

Joker comment re: School Trustee Brent Regan's insensitive, anti-Obama joke:

As an active participant in the virtual lynch mob for Brent Regan's head yesterday, is explanation should give everybody pause to stop and think.

Do we condemn the man no matter what he says after the fact? Yes that is the easy thing to do. We can take the cynical point of view that he's only saying this to save face or to salvage his political career. We can dismiss his apologies as fake. We can scream at the top of our lungs that this man is a racist pig.

Or we can stop and take a different path. We can realize that perhaps his comments were born out of ignorance instead of hatred. We can realize that perhaps this man has never encountered people of different races. Or that it never occurred to him that his words could actually hurt people.

I am not sure Regan is truly sorry, but I am convinced he learned that racist jokes hurt. And that's a start.

If education is the cure to racism, then we have to give people the chance to learn. It's a process. There's not a giant step from ignorant to understanding. There is no magic elixir that people can drink to rid themselves of the kind of thinking that often is generationally learned.

We have to give Brent Regan the ability to grow from this experience. Whether his political career is finished or not is not important. The public will decide his fate. We should be embracing the man with compassion and allow ourselves to forgive him.

Jesus taught that the answer to hate is not more hate. It is love. It is forgiveness. Everyone has the capacity to be saved from evil.

Brent has taken the first step – now it's our turn to step toward him.