

Tracy Aftergood

2nd Day RH 2022

Ahavaha Rabbah

Ahavah Rabbah is a prayer about great love – God’s great love toward us. One of the most important lessons I learned about great love, was from my Mom Dale, who died almost 20 years ago. She taught me that being loved unconditionally is the most precious gift you can ever receive. Today I can say without question that my three amazing daughters Olivia, Margot and Gemma and incredible husband Braden are the great loves of my life.

Yet when the pandemic took hold in early 2020 even their love couldn’t sustain me. I could feel my emotional reserves running low, because I had made my family's wellbeing and safety my number one priority and somewhere along the way failed to extend myself the same care and attention.

I quickly realized that by not showing myself any love, I was limiting how deeply I could love my family and those around me. To hold myself accountable I started to carve out just 1 hour a day to walk around our neighborhood by myself. A week turned into a month and these daily walks became a sacred time where I could meditate as I moved and just enjoy the simple act of being alone. I also began to have more frequent conversations with God. I didn’t have to hide my anxiety or sadness for fear that it would burden others as God had the strength to hear and hold my worries without conditions. It was now clear that self-care wasn’t a luxury, but a necessity I needed to uphold in order to be a loving parent, partner and friend.

As we enter this New Year, my hope for each of you is that even on your most busy and challenging of days you remember to show yourself some grace and



allow time for self-care. While loving yourself might be the last item on your to do list, it could ultimately be the most important one that you check off.