

i am lovable offers a timely message for people of all ages



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By Nate Smelle

Last December, local author Kimberly Dawn released a very special self-help book for children. Based on her own life experience as a child and an adult, *i AM LOVABLE* explores the journey of a little girl who feels lost and unlovable in a world where she is bullied and lacking unconditional love. Dawn first came to North Hastings in 2011 when she was visiting her mother and sister in Ottawa and discovered Grail Springs while searching for a yoga retreat online. Having just gone through a divorce, and dealing with health issues at the time, she said when she arrived at the Grail she fell in love with the energy of the place. After her sister passed away from colon cancer two and a half years ago, Dawn travelled back to Ottawa to spend time with her nephew on his first birthday without his mom. Revisiting Grail Springs on her journey and feeling that positive energy she experienced back in 2011, Dawn decided to leave her home on Grand Lake in New Brunswick and move to Maynooth. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Ontario Dawn had several local speaking events scheduled, including an event at the Bancroft Legion, a book reading at the Hastings Highlands Public Library, as well as another at Maynooth Public School's Pink Day celebration. However, with the closure of schools and the prohibition of public events still in effect she has had to put her plans to promote *i AM LOVABLE* on hold. Once restrictions are lifted, Dawn said she is going to make herself available for speaking events again so that she can continue sharing the book's message of self-love, acceptance, self-motivation and mindfulness. Seeing how the book has had a positive impact on those around her, she feels compelled to share its message. "I knew it was good for me, but I didn't know how it would be received," said Dawn. "Often I will get crowds of women and children around and I will read the book and do all the emotional voices, and having that energy of the kids is what drives me and pushes me forward. Also, many of the women that are at these shows ? because you get a lot of women going to these health and wellness shows ? they will often come up and start flipping through it. As they are flipping through it tears start rolling down their face when they see themselves in this story. ? In light of the ongoing situation with the pandemic, and the forced self-isolation people are experiencing ? some of which for the first time ? Dawn said the message of her book is now even more timely than when she wrote it. Highlighting a part of the book where the main character is feeling sad and unlovable until she finds a quiet place in the forest where she can reflect on her sadness, and what makes her a beautiful, funny, creative, talented, and special person, she said this is an experience everyone can benefit from no matter what age they are. "People right now need this more than ever, but nobody wants to admit it" Dawn said. "They all want to sit on Facebook and backtalk each other and that's not solving anything. You have to be calming your mind to be rationally acting and thinking. It's a forced collective consciousness awakening. "While the book is written for children, Dawn said the message it sends is one equally needed and appreciated by adults. When writing the book, she said she learned a lot about herself as she reflected on when she went through a similar experience of discovering, self-acceptance, and self-love as the main character. Before going through this experience, Dawn was working as a successful mortgage broker in Fredericton, New Brunswick, living a very different lifestyle than she does now.

Realizing that she was not feeling happy or healthy she began making a series of big life changes, which led her away from social media for nine years and towards the journey which produced *i am lovable*. Although she is now back online to promote her book, and for her work as a mortgage specialist at TD in Bancroft, Dawn said having so much time away from social media helped her develop a clearer understanding of who she is and what she has to offer the world. This experience also allowed her to see how social media is having a negative effect on both children and adults. 'I believe our culture, with the way we are leading this Instagram model race if you will, is also teaching the boys what to expect,' said Dawn. 'So young girls and women are asking themselves 'if I am not perfect and look like that am I still going to be able to get a boyfriend?' That's really the adult message, and you see it in the book where you see the little girl with the thought bubbles above her head. She wants to look like anyone of those other three girls, and she thinks that's what is going to make her lovable. How much of our population, men and women included, actually have a physical trait about themselves that they would like to change because they think it would make them more lovable?' Recognizing how this assault on self-image by social media affects everyone no matter their gender, Dawn said she plans to write a second book, *i AM LOVABLE too*, that geared towards boys. *i AM LOVABLE* is currently available for purchase on Dawn's website, www.iamlovable.ca; and at: www.chapters.ca and www.amazon.ca. It can also be found locally on the shelves of Necessities Retail in Bancroft, Grumbling Grannies in Barry's Bay, and the Old School Cafe in Combermere. Dawn said she will also deliver the book personally, while respecting physical distancing measures to local residents in Bancroft, Maynooth, Apsley, and L'Amable who are interested in purchasing a copy.