***MOTIVATIONAL LETTER OF DAPHNE OLIVIER***

**To whom it may concern**

**My name is Daphne, a 39 year old mother of two teenagers, wishing to apply to do the Psychology/Counseling course through the RPL program. My goal is to help adults and children to become emotionally, mentally and spiritually healthy, and I feel that my life experiences has equipped me with the passion and right mindset to do so.**

**MY CHILDHOOD \TODDLER -13YRS OLD**

**As a child I grew up in a household of about twenty one people, including children, in a two bedroom flat in Hout Bay-Everyone in the family, except my mom was drunk on the weekends, and brothers and sisters were always fighting amongst each other. Ever since I can remember I’ve always been the child in the family that had to run around for the sake of protecting my family- whenever my aunt’s husbands were violent towards them, I had to climb down from our first floor window to get the police, to come and save the day.**

**My dad was never really a part of my life. He was using drugs at the time and denied me as his child to my face, and just never had time.**

**My mom was working and most of the time she was out with church or some other youth function she had to attend, while my grandmother was looking after me. I never minded being with my grams, because she was the only constant in my life since my dad’s mom passed away. But as the years went by, life began to become more difficult, more challenges came my way. My grandmother started getting too old to look after me and mom had so many things in her life that she had to deal, that she hardly had any time to spend with me, let alone looking after me properly. Older men started to take advantage as they saw that there’s no one looking after me and also they’ve noticed that my mom’s too busy with her things that’s happening in her life, and that’s when molestation started in my life, from the age of about 4 up till 10\11. There I was, this little girl who had no one in her life she could trust but herself. I had to fight my way through adult abuse and molestation on m y own, and as if that weren’t enough- my mom got married to an abuser when I was 14 years old, and once again I had to be the protector and the carer.**

**THE TEENAGE PHASE**

**At that time I chose God in my life, but never knew what the real definition of God was, so I just followed every step of what religion had taught me. I always thought that all the things I dealt with, was something of the past and that I’ve made peace with it- until I got married to the wrong man, that’s where I discovered what life is all about and the importance of relationships with spouses, children, family, friends and even strangers. That’s when I discovered that I’m on a personal journey with only myself to find at the end of the day.**

**MY MARRIAGE**

**My ex-husband was an emotional, financial, mental and physical abuser, whom I’ve tried to help so many times through finding help for us to raise our children as stable as possible- but he was too proud and egotistic to see how he’s destroying the only thing he claims to hold dear. I started taking all the responsibility of raising the children as best I can on me and at the same time battling to get my ex on the right track, not realizing that I’m completely forgetting and losing myself in the process. Three years ago he stabbed our son almost to death because of his obsession with me and blaming my son for everything that went wrong in the marriage. That led to him going to jail and me being free of him- a long awaited answer.**

**THE CHILDREN AND THEIR STRUGGLES**

**After the stabbing incident, which was a terrified experience for me and my whole family, my greatest fear was that I might lose my children to the streets, or even worse, to drugs. I had to look for counseling for myself and the children-but as I was looking, it just seemed as though all the doors were deliberately shut in my face and having nowhere to turn, I had to start this process on my own and it was literally blood, sweat and tears for me and the children. Being so full of anger and resentment myself, I wasn’t sure how I was going to deal with this completely on my own, without any assistance from the outside. I had to have patience of which I had none at the time, my tolerance levels were completely down to zero, and that made me feel even more alone.**

**My son started lashing out, showing signs of distress-he was as broken as any child that went through the trauma he went through. All I could do as the mom was to sit them down and just talk us through this and try to get them to open up to me, which was a difficult situation where my son’s concern. He didn’t open up easily to anyone, just kept everything to himself. The only time he had the strength to talk, was when he had alcohol in his system, and I allowed him to talk even when I knew it was not the ideal manner to deal with any situation. Ebenezer dropped out of school when he was in grade eight, due to the circumstances and he’s been struggling with his learning disability that was also brought on by the physical abuse that took place in his life. The best I could do as the mom, was to just be there when they needed me. He is in a much better space right now and I thank God for the tremendous change He made in my son’s life.**

**Where my daughter’s concern, well, she turned to a boy at the age of thirteen and I had to decide whether I wanted to know what’s going on in her life, or am I going to drive her to a state of rebellion. I chose to rather allow them to make their mistakes and listen to them when they have something to talk about. Luckily, she was a more open child than my son, and much easier to deal with. I just always made sure to be there to advise her when needed. She dropped out of school when she was in grade nine, but went back to finish it last year and is currently preparing to do her grade twelve through night school starting in September.**

**MY JOURNEY AND WHAT I’VE LEARNED FROM IT**

**When I look back on my life now, then I’m really grateful for all the struggles that came my way. This journey was not easy for me at all, but at the end of the day, it made me this compassionate person I am today. I have a new found love for life and everything in it- I am able to help people on different levels, because of my physical and spiritual journey. Life has molded me into this mindful, strong, independent and wise person I am. I’ve learned what the true meaning of forgiveness and compassion is and at the same time how to love myself and not feel guilty about it. The meaning of gratitude and positivity materialized in my life. I’m definitely not perfect, just perfect in my imperfections.**

**MY WORK AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OVER THE YEARS**

**My mom worked as a domestic worker as it was all she could do since she had no education at all. She dropped out of school at the age of nine to go out and help, support the family financially. At the age of fourteen, I had to leave school and find work, because my mom was not capable of looking after me and three other children. She worked really hard to do the best she could for us, but since our fathers weren’t around to help support her, she struggled a lot. I started working as a child minder at that age and has been doing it till recently, because I thought teaching was my calling, but when I look back once again, I look at what my purpose in those children’s lives were. I was more to do with the child and parent’s emotional stability, constantly watching the child and parent’s behaviors, and if something looked slightly suspicious, I would make it my business to ask the parent about it. I’ve been volunteering at our Primary School for twelve years and I’ve been doing mostly life couching with the learners, because I was never skilled enough to do actual school work with them- teenagers have been drawn to me ever since I can remember, and they were children that came from broken homes coming to me for comfort, inspiration and support. In my personal capacity, I’m the mediator and listener of the family, the one they turn too when something has to be addressed and sorted out in a peaceful manner. I know now what I’m supposed to do in my life, I was born a helper, it’s something I’m not just good at, but passionate about as well. I love helping people and I feel that I am choosing my field of study based on what life has taught and helped me with, and I would more than love to help people who are faced with the same circumstances and more.**