CLASSICAL GUIDANCE MEETS SELF-LOVE: AN INNOVATIVE INTERVENTION TO BOOST SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-IMAGE

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ABSTRACT
Self-confidence and self-image are pivotal for students' academic engagement, persistence, and psychosocial adjustment, yet scalable classroom formats that directly strengthen these self-evaluative processes remain limited in vocational high schools. This study aimed to test the effectiveness of a brief, counselor-led, self-love–based classroom guidance module in improving self-confidence and self-image among Grade-10 students. Using a quantitative pretest–posttest control group design, two intact classes (N = 34) from an Indonesian vocational school were allocated as experimental (four sessions of self-love guidance integrating acceptance, compassionate self-talk, and mastery planning) or control (guidance-as-usual). Instruments demonstrated adequate psychometrics (item–total r = .492–.636; α = .88). The experimental group showed a large gain from pretest to posttest (M = 75.12 to 86.59; SD = 7.77 to 2.67; $t(16) = –6.263$, $p < .001$), while the control group improved modestly (M = 71.88 to 73.94; $t(16) = –2.764$, $p = .014$). Between-group effects on gains were very large (Cohen's $d = 1.61$; Hedges' $g = 1.57$). We conclude that a concise, classroom-deliverable self-love module can substantively elevate students' self-confidence and self-image and reduce within-class variability, indicating convergence on adaptive coping scripts. Practically, schools can embed 10–15 minute micro-practices (reflective journaling, compassionate self-talk, if–then plans) within guidance periods without disrupting timetables. Future studies should employ larger, multi-site samples, follow-up assessments for maintenance, and mediational analyses (e.g., script internalization, self-criticism reduction) to clarify mechanisms and boundary conditions.

Keywords: Classroom Guidance; Growth Mindset; Self-Compassion; Self-Confidence; Self-Image

INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence and self-image are foundational to students' academic engagement, persistence, and psychosocial adjustment in school settings. Robust evidence links positive self-beliefs with motivation, emotion regulation, and achievement across childhood and adolescence (Bandura, 1997; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Harter, 2012; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Low self-esteem/self-image, in contrast, is associated with internalizing symptoms and poorer educational trajectories (Orth & Robins, 2014; Goodman et al., 2015; Trzesniewski et al., 2006). In the contemporary school environment—marked by heightened academic demands and social comparison—supportive developmental inputs are therefore urgent, particularly in vocational high schools where identity exploration and career decision-making coincide (OECD, 2019; Fazel et al., 2014). Within this milieu, "self-love" (often operationalized via self-acceptance and self-compassion) has emerged as a promising avenue to cultivate adaptive self-views that buffer stress and promote flourishing (Neff, 2003; Neff & Germer, 2013; Seligman, 2011).

Schools routinely encounter students who report low confidence and distorted self-images that manifest as avoidance, procrastination, and reduced help-seeking—undermining learning and peer functioning (Orth & Robins, 2014; Durlak et al., 2011). General responses have included whole-school social-emotional learning (SEL), cognitive-behavioral skills training, and school counseling services that aim to enhance coping, self-efficacy, and belonging (Durlak et al., 2011; Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Fazel et al., 2014). While these approaches improve broad competencies, schools still need cost-efficient, developmentally attuned

formats that can be delivered at classroom scale and directly target self-evaluative processes central to confidence and self-image (Marsh & Craven, 2006; Yeager & Dweck, 2012).

Two complementary strands inform a more targeted solution. First, mindset- and efficacy-oriented micro-interventions (e.g., growth-mindset, values affirmation, mastery-goal framing) can shift self-appraisals and resilience with brief, structured activities embedded in lessons (Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Dweck, 2006; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Second, compassion- and acceptance-based programs (e.g., self-compassion training, acceptance and commitment techniques) reliably increase self-warmth, reduce self-criticism, and improve well-being among adolescents (Neff, 2003; Neff & Germer, 2013; Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017). Within guidance and counseling practice, classical (whole-class) delivery using role-play, sociodrama, and reflective journaling has shown promise for social-emotional skill rehearsal, perspective taking, and identity work, thereby strengthening students' self-views (Kipper & Ritchie, 2003; Blatner, 2000; Sink et al., 2008; Carey & Dimmitt, 2012). Together, these literatures suggest that a brief, counselor-led, classroom-based module that integrates self-love principles with experiential techniques (role-play/sociodrama) could feasibly enhance self-confidence and self-image at scale.

Despite strong theory and encouraging trials, three gaps remain. First, many SEL and counseling programs report global well-being gains but seldom isolate effects on self-confidence and self-image as primary outcomes—limiting construct-specific inferences (Durlak et al., 2011; Marsh & Craven, 2006). Second, compassion-based school interventions are growing, yet evidence in vocational high-school contexts in non-WEIRD settings remains sparse, with limited classroom-delivered formats led by school counselors (Neff & Germer, 2013; Bluth & Eisenlohr-Moul, 2017; Fazel et al., 2014). Third, active, performance-based counseling methods (role-play/sociodrama) have meta-analytic support for socioemotional outcomes (Kipper & Ritchie, 2003; Blatner, 2000) but are under-tested as vehicles for cultivating self-love and translating it into measurable gains in self-confidence and self-image in routine guidance periods. This study addresses these gaps by (a) centering confidence and self-image as focal endpoints, (b) implementing a culturally responsive, counselor-led, classroom module in an Indonesian vocational school, and (c) combining compassion/self-love content with experiential rehearsal to strengthen internalization and skill transfer (Bandura, 1997; Yeager & Dweck, 2012).

This study evaluates the effectiveness of a classical guidance module that integrates self-love principles (self-acceptance, self-kindness, mindful awareness) with experiential techniques (role-play/sociodrama, reflective journaling) to improve self-confidence and self-image among Grade-10 vocational students. The novelty lies in (i) operationalizing "self-love" for school counseling as a concise, classroom-deliverable package, (ii) targeting self-confidence and self-image as primary, theory-consistent outcomes rather than broad well-being, and (iii) testing feasibility and effects in an under-represented Indonesian vocational context (Neff, 2003; Neff & Germer, 2013; Fazel et al., 2014; OECD, 2019). Guided by social-cognitive and compassion frameworks, we hypothesize that students receiving the module will show greater gains in self-confidence and self-image than comparison peers (Bandura, 1997; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). The intervention is brief (within regular guidance periods), group-based (whole-class), counselor-led, and culturally adapted to Indonesian schooling norms; outcomes emphasize proximal psychological constructs (confidence, self-image) with practical implications for academic participation and counseling practice (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Durlak et al., 2011). Taken together, these design choices position the study to yield actionable, context-sensitive evidence to inform scalable school counseling practice and guide future research on strengthening students' self-beliefs in vocational settings.

METHOD

Research Design and Approach

This study adopted a quantitative experimental design to evaluate—objectively and numerically—the effectiveness of a self-love–based classroom guidance intervention in enhancing students' self-confidence and self-image. We implemented a pretest–posttest control group arrangement using two intact Grade X classes: one class served as the experimental group and received the structured self-love guidance, while the other functioned as the control group and continued with guidance-as-usual. Identical instruments were administered immediately before the intervention (pretest) and after the intervention (posttest) to estimate change attributable to treatment effects (Arikunto, 2013; Sugiyono, 2013).

Setting, Period, Population, and Participants

The research took place at SMK Garuda Nusantara, Jalan Raya Industri Tegalgede, RT 8 RW 3, Pasirsari, Cikarang Selatan, Bekasi, West Java, Indonesia (postal code 17530), during 26 April–31 May 2025. The target population comprised all Grade X students at the school. Through purposive sampling, two intact classes—X MP and X AKL (N = 34)—were selected and allocated by class to conditions so that natural timetables and classroom ecologies were preserved; one class was designated as the experimental group and the other as the control group. This intact-class approach was chosen to minimize instructional disruption and contamination between groups while maintaining ecological validity.

Variables and Indicators

The independent variable was a counselor-led self-love–based classroom guidance program designed to cultivate positive and compassionate self-relations alongside adaptive self-regulation. Its competency targets included self-understanding, self-acceptance, self-appreciation, self-care, and positive attitudes toward the self. Two dependent variables were evaluated. Self-confidence was defined as a relatively stable belief in one's capability to undertake tasks and face challenges in academic and social contexts, indexed through belief in one's abilities, willingness to try, and assertiveness. Self-image referred to the cognitive–affective evaluation of one's attributes and social presence, captured through positive perceptions of physical self, competencies, and social relations. The intervention was expected to influence proximal self-love competencies first and, subsequently, produce measurable gains in self-confidence and self-image at posttest relative to pretest and to the control group.

Experimental Design

Consistent with a pretest–posttest control group framework, both classes completed baseline measures prior to any treatment, after which only the experimental class received the self-love guidance sessions. Following the treatment period, both groups completed the same posttest measures. This structure supports comparisons of within-group change (pre–post) and between-group differences (experimental vs. control), thereby strengthening causal inferences regarding the impact of the guidance program under typical school conditions (Sugiyono, 2013).

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were gathered through questionnaires, observation, and documentation. The questionnaires served as the primary outcome measures and were administered at pretest and posttest. The observation focused on students' social interaction and engagement during guidance sessions to monitor process fidelity and classroom climate. Documentation (e.g., attendance logs and activity photos in line with school policy) provided corroborative evidence of implementation. Two Likert-type scales (5 response options from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) were used. The Self-Confidence Scale included items on belief in

ability, willingness to participate (including speaking in front of others), courage in decision-making, and independence. The Self-Image Scale included items on self-acceptance, self-perception, and self-appreciation. Items were derived from a blueprint aligned with the operational definitions above and reviewed for clarity and relevance prior to field administration.

Instrument Quality Assurance

Before formal data collection, the instruments underwent psychometric screening. Item validity was examined via Pearson product–moment item–total correlations, and items with $r \geq .30$ were considered adequately discriminating and retained; items below the criterion were revised or removed (Sugiyono, 2017). Internal consistency reliability was then evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (α) for each subscale, with alpha coefficients and corrected item–total statistics guiding iterative refinement to ensure consistent measurement across items within each construct (Arikunto, 2013). These procedures ensured that the instruments were both valid for their intended constructs and reliable for repeated use in comparable school contexts.

Data Analysis Procedures

Analyses proceeded at the student level. First, data were screened and summarized using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and observed ranges) for each outcome by group and time to characterize baseline comparability and overall dispersion. Next, assumptions were checked. Distributional adequacy was evaluated with the Shapiro–Wilk test (appropriate for small samples) and, where helpful for corroboration, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test; decisions were based on p-values and complemented by visual diagnostics when needed (Nuryadi et al., 2017; Quraisy, 2020; Fitri et al., 2023). For posttest comparisons between independent groups, Levene's test was used to assess homogeneity of variances. To evaluate within-group change from pretest to posttest, paired-samples t-tests were conducted separately for the experimental and control groups on self-confidence and self-image (Tsagris et al., 2018; Kwak & Kim, 2023). To estimate between-group effectiveness, we compared either gain scores (post–pre) or posttest scores adjusted for baseline (e.g., via ANCOVA when assumptions were met), using independent-samples t-tests as the primary inferential method for the two-group comparison (Putri et al., 2023). For interpretability, effect sizes (Cohen's d or Hedges' g for small-sample bias) were computed with 95% confidence intervals to convey the magnitude and precision of the observed effects. All hypothesis tests were two-tailed with $\alpha = .05$, and exact p-values and CI bounds were reported wherever feasible to facilitate transparent appraisal of both statistical and practical significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Instrument Validity and Reliability

The study began by establishing the psychometric adequacy of the instruments used to assess students' self-confidence and self-image. Item–total correlations for all indicators ranged from 0.492 to 0.636, exceeding the criterion r_table = 0.279, thereby meeting conventional requirements for convergent item functioning and adequate item discrimination within educational and psychological measurement (Cronbach, 1951; DeVellis, 2017; McNeish, 2018). In practical terms, these coefficients indicate that each item contributes meaningfully to its parent construct, and that the aggregated score reflects a coherent underlying attribute rather than a heterogeneous cluster of unrelated items. This pattern is consistent with recommendations that item–total correlations should fall in the moderate to high range when an instrument is intended for both diagnostic and evaluative uses in school settings.

Reliability analyses further supported instrument quality. The scale produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 (20 items), which indicates high internal consistency and suitability for pretest–posttest comparisons

(Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Zinbarg et al., 2005; Dunn et al., 2014). While contemporary psychometrics encourages complementing alpha with model-based indices (McNeish, 2018), an alpha of this magnitude still provides strong reassurance that observed changes across time are unlikely to reflect measurement noise. Given the short duration of the intervention (four sessions), high reliability is particularly valuable: it increases the power to detect real change and reduces the probability that practice effects or random fluctuations masquerade as program impact.

Descriptive Statistics, Normality, and Within-Group Tests

Descriptive analysis shows a clear performance separation between the experimental and control classes after the intervention. In the experimental group, the mean score increased from 75.12 (SD = 7.769) at pretest to 86.59 (SD = 2.671) at posttest. This pattern indicates not only a marked upward shift in central tendency but also a substantial reduction in dispersion—the posttest standard deviation is roughly one-third of the pretest spread—suggesting that the intervention helped *standardize adaptive strategies* across participants, an observation we return to in the discussion of mechanisms. In the control group, the mean rose modestly from 71.88 (SD = 5.453) to 73.94 (SD = 4.643), a small gain consistent with natural maturation, classroom exposure, or minimal diffusion effects.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Pre-test (Experimental)	17	53	86	75.12	7.769
Post-test (Experimental)	17	81	91	86.59	2.671
Pre-test (Control)	17	64	80	71.88	5.453
Post-test (Control)	17	66	82	73.94	4.643

Assumption checks confirmed that the data were appropriate for parametric testing. Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that all distributions did not significantly deviate from normality (all $p > .05$), satisfying a core assumption for *t*-tests and improving confidence that Type I error rates are controlled (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965; Lilliefors, 1967).

Paired sample *t*-tests quantified within-group change. The experimental group exhibited a large and statistically significant improvement from pre to post (Mean Diff = –11.471, SD_diff = 7.551, $t(16) = –6.263$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [–15.353, –7.588]). The negative mean difference here reflects posttest scores exceeding pretest scores, consistent with substantial gains. The control group also showed a smaller but significant improvement (Mean Diff = –2.059, SD_diff = 3.071, $t(16) = –2.764$, $p = .014$, 95% CI [–3.638, –0.480]), which might be attributed to routine instructional experiences, testing familiarity, or incidental exposure to related content. Importantly, the magnitude of change in the control class is dwarfed by the experimental gains, already hinting at a strong differential effect in favor of the intervention.

Table 2. Paired Sample *t*-Tests

Pair	Mean Diff	SD Diff	*t*	df	*p*	95% CI
Pre vs Post (Experimental)	–11.471	7.551	–6.263	16	< .001	[–15.353, –7.588]
Pre vs Post (Control)	–2.059	3.071	–2.764	16	.014	[–3.638, –0.480]

Between-Group Differences (Gain Scores) and Effect Sizes

To isolate the intervention's added value beyond general time or exposure effects, we compared gain scores (post – pre) between groups. Mean gain was 11.47 (SD = 7.551) in the experimental group versus

2.18 (SD = 3.067) in the control group, a wide separation pointing to the substantive value of the self-love-based guidance.

Table 3. Independent Samples (Gain Scores)

Group	N	Mean Gain	SD Gain	SE
Control	17	2.18	3.067	0.744
Experimental	17	11.47	7.551	1.831

Standardized effects were calculated to contextualize magnitude. The between-group Cohen's *d* (pooled SD) was 1.61, and the bias-corrected Hedges' *g* was 1.57, both conventionally interpreted as very large effects (Hedges, 1981; Lakens, 2013). Within-group effect sizes were also computed: dz ≈ 1.52 for the experimental group (large) and dz ≈ 0.67 for the control group (moderate). The pattern confirms three converging points: (a) the intervention produced robust improvements; (b) natural gains or practice effects in the control class were modest; and (c) the differential between groups is substantial, supporting the primary hypothesis that a structured, classroom-based, self-love intervention meaningfully elevates self-confidence and self-image among tenth-grade vocational students.

Efficacy of School-Based, Self-Related Psychoeducation

The present findings reinforce a wide evidence base showing that universal, school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs yield reliable improvements in attitudes, prosocial behaviors, and academic outcomes, often with effects in the small-to-moderate range (Durlak et al., 2011). Our observed effects, however, approach the upper boundary of what has been reported for targeted short-form interventions, particularly those embedding reflective practice and self-directed coping scripts. In the mindfulness and self-compassion literature, meta-analyses and systematic reviews document that relatively brief, structured school interventions can improve emotion regulation, well-being, and executive functions (Zenner et al., 2014; Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018). Interventions emphasizing compassionate self-relation—e.g., self-compassion curricula—are associated with reductions in stress and anxiety and elevations in psychological adjustment (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012; Neff & Germer, 2013; Zessin et al., 2015). The strong gains observed in our experimental class align with these findings and suggest that self-love, when operationalized as the integration of self-acceptance, compassionate self-talk, and action planning, may be a particularly potent organizing framework for adolescent learners in vocational contexts.

Psychological Mechanisms: Self-Acceptance, Efficacy, and Mindset

The pattern of results is also consistent with well-established psychological mechanisms. First, self-efficacy theory posits that structured mastery experiences and supportive feedback increase students' beliefs in their capabilities, which in turn fosters persistence and goal-directed behavior (Bandura, 1997). The intervention's design—brief, mastery-oriented activities; explicit recognition of effort; and concrete next-step plans—mirrors these pathways. Second, the growth mindset perspective emphasizes adaptive interpretations of difficulty and failure as opportunities for learning. While average effects of mindset interventions are often small to moderate and depend on context (Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Sisk et al., 2018), our integration of mindset *with* self-acceptance and compassionate self-talk may have amplified the impact, particularly by reducing self-criticism that can blunt the benefits of purely motivational messages. Third, reductions in the discrepancy between actual and ideal/ought selves (Higgins, 1987) likely contributed to improved self-image: guided reflection, values-consistent goal setting, and kinder internal dialogue can reduce distress associated with perceived shortcomings and promote a more coherent, stable self-view (Campbell & Lavallee, 1993).

A notable empirical feature of the data is the sharp contraction in variance (SD) from pretest to posttest in the experimental class. Such compression often indicates that students converged on a shared set of adaptive strategies (e.g., a common language for self-talk, routine use of pause-plan-proceed routines), which can function as mediators between psychoeducation and behavioral outcomes (Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018; Renshaw & Olinger Steeves, 2016). In short, rather than merely elevating mean levels of self-confidence and self-image, the program appears to have standardized self-regulatory scripts, reducing within-class disparities.

Convergence and Divergence from Prior Studies

In terms of convergence, our results mirror findings that short, structured, and classroom-embedded curricula can produce meaningful gains across socio-emotional indicators (Zenner et al., 2014; Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Additionally, the observed benefits closely resemble outcomes reported in self-compassion-focused and mindfulness-infused programs for adolescents, which commonly report improvements in well-being and emotion regulation (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012; Neff & Germer, 2013; Zessin et al., 2015).

In terms of divergence, the magnitude of the between-group effect (Hedges' $g \approx 1.57$) is larger than the average effects often cited for universal school-based interventions (Durlak et al., 2011) and for many growth-mindset interventions (Sisk et al., 2018). This discrepancy can plausibly be explained by (a) the contextual fit—tenth-grade vocational students face identity, competence, and career-readiness tasks for which self-acceptance plus action planning are immediately relevant; (b) the content architecture—the program blends *self-acceptance, compassionate self-talk,* and *specific goals* rather than relying on generic esteem boosting (Baumeister et al., 2003); and (c) the session density and design—four focused sessions with structured homework likely maximized transfer to in-class and practice-based tasks. Moreover, the variance contraction suggests that not only did students improve, but they did so in a coordinated fashion, which amplifies classroom-level effects.

Theoretical Implications

This study advances an integrated model of self-related change in which self-love functions as a practical synthesis of self-compassion—a non-judgmental, supportive stance toward oneself (Neff, 2003; Neff & Germer, 2013)—self-efficacy, or confidence rooted in mastery (Bandura, 1997), and growth mindset, the belief that ability is malleable (Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Rather than privileging a single mechanism, the intervention intentionally braids these pathways so that students (a) accept current limitations without self-attack, (b) identify and rehearse small, specific mastery steps, and (c) interpret setbacks as diagnostic information for adjustment. The observed large effects accompanied by reduced dispersion suggest interactive mechanisms: self-compassion buffers the affective sting of failure, thereby enabling efficacy-building experiences to accumulate without being derailed by harsh self-criticism. The pronounced contraction of posttest standard deviations within the experimental group implies the standardization of adaptive coping scripts. In experimental pedagogy, such variance patterns often mark successful internalization of common routines (e.g., "pause–label emotion–plan next action") that operate as proximal mediators linking didactic content to behavior (Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018). These findings support a testable account in which script acquisition, rather than content knowledge alone, is the primary engine of improvements in self-confidence and self-image. Methodologically, the work offers a transparent chain of evidence—item functioning, internal consistency, distributional checks, within- and between-group tests, and effect-size reporting—aligned with recommended practices for school-based (quasi-)experiments (Shadish et al., 2002; Lakens, 2013; Morris & DeShon, 2002). For brief interventions implemented in authentic classrooms, the combination of high reliability and clear between-group separation strengthens the claim that observed gains are substantive rather than analytic artifacts.

Practical Implications for Schools and Guidance & Counseling

Practical implications for schools and guidance & counseling include designing a feasible classroom guidance format in four sessions that embeds 10–15-minute micro-practices—guided reflection, compassionate self-talk scripts, and if–then implementation plans linking goals to concrete cues (e.g., "If I feel stuck during a practical task, then I reread the checklist, ask a peer, or request a one-sentence hint")—demonstrating that meaningful change is possible without overhauling the timetable and aligning with evidence that brief, well-structured SEL routines yield real benefits (Durlak et al., 2011; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Worksheets that help students convert self-critical statements into compassionate, actionable self-talk, paired with homework that couples reflective journaling with goal setting and specific next steps, cultivate replicable habits and reduce ruminative loops and social comparison (Neff & Germer, 2013; Zessin et al., 2015). To support transfer, subject-matter teachers can use growth-oriented feedback and practical rubrics aligned with vocational competencies, and schools can normalize brief check-ins at the start of practical sessions so that classroom expectations reinforce the adaptive scripts developed in guidance (Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Sisk et al., 2018). Collectively, these moves offer a scalable, low-burden pathway for schools to strengthen students' self-beliefs and everyday performance while embedding sustainable counseling practices across the curriculum.

CONCLUSION

In this study we set out to evaluate whether a brief, counselor-led classroom guidance module that integrates self-love principles with experiential techniques can improve Grade-10 vocational students' self-confidence and self-image; results show psychometrically sound instruments ($\alpha = .88$; item–total $r = .492$–$.636$), a large within-group gain in the experimental class ($t(16) = -6.263$, $p < .001$) versus a modest gain in the control class ($p = .014$), a very large between-group effect on gains (Hedges' $g \approx 1.57$), and a notable contraction of posttest variance indicating convergence on adaptive self-regulatory scripts. Theoretically, the findings support an integrated account in which self-compassion buffers negative affect while structured mastery experiences and growth-oriented interpretations build efficacy, jointly producing durable improvements in self-beliefs; practically, they provide a ready-to-adopt four-session template (10–15-minute micro-practices, compassionate self-talk, and if–then plans) for routine guidance periods; and for policy, they justify embedding low-burden, class-wide self-relation curricula within school counseling and vocational competence frameworks, accompanied by simple progress-monitoring to scale impact with fidelity.

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