



## Are You Loving You?

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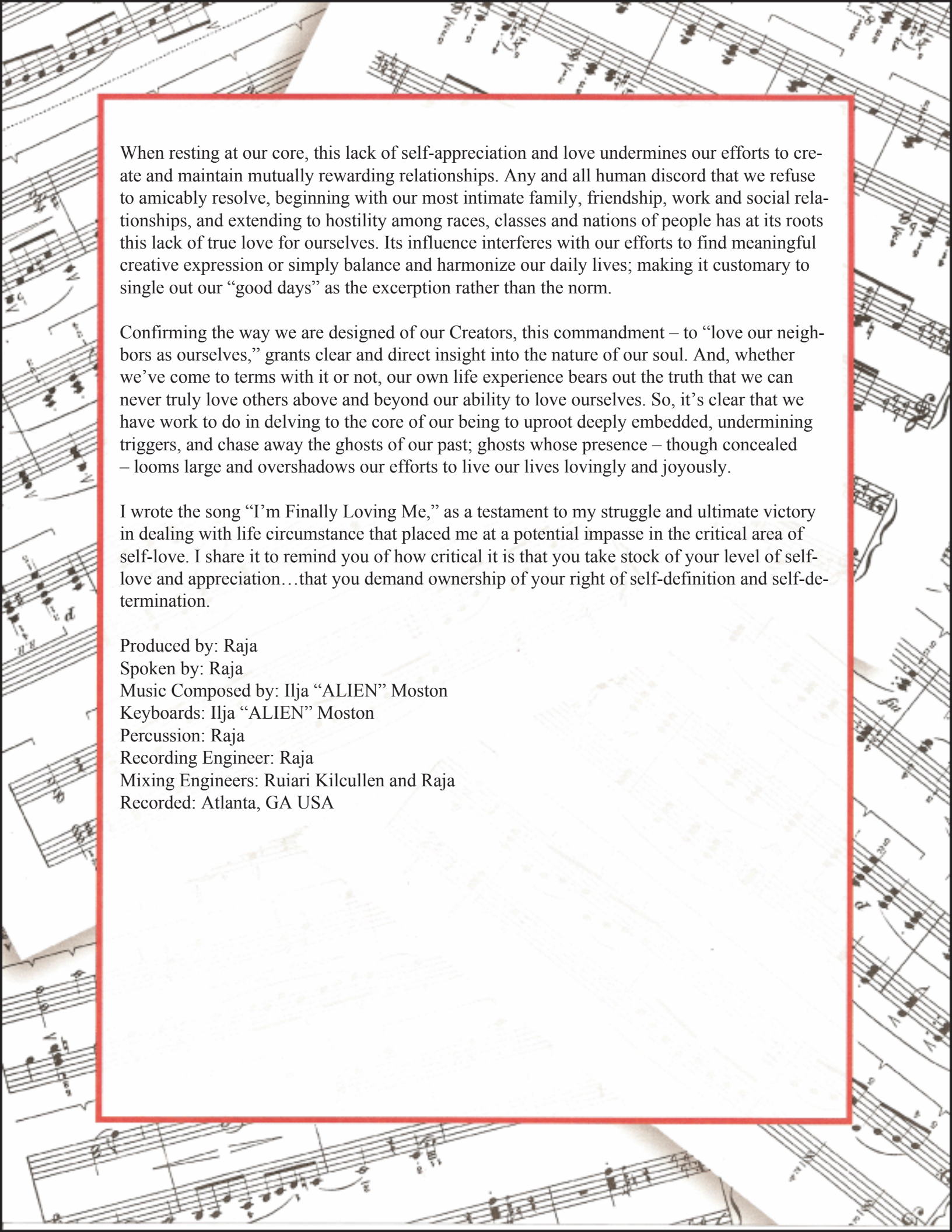
Written by: S.L. "Raja" Crumby

In the midst of a stream of constantly shifting values, we often struggle to ascertain and maintain a sense of our own significance and worth. For at the core of the human experience is a deep desire to feel good about oneself; to make meaningful connections and contributions; and to experience the peace inherent in knowing that one's life has purpose. There's ample evidence that we've created a society or culture that has - whether deliberately or inadvertently - trained us to repel the idea of loving ourselves. So stifling is our indoctrination that, though we mouth an absolute love of ourselves when questioned, the way we allow ourselves to be treated and treat ourselves suggest that at the deeper levels of our being, we've come to view self-love as a deep, dark, and even devilish pursuit; the epitome of arrogance, self aggrandizement and self-delusion; born of a misguided assessment of one's worth; motivated by the fatal flaw of egotism.

Simultaneously, we've been provided psychological and emotional stimuli to invoke the energies of self-deprecation and martyrdom, rendering ourselves duty-bound to love others; including our parents, spouses, children, our country, politicians, our church, and our alma mater. We've even been granted license to love our truck, car, our dog, cat, our favorite entertainers, movie stars, athletes, sports team and preachers, but not ourselves. And, yes, we've even entertained the rumor of a commandment to love our neighbors. Yet an important element of even this biblical directive - found in St. Mark Chapter 12, verse 31 of the King James Bible - has been conveniently de-emphasized. Remember...it says "Ye shall love your neighbor as yourself."

If you were to ask most of the people you know and anyone you meet whether they love themselves, while thinking it a strange question, the cursory response would undoubtedly be "Certainly," followed by "Why do you ask?" Yet, in the secret chambers of our hearts, where we must go to make an assessment of the life we've created, most of us engage, daily, a quiet and constant battle with low self-esteem, doubt, self-deprecation and fear or their remnants. The sad reality is that at various points in our lives, we have allowed ourselves to be seduced into judging ourselves and our efforts in ways that have engendered a sense of dislike, disdain and even self-hatred.

Our struggle to reach meaningful benchmarks in our lives is evidenced by burgeoning statistics which speak to high levels of mental depression, physical illness, substance abuse, financial and spiritual poverty, physical, emotional, psychological and economic violence, homelessness, incarceration, and suicide. These statistics suggest that the lack of love for ourselves has taken very deep roots and has outcropped in ways that are far-reaching, entangling and engrossing.



When resting at our core, this lack of self-appreciation and love undermines our efforts to create and maintain mutually rewarding relationships. Any and all human discord that we refuse to amicably resolve, beginning with our most intimate family, friendship, work and social relationships, and extending to hostility among races, classes and nations of people has at its roots this lack of true love for ourselves. Its influence interferes with our efforts to find meaningful creative expression or simply balance and harmonize our daily lives; making it customary to single out our “good days” as the exception rather than the norm.

Confirming the way we are designed of our Creators, this commandment – to “love our neighbors as ourselves,” grants clear and direct insight into the nature of our soul. And, whether we’ve come to terms with it or not, our own life experience bears out the truth that we can never truly love others above and beyond our ability to love ourselves. So, it’s clear that we have work to do in delving to the core of our being to uproot deeply embedded, undermining triggers, and chase away the ghosts of our past; ghosts whose presence – though concealed – looms large and overshadows our efforts to live our lives lovingly and joyously.

I wrote the song “I’m Finally Loving Me,” as a testament to my struggle and ultimate victory in dealing with life circumstance that placed me at a potential impasse in the critical area of self-love. I share it to remind you of how critical it is that you take stock of your level of self-love and appreciation...that you demand ownership of your right of self-definition and self-determination.

Produced by: Raja

Spoken by: Raja

Music Composed by: Ilja “ALIEN” Moston

Keyboards: Ilja “ALIEN” Moston

Percussion: Raja

Recording Engineer: Raja

Mixing Engineers: Ruiari Kilcullen and Raja

Recorded: Atlanta, GA USA

## I'm Finally Loving Me

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Verse 1:

I journeyed home the other day to chase away the lingering shadows; to lay to rest a weary mind and soul tired of wandering for so long. The faded pictures on your momma's wall never really tell it all. They're slanted portraits, the melodies of unsung songs. Stepped of the porch, walked down the street and knew that I was bound to meet familiar faces, their lips miming the same old songs. Wouldn't you know that I saw the ghosts of the things I feared the most, saying "What you doing here boy, and what's the point in returning home? They said "Son we thought we'd see you on a movie screen; you had such high hopes when you went away. Somebody said they'd seen you riding in a limousine. So won't you tell me now 'What brings you back this way?'"

To which I said:

Chorus: I'm taking shackles off of parts of me I hadn't allowed, releasing loving energy I disavowed; though my feet are finally under me I'm riding a cloud, I'm free...I'm finally loving me.

Verse 2:

Rounding the bend I saw the church where I gave my life to Jesus. I recalled how the saints go marching in. There, at the alter, I confessed the truth of how my life became the living proof of a tendency to just say "amen," whether I believed or not. They said "Son you oughta love Jesus and not love yourself; you can't make it into heaven any other way." So I played follow the leader, and put my life on the shelf. And I lost my will for trying because my soul was dying, trying to give to another what I hadn't been able to give to myself.

Verse 3:

Sometimes when your sun goes down you wonder if it's ever gonna rise again; it seems the beauty of your sunset fades away. Though night is falling, your soul is calling you to bask in the glory of the light within and let the full moon lit rays love your troubles away.

Chorus: And take the shackles off of parts of you you hadn't allowed, release the loving energy you disavowed, though your feet are finally grounded you'll be riding a cloud, so free to say I'm loving me.

I'm taking shackles off of parts of me I hadn't allowed, releasing loving energy I disavowed; though my feet are finally under me I'm riding a cloud, I'm free...I'm finally loving me.