



# SELFLESS

The choice between self love and selflessness is one high school students struggle to make. Despite facing relentless burnout and exhaustion, students choose their schoolwork time and time again. “WHEN IT COMES TO SCHOOL, I’D RATHER DO WORK THAN TAKE CARE OF HOW I’M DOING,” **ASHLEE MATA BARRERA** said. “I DO NOT DO ANYTHING WHEN I’M STRESSED EXCEPT WHAT I HAVE TO DO,” she added.

According to a study by NYU, 49% of all students reported feeling large amounts of stress on a daily basis. Although this feeling is often brushed off by parents, teachers, or other adults in a student’s life, consistent stress like this can lead to real, measurable, health problems like heart disease, asthma, alzheimer’s, and many more. It is vital for teens to prioritize their health, both mental and physical, at such important developmental periods of their life.

Taking time to do things you enjoy simply for the sake of enjoying them is a good step in the right direction when it comes to taking care of your physical and mental well-being. When asked how she takes care of herself, **MUHUBO AIMAD** said, “TAKING PHONE BREAKS, MAKING SURE I GET ENOUGH SLEEP, AND DISCOVERING NEW MUSIC”. The little things matter, and they go a long way in preserving a person’s mental health when times get hard, “IF ANYTHING, DISCOVERING NEW MUSIC HELPS ME CONFRONT MY EMOTIONS INSTEAD OF BOTTLING THEM UP,” **AIMAD** added. For her, and many others, finding ways to manage their thoughts and feelings was the best way to show themselves a little love.

Prioritizing yourself seems so easy when you say it out loud, but tying words to actions can prove to be difficult. A study done by Psychology Today found that roughly 85% of people worldwide have low self-esteem. Their study dives deeper, finding that low self esteem can lead to more issues like violent behavior, school dropout rates, teenage pregnancy, suicide, and low academic achievement, all of which directly impact high schoolers and high school communities across the country. Taking the steps to improve your self esteem may feel daunting, or even impossible. However, with the right support systems and goals in place, it isn’t. When asked about a goal she had in regard to self love, **AYOMIDE AKINTOLA** said, “BE MORE KIND TO MYSELF AND NOT LET STUFF GET ME DOWN.”. This is a goal most students aspired to achieve. Through showing kindness to your peers and yourself, a community of self love and compassion can be fostered.

While the pressure of school is frequently overwhelming, or the idea of loving yourself seems unachievable, take the time to show yourself love. The way you value yourself is worth more than any mean comment or bad grade could ever be. Take it from us.

*Story by E. Roberts*