

The president needs a lesson: Compassion 101

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January 21, 2018

A white envelope appeared in my mailbox last week. It only had my name scribbled across the front in purple pen.

Inside was a small card. The front was decorated with a picture of pink and purple tulips backlit by golden sunlight. Across the bottom, a baby blue banner. In white text within the banner: “May the Lord reward you for all you have done. Ruth 2:12.”

Now, we’ve discussed before that I’m not exactly a person of any particular religion. I’m agnostic, sure, but I’m never one to turn away good intentions.

Inside, in the same script and purple ink as my name on the envelope, was a message from one of my colleagues.

“Dear Andrew, I want to take this moment to thank you for your tremendous contribution to our staff,” it began. “I wish you all the best in 2018. I pray for you,” the letter concluded.

The colleague of mine who wrote this card to me also wrote at least 12 more cards for every other staff member. I was moved by his kindness.

But then, my thoughts wandered to our president.

My colleague is from Rwanda. Something you may not know about the country seated in the heart of Africa is it was the location of a genocide. An estimated 500,000 to 1 million people were killed, and countless more felt the ramifications of the slaughter.

My colleague was no exception.

But he, like so many others, sought a brighter future. He came to the United States, got his bachelor’s degree, and now works toward his master’s.

I was disappointed, but not surprised — like so many of us these days — at the president’s suggestion that we allow fewer immigrants into our nation. Specifically, from “shithole countries” such as Haiti, El Salvador and African countries.

Including Rwanda.

Historically, our country has been built by immigrants, and it stands to reason we should embrace them. However, some argue that immigrants are criminals and take away jobs from U.S. citizens.

Studies by the Cato Institute and The Sentencing Project demonstrate, however, immigrants commit fewer crimes and are incarcerated far less often than U.S.-born citizens.

For those who assert that immigrants take away our jobs, the opposite proves true. As Avianne Tan reports for ABC News, David Kallick, the director of the Immigration Research Initiative at the Fiscal Policy Institute explains that immigrants improve wages and create more job opportunities for native workers.

“The fact is that immigrants often push U.S.-born workers up in the labor market rather than out of it,” he said.

So, while our politicians in Washington spit out derisive comments and demean entire continents (I’m looking at you, Mr. Trump), my colleague feels welcomed and safe. He acts with kindness, empathy and compassion.

Maybe our president should take a page out of his book.

And if you agree with him, maybe you should, too.