

# LOVE YOUR TREE

*Cultivating Compassion Through Art*



## THE FIVE BRANCHES OF HOPE

*Love Your Tree* uses the metaphor of the tree and its universal symbols to help participants celebrate themselves and others across the following “Branches of Hope.”



### Diversity & Uniqueness

Just as trees are all unique in their shapes, functions, sizes, colors, growing patterns and blooming seasons, so are we! *Love Your Tree* honors the natural beauty of diversity and the beauty of our imperfections. With their branches sprouting in different directions and roots attaching in different soils, every tree is an individual and no two are exactly alike in appearance or existence. In this way, the tree can symbolize our individuality and our distinct paths as different experiences shape us into who we are.

**Examples:** “Like trees in a forest, we all grow in different ways and can find our own light”; “Like a tree, my body is unique and worthy of love.” “Like a tree, I am more than my outward appearance.”



### Community & Connectedness

Trees symbolize togetherness and serve as a reminder that we are never alone or isolated. Did you know that trees can communicate with one another through root systems and need one another to grow properly in a forest system? Even across continents and oceans, trees are constantly in a cycle of connection with the air we breathe and the environments we live in. Like trees, we are deeply connected to each other and the world even beyond our own family tree.

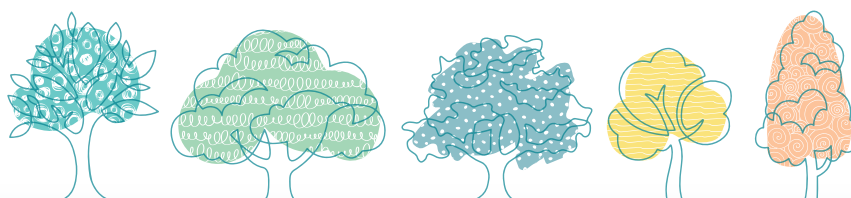
**Examples:** “Like a tree, I have deep roots and am not alone in my journey.” “Like a tree, I am connected to my community.” “Like a tree, I am an essential part of something bigger.”



### Mindfulness & Joy

Walking through a forest is known to have a calming effect on mood and provides a wonderful atmosphere for mindfulness and self-reflection. Imagine all the different ways we interact with trees – relaxing in a hammock strung between two old trunks, kids climbing and laughing in the branches or simply sitting and watching the wind blow through the leaves. *Love Your Tree* uses the tree symbol to encourage rest, meditation, playfulness, peace and connection with nature as a form of self-care and joy.

**Examples:** “Like a tree, I can be still.” “Like trees in the wind, I am relaxed with each breath.” “Like a tree full of playful kids, I am full of joy.”



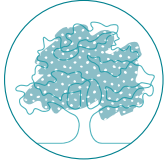
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## Resilience & Change

Even when trees lose their leaves or look bare during winter, new buds appear and fresh leaves unfurl in the spring. Other trees stay green through unexpected droughts or serve as shelter through the coldest winters. Over time, trees adapt to unexpected situations, often growing over or around barriers like sidewalks and fences, sprouting new branches. This is similar to how people grow and change over a lifetime, and it reminds us that we can adapt to all types of unforeseen circumstances.

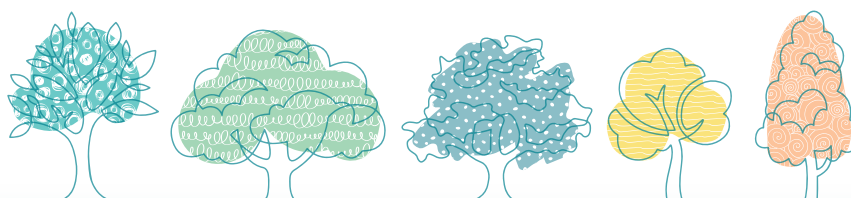
**Examples:** *"Like a tree, my mind is blooming."* *"Like a tree, my body changes through the seasons in my life."*



## Strength & Growth

Different types of trees stand strong all over the world and display their strength in a variety of ways. Some spread their roots deep or wide into the soil to ground and stabilize themselves. Others grow right into the edges of cliffs or are perfectly suited to stay upright during a hurricane. Just as trees grow strong, we can grow stronger physically and mentally. In the same way that trees are essential for life and are used for structure, comfort, nourishment and relaxation, we too have many strengths to share with the world.

**Examples:** *"Like a tree I can get through difficult storms."* *"Like a tree, I have many strengths and grow with every challenge."* *"Like a tree, my body is growing in its own wonderful way."*



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