

Emerson: Self-Reliance

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To believe in your own thought, ... that is genius. ... for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, ...

... the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is, that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men but what they thought.

... detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across (your) mind from within, ...

Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty.

Imitation is suicide.

God will not have his work made manifest by cowards.

A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace.

Accept ... the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, (knowing) the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, ...

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What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. ... you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. ... the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps ... the independence of solitude.

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An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; ... all history resolves itself into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Travelling is a fool's paradise. ... I ... wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the ... sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. ... what is imitation but the travelling of the mind?

Insist on yourself; never imitate. ... That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him.

All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. ... For everything that is given, something is taken.

... every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

... great men ... leave no class. He who is really of their class will not be called by their name, ...

Society is a wave. ... Its unity is only phenomenal.

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Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty.

Imitation is suicide.

God will not have his work made manifest by cowards.

A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace.

Accept ... the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, (knowing) the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, ...

... the voices ... we hear in solitude, ... grow faint ... as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members.

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. ...not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. ... you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. ... the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps ... the independence of solitude.

To be great is to be misunderstood.

Your genuine action will explain itself, ... Your conformity explains nothing.

An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; ... all history resolves itself into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Travelling is a fool's paradise. ... I ... wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the ... sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. ... what is imitation but the travelling of the mind?

Insist on yourself; never imitate. ... That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him.

All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. ... For everything that is given, something is taken.

... every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

... great men ... leave no class. He who is really of their class will not be called by their name, ...

Society is a wave. ... Its unity is only phenomenal.

... the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have ... come to esteem the religious, learned, and civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is. But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature.

... that which a man is (he ) does always by necessity acquire, and what the man acquires is living property, which ... perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes.

It is only as a man ... stands alone, that I see him to ... prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner.

Most men gamble with (Fortune), and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But ... leave ... these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, ... and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, ...

... a rise of rents, ... or some other favorable event, raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.

Emerson, Self-Reliance

To believe in your own thought, ... that is genius. ... for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, ...

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