*The first time I left for residential school,  
my mother* *carefully prepared my  
little suitcase* *. She took care to put in it everything  
I would need* *. My clothes, some  
toys I* *would never see again. I was  
six years old on* *this first trip.  
In my* *little suitcase, my mother had also put  
all the love she* *had, without forgetting the love from my father.*

*There were also embraces,  
tenderness,* *respect, for me  
and for others* *, sharing, and many  
other qualities* *she had taught me.  
The trip lasted* *12 years.  
When I* *returned home, my  
little suitcase* *was heavy. What my  
mother* *had put in it was gone; love  
embraces* *, all those beautiful things had  
disappeared.* *They had been replaced  
by hatred* *, self-rejection, abuses of all  
kinds* *(alcohol, drugs, sexual abuse) by  
violence* *, anger and suicidal thoughts.  
That is* *what I carried for  
a long time.*

*But I've been cleaning out this  
suitcase* *. I put back everything my mother had put in it when I  left the first time: love,  
respect for* *myself and others, and a great  
many other* *qualities.*

*Oh yes...added sobriety and  
especially* *spirituality. My little  
suitcase* *is very light. It is full  
of good* *things I can  
share* *with everyone*

*I meet along the way.  
Regardless of* *skin colour—  
white, red,* *black, yellow—we  
are all human* *beings, we  
are all* *God's creatures.*