Showing Lolomaika‘i in Hawai‘i

Hatred is very prominent in America, especially regarding race and sexuality. I’m proud to say I live in a state that goes against that ideology. I don’t know what I’d do if I lived in a state or country of prejudice and discrimination towards who I was born as. To me, receiving a simple compliment can do wonders for my day and I know paying that forward can lift someone else’s spirit too. It’s beautiful to see that the residents of these tiny little islands do care about other people and still plan to show it.

To this day, it still amazes me to see people being kind to me. I think the last time I experienced genuine kindness was a few weeks ago in a crystal shop when the employee reaffirmed that I wasn’t wasting their time by spending almost an hour looking around. That may have been her job but it made me feel better about loitering, then though I did end up buying because I felt bad. Kindness can be displayed through big events like the pride parade in October 2022 (I’m still upset that I couldn’t go) or just simple gestures like what I experienced a few weeks ago. I grew up in a Chinese household, meaning “I’m sorry” was displayed as a plate of cut-up fruit in my room, and compliments from them aren’t exactly direct (it’s better now though). I think that’s the main reason why I get all giddy over something so simple like a couple of nice words directed toward me.

I think it is pretty clear that homelessness is a huge problem in Hawaii. We used to be one of the highest-ranking states in homelessness. It’s great to see that there are many efforts on the islands to relieve that a little. I still remember back in 5th grade when I was walking to school and had to call my dad, sobbing, over not wanting to walk past the homeless people sitting on the sidewalk. Looking back, it was an awful thing for me to do. I may have been young and an idiot but I can only imagine how those people must have felt seeing how simply sitting there is enough to horrify a child. They’ve already been through enough and what I did probably
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made their day worse than it already probably was. My mom grew up in this rundown part of Jilin, China, and always taught me to never trust strangers. She has a specific dislike for homeless people and I always found it so strange. I hate to say that her words still somewhat influence me a bit to this day, especially with all the human trafficking warning on the internet nowadays. One of my goals in life is to be financially secure enough to be able to donate to charities for causes that I care about, homelessness included. I’m terrified of my parents kicking me onto the streets after they find out about my hidden life (they’re very conservative Chinese immigrants — ironic isn’t it?) and I want to be able to make a difference in these types of communities, whether in Hawaii or not. Currently, I do the bare minimum of donating my old clothes to places that will be sure it gets put to good use. It may not be much but as they say, a little goes a long way.

Despite how much I may complain about them, no one has shown me more kindness than my own parents. I’m so privileged to have loving parents that care about me, even if they do say the most absurd things sometimes. I will always be grateful for my mom and dad who do everything in their power to make sure I have a relaxed life and future. My mom would always tell me stories about how poorly she grew up with the stereotypical story of “When I walked to school, I walked in four feet of snow”, or other probably exaggerated stories that many other Asian Americans can relate to, and would go on about how loving her mom was to her because she was the unhealthiest of her six siblings. My dad grew up somewhat privileged in Beijing and wouldn’t really share past stories. I’m glad to know that parental love is generational on both sides of my family. I still recall an instance in my life when my aunt and cousins came over to my house for dinner and had this whole debacle that involved the beating of my 10-year-old cousin. My mom wasn’t at the house at the time but when she heard of it she was enraged and threatened to cut my aunt off. That was when I knew that I was fortunate to be born to a loving mother. My parents are a lot better at expressing love and kindness now than a few years ago. I
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I think it's something in the Hawaii air that makes you want to be good. While I do get into arguments with them, I know no one will ever show me as much kindness and love as my parents and I am very grateful for it, especially because I know many children don't get to experience the same kind of love, and I'd like to be able to pass that love onto other people in my communities and neighborhoods.

Kindness isn't just gestures towards people, but also towards the environment. I have seen too many instances of littering and just straight disregard for the beautiful island we live on. Like, come on, the beauty of Hawaii is its main appeal. I have this very clear recollection of me and an old friend cleaning up the trash around our apartment for Earth Day. That moment is very important as we were only around eight years old at the time and it just goes to show that anyone can show that kind of kindness. Even today, I try my best to clean up after myself within nature and other public settings like restaurants. I think it's just human decency to pick up after yourself and collect the simple piece of trash you see on your way and throw it where it really belongs.

I think Hawaii is a place filled with kindness. Hawaii is very well known as the state of Aloha and it's within Hawaiian culture to be kind to others and the environment. The people on these islands do a lot to show their support to other people and it just has a generally good-hearted society. In my day-to-day life, I show kindness by doing simple things like complimenting someone, giving a good tip at a restaurant or cafe, and holding a door open. I find these simple things important to maintain harmony within the community and encourage people to do the same, even if it's just something really small. I'm grateful for the people around me showing me kindness so I can then repay that onward and hopefully, have them carry that on too so it's just one big cycle of kindness in Hawaii.