MDPI

Review

Maximize the Impacts of Forgiveness Education with Moral Agency Development

Lai Yung Wong

Department of Educational Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI 53706, USA; wong2020@duck.com

Abstract: Forgiveness education is more than the teaching of forgiveness. Since forgiveness education cultivates virtuous characters and the best self as the moral self, it sets the foundation for moral agency development. Based on a review of research and the literature about the psychological processes of forgiveness and moral agency, this article illustrates how the forgiveness virtue and moral agency operate and enhance each other for their common roots in the moral self. Due to their symbiotic relationship, promoting moral agency development in forgiveness education is beneficial for the cultivation of mature forgivers, mature moral agents, and good citizens with virtuous characters. To maximize the effectiveness and the impacts of forgiveness education, the GMIRA method is proposed, which involves setting the learning goal of living and being the best self, social modeling towards the goal, and blending the holistic moral agency concept into the existing forgiveness curriculum using the IRA (invitation, reflection, and assessment) strategies. Since moral agency is adaptive, the IRA methods can be flexibly applied to fit individual developmental needs across time and social-cultural contexts in all types of education. This novel idea is open for future research.

Keywords: moral self; moral agency; forgiveness education; moral education; self-regulation; moral motivation; modeling; character education; reflection; assessment

1. Motivation

Cultivating moral agency is essential for forgiveness education. Moral agency refers to the ability and capacity of exerting one's moral self [1]. It is latent in each of us until it manifests in kindness, respect, fairness, benevolence, forgiveness, or other virtuous forms. When an individual displays these virtuous behaviors, we praise the individual as "a good person" for being moral. Exercising the virtue of forgiveness requires moral agency; according to Pasupathi and Wainryb, this means requiring an individual's moral capacity of understanding regarding the actions of the self and others and moral sense-making from one's own experiences [2]. As moral agency involves self-reflection and self-regulation [3,4], moral agency development may improve student learning and development because the effect of self-regulated learning is large on academic achievement in a meta-analysis [5]. Also, the effect of moral agency on good citizenship in a democratic society is robust and consistent, with or without controlling the covariates of education, age, religion, political affiliation, and community-engaged mom [1]. Since moral agents are "socially and personally responsible, ethical, and self-managed (Berkowitz and Bier [6], p. 2)", cultivating moral agency in forgiveness education is beneficial.

However, there are three major roadblocks for the cultivation of moral agency in forgiveness education. First, the conception of moral agency has been unclear or incomplete to many educators and policy makers. Moral agency is often reduced to moral cognition or moral emotion without considering the holistic nature of human beings. Second, the operating mechanism supporting the relationship between moral agency and forgiveness is unclear in the current literature. Third, there is a lack in the literature regarding the application of the holistic moral agency concept in our educational systems.

Agenda for This Article

To address the above issues, the discussion is conducted as follows:

- The epistemology of holistic moral agency (Section 2)
- The definition of moral agency and its 6M components (Section 3)
- How moral agency is related to the forgiveness virtue based on the process model [7] and the dynamic model [8] (Section 4)
- The symbiotic relationship between the forgiveness virtue and moral agency (Section 5)
- How forgiveness education facilitates moral agency development (Section 6)
- Why moral agency development matters in forgiveness education (Section 7)
- How to cultivate moral agency in forgiveness education (Section 8)
- Key takeaway (Section 9)

Notably, Sections 2 and 3 aim to clarify the moral agency conception from a holistic developmental perspective. As the intricate relationship between moral agency and the forgiveness virtue is unfolded in Sections 4–6, their operation can be visualized through one's moral self. Section 8 highlights the practical pedagogical strategies to facilitate moral agency development in forgiveness education.

2. Epistemology of Holistic Moral Agency

Be aware of the term "agency". It may have different meanings depending on the epistemological roots and goals of scholars [9]. Based on the social psychological perspectives, Hitlin and Elder classified agency into four types, namely existential, identity, pragmatic, and life course, all of which overlap with the concept of self [9]. Even though agency may or may not infer moral agency, moral agency always infers agency. This distinction is needed because agency is derived from a self that may or may not be moral; in contrast, moral agency is derived from a moral self only. A moral self is a special subset of a self.

With that said, moral agency is interpreted from the lens of human developmental science in this article. As such, moral agency is not a moral theory of a particular political, religious, cultural, intellectual, and social kind. Rather, it is a psychological construct pertaining to human agency as a moral being. According to Bandura, moral agency is a special form of human agency that is self-organizing, self-regulating, and self-reflective; it may be proactive (as in kindness) or inhibitive (as refraining from temptation) [3,4,10]. A moral agent refers to an individual who exerts the moral self; moral agency refers to the moral capacity, ability, and power of a moral agent to exert the individual's moral self [1].

Presumably, moral agency is latent in each of us. When triggered, moral agency manifests itself in the form of virtuous moral behaviors like kindness, respect, and generosity. However, moral agency is more than moral behaviors. As noted by Pasupathi and Wainryb [2], moral agency is the moral capacity of understanding through life experiences, which involves beliefs, desires, and goals. To Peter and Liaschenko, moral agency involves moral deliberation and moral autonomy [11]. In Black's view, moral agency is about reasoning with a free will to avoid harming others [12]. While their insights about moral agency are important, there is a lack of accounting for the emotional part of human beings. When moral agency is reduced to a moral mind with rational thinking only, it would be incomplete [1,13,14].

Taking a broader perspective, Ryan and Lickona proposed an integrative view of moral agency involving knowing, affect, and action [14]. Knowing means the knowledge of moral values with moral reasoning, moral imagination, and judicious judgment. Affect means an emotional appeal to being good with conscience and empathy, as well as the commitment and identification with moral values. Action means acting willingly with the competence and habit of being good. Ryan and Lickona believe that the three components of knowing, affect, and action may not always work together, but when they do unite, full moral agency will occur. On the other hand, Berkowitz proposes that there are seven parts of the moral anatomy of a moral agent, which include moral behavior, moral values, moral personality, moral emotion, moral reasoning, moral identity, and foundational characteristics [15]. While these conjectures of moral agency are quite comprehensive, there has been a lack of

research studies about how they operate holistically. With that said, moral development research, such as the study of the four components of ethical judgment, ethical sensitivity, ethical action, and ethical focus by Narvaez [16], who followed West's approach, may furnish indirect support to the tripartite of moral agency involving knowing, affect, and action.

The latest proposal for moral agency comes from the epistemology of holistic human development, which has been validated and tested for its robust and consistent relationship with good citizenship [1]. Where every human being is unique and holistic, so is a moral being. Given that the moral developmental trajectory is different for every individual at different times in life, a holistic approach to moral agency development is most appropriate. In this holistic moral agency conception, a moral agent would exert the moral self with six basic components, namely moral cognition, moral emotion, moral goals, moral autonomy, self-efficacy beliefs, and moral behaviors (which is abbreviated as 6M). Presumably, the 6M support one another. As each of the 6M components grows at varying rates at different times in different contexts, moral agency development is individualistic and dynamic, with the potential to adapt to different socio-cultural contexts. Moreover, as the 6M grow, a moral agent's moral values, moral identity, and moral motivation will grow accordingly. Hence, the 6M components are succinct and fundamental for moral agency development.

How we understand the concept of moral agency matters in education and in educational research. Relying only on moral cognition carries the inherent risk of "moral" justification for the selective disengagement of one's moral commitment [10]. Cognitive distortion, due to interpersonal rejection, is negatively associated with forgiveness [17]. Also, moral agency cannot be reduced to empathy or other moral emotions, even though empathy is often associated with forgiveness and the forgiving process [17,18]. This kind of reductionism might explain why the impacts of social emotional learning (SEL) programs on moral development varied widely in character education [6]. Given the strong and consistent empirical evidence of the 6M holistic moral agency's effect on good citizenship [1], the following discussion about moral agency will be based on the holistic 6M conception.

3. Definitions

6M: This is an acronym for the six basic components of moral agency, comprising moral autonomous will, moral behaviors, moral cognition, moral emotion, moral goals, and self-efficacy beliefs.

IRA: This is an acronym for invitation, reflection, and assessment. The IRA is blended with the 6M as an educational strategy to promote moral agency development.

GMIRA: This is an acronym for goal, modeling, and the IRA, which aims to inspire and motivate moral agency development.

Moral agency: This refers to the capacity, ability, and power of an individual to exert the moral self. It is holistic, humanistic, and individualistic. It represents the moral psyche involving the 6M.

Moral agent: This refers to an individual who manifests the moral self. Ideally, a moral agent will exercise the 6M by thinking, feeling, and acting towards a moral goal with an autonomous will and self-efficacy belief.

Moral cognition: This refers to the thinking faculty of the moral self towards moral goodness. This involves truth-seeking with open-mindedness and humility, an awareness of biases of oneself and others, comprehension, discernment, dialectic reasoning, identifying causes and consequences, and prudence in judgment and decision-making.

Moral emotion: This refers to the emotions of a moral self who is aware of one's emotional state and responds aptly to the moral concern of the well-being of the self and others via self-regulation.

Moral goal/moral purpose: This refers to the good purpose towards the well-being of the self and/or others [16]. The moral goal for forgiveness may vary in scope. It is narrow when the goal of forgiveness aims at benefiting oneself only, such as forgiving to stop the mental and emotional suffering of oneself. Reversely, it is broad when the goal of

forgiveness aims at benefiting the public at large, such as forgiving for the magnanimity and love of humankind, including an adversary.

Moral autonomous will: This is also called moral autonomy, moral free will, or moral independence. It refers to the freedom of self-determination and commitment to being good. (Note: a free will may or may not be moral, e.g., a free will that does harm against the innocent is not moral.)

Self-efficacy belief: This is a belief or strong perception of the self's capabilities to produce desirable outcomes [3,4].

Moral behavior: This refers to good conduct that promotes the well-being of the moral self and others.

4. How Moral Agency Is Related to Forgiveness Virtue

Forgiveness is a gift of goodness to an offender in lieu of revenge for an offense. According to Enright [19], this goodness is the love of mankind that propels a change in heart for what is best for the other person, including those who have hurt us; therefore, agape love is the essence of forgiveness. To forgive is not about dismissing or denying the wrong. Instead, as North [20] has explained, a forgiver must recognize the wrong and overcome the resentment to forgive an offender, which requires compassion, benevolence, and love for the change in heart to occur. Forgiveness facilitates rejection, redemption, and restoration. That is, it rejects the perpetual cycle of antagonism and vengeance; it pays forward to help the forgiven redeem the self with a second chance, even though the forgiven may not deserve it; and it promotes the restoration of the relationship of the wounded parties. While forgiveness may not necessarily lead to the reconciliation or restoration of the relationship, forgiveness suggests the acceptance of an offender, which makes the healing of the damaged relationships or reconciliation possible. This notion of restoring harmonious ties of trust, affection, and mutual sympathy is fundamental for recreating the bonds between human individuals, which is "the foundations of a natural moral vision", according to North ([20] pp. 507–508). This restoration function makes the forgiveness virtue especially valuable for its role in addressing transgression and conflict situations.

Forgiveness can significantly diminish emotional, mental, and physical suffering, although these results are not guaranteed [21]. Research studies have shown that forgiveness improves self-esteem [22] and reduces anger [23–25] and anxiety [26]. The virtue of forgiveness is not the same as pseudo-forgiveness like forgetting, denial, or compromising. Rather, the former requires *work* to overcome resentment with a change in heart to offer compassion, benevolence, and love for the goodwill to an offender [20]. As such, forgiveness helps to restore relationships, peace, and hope [7,20].

According to Fitzgibbons [21], forgiveness may *work* at cognitive, emotional, and spiritual levels in the four phases of forgiveness therapy, namely uncovering, decision, work, and outcome. The fourth phase, "outcome", is also called "deepening [7]" and "discovering [27]" because a forgiver needs to work deeply for emotional release and self-discovery, which may eventually lead to new meaning about past experiences and new purposes for the future.

Less discussed thus far in the literature is that the *work* of forgiveness in these four phases also amounts to exercising the agency of one's moral self. As alluded earlier, forgiveness is a moral response to wrongdoing [20], which requires an agent's moral cognition of the wrong as well as the ability and will to tamper anger with compassion and empathy. Moreover, a forgiver has to "lower (the self) in modesty and humility ([20] p. 507)". These suggest that exercising moral agency is paramount in the forgiveness process.

4.1. 6M Operation in Enright Process Model of Forgiveness [27]—(Table 1)

In this sub-section, the intimate relationship between moral agency and forgiveness is extracted by applying each of the holistic moral agency components (the 6M) to the forgiveness process using the 20-step Enright Process Model of forgiveness therapy [7].

This model's efficacy has been validated and applied in research studies around the world in the last three decades [28]. To illustrate the operation of moral agency in forgiveness, the discussion may refer to the parable about a father forgiving his prodigal son who has improverished and suffered from squandering the inheritance through a debauched lifestyle [20]. A summary of the 6M operation in the forgiveness process is created in Table 1 as well, which includes the dynamic process model [8] for comparison.

Table 1. Relationship between Moral Agency (the 6M) and the Forgiveness Process.

Moral Agency~The 6M [1]	Process Model Forgiveness [7], p. 68	Dynamic Model Forgiveness [8]	Mature Forgiveness [29]
Moral Cognition: An open-mind and humility in seeking the truth. Aware of biases. Good comprehension, discernment, reasoning, dialectical thinking, and decision-making. Awareness of choices and their consequences.	Rehearse and reflect on the issues of conflict, people and situations (#5). Gain better insight into the injustice and injury involved (#6, 7, & 8), the suffering for self and others (#4), and the continuous hurt from an unhealed wound (#7). Reframe who the wrongdoer is (#12). Consider multiple values: forgiveness, along with compassion, justice, and agape. New insight about forgiveness in ending suffering (#9). Find meanings in suffering and forgiveness (#16).	Social contexts and cultural values influence appraisal of conflict, dialectical thinking and causal attribution, which affects the motivation and decision of forgiveness. e.g., collectivist culture in the East emphasizes interpersonal harmony; individualist culture in the West emphasizes intrapersonal well-being. In appraising the transgression, the East separates the causal attribution between people and situation for the holistic thinking with broader context, but the West focuses on a particular object and is more individual-centered.	[Implied] Strong and persistent awareness of the goodness in forgiveness
Moral Emotion: Excellent emotional awareness and regulation for the self and others.	Confront the anger (#2). Work on empathy and compassion toward the offender (#13). Bear and accept the pain (#14). Express empathy and compassion towards an offender (#13).	Cultures influence the emotional process of forgiveness. In interdependent self-construal culture (the East), socially engaged emotions, like guilt and respect, may lead to more forgiving responses. In independent culture (the West), socially disengaged emotions, like anger and pride, may lead to more unforgiving responses.	Expert in managing negative emotions; less struggling in forgiveness. High capability to control anger while offering justice.
Moral Behavior: Good action that promotes well-being (e.g., respect, kindness, and forgiveness)	Offering forgiveness instead of continuing resentment to an offender (#15).	3 forms: (1) Decisional forgiveness (i.e., positive or negative behavioral intention toward the transgressor). (2) Emotional forgiveness (i.e., replacing unforgiving emotion with positive emotion). (3) Behavioral forgiveness. One may express forgiveness behavior without emotional forgiveness.	Applying the forgiveness virtue consistently across time, people, and circumstances.
Moral Goal (or Moral Purpose): Virtuous end targeted by a moral agent for being good.	[Implicit]. A moral goal is necessary for a commitment to forgiving an offender (#11). e.g., stopping the personal pain of "secondary injustice" for an unhealed wound, magnanimity, respect and love for others, including an offender.	Maintaining cultural values in the East (e.g., social harmony and cooperation) vs. enhancing personal well-being in the West (e.g., reduce suffering and improve mental well-being).	Strong and persistent goals, e.g., agape love, magnanimity, peace, etc. A forgiving life becomes a moral identity.
Moral Autonomous Will: Self-determination and commitment to being good.	Forgiveness is a choice that cannot be coerced upon a self. It's up to one's will and commitment to forgive (#10 & #11).	[Implicit] It varies according to cultural orientation between independent or interdependent self-construal.	Consistently committing to committing to a forgiving life.
Self-Efficacy Belief: A belief of self-competence to produce desirable outcomes.	[Implicit] Self-efficacy belief grows as one practices empathy, compassion (#13) and forgiveness (#15), and experiences positive outcomes, e.g., decrease in emotional pain (#20) and increase in hope with new purpose in life (#19).	[Implicit] It varies in accord with cultural preference of approach or avoidance. Approach focuses on the competence to achieve positive outcomes or state (e.g., solve conflict). Avoidances focuses on eliminating undesired outcomes (e.g., avoid conflicts)	Persistent and strong belief in the self's capacity to forgive for desirable outcomes in life. It promotes a strong identity of a virtuous forgiver.

4.1.1. Moral Cognition in Forgiveness

A moral agent cannot simply forget and forgive because the virtue of forgiveness requires exercising one's moral cognition. In the case of the prodigal son, the father would rehearse and reflect on the past about the son's situation. To forgive the son, the father must first open the mind to reflect well about the issues of the conflict, people, and situation and not just the son's violation of family honor, values, and trust (Step #5 [7]). In this uncovering phase of the Enright Process Model, the father may apply dialectical thinking to decipher the complicated causes of his son's situation, which may involve multiple perspectives from his own life experiences and from his son's, as well as the family's deficiency in supporting the upbringing of the son. This inquiry for the truth of the past will help the father acquire better insight into the injustice, the injury, and the impacts of continuous suffering from an unhealed wound (Steps #4, #6 to #8). After weighing in multiple values (such as forgiveness, compassion, justice, and agape), the father may gain new insight about forgiveness as a choice to end the suffering (Step #9) in the decision phase. After making the decision about forgiveness, the father starts to deliberate about forgiveness with more careful thoughts through the work phase. With an open mind, the father may realize that he can reframe who the son is, despite his son's wrongdoing (Step #12). As the father goes through the last phase of the deepening process, he may discover the meanings of suffering and forgiveness (Step #16). While he realizes his own susceptibility and needs for others' forgiveness in the past (Step #17), he also realizes that he is not alone because his son may need forgiveness too (Step #18). The father now recognizes a new purpose in life (Step #19) as he opens his mind to accept his son.

Notably, the moral cognitive faculty of the forgiving father is actively working throughout the four phases of the Enright Process Model. Also, open-mindedness is essential for a moral mind to search for the truth of matters besides good reasoning skills about the causes and consequences. The open-minded moral mind is more than thinking about right or wrong; rather, it must be open to acknowledge human susceptibility and to accept the offender as a worthy human being with humility. With these kinds of moral cognition, a moral agent, like the forgiving father, can begin to realize that forgiveness is a feasible moral choice to alleviate the situation for the well-being of all.

4.1.2. Moral Emotion in Forgiveness

An important function of forgiveness is the release of anger and resentment. However, forgiving an offender can be difficult, particularly amid a conflict or when an emotional injury is deep [21], which may linger for years in some cases [30]. While being aware of the difficulties of the emotional state of the self and others, a moral agent can self-regulate the emotional response for the well-being of the self and others. For the case of the prodigal son, the father must first uncover and confront his anger rather than harboring it (Step #2 [7]). When the father becomes aware of the emotional drain and exhaustion from the son's violation (Step #4), he reassesses the emotional suffering of the self and the son's (Step #7). While new insight into the suffering may emerge, the father may realize that the suffering will not end with the same old resolution strategies. This emotional awareness may motivate the father to soften his heart towards the son (Step #9). With the practice of empathy and compassion towards the son (Step #13), the father learns to manage pain and other negative emotions (Step #14). By practicing forgiveness, the father learns to release the negative affect (e.g., pain, anger, and depression) and replace it with a positive affect (e.g., peace and joy) [21–23,31,32]. The father may feel these emotional benefits more strongly at the end of the forgiveness process (Step #20).

Hence, through the forgiveness process, a moral agent (as illustrated by the forgiving father) becomes more aware of the emotions of the self and others and learns to self-regulate emotional responses via forgiveness. Moral emotion does not work alone; instead, it is weaved with moral cognition [33] and moral action during the forgiveness process. This reflects the holistic power of moral agency as the moral self organizes, reflects, and regulates itself [3,4].

4.1.3. Moral Goal for Forgiveness

While a moral goal may not be explicit in the forgiveness process model [7], it is revealed implicitly when a moral agent commits to forgiving an offender in the decision phase (Step #11). Without a meaningful purpose, a commitment to forgiveness is impossible, and the work phase of forgiveness would fail. This does not mean that forgiveness is set out as a moral goal. As demonstrated in the case of the prodigal son, the father's first goal is to stop the suffering and to improve the relationship with his son for the well-being of all in the family. For these moral goals, the father is motivated to commit his moral self through the work and deepening phases of forgiveness. As such, a new purpose in life (Step #19) becomes possible.

The above illustration demonstrates how a moral goal helps to fortify a moral agent's commitment and determination to a forgiving life. In addition, when a moral agent experiences the benefits of forgiveness, the virtue of forgiveness can turn into a personal goal [34]. This implies that forgiveness education can be instrumental in sparking the journey of mature forgivers.

4.1.4. Moral Autonomous Will to Forgive

It would be immoral to coerce oneself to forgive. To forgive or not is a choice that rests upon a moral agent [27]. Moral autonomous will is required in the decision phase of the forgiveness process model [7], (Steps #10 and #11). In the aforementioned case, should the father lack the moral autonomous will, the forgiveness process would go awry. Additionally, pseudo-forgiveness (such as dismissal and compromising) may occur, and the true benefits of forgiveness may not prevail.

4.1.5. Self-Efficacy Belief in Forgiveness

The belief in self-efficacy is implicit in the work and deepening phases of the forgiveness process [7]. As aforementioned, when the father (a moral agent) begins practicing empathy and compassion (Step #13) and offers the gift of forgiveness to his son (an offender) (Step #15), the father starts to experience the positive outcomes of relief from emotional and mental suffering (Step #20), with increasing hope for a new purpose in life (Step #19). The father's self-efficacy belief is generated through the forgiveness processes as he realizes the positive outcomes of forgiving others.

The more a moral agent practices the virtue of forgiveness with experiences of positive outcomes, the stronger the self-efficacy belief is as a forgiver [35]. Therefore, mature forgivers are more likely to have a stronger self-efficacy belief than immature forgivers. Cultivating the belief in self-efficacy is important for the development of mature forgivers.

4.1.6. Moral Behavior

Forgiving an offender is a graceful and generous behavior. Since forgiveness puts a stop to vengeance and reduces suffering in humanity, its virtuous quality qualifies as a moral behavior. Marvelously, when you give the gift of forgiveness to others, you receive the healing yourself. This paradox of forgiveness is found in the anecdotes of many forgivers [7] (Step #20), as well as in clinical and nonclinical forgiveness interventions [36,37]. As alluded to earlier, the moral behavior of forgiveness helps to reduce participants' negative affect, such as anger, anxiety, and depression [22–26,31,32,38,39], while it also enhances the positive affect for hope and self-esteem [28], as well as a eudaimonic happiness affect and behaviors [40].

Forgiveness is not an easy task [21]. The deeper the injury, the harder it is to forgive an offender. Psychologically speaking, forgiveness deviates from the natural human instinct of reciprocation. That is, I reciprocate kindness to you when you are kind to me, or reversely, I reciprocate affliction to you when you afflict me. The first reciprocation instinct is fine because it generates a positive cycle of goodness between human beings (Figure 1).
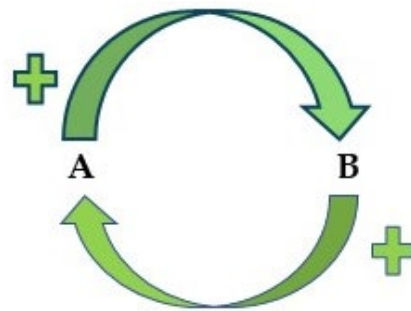
Figure 1. Cycle of goodness (the first instinct).

The second instinct is problematic because it degenerates into a vicious cycle of vengeance (Figure 2), endangering relationships and harmony.
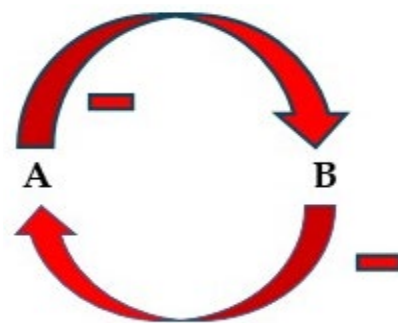
Figure 2. Cycle of vengeance (the second instinct).

Forgiveness rejects the second human instinct by replacing vengeance with the generosity of goodness to an offender (Step #15 [7]). Resisting the temptation of the second human instinct requires courage. As a moral behavior, forgiveness not only courageously shuts down the vicious cycle of vengeance, but it also returns with generosity by reopening the goodness cycle that allows fresh air and new purpose in life (Step #19), as depicted in Figure 3.
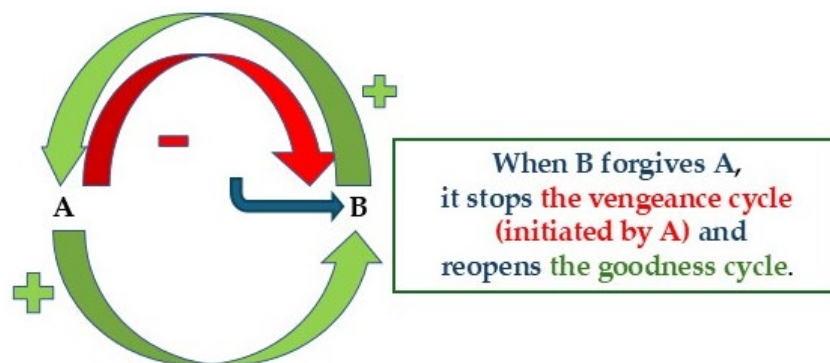
When B forgives A, it stops **the vengeance cycle (initiated by A) and** reopens **the goodness cycle.**

Figure 3. Forgiveness reverses the cycle of vengeance into the cycle of goodness.

4.2. Socio-Cultural Influences

How would socio-cultural factors affect forgiveness? If so, what is its implication on the 6M moral agency operation in forgiveness? In the dynamic model proposed by Ho and Fung [8], the Eastern collectivist culture tends to think broadly, with the preference of interpersonal harmony and social well-being. In contrast, the Western individualistic culture tends to focus on a particular object with the preference of personal well-being. As such, socio-cultural contexts affect the understanding of the injustice gap, dialectical thinking, and causal attribution between people and situations, as well as the appraisal

of transgressions and how a moral agent's emotions are socially engaged (e.g., guilt and friendliness that promote interpersonal bonds) or disengaged (e.g., superiority and anger that promote individual attributes). These dynamics may lead to the motivations of avoiding or maintaining one's social bonds, which affect the decision and emotions of an individual and ultimately the expression of forgiveness or no forgiveness.

Applying the dynamic model to the prodigal son's case, the father may or may not forgive the son, depending on the family culture and values. For instance, if the family emphasizes honor and social order, the father may not be able to forgive his prodigal son for the latter's violation of the family's honor, social order, and harmony within the family. In another family that emphasizes the values of cohesiveness, inclusion, and love, the father may forgive his prodigal son because family love outweighs the son's wrongdoing.

Despite the influence of socio-cultural dynamics for different social groups [31], there are similarities in forgiveness across cultural groups too [41]. For instance, both the Chinese and American cultures recognize the problems of transgression and the metaphor of debt cancelation in forgiveness; they both have similar emotional responses related to shame and guilt following one's own wrongdoing [42]. In addition, regardless of socio-cultural differences, forgiveness intervention can be effective across different racial groups within the same country [31] and across the world [25,32,43,44]. As Kim and Enright have noted, the essence of the forgiveness virtue centering on beneficence makes it socially and culturally adaptive, even in different religious contexts [29].

Likewise, moral agency is adaptive to different socio-cultural contexts. In Bandura's view, since cultural communality requires basic agentic capacities and mechanisms of operation, successful agency would blend the different modes of individual, proxy, and collective agency regardless of where an agent resides [4]. Given that moral agency is holistic, its 6M components are dynamic and adaptable to fit across various people, time, and socio-cultural contexts (Table 1).

5. Symbiotic Relationship Between Moral Agency and Forgiveness

As illustrated thus far, moral agency and forgiveness frequently hang out together, which suggests that they have a symbiotic relationship. Their close relationship is reasonable considering their common roots in an agent's moral self (Figure 4).
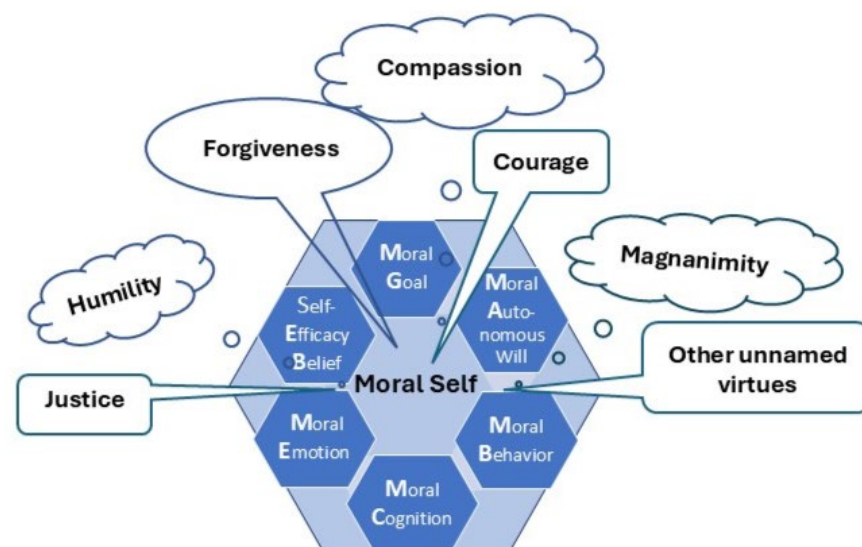

Figure 4. Moral self as the root of moral agency (the 6M) and moral virtues.

Whereas forgiveness stands out as the virtue of a moral self, moral agency stands out as the capacity and ability of a moral self. The symbiotic relationship between forgiveness and moral agency is mutually beneficial. As shown in the research study of a 12-hour knowledge-based forgiveness intervention for clergy members, participants not only in-

creased their knowledge of forgiveness, but they also increased their self-efficacy which, in turn, increased their interest to promote forgiveness in future congregations [35].

Sometimes forgiveness does not work, especially when there is character weakness or when moral values are absent [21]. In these situations, cultivating moral agency to build up a moral self (e.g., practicing the 6M for the virtues of kindness, humility, and empathy) before exercising the forgiveness virtue may be helpful. As Enright has suggested, when it is hard to forgive, an individual can first practice gentleness with oneself, humility, courage, and/or patience [19].

On the other hand, practicing the virtue of forgiveness helps improve our moral agency. Recalling our previous discussion, practicing forgiveness helps to boost a moral agent's self-efficacy belief [35] and moral goal [34]. While moral agency is our inner capacity of being good, it becomes realized only with real-life practices. All practices of virtues, including the virtue of forgiveness, are opportunities to strengthen our moral agency.

In short, when a moral agent exercises the virtue of forgiveness, the moral agent is also exercising one or more of the 6M components. However, a moral agent may operate one's moral agency with or without forgiveness. Forgiveness needs a moral self to bloom; moral agency needs real-life practices of virtues to thrive. Since forgiveness exercises are opportunities to grow the forgiveness virtue and moral agency, forgiveness education plays an important role for the cultivation of mature forgivers and mature moral agents.

6. How Forgiveness Education Facilitates Moral Agency Development

Nominally, forgiveness education is about cultivating the virtue of forgiveness. But more than that, forgiveness education also supports moral agency development. As shown in a meta-analysis [25], one of the prominent impacts of forgiveness education is anger reduction, which is a manifestation of moral agency capacity in regulating one's emotion. Moreover, as the learning and practice of the forgiveness virtue increases the willingness to forgive in a divided community, it reduces prejudice towards a different ethnic/cultural group [31]. Prejudice reduction implies the development of a moral mind with an open mind, as well as the development of moral autonomous will towards moral goodness and self-efficacy beliefs in forgiving another's wrong as a desirable outcome. Hence, the learning of forgiveness is beneficial for moral agency development.

Whereas moral agency is about the capacity and ability of a moral self, strengthening the moral self with the 6M muscles is essential for moral agency development. The forgiveness education curricula [45,46] fit well in this regard because they emphasize learning and practicing being the best self, along with a wide range of virtues, such as kindness, respect, generosity, courage, justice, agape (as the love of humanity for the inherent worth in all human beings), and balance (as in the virtue of the mean). Every lesson about a virtue is an opportunity to practice and strengthen the 6M muscles of a moral self. Therefore, forgiveness education facilitates the growth of moral agency.

Is it possible for the best self to be something other than the moral self, such as the ideal self (whose attributes we like ideally), the ought self (whose attributes we ought to possess), or the savoring self (who appreciates and enjoys every present positive moment in life) [47]? Maybe, or maybe not. We need to realize that there are multiple ways to describe a self. When a self has no moral foundation, it is susceptible to the pitfall of extremes, like the ideal self dwindling into vainglory, the ought self ossifying into a lifeless dogma, and the savoring self becoming spellbound rather than awakened by over-glamorized joy. Having a moral foundation for the self is the best, which is the benchmark of excellence recognized by excellent teachers and philosophers throughout human history around the world, such as Socrates, Aristotle, Confucius, Mencius, Siddhartha Gautama, and Muhammad.

Furthermore, the learning theme of being the best self in forgiveness education will promote the moral self as well. As suggested in Nicomachean Ethics [48], excellence (i.e., arete in Greek) is achieved by being virtuous in thoughts and character. In other words, to be excellent, the best self must be virtuous in thoughts, feeling, and action as a person of character in accordance with moral virtues (such as kindness, respect, justice, courage,

agape, and forgiveness). Therefore, learning to be the best self is equivalent to learning to be the moral self.

In the Knutson's and Enright's forgiveness education curriculum guide published by the International Forgiveness Institute in 2023 [45], there is an implicit acknowledgement that being the best is being moral too. In the first lesson of the middle-school curriculum guide for children between 11 and 13 years old (i.e., Grade 6 in the United States or Year 8 in the United Kingdom), it sets the main learning theme as follows:

"Be Your Best Self:

Think thoughts that are positive, grateful, and truthful, speak words that edify in truth both the self and others, and behave in ways that are kind, generous, respectful, loving, courageous, just, and forgiving. (...) acknowledging and confronting anger, sadness and other negative emotions and cultivating positive emotions such as love, joy, hope, and so forth in being one's best self."

(Knutson and Enright, [45], p. 6)

In other words, the curriculum guide encourages students to achieve the best self by practicing moral thought (e.g., truthful thoughts and expression), moral emotion (e.g., confronting anger and cultivating joy), and moral behaviors (e.g., behaving kindly and respectfully). This implies that by practicing the 6M, our moral selves will become stronger, and so are our best selves. This is reasonable because the moral self and the best self are two sides of the same coin. Hence, learning to be the best self in forgiveness education will facilitate the growth of the moral self.

7. Why Moral Agency Development Matters in Forgiveness Education

Although forgiveness education has shown the positive impacts of improving forgiveness and reducing anger [25,32], it lacks the maintenance effect in follow-up tests [32]. To enhance and sustain the impacts of forgiveness education, moral agency development is instrumental in forgiveness education. The following is the rationale: all virtues are derived from a moral self (see Figure 4); when an individual exercises the virtue of forgiveness, the 6M of a moral agent will kick in, as described previously. Since the 6M components help to bridge different virtues or values, moral agency development will strengthen the moral self with a larger moral capacity to learn and practice the forgiveness virtue. Hence, moral agency development helps to cultivate mature forgivers who can apply the virtue of forgiveness across people, time, and situations. While more research studies confirming this claim will be necessary, the prima facie evidence can be traced to the moral exemplars in Tirrell et al.'s study of the post-genocide Rwanda who described how well "justice facilitates forgiveness, and forgiveness fulfills justice [49], p. 74". In the experiences of these moral exemplars, the virtues of justice and forgiveness complement each other. Also, in Bell et al.'s study [50], only the highly religious-committed individuals exhibited a positive correlation between forgiveness and greater community expectations for forgiveness. The results of these studies suggest that with higher moral agency, moral exemplars like those with religious commitment or genocide survivors are relatively more capable of embracing forgiveness, as mature forgivers do, despite the suffering from their traumatic experiences.

Besides facilitating the growth of mature forgivers, cultivating moral agency in forgiveness education also matters because moral agency supports the growth of moral characters, such as courage, balance, temperance, justice, and responsibility. In turn, moral character building helps to promote the development of well-rounded and resilient moral agents across time, people, and events, as mature moral agents per se. Furthermore, given the robust evidence of moral agency's impacts on good citizenship (that is just, responsible, and participatory) in a democratic society [1], promoting moral agency in forgiveness education will help cultivate good citizenship too.

Overall, it will be advantageous to encourage moral agency development in forgiveness education for the cultivation of mature forgivers, mature moral agents, and good citizens. This will be good for the well-being of students, the school community, and

society at large, especially in our contemporary world full of divisive isms, prejudices, and misinformation.

8. How to Cultivate Moral Agency in Forgiveness Education

A teacher's role in cultivating students' moral agency is indispensable in school. A good teacher, characterized as an intentional teacher according to Slavin [51], would set the educational goal of moral agency development with *seamless* [emphasis added] pedagogical strategies to incorporate the 6M components into the forgiveness course syllabus. While there may be many ways to accomplish this worthy pedagogical goal, the GMIRA method is proposed because it can be implemented easily in and outside of a classroom setting. GMIRA stands for goal, modeling, and IRA. Specifically, it refers to: (1) setting the learning goal of being and living the best self as the moral agent; (2) creating social modeling opportunities to promote moral agency development as a mature forgiver; and (3) blending the 6M moral agency conception into the learning activities using the IRA (invitation, reflection, and assessment) self-regulated learning strategies. Let us explore the GMIRA strategic method further below.

8.1. Setting the Learning Goal of Living and Being the Best Self

"Being and living from my best self" should be the learning goal for everyone at all school levels. This learning goal leverages the familiar educational theme of forgiveness curricula in middle school [45,46], which fits the dual purposes of cultivating the forgiveness virtue and moral agency. To achieve this teaching goal, an intentional teacher should help students understand that one's best self is synonymous with one's moral self and encourage students to pursue this worthy learning goal with relevant and real-life moral exemplars in our world, especially those who have experiences with forgiveness. A few examples include Malala Yousafzai [52], Harry Potter, Richard Moore [53], Maya Angelou, Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, Sonia Sotomayor, Ruby Bridges, and so forth. Moral exemplars are inspiring [54] and emulating [55]. By exploring together with students how these moral exemplars apply their moral agency via their 6M and the impacts they have created for their lives and other people, the intentional teacher can inspire students to set up a personal goal of living the best self at home and in school.

8.2. Social Modeling

Besides setting the learning goal, social modeling is another useful strategy to incorporate into forgiveness education. As Bandura has noted, social modeling helps to promote self-efficacy beliefs and agency development [4,56]; also, social modeling is a universal human capacity found in early childhood when a child observes and learns through vicarious experiences of other's failure or success and the subsequent consequences in a social environment, with or without imitation of the behaviors [3,57]. While a social model may be a teacher, a coach, a peer, a parent, or a fictional symbolic model found in books or mass media, Bandura has found that the influential ones tend to have the social power, status, proficiency, competence, and consistency between preaching and practices [56–58]. However, the impact of social modeling on a learner can be negative or positive; and it may be limited to those who do not have the self-efficacy belief [57–59]. Also, a learner does not necessarily replicate the model's behaviors [56,57]. These imply that what a child is modeling and how well the modeling occurs matter in supporting and reinforcing moral agency development. Borrowing the ideas of Bandura [56], it would be prudent to select a social model that has demonstrated the following:

i.   Consistent adherence to moral standards.
ii.   Proficiency and competence in applying three or more of the 6M components and
iii.   Effectiveness in motivating and supporting a learner's needs for moral agency development [4].

Intentional Teacher's Role in Social Modeling

As Bandura has noted, except for students who have already mastered the perceived self-efficacy of coping in similar situations, affective modeling occurs when students reference and model a teacher's verbal, emotional, and behavioral expressions in appraising unfamiliar people and ambiguous situations [59]. An intentional teacher should acknowledge this affective modeling effect as a teacher [59]. This does not mean that a teacher needs to be perfect. Rather, the teacher should be an enabler, a motivator, and an inspirer [4], with a commitment to practicing the 6M as a lifetime pursuit for being a moral agent. For this reason, an intentional teacher is likely to be humble, open-minded, and empathic to students' journeys of becoming mature forgivers and mature moral agents. To apply the social modeling strategy, an intentional teacher can facilitate students' learning and application of the 6M by the following:

i. Creating curiosity around moral exemplars with interesting and relevant stories [51] to inspire and motivate exploration of the 6M application in the model's lives.
ii. Helping students identify a good model that fits their 6M learning and developmental needs while being aware that having a diversity of social models may be beneficial because there are various needs of learning at different stages of development.
iii. Inviting students to learn and participate in the 6M as the model they have identified with.
iv. Coordinating a meeting between a student and his/her model, if feasible.
v. Encouraging students to reflect and assess the 6M learning from their models.

8.3. Blending in Through "IRA" Self-Regulated Learning Strategies

The IRA is an acronym for invitation, reflection, and assessment. It means inviting every student to learn and practice his/her 6M muscles, along with the forgiveness muscles, through reflection and assessment activities. The approach is a seamless integration with forgiveness education, as the IRA strategies are blended into the teaching, learning, and practicing of the 6M along with the goal of living and being the best self and the inspiration of social modeling.

For the purpose of promoting self-regulated learning, the IRA should be applied to help students discover their moral selves and cultivate their moral agency and forgiveness virtue through reflection and assessment. While research for this novel idea is needed, scholars have supported the use of reflection to promote self-regulation [60], which is essential for self-monitoring and moral agency development [4]. Indeed, as Chung et al. [61] have found, students improved their self-efficacy and writing outcomes after they were engaged in planning, goal setting, and reflecting and self-assessing their writing and revision.

In addition, the IRA can be used to promote holistic moral agency development through the improvement of all the 6M components. Even though the IRA may start with moral cognition for the cognitive stimulation of reflection and assessment activities, it goes beyond the cognitive boundary by activating the other moral agency components in the developmental process. Therefore, the IRA approach is likely to be different from other self-regulation models [62], such as the Boekaerts' model [63] and the MASRL model [64], despite their similar involvement in cognitive, metacognitive, behavioral, emotional, and motivational aspects of learning. Future research comparing these models with the IRA will be helpful.

Now, let us explore the IRA strategies and the role of an intentional teacher.

8.3.1. "I" Is for Invitation

Using the definitions of moral agency in Section 3, an intentional teacher can help students understand that each of them has the moral agency within to empower self-development. Since moral agency is composed of the 6M that complement and support each other, when one of the 6M runs into difficulty, students can use the other five moral agency components for support. By honing their 6M over and over, students can strengthen

their moral agency to achieve their best selves, which is important for self-learning and self-development.

Intentional Teacher's Role in Invitation

i.   Introduce the conceptions of moral agency and the 6M separately or collectively.
ii.   Creatively incorporate the 6M components into the forgiveness curriculum and learning activities. Whereas the current forgiveness curriculum emphasizes some of the 6M components (moral thought, moral behavior, and moral emotion), its coverage for the components of self-efficacy, moral goals, and moral autonomous will appears to be less explicit. An intentional teacher will ensure that the curriculum will include all the 6M components, wherever it is appropriate, in the discussion and reflection activities, forgiveness exercises, and other classroom and homework assignments.
iii.   Invite students to learn and apply one or more of the 6M components for the learning goal of living and being their best self. The invitation is most applicable when students practice the forgiveness muscles, when students practice being their best self, when students practice a virtue, when they discuss a class topic, when they perform a reflection and assessment activity, and/or when students explore who they are as a person.
iv.   Invite students to learn and apply one or more of the 6M components, like a moral exemplar. This will help students imagine how to apply the 6M and appreciate its associated benefits and outcomes.
v.   Encourage students to practice the 6M at home so that they can develop the moral habit of exercising the 6M as a moral agent.
vi.   Gently re-introduce the concepts of moral agency and the 6M if they get stuck in a difficult matter. Every mistake or difficulty is an opportunity to learn and practice the 6M. Invite students to apply, reflect, and assess with a different 6M component that may be relevant and helpful.

8.3.2. "R" Is for Reflection

"Reflection is the process of turning experience into learning" according to Bourner [65], p. 268. For the goal of being and living from the best self, reflecting the self and the self's 6M operation is essential for self-learning and self-improvement as a moral agent. Reflecting on others' experiences can provide an extra lens for learning what one may do or avoid for self-improvement as well. To reflect well, according to Koole et al. [66], students should perform an adequate review of one's experiences and the context involved, and they should perform a critical analysis using searching questions (see [65]) with an outcome of reflection pertaining to a concrete goal and an action plan. To facilitate the 6M reflection of one's experiences, a reflection frame is created in Table 2 to jumpstart teachers' imagination and adaptation for the needs of their students.

Intentional Teacher's Role in Reflection

i.   Modify the reflection questions in Table 2 based on student developmental needs and the context.
ii.   Review the reflection questions to ensure that they promote one of more of the 6M components.
iii.   Incorporate the reflection questions into the learning activities.
iv.   Demonstrate with a reflection example, preferably from a moral exemplar.

Table 2. The 6M Reflection Frame.

Moral Cognition.

What happened? Who was involved? What were the causes for the event/ situation? What am I missing about the facts of the situation? What does my "opponent" know that I don't know? Is the dissent from my "opponent" factual and reasonable? What other objective evidence is available to help me see the truth? To become a better person, what can I learn from others (including my opponent)? What is good? What is not so good? What bias may I have possibly? How do I know if I am biased or not? What are the choices and their consequences to me and others? How did my understanding affect the other 5M (my feeling, my goal, my will, self-efficacy belief, and my behavior)? What is the moral lesson from my experience? What were the most and the least fulfilling parts of my experiences, and what did these experiences suggest about my values? *

Moral Emotion.

How did I feel about an event or situation? How am I feeling now? * How did others feel about the same situation or similar event? How would I feel if I was in other's shoes in the same situation? What caused my positive or negative feelings? What was my positive or negative feeling telling me? Was I overreacting emotionally? How was/is my positive and/or negative feeling affecting me and others? How can I relieve my stress (pain, and other negative feelings) well? How can I express/share my positive or negative feelings that will promote the well-being of all?

Moral Goal.

What was the purpose of my past behavior? How well have I achieved my goal? How well will I achieve my goal if I continue or change my behavior? How did my goal contribute to the goals of others? What is a good goal to pursue? What goal is important for the well-being of all (including my opponent)?

Moral Autonomous Will.

How well can I commit to being and living my best self, even at hard times or when it was challenged by my adversary? If I cannot commit my good will, what is preventing me? What supports can I draw from to strengthen my good will? (Tips: check out moral cognition, moral emotion, moral goal, self-efficacy belief, and moral behavior within as a moral agent. Seek external support, if necessary.

Self-Efficacy Belief.

How well can I make a difference? How well can I achieve the outcome of _____ as a moral agent (or a mature forgiver or a good citizen, or the like)? What were the antecedents that confirmed or contradicted my prior beliefs about my ability? * Learning from my experiences, what are my strengths, as well as weaknesses that are opportunities for my growth as a good _____ (e.g., learner, citizen, human being, leader, or the like, who is a moral agent)? *

Moral Behavior.

Was my behavior appropriate in the context? What other behavioral options did I have at the time? * What are the consequences of my behavior? What might have prevented me from behaving my best self? What might I do differently because of the experience? * What would help me behave as my best self in the future?

* Adapted from Bourner [65], Table II Questions as tools for reflective thinking.

8.3.3. "A" Is for Assessment

While reflection may be used as a formative assessment to ascertain where students are in the learning process [67,68], reflection is insufficient by itself for its subjective nature and vulnerability of self-bias. In the IRA paradigm, assessment supplements the quality of reflection by ensuring that the knowledge gained from the reflection is valid, reliable, and useful for life application for the goal of living from the best self as a moral agent.

Validity

To assess the validity of one's reflection is to assess accuracy [69] and thoroughness (also referred as "completeness" by Eisenhart and Howe, as cited in [70]). The main reason is that the more accurate and thorough we are in reflecting the self and the situation involved, the closer we are to the truth core of a matter. Whether my reflection is about a child stealing my lunch or a hungry child stealing my lunch may yield very different 6M responses from me as a moral agent. This also implies that whether my reflection is based on only my moral cognition or my 6M collectively may lead to very different responses and development for me as a moral agent. Therefore, assessing for the accuracy and thoroughness in one's reflection is essential for validating the reflection and its purpose of moral agency development.

Reliability

Assessing the reliability of reflection is about ensuring its credibility. Credibility implies dependability and trustworthiness. Whereas reliability is commonly conceived as consistency in the results of repeating a trial [69], the value of consistency may or may not be worthy depending on the quality of a moral agent and the context involved for the purpose of moral agency development. For instance, when loyalty is consistently exercised for the public good, consistency indicates moral agency development. Reversely, when loyalty is consistently exercised in ways that produce harm to others, like exercising loyalty to Al Capone or other gangster leaders, then consistency is not a good indicator for moral agency development. Instead, the credibility of reflection is preferrable because it is centered on truth-seeking. This has two implications. Firstly, a moral agent will aim at seeking the truth by minimizing inadequate reflection [66] and self-bias during the self-reflection or self-assessment processes. Secondly, to achieve the credibility criteria, a moral agent will seek third-party feedback, particularly the feedback from a credible source, such as a moral exemplar who is a good peer, a good teacher, a good parent, and/or an expert in a particular field of interest.

Utility

Reflection about one's moral agency is most meaningful when an individual applies the 6M in everyday life and discovers the growth of moral agency in the self. While moral agency may grow in any of the 6M components, it may be most notable to a moral agent in the self-efficacy belief [4] or when a moral agent experiences positive changes in one's life. Therefore, besides the validity and reliability checks, it will be worthy for students to self-assess the utilization and impacts of the 6M exercises to their lives, with questions like the following:

- How did exercising my moral emotion (e.g., better emotional awareness and management of my emotion) affect me as a forgiver?
- How did exercising my moral cognition (e.g., being humble and open-minded) help me as a student, a son, a daughter, and/or a citizen?
- What did the learning or practice of the 6M mean to me regarding my values in life?
- How can I apply all or any of the 6M components in life to improve my learning in school, my life skills, my future career, and/or my relationship with others [71]?
- What can I learn from the 6M lessons and reflection activities? As a moral agent, what has been my strength? Which of the 6M is my weakest link that needs improvement?

Intentional Teacher's Roles in Assessment

An intentional teacher may promote moral agency development and the virtue of forgiveness via the assessment strategies as follows:

i. Encouraging students to self-assess their reflection like a research scientist, a philosopher, a historian, a detective, or other personnel charged with finding the evidence for the truth.

ii. Creating a rubric as a student's guide for assessment. This will help students acquire higher learning strategies with better performance and accuracy [72,73]. See Table 3 for a sample rubric. An intentional teacher may want to modify it with relevant examples to support students' learning and developmental needs.

iii. Assigning a task for students to track their own assessments across time, with or without a survey instrument, so that students can observe and assess their changes and development across time for outcome variables such as self-efficacy [74,75], moral agency [1], good citizenship [1], or forgiveness [76]. This will help students acquire self-monitoring and self-regulating skills.

iv. Helping students set up peer-assessment. Peer-assessment is beneficial because it facilitates co-regulated learning in class, which promotes learning and development [65,72,77] and academic performance [78].

v.   Providing informal formative assessments and feedback [79]. While interacting with students, an intentional teacher can gauge students' desire of mastering or avoiding challenges, their sense of self-efficacy [58], and other 6M applications in or after class and provide timely feedback to assist students' learning in class along with moral agency development.

vi. Helping students appreciate "negative" formative assessments. This will help students identify their own unique learning needs for their well-being.

vii. Giving students sufficient time to grow and change [80].

Table 3. A Sample Rubric for Assessing the 6M reflection.

Assessment	Criteria	Excellent	Better	A Good Start	Deficient
validity check	Accurate reflection	high accuracy with matching evidence (e.g., between what one says and does, or between subjective and objective evidence)	accurate and true, substantiated by strong, subjective or objective evidence	authentic/accurate (subjective truth)	inaccurate or unauthentic
validity check	Thorough reflection (qualitiatvely and quantitatively)	e.g., complete, indepth reflection for every component of the 6M	e.g., in-depth reflection for two or more of the 6M	e.g., quality reflection for at least one of the 6M	none related to the 6M; superficial reflection
reliability check	Credible reflection (e.g., self-bias check)	check with two parties or more	check with one other person/peers or teachers or parents	check with the self again	no checking
utility check	Applicability of 6M reflection in my life	appy the 6M in every aspect of one's life (e.g., as a good learner/citizen/ leader/child/spouse/ parent, etc.)	apply two or more 6M components in one's role in life	apply one of the 6M in one's role in life (e.g., as a student, child, parent, teacher, etc.)	Not applied to life
utility check	Growth in moral agency (impacts of 6M reflection, short term & long term)	Positive changes in various 6M components that lead to substantive growth (e.g., increases in self-efficacy, commitment to moral goal, increase in humility and open-mindedness, inclusiveness, balanced, calm, etc.)	Positive change in at least one aspect of the 6M	identify one's strength or weakness in the 6M	none related to 6M development

8.3.4. Other Comments About IRA Strategies

An intentional teacher should be aware that the IRA strategies are intended to be motivational rather than punitive. Therefore, assessment should not be about grading nor ranking student performance; thus, a summative assessment is not necessary. Instead, a low-stakes formative assessment may serve better to support the goal of living and being the best self as a moral agent. Better yet, creating a bonus scheme [81,82] to motivate students to perform the 6M exercises, reflection, and assessment activities, along with the forgiveness exercises may prove beneficial.

8.4. Opportunities and Challenges in Cultivating Moral Agency

An intentional teacher can create many opportunities to introduce the conceptions of moral agency and its 6M components throughout the forgiveness education program. When students perform the reflection activity, they increase their self-awareness, which can lead to an increase in their emotional self-regulation and self-esteem [83]. Furthermore, when they experience positive changes after the reflection and assessment activities, they

can acquire self-efficacy. This facilitates self-regulation, which is essential for the cultivation of moral agency [3]. Together with the goal of living and being the best self and the motivation and support of social models, students' moral agency can be strengthened along with their forgiveness muscles over time. Hence, the pathway for becoming a mature moral agent and a mature forgiver is possible through the weaving of the 6M strategies into the forgiveness program.

However, the road to being the best self as a moral agent may be bumpy at times. Teachers may watch out for the unintended negative effects of self-learning and self-regulation, which may manifest in burnout, anxiety, and stress [84], as well as an avoidance of self-regulation [72]. To prevent or to remedy these unintended effects, teachers should caution and acknowledge the possible rise of challenge or frustration as a part of the normal process for self-improvement. Moreover, it would help to remind students that social comparison is irrelevant and unworthy because every human being has unique strengths and weaknesses, with different needs for self-improvement. In addition, as teachers help students understand the importance of identifying their weaknesses for self-learning and development, teachers can also help students develop their self-efficacy beliefs by appreciating and adapting from their strengths while encouraging students to turn a "crisis" into a learning opportunity by practicing balancing skills with the forgiveness and 6M muscles together.

Alternately, the other extreme response to watch out for is moral self-licensing. According to Merritt er al. [85], p.344, moral self-licensing refers to those who "act in morally dubious ways without fear of feeling heartless, selfish, or bigoted" because of a moral credential (such as a person's reputation of being non-prejudiced). Merritt et al. believe that a moral credential can be established from previous good deeds, group membership, or by what others have done to them (e.g., a victim). Moral self-licensing is a form of self-biases, which is associated with moral disengagement. A true moral self will resist moral licensing by being humble with a genuine interest in truth-seeking across time, people, and situations. To counter moral self-licensing, an intentional teacher should demonstrate and encourage humility and authenticity as students practice the 6M muscles in the IRA process.

9. Key Takeaway

Based on a review of research and the literature about the psychological processes of forgiveness and moral agency, this article has uncovered their mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship and their common roots in a moral self. Ontologically speaking, their relationship reflects how the human and moral psyches operate together holistically, not just at the mind level but as an integrated whole person. This underscores the importance of holistic education.

Forgiveness education is more than the teaching of forgiveness. Besides forgiveness, it teaches agape, justice, courage, balance, and other virtues that are important for character development. For the educational goal of being and living from the best self, the forgiveness muscle-building exercises also require exercising various 6M moral agency components. Hence, forgiveness education promotes moral agency development as well. In return, moral agency promotes the growth of the forgiveness virtue. Furthermore, as virtues help people achieve their highest potential [86] and moral agency fosters good citizenship [1], forgiveness education is a unique kind of character and moral education that contributes well to the well-being of students and society at large.

Cultivating moral agency is fundamental to forgiveness education. As Ryan and Lickona [14] have noted, "moral education or character education (e.g., forgiveness education) must build on a comprehensive, integrative view of the moral agent (p.14)" involving knowing, affect, and action. While this tripartite concept may manifest in various versions [15,16], its concept is generally accepted for promoting moral development in moral or character education [86]. Also, it is more comprehensive than Kohlberg's moral cognitive development approach in the just community model and Nodding's caring education model. However, the prima facie evidence of the tripartite moral agency's impact is weak

for its minimal effect in the meta-analyses of character education [87] and for the meager evidence of moral development from only about 25% of the 33 scientifically approved character education programs in the What Works in Character Education 2005 report [6]. Since the intrinsic motivation for character education is driven mainly from the "affective/motivational" component according to Althof and Berkowitz [88] (p. 567), this may explain the weakness and insufficiency of the tripartite components as an endogenous developmental factor.

In contrast, the 6M moral agency concept is embedded with additional motivational power from moral goals, moral autonomous will, and self-efficacy beliefs that energize and direct the moral self from within (see [71]). As such, the 6M empowers a moral agent with better motivation, tenacity, and resilience to deal with tough situations, as well as better resistance against moral disengagement that may arise from a limited moral cognitive ability. Since the empirical evidence for the influence of 6M moral agency in good citizenship is robust and consistent regardless of the changing conditions [1], teachers who incorporate the 6M components into forgiveness education are expected to be more effective in invigorating students' intrinsic motivation to realize their full potential as a moral agent and as a forgiver. With that said, teachers can start with one and not all of the 6M components, so long as it is useful and inspiring to students' learning and application of the 6M in their lives.

Blending the 6M concepts into forgiveness education seamlessly is critical to maximize its educational impacts. To achieve this purpose effectively, teachers can adopt the GMIRA strategic method to promote self-regulated learning. This involves setting the learning goal of living and being the best self, encouraging the modeling of moral agency exemplars, and inviting students to apply one or more of the 6M muscles and the forgiveness muscles together, along with reflection and assessment to help students self-regulate their own learning and moral selves.

Applying the 6M with the GMIRA strategic method is advantageous from pedagogical perspectives. Firstly, the GMIRA strategic method is easily adaptable to any existing subject matter. No new educational intervention is needed. Secondly, the GMIRA is centered on students' interest; therefore, it can be creatively applied to meet students' individual needs for development and learning. Thirdly, reflection and assessment about the 6M application in life promote self-monitoring skills and the learning of one's moral self. This process helps to arouse intrinsic motivation to learn and apply well as a moral agent and as a forgiver. Fourthly, self-reflection and self-assessment are crucial for self-regulated learning that is instrumental for academic achievement according to the meta-analysis of Ergen and Kanadli [5]. Moreover, as Slavin [51] has noted, when students' self-efficacy improves (for the growth of moral agency), teachers' self-efficacy grows, which helps to promote teaching effectiveness and outcomes.

Contribution and Outlook

This article has filled in the gaps in the literature regarding the relationship between moral agency and forgiveness, why the cultivation of moral agency is important for forgiveness education, and how to cultivate moral agency seamlessly using the GMIRA strategic method. Presumably, the GMIRA strategic method will help cultivate mature forgivers, moral agents, and good students who will be good citizens for tomorrow. These promising results will be realized only when teachers have the will and creativity to integrate the 6M and GMIRA into the forgiveness education program to meet students' needs for learning. The 6M reflection frame (Table 2) and a sample rubric (Table 3) were created to facilitate teachers' roles in planning for the reflection and the assessment of 6M self-regulating exercises.

It will be up to educators and policy makers to turn the proposed strategies and tools into practice. Given the lack of research about moral agency development in forgiveness education, research will be necessary to affirm the promises of the GMIRA application in forgiveness education. It may be prudent for researchers to first examine the relationship

between moral agency and forgiveness education using the moral agency scale [1] and the EFI-30 forgiveness scale [76]. Also, researchers may examine the impacts of the IRA strategies in forgiveness education on the development of moral agency and the forgiveness virtue and then compare the results with the GMIRA strategies in forgiveness education. This is a new arena for research in forgiveness education and moral agency development, which may pave the way for other types of education to follow.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created in this study.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

1. Wong, L.Y. Exploring Two Possible Causes of Good Citizenship Development: Moral Agency and Social Network Diversity (Order No. 29392341). Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI, USA, 2022.
2. Pasupathi, M.; Wainryb, C. Developing moral agency through narrative. *Hum. Dev.* **2010**, *53*, 55–80. [CrossRef]
3. Bandura, A. Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspect. Psychol. Sci.* **2006**, *1*, 164–180. [CrossRef]
4. Bandura, A. Toward a psychology of human agency: Pathways and reflections. *Perspect. Psychol. Sci.* **2018**, *13*, 130–136. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
5. Ergen, B.; Kanadlı, S. The Effect of Self-Regulated Learning Strategies on Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis Study. *Eurasian J. Educ. Res.* **2017**, *17*, 55–74. [CrossRef]
6. Berkowitz, M.W.; Bier, M.C. *What Works in Character Education: A Research-Driven Guide for Education*; Character Education Partnership: Washington, DC, USA, 2005; Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marvin-Berkowitz-2/publication/251977043_What_Works_In_Character_Education/links/53fb5ea60cf22f21c2f31c28/What-Works-In-Character-Education.pdf (accessed on 24 April 2024).
7. Enright, R.D.; Fitzgibbons, R.P. The Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy. In *Helping Clients Forgive: An Empirical Guide for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope*; APA: Washington, DC, USA, 2000; Chapter 5; pp. 65–88. [CrossRef]
8. Ho, M.Y.; Fung, H.H. A dynamic process model of forgiveness: A cross-cultural perspective. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* **2011**, *15*, 77–84. [CrossRef]
9. Hitlin, S.; Elder, G.H. Time, Self, and the Curiously Abstract Concept of Agency. *Sociol. Theory* **2007**, *25*, 170–191. [CrossRef]
10. Bandura, A. Selective moral disengagement in the exercise of moral agency. *J. Moral Educ.* **2002**, *31*, 101–119. [CrossRef]
11. Peter, E.; Liaschenko, J. Perils of proximity: A spatiotemporal analysis of moral distress and moral ambiguity. *Nurs. Inq.* **2004**, *11*, 218–225. [CrossRef]
12. Black, J.E. An introduction to the moral agency scale: Individual differences in moral agency and their relationship to related moral constructs, free will, and blame attribution. *Soc. Psychol.* **2016**, *47*, 295–310. [CrossRef]
13. Haidt, J. *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*; Basic Books: New York, NY, USA, 2006.
14. Ryan, K.; Lickona, T. Character Development: The Challenge and the Model. In *Character Development in Schools and Beyond*, 2nd ed.; Ryan, K., Lickona, T., Eds.; The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy: Washington, DC, USA, 1992.
15. Berkowitz, M.W. The Science of Character Education. In *Bringing in a New Era in Character Education*; Routledge: London, UK, 2002; Volume 508, pp. 43–63.
16. Narvaez, D. Integrative Ethical Education. In *Handbook of Moral Development*; Killen, M., Smetana, J., Eds.; Erlbaum: Mahwah, NJ, USA, 2006; pp. 703–733.
17. Onal, A.; Yalcın, İ. Forgiveness of Others and Self-Forgiveness: The Predictive Role of Cognitive Distortions, Empathy, and Rumination. *Eurasian J. Educ. Res.* **2017**, *17*, 97–120.
18. Konstam, V.; Holmes, W.; Levine, B. Empathy, Selfism, and Coping as Elements of the Psychology of Forgiveness: A Preliminary Study. *Couns. Values* **2003**, *47*, 172–183. [CrossRef]
19. Enright, R.D. *8 Keys to Forgiveness*; W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.: New York, NY, USA, 2015.
20. North, J. Wrongdoing and forgiveness. *Philosophy* **1987**, *62*, 499–508. [CrossRef]
21. Fitzgibbons, R. Anger and the Healing Power of Forgiveness: A Psychiatrist's View. In *Exploring Forgiveness*; Enright, R.D., North, J., Eds.; University of Wisconsin Press: Madison, WI, USA, 1998; pp. 63–74.
22. Reed, G.L.; Enright, R.D. The effects of forgiveness therapy on depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress for women after spousal emotional abuse. *J. Coach. Clin. Psychol.* **2006**, *74*, 920–929. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
23. Enright, R.D.; Enright, J.A.K.; Holter, A.C.; Baskin, T.; Knutson, C. Waging peace through forgiveness in Belfast, Northern Ireland II: Educational programs for mental health improvement of children. *J. Res. Educ.* **2007**, *17*, 63–78.
24. Gambaro, M.E.; Enright, R.D.; Baskin, T.W.; Klatt, J. Can school-based forgiveness counseling improve conduct and academic achievement in academically at-risk adolescents? *J. Res. Educ.* **2008**, *18*, 16–27.
25. Rapp, H.; Wang Xu, J.; Enright, R.D. A meta-analysis of forgiveness education interventions' effects on forgiveness and anger in children and adolescents. *Child Dev.* **2022**, *93*, 1249–1269. [CrossRef]

26. Amiri, F.; Moslemifar, M.; Showani, E.; Panahi, A. Effectiveness of forgiveness therapy in the treatment of symptoms of depression, anxiety, and anger among female students with love Trauma Syndrome. *J. Adv. Pharmacy Edu. Res.* **2020**, *10*, 99.

27. Enright, R.D. *Forgiveness is a Choice: A Step-by-Step Process for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope*; APA: Washington, DC, USA, 2001.

28. Freedman, S.; Enright, R. A Review of the Empirical Research Using Enright's Process Model of Interpersonal Forgiveness. In *Handbook of Forgiveness*, 2nd ed.; Worthington, E.L., Jr., Wade, N.G., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2019; pp. 266–276. [CrossRef]

29. Kim, J.J.; Enright, R.D. Forgiveness Education from an Aristotelian Realist Perspective: Can We Determine a Good Forgiveness Education Program? *Educ. Sci.* **2024**, *14*, 155. [CrossRef]

30. Freedman, S.; Chang, W.R. An analysis of a sample of the general population's understanding of forgiveness: Implications for mental health counselors. *J. Ment. Health Couns.* **2010**, *32*, 5–34. [CrossRef]

31. Enright, R.D.; Rhody, M.; Litts, B.; Klatt, J.S. Piloting forgiveness education in a divided community: Comparing electronic pen-pal and journaling activities across two groups of youth. *J. Moral Educ.* **2014**, *43*, 1–17. [CrossRef]

32. Xu, J.W. *Implementation of Forgiveness Education to Increase Agape Love in Three Culturally Distinct Areas. Belfast, Northern Ireland, Israel, and Taiwan*; The University of Wisconsin-Madison: Madison, WI, USA, 2023.

33. Gross, J.J. Emotional Regulation with James J. Gross, PhD., APA. 2022. Available online: https://youtu.be/Yd6hR1qCfSM (accessed on 5 September 2024).

34. Freedman, S. Forgiveness as an educational goal with at-risk adolescents. *J. Moral Educ.* **2018**, *47*, 415–431. [CrossRef]

35. Worthington, E.L., Jr.; Cairo, A.H.; Chen, Z.J.; Hicks, C.L. Changes after an educational intervention to teach about and promote forgiveness among seminarians and practicing clergy. *J. Psychol. Theol.* **2021**, *49*, 93–111. [CrossRef]

36. Enright, R.D. The 3 Paradoxes of Forgiveness That Confuse Many People. Psychology Today, 4 January 2023. Available online: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-forgiving-life/202301/the-3-paradoxes-of-forgiveness-that-can-confuse-many-people (accessed on 26 November 2024).

37. Yu, L.; Gambaro, M.; Song, J.Y.; Teslik, M.; Song, M.; Komoski, M.C.; Wollner, B.; Enright, R.D. Forgiveness therapy in a maximum-security correctional institution: A randomized clinical trial. *Clin. Psychol. Psychother.* **2021**, *28*, 1457–1471. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

38. Subkoviak, M.J.; Enright, R.D.; Wu, C.; Gassin, E.A.; Freedman, S.; Olson, L.M.; Sarinooulos, I. Measuring interpersonal forgiveness in late adolescence and middle adulthood. *J. Adolesc.* **1995**, *18*, 641–655. [CrossRef]

39. Waltman, M.A.; Russell, D.C.; Coyle, C.T.; Enright, R.D.; Holter, A.C.; Swoboda, C. The effects of forgiveness intervention on patients with coronary artery disease. *Psychol. Health* **2009**, *24*, 11–27. [CrossRef]

40. Maltby, J.; Day, L.; Barber, L. Forgiveness and happiness. the differing contexts of forgiveness using the distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic happiness. *J. Happiness Stud.* **2005**, *6*, 1–13. [CrossRef]

41. Sandage, S.J.; Crabtree, S.A.; Bell, C.A. Forgiveness and Culture: Conceptual Issues. In *Handbook of Forgiveness*, 2nd ed.; Worthington, E.L., Jr., Wade, N.G., Eds.; Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group: London, UK, 2020; pp. 201–211. [CrossRef]

42. Ho, M.Y.; Worthington, E.L. Is the concept of forgiveness universal? A cross-cultural perspective comparing western and eastern cultures. *Curr. Psychol.* **2020**, *39*, 1749–1756. [CrossRef]

43. Freedman, S.; Chen, E.Y.J. Forgiveness education as a form of peace education with fifth-grade students: A pilot study with implications for educators. *Peace Confl. J. Peace Psychol.* **2023**, *29*, 235–246. [CrossRef]

44. Taysi, E.; Vural, D. Forgiveness education for fourth grade students in Turkey. *Child Indic. Res.* **2016**, *9*, 1095–1115. [CrossRef]

45. Knutson, J.A.; Enright, R.D. *Be Your Best Self: A Guided Curriculum for Children Ages 11–13 (Grade 6 in the US, Year 8 in the UK)*; International Forgiveness Institute: Madison, WI, USA, 2023.

46. Knutson, J.A.; Enright, R.D. *Be Your Best Self: Giving and Receiving Forgiveness. A Guided Curriculum for Children Ages 11–14 (Grade 7 in the US, Year 9 in the UK)*; International Forgiveness Institute: Madison, WI, USA, 2023.

47. Gunay, I.; Actual Self Versus Best Self. Positive Psychology News. Available online: https://positivepsychologynews.com/news/irem-gunay/2013042725817 (accessed on 27 April 2013).

48. Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd ed.; Hackett Publishing: Indianapolis, IN, USA, 1999.

49. Tirrell, J.M.; Kelly, E.I.; Gasana, J.G.; Dowling, E.M.; Dennis, J.; Malvese, K.; Rollman, E.; Namurinda, E.; Lerner, R.M.; Sim, A.T.R. 'That is when justice becomes complete' Exemplars' perspectives on forgiveness as a civic virtue in post-genocide Rwanda. *J. Moral Educ.* **2023**, *52*, 67–82. [CrossRef]

50. Bell, C.; Woodruff, E.; Davis, D.E.; Van Tongeren, D.R.; Hook, J.N.; Worthington, E.L. Community Sanctification of Forgiveness. *J. Psychol. Theol.* **2014**, *42*, 243–251. [CrossRef]

51. Slavin, R.E. *Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice*, 8th ed.; Pearson Education Inc.: London, UK, 2006.

52. Yousafzai, M. Malala's Story [Audio]. Available online: https://malala.org/malalas-story/ (accessed on 5 September 2024).

53. BBC. Richard Moore: Soldier Who Blinded Schoolboy Says 'Sorry'. Available online: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-foyle-west-53985472 (accessed on 1 September 2020).

54. van de Ven, N.; Archer, A.T.M.; Engelen, B. More important and surprising actions of a moral exemplar trigger stronger admiration and inspiration. *J. Soc. Psychol.* **2018**, *159*, 383–397. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

55. Engelen, B.; Thomas, A.; Archer, A.; Van de Ven, N. Exemplars and nudges: Combining two strategies for moral education. *J. Moral Educ.* **2018**, *47*, 346–365. [CrossRef]

56. Bandura, A. Social Cognitive Theory of Moral Thought and Action. In *Handbook of Moral Behavior and Development*; Kurtines, W.M., Gewitz, J.L., Eds.; Erlbaum: Hillsdale, NJ, USA, 1991; Volume 1, pp. 45–103.

57. Bandura, A. *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*; Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ, USA, 1986; pp. 23–28.

58. Bandura, A. Self-Efficacy. In *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*; Ramachaudran, V.S., Ed.; Academic Press: New York, NY, USA, 1994; Volume 4, pp. 71–81, Reprinted in *Encyclopedia of Mental Health*; Friedman, H., Ed.; Academic Press: San Diego, CA, USA, 1998; Available online: https://www.academia.edu/32386167/Bandura_self_efficacy (accessed on 19 June 2024).

59. Bandura, A. Social Cognitive Theory of Social Referencing. In *Social Referencing and the Social Construction of Reality in Infancy*; Feinman, S., Ed.; Plenum Press: New York, NY, USA, 1992; Chapter 8; pp. 175–208.

60. Lyons, K.E.; Zelazo, P.D. Monitoring, metacognition, and executive function: Elucidating the role of self-reflection in the development of self-regulation. *Adv. Child Dev. Behav.* **2011**, *40*, 379–412. [PubMed]

61. Chung, H.Q.; Chen, V.; Olson, C.B. The impact of self-assessment, planning and goal setting, and reflection before and after revision on student self-efficacy and writing performance. *Read. Writ.* **2021**, *34*, 1885–1913. [CrossRef]

62. Panadero, E. A Review of Self-regulated Learning: Six Models and Four Directions for Research. *Front. Psychol.* **2017**, *8*, 422. [CrossRef]

63. Puustinen, M.; Pulkkinen, L. Models of Self-regulated Learning: A review. *Scand. J. Educ. Res.* **2001**, *45*, 269–286. [CrossRef]

64. Efklides, A. Interactions of Metacognition with Motivation and Affect in Self-Regulated Learning: The MASRL Model. *Educ. Psychol.* **2011**, *46*, 6–25. [CrossRef]

65. Bourner, T. Assessing reflective learning. *Educ.+Train.* **2003**, *45*, 267–272. [CrossRef]

66. Koole, S.; Dornan, T.; Aper, L.; Scherpbier, A.; Valcke, M.; Cohen-Schotanus, J.; Derese, A. Factors confounding the assessment of reflection: A critical review. *BMC Med. Educ.* **2011**, *11*, 104. [CrossRef]

67. Wylie, C.; Lyon, C. Using the Formative Assessment Rubrics, Reflection and Observation Tools to Support Professional Reflection on Practice (Revised). In *Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST)*; Pearson: London, UK, 2016.

68. Wiliam, D.; Thompson, M. Integrating Assessment with Instruction: What will it Take to Make it Work? In *The Future of Assessment: Shaping Teaching and Learning*; Dwyer, C.A., Ed.; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: Mahwah, NJ, USA, 2008; pp. 53–82.

69. Agresti, A.; Finlay, B. *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences*, 4th ed.; Prentice Hall, Pearson Education International: London, UK, 2009.

70. Whittemore, R.; Chase, S.; Mandle, C.L. Validity in qualitative research. *Qual. Health Res.* **2001**, *11*, 522–537. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

71. Reeve, J. *Motivating Others—Nurturing Inner Motivational Resources*; Allyn & Bacon: Boston, MA, USA, 1996.

72. Panadero, E.; Romero, M. To rubric or not to rubric? The effects of self-assessment on self-regulation, performance and self-efficacy. Assessment in Education: Principles. *Policy Pract.* **2014**, *21*, 133–148. [CrossRef]

73. Andrade, H.L.; Du, Y.; Mycek, K. Rubric-referenced self-assessment and middle school students' writing. Assessment in Education: Principles. *Policy Pract.* **2010**, *17*, 199–214. [CrossRef]

74. Panc, T.; Mihalcea, A.; Panc, I. Self-Efficacy Survey: A new assessment tool. *Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2012**, *33*, 880–884. [CrossRef]

75. Riople, L. Measuring Self-Efficacy with Scales and Questionnaires. Available online: https://positivepsychology.com/self-efficacy-scales/#assessment-tools (accessed on 21 May 2019).

76. Enright, R.; Rique Neto, J.; Melo, R.; Song, J.; Komoski, M.C.; Batool, I.; Bolt, D.; Sung, H.; Huang, S.-T.; Park, Y.; et al. Validating the Enright Forgiveness Inventory–30 (EFI-30). *Eur. J. Psychol. Assess.* **2021**, *38*, 1–11. [CrossRef]

77. Yan, Z.; Carless, D. Self-assessment is about more than self: The enabling role of feedback literacy. *Assess. Eval. High. Educ.* **2022**, *47*, 1116–1128. [CrossRef]

78. Double, K.S.; McGrane, J.A.; Hopfenbeck, T.N. The impact of peer assessment on academic performance: A meta-analysis of control group studies. *Educ. Psychol. Rev.* **2020**, *32*, 481–509. [CrossRef]

79. Ruiz-Primo, M.A. Informal formative assessment: The role of instructional dialogues in assessing students' learning. *Stud. Educ. Eval.* **2011**, *37*, 15–24. [CrossRef]

80. Andrade, H.; Valtcheva, A. Promoting Learning and Achievement Through Self-Assessment. *Theory Pract.* **2009**, *48*, 12–19. [CrossRef]

81. Moll, J.; Gao, S. Awarding Bonus Points as a Motivator for Increased Engagement in Course Activities in a Theoretical System Development Course [Abstract]. In Proceedings of the IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference, Uppsala, Sweden, 8–11 October 2022; pp. 1–8.

82. Auerbach, S.I. The Effects of Bonus Reinforcement in the Good Behavior Game. Master's Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA, 1978.

83. Mertens, E.C.; Deković, M.; Van Londen, M.; Reitz, E. Parallel changes in positive youth development and self-awareness: The role of emotional self-regulation, self-esteem, and self-reflection. *Prev. Sci.* **2022**, *23*, 502–512. [CrossRef]

84. Baumester, R.F.; Vohs, K.D. Strength model of self-regulation as limited resource: Assessment, controversies, update. *Adv. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* **2016**, *54*, 67–127. [CrossRef]

85. Merritt, A.C.; Effron, D.A.; Monin, B. Moral Self-Licensing: When Being Good Frees Us to Be Bad. *Soc. Pers. Psychol. Compass* **2010**, *4*, 344–357. [CrossRef]

86. Peterson, C.; Seligman, M.E.P. *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2004.

87. Johnson, K.; Brown, M.; McGrath, R.E.; Berkowitz, M.W.; Bier, M. A Meta-Analysis of the What Works in Character Education Research. *J. Character Educ.* **2022**, *18*, 87–112.
88. Althof, W.; Berkowitz, M.W. Character and Civic Education as a Source of Moral Motivation. In *Handbook of Moral Motivation*; Brill: Leiden, The Netherlands, 2013; pp. 567–583.