

MS SPENCER:

Sam asked me to listen to him. To talk through his confusion. Validate his feelings.

And I did that because I care about my job. My students. They're not just numbers and bodies and book bags to me. They're people.

*Children.*

And I did what I thought was right. I picked up the slack.

That's what people in communities do.

That's what the women in my neighborhood did when *my* mother died.

They came over to our crappy apartment in North Philly and made sure I did my homework when my father was working. They took me to church and taught me how to cook and do laundry so my brothers had food to eat and clean clothes to wear to school.

It takes a village to raise a child. You left the village. I'm still here.

So yes, it's personal. That's why I care. And because I see so much good in Sam. I want the best for him. And I know you do too, even though you're ... [awful]

It's hard—it's hard navigating how to love someone you don't understand. But you have to try. *We* have to try.