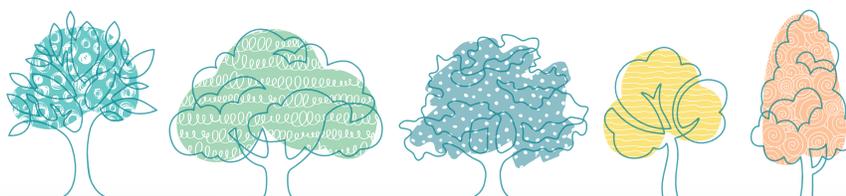
Use a separate piece of paper if you need more room.

**Step 1: Quickly sketch your favorite kind of tree.**

**Step 2: Quickly sketch yourself, incorporating any of the characteristics that make you unique or aspects of your body and personality for which you are grateful.**

**Step 3: Explore the two sketches together.**

Ask yourself: Are there any similarities? How can I combine the two images? Play with the possibilities!



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**Step 4: Use the tree elements identified on your worksheets to represent aspects of the body.**

**Example:** Toes and feet spreading out like roots above the ground where the tree is anchored.

**Step 5: Use the tree/body metaphor to create a blended image of your artist statement!**



*"Like trees, our differences make us beautiful."*

Liz L., Diversity

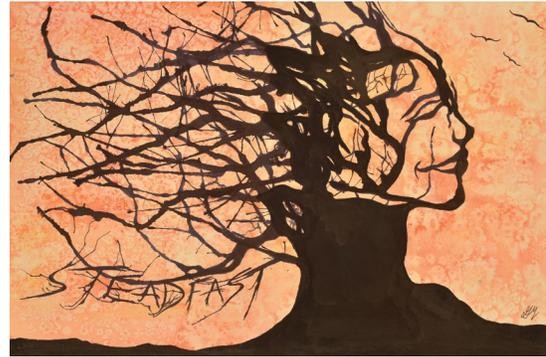
Age Category: 15-18



*"Like a tree, my body...is strong."*

Stella H., Luzu

Age Category: 11-14



*"Like a tree, I am...steadfast."*

Gavin M., Steadfast

Age Category: 15-18

**Step 6: Decide what kind of art you would like to create based on your tree representation!**

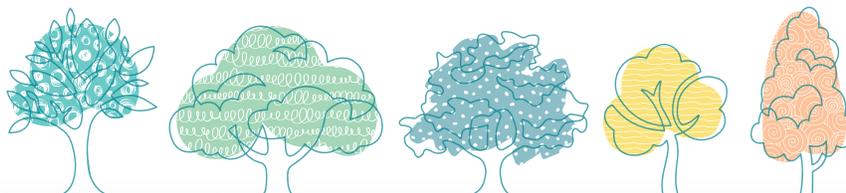
These are just some of the possibilities:

- Poster (paint, colored pencil, collage, pastels, pen and ink, etc.)
- Dance choreography
- Poem or spoken word
- Original photography
- Song/lyrics/musical composition
- Sculpture

**Step 7: Create and submit!** Once your idea comes to life, don't forget to take a picture and/or upload it to the Love Your Tree virtual gallery at [LoveYourTree.org](http://LoveYourTree.org)

**Step 8: Share your art and the Love Your Tree message with the world.** Creating your own artwork is just part of the process. Art is so powerful! By sharing your message of body positivity, self-acceptance or resilience with others, it not only helps you but could also inspire or empower the people who see it to create change or overcome challenges in their own lives.

**Share a link to your artwork in the online gallery to your social media channels. Be sure to use the #LoveYourTree hashtag!**



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