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The two readings, *On Compassion* by Barbara Lazear Ascher and *Homeless* by Anna Quindlen are both a representation of homelessness in the US. In most cases, people usually ignore the homeless on the streets. Some people are either scared by them or are just disgusted by the way they smell or the gestures that they show. Quindlen in her story meets Anna who is homeless. However, Anna refuses to admit that she is homeless and shows a picture of a home. In my opinion, passers-by consider street children homeless, just like Anna they may be having homes. Quindlen does not acknowledge a house as a home. For her, a home is the place where one obtains comfort and stability. She believes that a home is a special place and uniquely comprises quirky and funny things that we are familiar with (Meanwell, 2012).

“ *On compassion*” talks about the different ways people should show compassion to the homeless. I agree that a little compassion can change the life of another human being. Barbara further notes that compassion is not something that people are born with but that it can be acquired or learned. Barbara recommends that people should try understanding and show compassion to the homeless people. They should focus on understanding why the homeless people live the way they do; it is not poverty in all cases as most people assume. However, Quindlen’s case may be different because the woman that she meets is friendly. She takes a photo from her bag and shows Quindlen. In most cases the homeless people become violent when approached by people who want to help.

People judge the homeless and think they are not like the rest of us; people get scared of associating with them. Quindlen’s writing reminds us that it is

good to share with the homeless people; we might just come to a new discovery. I do not agree with this fully; this is because when I come across someone, I am often at the risk of putting them down making their situation even worse. This is well put in Barbara's writing; she acknowledges different forms of motivations that lead to acts of compassion. One of them is fear; in most cases I am motivated to show compassion to the homeless due to the fear that they could grab a knife and injure me if I do not give them what they want. Ascher also gives examples of small acts of compassion that can help others. Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that Ascher could have showed the negative side of showing compassion to the homeless people (Meanwell, 2012).

Quindlen's writing further notes that we should only give the homeless what they require and not what we think they require. Their need can only be known by interacting with them. When you talk to someone, like Quindlen did, you get to know what they really require. This is as opposed to Ascher's opinion that we should generally show compassion to the homeless. Well wishers could give them what they really do not need. It is important that we get to understand the homeless and know what they lack and why they live the way they do. Quindlen further notes that some homeless people do not stay in homes because of mental illness. These kinds of people need medical attention rather than houses.

In my opinion, Quindlen's essay provides a more plausible plan of action despite the above criticisms. This is because it is more critical in its approach towards showing compassion for the homeless. When we want to help the homeless, we need to first take the risk of talking to them and understanding

what they really need. We need not give them what they do not require; this would be wastage. Conclusively, both writings narrow down to showing compassion to the homeless people in society. They need not be neglected because of their lifestyles. They deserve to be understood and engaged into normality (Meanwell, 2012).

Works Cited

Meanwell, E. (2012). *Experiencing Homelessness: A Review of Recent Literature* (Vol. Vol. 6). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.