

**Forgiveness Education:
International Perspective for Children and Youth**

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“If real peace is ever to be achieved in the world, then we must begin with the children.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

Abstract

Forgiveness education is one of the best ways to teach children and youth to internalize humane values such as the inherent worth of all people, kindness, respect, generosity, and beneficence and to thereby help them live as a forgiving person in the world. To date, the effectiveness of forgiveness education has been tested and empirically validated worldwide in studies conducted with samples of youth. In these studies, youths who had received forgiveness education showed enhanced psychological well-being, as well as decreased levels of maladaptive functioning and behavioral problems. For expanding the horizons of forgiveness education, future research and practice should be directed toward curriculum development, especially in relationship to school instruction and teacher education.

What Is Forgiveness?

Forgiveness as understood within psychology is a moral virtue in which people are

good to those who are not good to them. Forgiveness includes a person's internal, psychological response to another person's injustice and behavioral response to that person. The one who forgives reduces resentment and offers beneficence to an offender, without condoning, excusing, or forgetting the offense. However, a person who forgives may or may not reconcile with the offender, depending on the trustworthiness of that offender (Enright & Fitzgibbons 2000, 2015). Forgiveness education often is based on the Forgiveness Process Model, which describes what people do cognitively, behaviorally and emotionally as they move through the forgiveness process (Enright & Fitzgibbons 2000, 2015). The model has 20 individual guideposts distributed over four phases. In the first phase, the uncovering phase, the injured person becomes aware of his or her anger and responses. In the second phase, the decision phase, the injured person examines options for responding to the transgressor and chooses to work toward forgiveness. In the third phase, the work phase, the injured person reframes his or her perception of the offender and cultivates empathy and compassion for the same. In the fourth phase, discovery and release from emotional prison, the injured person sees that he or she is not alone. He or she finds meaning in the injury experienced and finds a new purpose in life.

The aim of forgiveness interventions in general (forgiveness therapy with adults and forgiveness education with children and adolescents) is to help the injured person think about the offender in broader ways than just in terms of the offense (reframing). It also aims to cultivate the injured person's empathy and compassion toward the offender, while still protecting him or herself when necessary. One of the key social-cognitive processes in the forgiveness education is *unconditionality*, which is based on Piaget's concept of conservation (Enright & the Human Development Study Group 1994). *Unconditionality* is the understanding that all people are equal, regardless of personal characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic status, athletic ability). Learning the concept of cognitive unconditionality involves seeing beyond surface features and through the person him or herself. Everyone has an essence of personhood and thus should be treated as ends and not merely as means to such. If students can learn about unconditionality, they may understand that those that they consider as ene-

mies have inherent worth and are therefore worthy of respect. The forgiveness program is aimed at understanding *inherent worth*, which is the insight that all people are unconditionally valuable. Teaching about forgiveness involves acting on this social-cognitive understanding and the moral principle of inherent worth that develops from it.

Forgiveness Education

Forgiveness education, in contrast to forgiveness therapy with adults, is usually taught in the form of stories. Through a story, students are challenged to see beyond surface features, such as a person's rudeness or aggression, to see the worth of the person that lies underneath. As students gain cognitive abilities to see the inherent worth of story characters, they begin to see such worth in their perpetrator and even in themselves. This can be generalized for all people and we see improved attitudes across a wide spectrum of significant people in the students' lives.

Forgiveness education is delivered in a typical pattern. First, the teacher introduces certain concepts that underlie forgiveness (the inherent worth of all people, kindness, respect, generosity, and beneficence), without explicitly mentioning the word "forgiveness." Second, the teacher tells the students stories in which the characters display instances of forgiveness through inherent worth, kindness, respect, generosity, and beneficence toward someone who acted unfairly. Third, the teacher helps the students apply the five principles (inherent worth, kindness, respect, generosity, and beneficence) to forgive a person who has hurt them, if the students so desire. Throughout the implementation of this program, teachers make the important distinction between learning about forgiveness and choosing to practice it in certain contexts. The teachers take great care in conveying to students the idea that exercising forgiveness is not mandatory but completely optional.

There are at least eight implications regarding forgiveness education as follows (see Mag-

nuson, et al. 2009):

1. Conflict within people often is what starts conflict between people. Deep resentment by one person can wound other people.
2. When a second person is affected by the first person's resentments, then this can lead to a third and fourth person developing resentment and then passing it on to others.
3. The inner world of the human heart, when resentment remains, can infect an entire community.
4. Forgiveness is not a substitute for justice, but instead can work alongside the quest for justice.
5. Forgiveness, practiced over years in schools and families should be able to reduce the resentments.
6. To be effective, forgiveness programs must have a clear definition of what forgiveness is.
7. To be effective, the forgiveness programs should be implemented over years so that children can learn deeply about forgiveness when they experience conflict.
8. Forgiveness education needs to pervade a social group to be effective in transforming communities. In other words, it is best when forgiveness becomes part of the community and practiced over a period of years.

An Example of a Forgiveness Education Lesson

As one example of a forgiveness education lesson used in the United States and in Belfast, Northern Ireland, consider the first lesson of the first grade (Primary 3 in Belfast)

forgiveness curriculum, *The Adventure of Forgiveness* (Enright & Knutson 2010), which encompasses 17 lessons. The Grade 1 curriculum guide does not start out right away with ideas on forgiveness in particular. Instead, a foundation is first put into place that includes thinking about the inherent worth of all persons (Lesson 1) and then about certain qualities that are part of forgiveness, such as kindness, respect, generosity, and love. Only later in the curriculum are these themes folded into the moral virtue of forgiveness.

The teacher first is presented with the Main Ideas for Lesson 1, titled “A Person is a Person,” as follows:

This is the first of three lessons that will teach about the concept of inherent worth. As the students learn about inherent worth, they will be provided with an important foundation that will help them as they learn to forgive in later lessons. What does it mean to say that all people have inherent worth? It means that all people are of great value (deep worth). They are ends in-and-of the selves. The deep worth of all people is not based on appearance, possessions, behavior, position in life, place of residence, or other such external differences. These differences certainly contribute to our unique personalities and lifestyles, but they do not determine value. A focus on differences may cause us to miss the fact that all people have deep worth. How do we get inherent worth (deep worth)? It cannot be earned nor can it be taken away. All people have inherent worth (deep personal value) simply because they are people. People are not on this earth to be used, manipulated, or disrespected. We are to treat each person as he or she is—a person of deep worth. Lessons one through seven will provide a solid “forgiveness foundation” that will help the students as they learn to forgive in the later lessons.

The teacher is given both an executive summary of the story, *Horton Hears a Who* by Dr. Seuss, and a book summary to know exactly what will be covered in this 45-minute session:

- Executive Summary:

When Horton hears tiny voices on a speck of dust, he fights to protect them because

“a person is a person no matter how small.” A person has inherent worth, not because of their appearance or where they live, but because they are a human being.

- Book Summary:

As an elephant named Horton baths in a coop pool of water in the jungle, he hears a voice. He doesn't see anyone else around. The only thing he sees is a small speck of dust. Perhaps it is because of his big ears that he can hear the small voice on that small speck of dust. Because Horton cares about all people no matter how small, he worries that the dust might fall into the pool, and the small people on the dust might be hurt. So he carefully places the speck of dust on top of a clover flower. When a kangaroo with its baby in its pouch hops by Horton, they make fun of him for worrying about a speck of dust. They call him a fool. Then they intentionally make big splashes in the pool. Horton grabs the flower with the speck on it and runs through the jungle looking for a safe place to put it. News quickly spreads throughout the jungle that Horton is talking to a speck of dust. Others immediately label him as crazy. But Horton is determined to protect these tiny people. Even though others can't see or hear them, these people deserve to be treated humanely. Horton repeats that “a person is a person, no matter how small.”

A tiny voice, whom Horton discovers is the Mayor, tells Horton of his community, called Whoville, with houses and churches and stores. Then two monkeys named “the Wickersham Brothers” snatch the clover with the speck on it and give it to an eagle. That eagle flies away with the flower in its beak. Horton follows the bird through day and night, desperate to protect the tiny Whos in Whoville. Then the eagle drops the clover in a field full of clover, each flower identical to the one holding the tiny Whos. Anxious to find his friends, Horton picks the flowers, one by one. Finally after picking millions of flowers, he finds the one that holds the speck of dust with the Whos. The Whoville mayor tells Horton of the troubles they've endured. He begs Horton to continue to protect them. Then Kangaroo and her little kangaroo, along with others from the jungle again accuse Horton of being crazy, talking to

people who aren't there. Again they snatch the clover and threaten to boil it in oil. Horton beg them not to hurt the Whos, and he encourages the Whoville Mayor to get all the Whos to make noise, so the others can hear them too. But the other jungle animals still cannot hear the Whos.

They tie Horton up and beat him. Horton doesn't think of himself, he thinks of the Whos, and pleads with the Whoville Mayor to make sure everyone is making as much noise as possible. The Whos play instruments and bang on cans and kettles. Horton can hear them, but the kangaroos and the Wickersham Brothers cannot. So the Mayor runs through the town to make sure everyone of the Whos is making some kind of noise. He finally finds on smallWhonot making a sound. The Mayor grabs the smallWho and climbs up the top of a tower. He holds him in the air, and the smallWho yells, "Yopp!" This time the kangaroo hears it. The little kangaroo hears it too. Everyone hears it! They realize that Horton was telling the truth. There were small beings living on the dust speck on that flower. And the kangaroos and the other jungle creatures all vow that they too will protect the Whos – because the Whos are people, too, no matter how small.

After reading the story or summary to the children, the teacher engages the students in a discussion with the following questions as a guide:

1. What happened in today's story?
2. Throughout the story, Horton kept saying, "A person is a person, no matter how small." What do you think he meant? *A person is a person, no matter what he or she looks like, what he or she does in life, and so forth. People have deep worth because they are people.*
3. Did Horton seem to know the "Whos" before he heard them shouting out? Why do you think this?
4. Did Horton threat the "Whos" as people of deep worth? In what ways?
5. How could Horton have known that they were people of deep worth if he didn't know them? *He understood that all people have deep worth regardless of what they look like, were*

they live, what they can do, and so forth.

6. Did it seem to matter to Horton that the “Whos” were very small? How do you know?

7. If size does not matter, what else **does not matter** when deciding whether a person has deep worth?

In the coming days, the teacher has the option to add an activity to deepen the idea of inherent worth as follows:

“A Person is a Person No Matter How Small” Activity

Objective: The students will list some of the factors that make “a person a person.” They will learn that all people have deep worth. They will learn that this deep worth is not based on physical appearance, possessions, career, or other external features. They will learn that people are ends in-and-of themselves and should be treated as people of deep worth.

Instructions: The teacher will write “A person is a person no matter...” on the board. As a class, the students will make a list of the things that do not matter when thinking about a person’s deep worth. The teacher may want to classify the various answers. For example, some children may focus on a person’s possessions (money, house, and toys); some children may focus on physical features (height, weight, appearance); some children may focus on physical strength (health, athletic ability); and some children may focus on one’s role in society (firefighter, business person, janitor). If the students miss some of the categories, you may want to ask specific questions to help them gain a full understanding of the main ideas of the lesson. For example, if a person is very good looking, does she or he have deeper worth than someone who is not good looking? Why? Why not? If a person is a very healthy person, does he or she have deeper worth than someone who is sick or in a wheelchair? Why? Why not? If a person has lots of money, does he or she have deeper worth than someone who is very poor?

Why? Why not? If someone is a mayor of a city, does he or she have deeper worth than a person who cleans things? Why? Why not? If someone is a star football player, does he or she have a deeper worth than someone who cannot play the game? Why? Why not?

How Effective Is Forgiveness Education?

To examine the effectiveness of forgiveness education, several studies were conducted on children and youths with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Given that forgiveness therapy programs have improved psychological adjustment for a variety of at-risk and clinical adult populations (Baskin & Enright 2004; Greenberg, Warwar, & Malcolm 2010), we can expect similar programs to be effective in improving psychological and academic functioning and reducing difficulties and problems when applied to youth populations. To date, almost all forgiveness programs leading to expected outcomes share one of two key underlying process mechanisms: 1) a cognitive shift in the reframing process, whereby the individual sees the offender in a new light; and 2) an accompanying reduction in resentment required for improved mental health.

Pioneering Studies in Belfast, Northern Ireland and Milwaukee's Central City

Forgiveness programs for youth have been proposed as an approach to address anger in children who encounter stressful life events. In line with this perspective, Enright and his colleagues (2007) conducted a series of forgiveness education studies regarding vulnerable children residing in conflictual or risky areas. In their study 1, 309 first-grade students from Belfast, Northern Ireland and Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin completed the Beck Anger Inventory for Youth. Students in the two impoverished and violent environments had greater levels of anger than those in Madison, with the difference in the levels of anger being statistically significant. In Studies 2 and 3, using a teacher/psychologist consultation model, psychologists instructed and supported teachers who led forgiveness intervention with first grade students (N = 36 Experimental, 57 Control) and third-grade students (N = 35 E, 49 C) in Belfast. In each case, students whose classrooms were randomly chosen for forgiveness interven-

tion experienced a decrease in anger by a statistically significant degree compared to those students whose classrooms were in the control group. For the third-grade study, students in the experimental condition also experienced more drastic improvements in forgiveness and a larger decrease in psychological depression compared to their counterparts in the control group. Implications of forgiveness education regarding anger reduction in schools, especially in socially conflicted regions, were discussed.

Exposure to negative environmental conditions such as poverty and violence can have adverse effects on young children. Another series of studies (Holter et al. 2008) examined the impact of three classroom forgiveness education programs for elementary school students in Milwaukee's inner city. The forgiveness education program implemented on these students was a classroom program based on the Enright Process Model of Forgiveness (Enright, 2001), targeting anger and other related variables such as depression which often affect children in urban impoverished communities. Participants for these studies were first, third, and fifth grade students from Catholic and public charter schools. The results showed a significant decrease in anger for students in the first and fifth grade experimental group, compared to the control group. Among students in the third grade, both the experimental and control group manifested a decrease in anger. No significant differences between the groups were detected for depression.

Another Look at Forgiveness Education in Milwaukee's Central City

Enright and his colleagues (2014) implemented another forgiveness education program in Milwaukee's central city with samples of eighth grade youth from racially-segregated communities. The authors delivered a forgiveness study with three treatment conditions: two pen-pal groups and one individual journaling group. In one, pen-pal condition students from the same racial group were paired (e.g. an African American student with

another African American student). In the other, students from different racial groups were paired (e.g., an African American student with a European American student). In the journaling condition, participants worked individually. The authors evaluated the effectiveness of each intervention in promoting forgiveness and reducing prejudice, anger, and emotional reactivity. All three groups showed improvements in terms of both forgiveness and attitudes toward other groups (prejudice). However, when the researchers focused on the race of the participating students, they found that, unlike students in the European American group, students in the African American group did not experience significant improvements in psychological health or prejudice, even though the intervention increased their degree of forgiveness. Moreover, while both interracial and intra-racial pen-palling treatments exhibited therapeutic effects, it should be noted that participants in the interracial group had a significantly lower number of interactions than the participants in the intra-racial group.

A 31-Day Forgiveness Curriculum in the Midwestern United States

Freedman (2018) implemented a forgiveness program with 21 at-risk adolescents attending an alternative school located in a Midwestern city of the United States. The students all reported past histories of deep, personal and unfair hurt from another individual. The participants were randomly assigned into either the experimental (forgiveness) group or the control (personal communications class) one. The goal of forgiveness education was for the participants to forgive the person (i.e. fathers, mother, spouse, or boyfriend) who had hurt them deeply. The education was based on a curriculum used in a previous study, *Forgiveness within the Family* (Cardis, Enright, Ashleman, Lewis & Walker 1994). The researcher co-taught both classes with two teachers from the alternative school. After the program, the experimental group showed higher levels of improvement than the control group in forgiveness and positive outlook, and lowered levels of anxiety and depression. Students reported that

forgiveness education had a positive impact on their emotional well-being and helped them to understand the concept of forgiveness.

School Counselor as Forgiveness Educator

As school counselor, Gambaro administered a forgiveness program targeting adolescents showing high levels of anger (Gambaro, Enright, Baskin, & Klatt, 2008). Twelve adolescents from ages 11 to 13 were randomly assigned to a fifteen-week school-based intervention in either Forgiveness Counseling (FC) or an alternative treatment control group, using a client-centered format. Dependent variables were administered at pre-test, post-test, and 4-month follow-up. FC was more effective than the alternative treatment control group in reducing behavioral problems, promoting forgiveness, self-reliance, academic achievement, and positive attitudes toward teachers and parents. Results were similar at 4-month follow-up. Aggregate effect sizes were large for post-test and follow-up analyses. Implications of treating high anger and resentment in adolescents were discussed.

Parents as Teacher Educators in Belfast

Looking beyond the typical teacher-led, structured, and school-based forgiveness program, Magnuson and his colleagues (2009) appraised the effects of a parent-led forgiveness intervention on parents and their third-grade children (ages 8-9) in Belfast, Northern Ireland. In this study, parents in the experimental group (n=5) used a curriculum guide to teach forgiveness to their children, while, in the control group, parents (n=5) participated in art activities with their children. While the intervention did have a significant effect on the children, it did yield positive effects on the parents: the study found that, compared to those in the control group, parents who taught forgiveness to their children exhibited a significant gain in interpersonal forgiveness scores.

Forgiveness Education in Korea

In Korea, Park and her colleagues (2013) investigated an intervention designed to help female aggressive victims improve their levels of psychological and school adjustment. Adolescent aggressive victims are youth who demonstrate heightened levels of aggressive behavior and are frequently victimized by others. A program focused on the psychology of forgiveness was implemented and tested against both an alternative skillstreaming program and a no-treatment control group. Forty-eight female adolescent aggressive victims in South Korea (age 12 to 21 years) were recruited from a middle school and a juvenile correctional facility. Participants were randomly assigned to groups. Both forgiveness and skillstreaming interventions were implemented in a small-group format for 12 weeks. Participants in the forgiveness group reported significant decreases in anger, hostile attribution, aggression, and delinquency at post-test and follow-up. They also reported significant increases in empathy at post-test and follow-up and an increase in grades at post-test.

Forgiveness Education in Turkey

In Turkey, Taysi and Vural (2016) explored the effectiveness of forgiveness education for fourth-grade children (N= 74 experimental, 48 control). The forgiveness program, translated into Turkish, implemented by school teachers with only the experimental group. The teachers in the experimental group attended a forgiveness education workshop with a social psychologist. Forgiveness education is a guided curriculum, a course of team lessons to be implemented over 10 weeks. Compared to the control group, the experimental group showed a significant increase in forgiveness and hope and a decrease in anger. However, these group differences did not maintain in the 16-week follow-up, which may be attributed to the insufficient time allotted for the forgiveness program.

Forgiveness Education in Pakistan

In Pakistan, Rahman and colleagues (2018) examined the effectiveness of forgiveness education with early adolescent females who were sexually and/or physically abused. They were randomly assigned into either an experimental (forgiveness, n=4) or control (as usual by the residential facility, n=4) group. At the 1-year follow-up, the experimental group showed significantly higher levels of forgiveness and hope and a lower level of anger. Forgiveness education has also been shown to ameliorate the negative impact of serious psychological wounds in Pakistan female adolescents. As a pilot study, the result showed that forgiveness education is very promising tool for healing abused female adolescents from a different social and cultural background like Pakistan.

A Closer Look at Forgiveness Education: The Example of Greece

Since 2014, the Greek Ministry of Education has approved and supported the “Greek Forgiveness Education Program.” Over the past five years (2014-2019), it has expanded to become a nationally-implemented program: a total of 600 teachers were trained in teaching forgiveness and more than 6,000 students participated in the program. Teachers providing forgiveness education were required to participate in 20-hour training workshops, during which they familiarized themselves with the theory and practice of forgiveness and learned about the benefits of forgiveness education.

The Cultural Basis in Greece for the Forgiveness Education Curricula

The underlying Aristotelian basis of the forgiveness program, first developed in the United States, gives a firm and familiar context to the Greek teachers implementing forgiveness education. Greek students and teachers, since the 12 academic years within the school system, incorporates many scripts from classical ancient studies that describe in depth rivalry, rage, nemesis and katharsis. Greek history, also a mandatory subject starting at third grade,

presents numerous examples of heroes who performed acts of magnanimity, a basic Aristotelian virtue.

The author of the Greek curricula (Galiti & Enright, 2015, Galiti, 2017), after taking into consideration the Greek culture, either adapted to the Greek educational system some of the ideas already mentioned in the United States curricula, or created new ideas based on the unique Greek culture and practices. Some of the points to aid forgiveness that were strongly emphasized in the Greek curricula are the virtues of empathy, gratitude, and especially humility. These three ideas are interconnected. Empathy is an important element of both gratitude and humility, which arise from empathy. A humble person is "other-oriented" and is grateful for what others have done and to people by whom this person is forgiven.

From the Greek perspective, humility is one of the basic concepts that promotes a healthy act of forgiveness (Gassin, 2001). Other people deserve our forgiveness because we have been forgiven first and we are grateful for that. Who is the person then who can claim that he never has acted unfairly or unjustly? Realizing that we are all to some degree imperfect, any act of forgiveness is coming out of empathizing with the wrongdoers' weakness without condemning them. A humble person can see the vulnerability of human nature because it feels vulnerable, imperfect, and capable of mistakes and bad behavior.

From the Greek perspective, almost all difficulties we encounter in forgiving and reconciling are linked with pride. All the distress and affliction that follows upon insults, the desire for revenge and refusing to forgive, are associated with pride. Humility gives a person the ability to see beyond the bad act, beyond only behavior itself, to see deep into the heart of the person, because every human is more than his or her acts.

To forgive means to forego every self-justification. Otherwise, any act of forgiveness might be an act of superiority. We first need to let ourselves go, and then forgive. This is connected to the Aristotelian idea of "magnanimity," or what is called largeness-of-heart. For

forgiveness to develop out of love and compassion and not out of duty, self-defense, or self-justification, the above self-awareness is crucial.

First Example of Greek Forgiveness Education: High School

The high school curriculum, titled “Conflict and Coexistence,” aims not only to teach forgiveness skills but also to help students learn how to deal with violence and bullying issues in school (Galiti, 2017). The most important part of the lesson is a section that is called the “experiential exercise.” One of the suggested exercises in this section, titled the “dilemma corridor,” calls upon a student to walk through a corridor where other classmates, divided into two groups, stand on both sides. While the student is walking, the other classmates loudly verbalize the reasons why this student should forgive or not forgive based on a specific scenario of forgiveness which has been given to the class. At the end of the dilemma-corridor, the student must decide if he or she will forgive the person who hurt him or her and then explains the reason for the decision. Below is an example of a typical lesson that uses Greek myth to foster the moral virtue of forgiveness.

Summary and Activity of the “Rage of Achilles”

Many of the themes for the Forgiveness Education curricula, developed in the United States, are based on Aristotle’s moral theory as presented in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 1999). This gives the unique opportunity to the Greek curricula for adaptation of the program by offering a variety of themes based on Greek history, mythology, literature, and culture in general.

The example here, which is the first lesson in the book “Conflict and Coexistence,” addressed to high school students, refers to healthy and unhealthy anger. The story of the rage of Achilles as written in Homer’s *Iliad* is presented as incentive for reflection and discussion. This is a story that the students have already been taught in previous years and now they can approach it from a different perspective, that of forgiveness.

The story can be summarized as follows:

Greeks were attacking Troy's allies, after nine years of exhausting war. Agamemnon claimed Chryseis, the daughter of Chryses a priest of Apollo as his loot. Chryses decides to go to the Greek camp to regain his daughter but Agamemnon refuses to give her back although the other Greeks disagreed with him. Chryses then prays to Apollo, asking him to send a plague in the Greek camp, which leads to many deaths of the soldiers and their animals. The seer Calchas says that the cause of the plague is the refusal of Agamemnon, who then agrees to return Chryseis, but claims in her place a concubine of Achilles, Briseis. Achilles refuses to give her but the goddess Athena asks him to obey so that the Greeks succeed against the Trojans once again. Although he obeys, he promises that Agamemnon will regret that. He also promises that he will not fight against the Trojans, who begin to win the war. He is very upset because he lost Briseis and his pride suffered in front of all the warriors. Patroclus, his best friend, wears Achilles' armor to help the war, but gets killed by Hector. This brings more rage to Achilles, who returns to fight and kills Hector. He drags his body around the walls of Troy as revenge for the death of Patroclus. At the end, Priamus, the father of Hector, arrives crying and begging for his son's body. Achilles becomes healed from his rage and gives the body back.

Students tend to be motivated by the story "the rage of Achilles" to discuss the difference between healthy and unhealthy anger. They learn how to gain control over their anger by accepting their feelings and by bearing the pain.

Some of the questions that guide the discussion are the following:

1. Which way did Achilles choose to get rid of his rage? Did this way help him at all?
2. Was Achilles' refusal to fight a healthy way of dealing with the injustice? Why yes or why no?
3. In what ways can unhealthy anger influence the people around us?

4. How is the goddess Athena trying to help Achilles deal with the injustice? Is that forgiveness or not?
5. How can bearing the pain, instead of covering it, help us heal emotionally?
6. In what other way do you think Achilles could have confronted the injustice that happened to him?

At the end of the discussion students participate to the following experiential activity:

The class splits into four groups and each group will write a diary story:

- 1 The first group will write as being Achilles just after the fight with Agamemnon.
2. The second group will write as being Achilles after refusing to fight and staying alone.
3. The third group will write as Achilles again but overturning the facts of the story. Achilles this time will put the common good over his own and decide to show magnanimity, to forgive Agamemnon and get back to war.
4. The fourth group will write in the diary as Agamemnon, who has been forgiven by Achilles.

At the end, in the common group discussion, after listening to each other, all students will try to step inside the shoes of Achilles and discover his thoughts and feelings. They will reflect and think critically regarding how Achilles dealt with his rage and what different reactions he could have had. The positive and negative results of all sides will be discussed and evaluated.

The Second Example of Greek Forgiveness Education: Seventh Grade

This example focuses on the allegorical fable of Heracles as it is paraphrased in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 2.1.21-34. Through this story, students will understand that every person has two sides: a good and a bad one. Students are called to realize that it is their own decision which path they will follow in their life. They need to understand that for someone to be able to reveal the "good self," this person needs first to understand and then believe in the virtues and practice them. Life is full of di-

lemmas and we are all asked to decide, based on our conscience most of the times, if we choose the easy way of pleasure or the hard way of virtue.

Summary and Activity of “The Fable of Heracles”

In this allegorical story, Heracles is in front of a crossroad and needs to decide which way to follow. Two women, called Virtue (Αρετή) and Vice (Κακία), approach Heracles and ask him to choose between them. Vice is very seductive and offers an easy way of life, full of short term pleasures, while Virtue doesn't offer an easy way, away from hard work, but the life she offers has long-term rewards and will help him to become helpful to others. Heracles, after thinking for a while, decides to follow the way of Virtue. He becomes strong in body and mind.

After reading the story, the teacher discusses with the students the following questions :

1. What does it mean to reclaim your best self?
2. Do you know any people who live within their best self?
3. What are some ways in which we can live within our best self?
4. What is self-discipline? How did our hero show self-discipline?
5. Can someone have high self-esteem but be humble at the same time? How?
6. How easy is it to live within your best self?
7. How can you practice living within your best self?
8. What are the consequences of not living within your best self?
9. What does it mean to fail to live within your best self?
10. How can communities and societies change if we try to live within our best self?

Activity about choice making in a cyberbullying incident:

Three of your classmates have created a blog in which they intimidate students and teachers from your school. Many students feel offended and refuse to come to school. Your principal wants to know who these students are who post all of those intimidating comments and pic-

tures. You and your friends are the only ones who know the persons behind this. You feel very badly about all of this and you want to tell the principal, but your friends say they do not want to betray their friends and become the "informers." What will you do?

After giving the above text with the dilemma to the students, they first split into four groups and are asked to decide as a group, what they will do. The teacher then asks students to reflect on the following questions:

1. What are the consequences of your decision?
2. Does your decision respect the rights and freedom of the other students?
3. If you were the principal, what would you do?
4. If you were one of the cyberbullying victims, how would you feel? This question aids the students in focusing on forgiveness.
5. If you were a victim and you knew the offenders, would you talk to the principal? Again, this question helps students consider forgiveness and mercy.

After the discussion with all groups again, each group can change their initial decision.

The discussions of the ethical dilemmas facilitate the students' better understand of their initial decisions, assist them in comparing their responses with others, and aid in the growth of empathy, one of the Greek bases for forgiveness, toward others.

Looking Toward the Future of Forgiveness Education

Teachers are influential role models for their students. If they exhibit empathy and forgiveness in how they teach, discipline, and relate to students, then the students themselves are more likely to be empathic and forgiving (Newman-Carlson & Horne 2004). Because of this, the first step in the Forgiveness Education Program consists in educating the teachers, particularly training teachers to understand the concept of forgiveness and to practice it in their own lives.

In the future, it would be good if a way can be found to support teachers even after the teacher education phase has been completed and the implementation of the Forgiveness Program is underway. This support can take a variety of forms, ranging from additional teaching materials to online resources pertinent to forgiveness education and question and answer sessions with educators. A program manager or coordinator might be appointed to supervise the implementation of the program as a whole, assessing, surveying, and measuring program outcomes and endeavoring to find ways to enhance and modify the program.

We suggest including Forgiveness Education as a key part of the Social Emotional and Character Education curriculum for prospective teachers (teacher trainees). Since 2014, in response to severe levels of violence and student suicide in schools, the Korean government has made the completion of coursework on school violence and bullying a mandatory requirement for acquiring a teaching certificate. A number of recent studies on Forgiveness Education have demonstrated its effectiveness in alleviating bullying problems in schools (Gambaro et al. 2008; Park et al. 2013). We expect that teaching forgiveness to prospective teachers will lead to positive outcomes, providing them with the skills and competencies for preventing and intervening in school violence.

It is worth mentioning a few caveats when implementing of Forgiveness Education in schools. First of all, we recommend delivering Forgiveness Education on a school-wide level, with all students and teachers learning about the concept and practicing forgiveness at the same time. In this way, the forgiveness program would be far more likely to improve the school environment in its entirety, and educators would be more successful at creating desired social climates and atmospheres in their schools (Aluedse 2006). Second, educators should bear in mind that forgiveness may be particularly challenging to grasp for certain students, especially those who previously have undergone painful experiences. These students may require extra counseling sessions to heal from past emotional wounds before participat-

ing in the forgiveness program. Finally, we suggest that classroom teachers and school counselors form partnerships in designing and implementing their own versions of the Forgiveness Program. In most schools, roles are clearly divided between classroom teachers and counselors: classroom teachers mainly run structured curriculum-based academic programs, while school counselors run supplemental group-format counseling programs targeting deeply-hurt students. However, forgiveness programs can be integrated into regular subject classes, such as Korean language in Korea or English classes in the United States and the United Kingdom, social studies, or ethics. A recent study has experimented with implementing a forgiveness program in the context of a high school Korean History curriculum. Compared to the traditional curriculum, a curriculum that incorporated Forgiveness Education led to better academic, socio-emotional, and behavioral outcomes among students (Kim & Park 2019). Moreover, forgiveness (in conjunction with education on cognate concepts such as justice or fairness) is already a mainstay of textbooks across Grade 1-10 (<http://ncic.go.kr/mobile.index2.do>, in Korean).

In evaluating Forgiveness Education programs, educators should pay attention not only to the programs' outcomes but also to its mechanisms. Effect of forgiveness education on psychological functioning and adjustment might be mediated by improved self-image or moderated by quality of interpersonal relationships. Also, there is some cultural differences in terms of a key factor(s) to optimize the effect of forgiveness education on youth. Such hypotheses should be tested with a set of rigorous research designs and worldwide representative samples. Although researchers have come up with hypothetical models and theoretical pathways (e.g., Egan & Todorov 2009), the literature is still lacking in terms of rigorous and scientific investigations. In the future, researchers ought to verify the benefits of Forgiveness Education programs through not only multi-informant inquiries but also long-term, longitudinal studies tracking participants across the life-cycle. Furthermore, we also suggest measur-

ing the impact of forgiveness education through a variety of alternative measures such as observation, peer, teachers, and/or parents' reports as well as self-reports. Finally, it is important for educators to understand that interpersonal hurt is a pervasive and ubiquitous presence in everyday life and that the concept of forgiveness is relevant to everyone and in all social contexts, not just among students and in schools. Therefore, our ideal is that schools, families, and local communities join together in supporting and encouraging one another to practice and to learn the concept of forgiveness.

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