**Name**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Homeroom**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Cultivating Compassion***

**Directions:** Read the following book excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

A close up of a person

Description automatically generatedThis passage is taken from President Obama’s autobiography *The Audacity of Hope[[1]](#footnote-1)*. In it, he describes his sometimes turbulent teenage years in Hawaii when his mother often traveled and his father lived far away in Africa.

1

“Because my mother’s work took her overseas, I often lived with my grandparents during my high school years and without a father present in the house, my grandfather bore3 the brunt4 of much of my adolescent rebellion. He himself was not always easy to get along with; he was at once warmhearted and quick to anger. By the time I was sixteen, we were arguing all the time, usually about me not following what I considered to be an endless series of petty5 rules…With a certain talent for debating, I found that I could generally win these arguments, leaving my grandfather flustered and angry.

Barack Obama pictured with his grandfather Stanley Dunham

During my senior year, debates with **him** started to feel less satisfying. I began thinking about the struggles and disappointments he had seen in his life. I started to appreciate **his** need to feel respected in his own home. I realized that by following **his** rules, it would cost me little, but to him it would mean a lot. I recognized that in insisting on getting my own way all the time, without regard to **his** feelings or needs, I was in some way diminishing6 myself…Again and again, I found myself returning to the question my mother always asked: ‘How would that make you feel?’”

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| --- |
| **Quick Pronoun Check:** Throughout the second paragraph, who is President Obama referring to with the pronouns “**him**” or “**his**?” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Stop and Jot:** Paraphrase this sentence in your own words: *“In insisting on getting my own way all the time, without regard to his feelings or needs, I was in some way diminishing5 myself.”*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

***Cultivating Compassion* Reflection Questions**

**Directions**: Using the context below, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

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| --- |
| **Golden** **Rule**: It is a principle6 that is found in most major religions and cultures around the world. In English, it is often a paraphrase of a famous line in the Bible: “Do unto7 others as you would have them do unto you.”(Which roughly translates to: “Treat others as you would like to be treated”) |

1. What similarities do you see between the Golden Rule and President Obama’s mother’s question for her son: “*How would that make you feel*?” Why is this connection important?

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1. In one artful sentence, explain why President Obama decides to start following his grandfather’s rules. (Use the term “Golden Rule” in your response)

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1. Imagine that your group of friends starts teasing a classmate because they thought his clothes looked old and out-of-style. What could you say to help them see things from his perspective and show compassion?

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**6 principle**: a moral rule or belief that helps you know what is right and wrong

**7 unto:** an older form of the word “to”

**Stamp Your Learning for *Cultivating Compassion***

**Directions:** Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Review the definitions for the Golden Rule and compassion. What do they share in common?

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1. How will you apply what you’ve learned about the Golden Rule to your everyday life? Be specific.

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1. 1 Image from taken from: https://www.politico.com/story/2010/10/barack-obama-irish-american-dream-043381

   2 **bore**: to assume a heavy cost or responsibility

   3 **brunt**: the main force of something harmful

   4 **petty**: not very important or serious

   5 **diminishing**: lessening someone’s reputation or value [↑](#footnote-ref-1)