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Mandella Girod

Pay Compassion Forward

“Compassion is like a baton in a relay race. People will always pass it on.”—Datcher Keltner

In the midst of the U.S. presidential election, Donald Trump, Black Lives Matter, and the many current issues occurring right now not only in the United States, but all over the world, the need for compassion is enormous. All of us at one point or another have experienced the effects of compassion, be it having been given to us or having expressed it towards another person. Compassion links everyone together, kind of like the red string of fate. It aids in the process of helping a group of people, or one person, understand one another, no matter the race, class, gender, or any other social constructs that divide us as a people. The capacity within us to feel, cry, and hurt for one another is compassion.

Compassion can take many forms. It's the warm, understanding embrace of a grandmother. The constant love you give someone who has never felt real love before. The feeling in your heart after you have helped someone in need. The sigh of relief after you help a mother with her two-year-old, while she deals with a fussy newborn. The friend who helps you through a tough time. The old man on the subway teaching you how to tie a tie before your first interview. The person who steps in and says enough is enough in an abusive situation. The listening ear, no matter what the cause. The helping hand.

My mother isn't really much of a compassionate person, neither is my stepfather. But my biological father is totally different. My father's compassion rolled like thunder. It was loud and impactful. No matter who you were, if he could help you he would. Even after living through a time period when not many people were compassionate toward men of color, Robert Girod could

embody compassion like the flick of a light switch. If you were stuck on the side of the road, he would pull over and help you because he understood how it felt. If you were left heartbroken, he would be there to help you pick up the pieces. If you did not have a good father figure in your life, he would step in. My dad made me proud. He went out of his way to help others even when he knew he shouldn't because he was sick. He put his own personal needs aside just to show a little compassion to those in need of help. And I believe I got a lot of that.

Compassion is not just a one-and-done job. Compassion is an ongoing expression of sympathy and empathy for a person who has hit a rough patch in their lives.

Compassion is forever being expressed, even if it is not you expressing it anymore. Even after you have left this earth, your compassion will forever be a part of the chain reaction. Please be compassionate to one another because it can change someone's current mood or outlook on life, and they will pass it on to the next person. Pay compassion forward.