

SPRING  
2025



House of Mercy and Encouragement

*play therapy, counseling, tutoring  
help for children and families*

>>> HOMETown News <<<

# HOUSE OF MERCY AND ENCOURAGEMENT

FROM OUR DIRECTOR

## YOU LIFT ME & I'LL LIFT THEE & WE'LL ASCEND TOGETHER

By Susan O' Neil, LMHC

"You Lift Me & I'll Lift Thee & We'll Ascend Together."

Quaker Proverb

I recently started an online retreat called Holy Silence – The Quaker Way-2025. I am not a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers), but I saw in their newsletter the offering of this retreat and decided I should take it.

The first query to take into silence was "What makes something sacramental to me?" I settled into silence and simply listened for a response. I loved the silence, but I did not receive a response or at least I thought I didn't.

A few days later, I was working with one of my young clients. This child is usually very chatty and shares many things as he creates art. During this session, he was working busily on a project. I was doodling on a note card, waiting to see what was on his mind but also allowing us to sit in silence. A bit more time passed, and he said "It's quiet.

Nobody is talking." I acknowledged the quiet and said, "sometimes it may feel uncomfortable and sometimes it's nice." The boy began to talk about challenging issues in his life. This was a big step for him. I listened, supported and provided acceptance.

Our session was done, and we walked to the lobby. The child wrapped his arms around my waist and said, "I love you, Miss Susan." I hugged him back.

Later that night, I was thinking about this child and this session. I thought about the silence. In that silence things were communicated. The silence allowed for a sense of caring, support, acceptance and love. It was felt, not just heard.

"What makes something sacramental to me?" For me, the silence experienced while in service to another person was sacred. It was like the Quaker Proverb states, "You Lift Me & I'll Lift Thee & We'll Ascend Together."

May peace be with you,  
Susan



- We will be hosting Coffee with the Counselor at Our Lady of Lourdes in Dunedin on Monday, April 28th-Sacrifice & The Self: What's the balance? Register here to join: <https://cwc-ticket.eventbrite.com>
- HOME is revamping our website. Keep a look out!



**GENERAL  
HAPPENINGS  
at HOME**

# Client STORY <<<

By: House of Mercy Client

Do you know what it's like with people constantly telling you that you're not good enough? Or people always labeling everything you do as bad, lazy, or dumb? Parents, teachers, supposed friends. And you start to believe it. You get that message in your head, and you figure it's hopeless to fight against it. You have to fit in where people tell you. And then your parents force you to start therapy. As if you need it. You're already doing what people expect of you anyway!

I started going to HOME as a child. I didn't want to start counseling, but once again, I was basically told something was wrong with me. I avoided talking about anything important when I started out and brushed off the things that were said to me. But for once, I had someone who was actually listening, even when I had nothing to say. I had someone who seemed to care about me.

Unfortunately, I didn't get to go often. My parents didn't understand the meaning of consistency, I guess. So, while I had started to like going, I seemed to stop abruptly, start up again months later, and then stop again. I got disheartened. I ended up having to switch therapists a couple times and I learned to avoid them again. I didn't want to keep starting over. It was too hard.

At one point, something just seemed to click with my therapist. I was in a dark place, and she let me just be me. She was fully invested and never gave up on me, even when I wanted to give up on myself. I started to trust more and was more motivated to talk about all sorts of things, from the smallest bother to the big things that messed with my head. It was hard sometimes. I actually started to get pushback from my parents for constantly reminding them to schedule appointments for me. Consistency still didn't always exist. But I knew I always had someone in my corner, and I wanted to keep coming back.

I'm an adult now, and I still come to HOME and still have the same therapist that I was fully able to open up to. I'm able to drive myself and schedule my own appointments. Some issues have stayed the same while others have changed as I've grown. What hasn't changed is the trust and stability I know I have at HOME. I have gained more confidence in myself as a person and now have the words to explain some of the things I feel and some of the thoughts I have. It's been a long journey, but I have hope now. I can make it.

## >>> A Closer Look at 2024 <<<

**-HOME WORKED WITH OVER 190 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**-HOME PROVIDED 1653 THERAPY SESSIONS INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, AND GROUP**

**-WITH THE HELP OF GRANTS AND DONATIONS, 25% OF OUR SERVICES WERE PROVIDED COMPLETELY FREE OF CHARGE TO FAMILIES WHO COULD NOT OTHERWISE AFFORD HELP**

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AMAZON WISHLIST



# Benefits of Self-Sacrifice: A Fresh Perspective <<<

By: Winnie Holland, LMHC

Everyone has had moments when they sacrifice for another person, personal reasons or religious reasons. These sacrifices have positive effects according to many clinical studies. The benefits of self-sacrifice include the importance of social interaction and helping others. When we give of ourselves to help others, self-sacrifice can be beneficial to us as well by increasing our own wellness.

In many Western denominations of Christianity, the season of self-sacrifice begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter. There are other religious groups that abstain from specific practices and foods during holidays as well (Ramadan, Yom Kippur, etc.) Regardless of the motive behind “giving something up” these times of self-sacrifice can create long term benefits for the individual.

A study conducted by Drs. J. Quoidbach and E. W. Dunn involved asking groups of people to eat a piece of chocolate during two lab sessions that were held a week apart. During the intervening week, participants were asked to either abstain from chocolate or eat as much of it as possible, while a control group received no special instructions for their chocolate consumption. The researchers found that those who has given up chocolate for the week “savored it significantly more and experienced more positive moods after eating it, compared to those in either of the other two conditions.”

According to the study summary, the repetition or overuse of something that we like or provides pleasure can diminish the overall pleasure. This notion is applicable to Lent or any practice of self-sacrifice. As the researchers stated, “This slow slide toward disenchantment may be disrupted by temporarily giving up something we like.”

Additional studies have been conducted by these researchers that have reinforced these results and been published in Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin.

Changing one’s perception to reflect that perhaps their experiences have been more limited than plentiful may actually be advantageous. The researchers note that “exercises and activities aimed at decreasing feelings of abundance could help people maintain their capacity to savor small pleasures even after experiencing the best life has to offer — thereby allowing them to have their cake and savor it too.”

Self-sacrifice can also be beneficial is helping increase our willpower to reduce or abstain from other activities to increase our health and wellness. Dr. Roy Baumeister, as he notes in this book “Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength,”. The book indicated that even practicing to persevere on a difficult but unrelated task generalized to other situations.

Whether you commit to a form of self-sacrifice for Lent, Ramadan, Yom Kippur, or just because the time is right, the benefits are clear. In order to cultivate greater happiness and more willpower overall, the answer may lie in giving up those chocolate bars.

- J. Quoidbach, Elizabeth W. Dunn
- Published 31 January 2013
- Psychology
- Social Psychological and Personality Science
- RBaumeister, Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength”