

To the Tsadra foundation and whomever else it may concern,

Andrew has been one of my closest friends for more than 10 years and it has been such a blessing in life to be connected to him and to witness the way in which he moves through the world. I was impressed by his powerful presence and his unceasing drive towards compassion ever since first getting to know him, and have also been able to witness the way these qualities have matured and deepened in him over the years.

Andrew is one of the most driven and motivated individuals that I have ever met; anything that he decides is worth his time, he treats as sacred and gives all of his energy to. As I started to get to know him, it was amazing to witness the steadfast way in which he would commit himself to activities and ideas that he cared about. In college, he devoted himself to being a student leader for multiple volunteer and social justice organizations, and at the same time was able to give his energy to being drummer for an excellent local band. When he worked as a volunteer chef in a soup kitchen after finishing college, he learned how to masterfully prepare dishes in a way that incorporated the flexibility needed to cook with ingredients that were constantly shifting in availability. After deciding that yoga was a practice that he wanted to incorporate into his life, he not only maintained a consistent and long-term personal practice but also went as far as to become an excellent yoga teacher - I've heard of his students consistently praising the ways in which he skillfully attends to their needs. Even seeing live music is a committed practice for Andrew - he's seen his favorite band almost 80 times! And, perhaps most pertinently, upon discovering his connection to Tibetan Buddhism, he fundamentally reoriented his life around practice. While so many of us commit to meditating and learning as a lifelong way of engaging with Buddhism, Andrew went, and continues to go, above and beyond; for him, devotion to spiritual practice meant living in Nepal for years to pursue his studies, to learn fluent Tibetan, and to now be pursuing a 3-year retreat. Through what I've witnessed of Andrew's devotion, I can confidently say that there is nobody I know who more fully and comprehensively follows through with their values and their vows.

Beyond just being driven, Andrew is a radically compassionate soul and it has been beautiful to experience not only the ways in which he cares for me but also the ways in which he gives himself as a healing presence to so many. He was my first friend in college, and while I dealt with many insecurities during that time in my life, I knew that I could rely on his warmth and his presence to access a feeling of love and safety within myself. Kindness comes naturally to Andrew, and I've witnessed a myriad of acts throughout the years that demonstrate the power of his compassion, whether it be in the smaller acts of giving time to friends and money to those in need, in the career-choices he makes (examples being working with neurodiverse children and with the unhoused), or in the way in which he devotes his life to personal growth and spiritual practice for the sake of radically changing himself and changing the world.

I've walked with him through many phases of his life, and more and more over the years I've witnessed how his devotion has created a light within him for all to see. Every time we meet, I can feel the growth he has undergone through an ever-increasing softness and tenderness to his presence and to the more refined ways in which he is able to draw out beauty in others. Buddhist practice has been the heart of his growth, and the whole world is better off for Andrew having discovered Buddhism as a lifelong pursuit.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to reflect on Andrew's merits, I am happy to answer any other questions that arise about his character or about my experiences with him.

-Benjamin Habito