

To Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson:

I love your ideas about reliance. It would be great if everybody could do what they truly believed in instead of what society tells them to do. Kids my age feel a lot of peer pressure to do things they don't want to do. Being true to oneself is very difficult. We feel safer by hiding our true feelings.

Even though self-reliance is a great philosophy, there are many problems in today's society. It would be total anarchy if everyone said and did what they truly believed in. Nothing could be done if everybody did what they wanted. Sometimes it is better for the good of the group to keep your own opinions to yourself.

No man can completely separate himself from the rest of society. It would be impractical to be a farmer, scientist, and doctor just because you don't agree with what they are doing. Some things are better left the way they are. It is more useful to society, if everyone had specific skills in a few areas instead of broad overviews of different professions.

I disagree with your views on traveling also. Traveling allows the knowledge of one culture to be passed to another. Even though blind imitation should be discouraged, imitation is the only way to learn something. When we are born, we are not self-reliant. We imitate what other people are doing until we can think for ourselves.

To be a genius may require self-trust and nonconformity. However, I am glad there have been such few geniuses. Like you said, society never advances. So what is the use for brilliance? Self-reliance has hurt our society as much as it may have helped.

Sincerely,

Austin Che