


Community Comment
August 25, 2017
Sam Pennisi

A Moral Compass

I have been haunted by the events of the last week. The President of the United States of America has many roles to fulfill. He or she becomes the advocate for policies that guide the American government in all its many and varied functions.

Our government leads the federal bureaucracy, and to a large degree the states, on the path forward for domestic policy. The Department of Justice sets the tone and provides for the implementation of laws that affect our daily lives. In the end, our local law enforcement agencies are guided by national policy. Transportation issues like highway and road maintenance are the result of shared resources and standards, and buses, light rail, and mass transit systems help average people and spread the load of people going to and from work. National health policies help doctors do their job and keep hospitals safe and available. ~~There are thousands of policies that affect us daily.~~ 

The Federal government is responsible for international relationships and our national defense. The civilian president serves as the commander in chief of the armed forces. Though we have modified it recently, Congress has the power to declare war. The President can and must act instantly when necessary until this can be debated and acted upon. This is a great example of a government of and by the people. Our collective representatives have this unbelievable responsibility and each of us will be touched by their decision.

I mention these few examples simply to highlight the somber responsibility of all of our representatives. Congress has the luxury of working as a team with an opportunity to collect ideas and debate them in public. Compromise is often the result and can ensure a better decision. But the President, along with his or her advisors, has the individual duty and responsibility to act alone.

Unwritten in all this is the social contract we all seem to accept. The contract is simple; we are all in this together and we all abide by similar moral standards. We have as our current president, a man who either doesn't understand this or is morally not like the vast majority of us. I'm not talking about party differences, I'm talking about similar moral values.

In 2017, it should be a given that white supremacy, neo-nazi's, and facists, are the opposite of American values. They are violent, bigoted, racist, and seek to overthrow our republic. For a president to offer the moral equivalency to people who showed up to protest these ideas is unbelievable and unacceptable. Period!

After the Charlottesville tragedy, where one young woman was killed when a car driven by one member of the radical right plowed into a group of protesters, the President and

his supporters had the easiest decision in the world to make; denounce this as un-American and against everything that we stand for.

The President could not do this. His rant on Tuesday of last week clearly showed who he really is. He is unfit to be our moral leader. I gave those around him until the end of the week to either resign their positions or speak strongly to this specific issue. Almost no one did this. This is all I need to know about these people and the Republican Party leadership.

It's up to us to keep a moral compass. At this time, we cannot rely on the President or his party.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.