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Self - Reliance

Let's Begin

Self-reliance is often confused or used interchangeably with self-sufficiency. However, the two words do not mean the same. I trust my skills and ability (self-reliance) is not the same as saying I have all that I ever need (self-sufficient).

List some qualities that will indicate you are self-reliant.

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Are the following a sign of self-reliance? Discuss with your class the reason for your answer.

1. Doing all your tasks yourself without seeking help, even when you need help YES/NO
2. Becoming financially independent or building luxuries for oneself YES/NO
3. Staying away from family or loved ones to avoid support or guidance from elders YES/NO
4. Hiding your physical, emotional or spiritual needs from your dear ones YES/NO

Self-Reliance and Right Conduct

Being self-reliant is essential for performing righteous action.

Self-reliance is depending on one's own powers, skills and resources rather than those of others. It does not mean autonomy or keeping others away from our life. Self-reliance is keeping faith in ourselves even as we interact with people around us.



Let here the story about the donkey.

One day a farmer heard the distressed cry of a donkey and discovered it fallen down an abandoned well. The farmer struggled unsuccessfully to pull the donkey out.

Finally, the farmer understood there was nothing that he could do to save the donkey.

Therefore, he reasoned to himself, “This donkey is old. I am too. I can’t get him out of this mess. It is better for the donkey to bury him in this well and atleast put him out of his misery.”

And he found a pile of rubble and began shovelling it into the well. Realising his end was near, the donkey wailed horribly.

Then, after a few shovelfuls later, he calmed down and started shaking off the mud and rubbles that fell on his back.



Peering into the well, the farmer was astonished to see the donkey shaking the rubble off as it fell on his back. As the donkey was shaking off each layer of dirt he stepped up onto the rising mound. As the pile increased the donkey stepped closer to the edge of the well, finally reaching the top and eventually trotting away.

Don't allow yourself to be buried under the weight of dirt and rubble that life throws at you. Shake it off and step up.

Learning life skills: Pathway to Physical Self-Reliance

Performing our responsibilities will often require us to use/apply various life skills. For example, if parents fall ill and you need to nurse them back to good health, several life skills will be put to use at once. You might need to communicate clearly with the

doctor and other family members/friends about the situation, be aware of basic principles of nutrition and a healthy lifestyle, and have basic home management skills such as managing small finances, cooking, etc. to fill in for your parents till they recover. At the time of such a challenge, learning a new skill may not be possible or can get stressful. Learning new skills and practising old skills throughout life is one way to stay self-reliant, whatever the situation in life. So, keep learning and never give up!

Home Activity: Life Skill Checklist

Listed below are some life skills. Tick the basic life skills you have already learnt (or are learning). For the ones you have not, make a planner to systematically develop those skills and continue your personal journey to self-reliance. (An example is provided below the list to help you get started.)

Cooking <input type="checkbox"/>	Driving a vehicle/cycle <input type="checkbox"/>
Swimming <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic self defence <input type="checkbox"/>
Gardening <input type="checkbox"/>	Personality development <input type="checkbox"/>
Spoken communication skills <input type="checkbox"/>	Basics of finances <input type="checkbox"/>
Basics of management <input type="checkbox"/>	First aid <input type="checkbox"/>
Hygiene of self and surroundings <input type="checkbox"/>	Basics of healthy lifestyle and nutrition <input type="checkbox"/>
House repairs (plumbing, electric etc.) <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic IT skills <input type="checkbox"/>

To develop a life skill, you can make a plan as given below.

For example, Skill = Performing First Aid for burns, cuts and small injuries.

Week 1: I will **read** about what are the types of first aid on the Internet.

Week 2: I will **memorise the basics** of first aid from a reliable resource in the library

Week 3: I will **enroll** in a first aid class conducted in my school/ community to get hands-on experience

Week 4: I will **learn about the ways to speak** to an injured person and conduct oneself while giving first aid by talking to / listening to / interviewing people who regularly perform first aid (e.g., nurses)

Please note: Words highlighted in bold above are some ways to develop a new skill.)



Self-confidence: the secret to emotional self-reliance

Reflect and Answer

Have you been in a situation that challenged your ability to its limit? What was your response in that situation? What is your takeaway about self-reliance from this story?

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*In the dark depths of urgent need,
Emerges a spirit that plants a seed,
Of a clever thought or a daring might,
To find new ways and bring back the light.*

Tips To Promote Self-reliance

- 1) **Be your best friend:** Support yourself 100% and focus on your strengths and achievements. Self-reliant people make the best of themselves and don't put themselves down. They realise that they aren't perfect but they make the most of what they have.
- 2) **Quiet Confidence:** Self-reliant people don't need to tell anyone about their positive attributes. They don't need to prove themselves to anyone. They are kind, calm and collected. They are comfortable with themselves and feel happy in their own skins.
- 3) **Discretion:** Self-reliance means you have the ability to look inwards for strength. Those who are not self-reliant constantly look outwards for acceptance and security. At times we all need

other people's advice and encouragement but as a rule, self-reliant people always strive to put good advice to action using their own skills and intelligence.

Pathway To Emotional Self-reliance

- Being mindful or in tune with your emotions is the first step to emotional self-reliance. Learn to ask yourself why you feel a certain way about a person / situation / thing to process the emotions. Keeping a journal is a good way to process feelings.
- Every time you face what you fear or feel uncomfortable about, the fear wears down, your confidence grows and soon enough you begin to feel familiar or in control of those actions! By facing your fears head on, they lose all their power over you.
- Fear has lots of different voices: doubt, self-depreciation, pessimism and criticism to name a few. Here are some common fears (highlight the ones which apply to you): Fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of losing, fear of succeeding, fear of not being good enough, fear of the unknown, fear of the future, or fear of being wrong. When you start to name your fears and recognise their form, you can begin to concentrate more on what action you need to take to overcome them.

Befriend Yourself for Spiritual Self Reliance

It is said – You are not one but three - *who you think you are, who others think you are and who you really are.*

The first step to working on improving something about yourself is to know your strengths and weaknesses. The second is to check the perceptions others have about you that helps or comes in the way of your progress. The third is to love yourself in spite of your weaknesses and perceptions others have. Being your own friend is the best way to stay self-reliant throughout life.

Read this beautiful verse on self-esteem by Ellen Bailey.

*Why would you want to be someone else? When you could be better
by being yourself.*

*Why pretend to be someone you are not? When you have
something, they haven't got.*

*Cheating yourself of the life you have to live, deprives others of that
only which you can give.*

*You have much more to offer by being just you, than walking
around in someone else's shoes.*

*Trying to live the life of another is a mistake. It is a masquerade;
nothing more than a fake.*

*Be yourself and let your qualities show through. Others will love
you more for being just you.*

*Remember that God loves you just as you are. To Him you are
already a bright shining star.*



Family and friends will love you more too, if you spent time practicing just being you.

Share with your class how you **feel** about this verse.

Identifying Roadblocks to the Way Inward

Ask yourself – Do I hold back from connecting to my inner self due to beliefs that are fed to me by others?

The list below might help you identify some of these beliefs.

- a. People who spend time with their inner self do not do well in life, they turn into ascetics, saints or beggars
- b. It is difficult for small children, teenagers and young adults to connect with their core because they are weak or do not have a mature sense of self
- c. Connecting to one's inner self is a religious practice, and I am not religious
- d. The practices to connect to self are actually superstitious; only the uneducated and uninformed take to them. Educated and scientific minds won't go that way
- e. I am doing fine in life, surrounded by people who give me strength and support, so I do not need such practices for now

If any of these or other beliefs are holding you back from connecting with your inner self, this might be the right time to let go of the limiting beliefs and take a step to connect with your inner self.

Spiritual self-reliance begins by making the choice to believe in a higher power within oneself.

Be a Tree on the Mountain

In so many ways, living through the teenage years is like a tree struggling to grow on the side of a mountain. Can you imagine being that tree? Recall that Scoop 2 of Chapter 3 where we discussed about "Bouncing Back". The winds up at high altitude can be very strong, and the young tree experiences the full force of every gale. And what happens? Each time the wind blows and forces the tree to bend under its force, the tree automatically sends its roots deeper into the earth. There the roots find more water, more good nutrients, everything that a young tree needs to grow tall and strong. Can you see how this Tree on the Mountain metaphor relates to you? Yes? That's it! You are the tree and the fierce winds are the changes and challenges that blow hard against you.



Like the tree on the mountain, you too can regard any disturbing experience in your life as a signal, an opportunity, to put your 'roots' down deeper into your soul, into the essence of the real You. In this way, like the tree on the mountain, you can grow 'tall and strong' in being who you are rightly meant to be. Sounds good?

So how are you to send your ‘roots’ down deeper into the rich soil of your true Self? Any ideas. We can suggest a powerful method for diving deep into your Self so that your true strength of character can soar higher and higher. This is an ancient method, tried and tested over thousands of years by the Wise Ones of history. It is:

BECOME FEARLESS

If you made a list of all of the struggles and strains that you’ve had to deal with during your teenage years, how many of them would be to do with fear?...What do you think?...For example, what is it that holds you back from being uniquely you? Is it fear of failing? Fear of standing out? Fear of being judged or rejected?

And what about this one (if it applies to you): What is keeping you from trying to do your very best in every-single thing that you do? Would it be fear that is holding you back? Fear of the end result not being perfect?...Fear of disappointing others?...You might like to make notes in your Journal as you reflect on each one of those questions.

Why do you think such fears are so common in teenagers, and even in adults? We can understand why little children could have such fears, but why do they persist into the teenage years?

The metaphor of the Elephant and the Rope can help understand, why some of your fears have stayed on with you. It goes like this:



The Elephant Story

A person was passing by some elephants. He suddenly stopped when he noticed that they were held by a small rope tied to their front leg. No chains, no cages. It was obvious that the elephants could, at any time, break away from their bonds, but for some reason, they did not. He saw an elephant trainer nearby and asked why these animals stood captive. “Well,” the trainer said, “when they were much smaller, we used the same sized rope to tie them, enough to hold them at that age. Growing up, they believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free.” The man was amazed. Only because the elephants believed they could not break free; they were stuck right where they were. What is your belief about you?

Let's Remember

Self-reliance as an extension of right conduct within roles and responsibilities. Self-reliance is depending on one's own powers, skills and resources rather than those of others. We should aim to be self-reliant at the physical, emotional, and spiritual levels.

What I liked most about this lesson...

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I learnt that

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I. Movie Time!

Watch any of the following movies with your family, friends or neighbours and reflect on how the idea of self-reliance relates with the story/characters you saw in the movie.

Suggested movie list:

- *The Theory of Everything*
- *A Beautiful Mind*
- *The Pursuit of Happiness*

II. Rise with self-reliance

Read the elephant story below with your family members.

Ask your family members if they ever faced a situation where they were repeatedly told they cannot do something, but they used their skills / knowledge to accomplish the task or overcome the challenge. Also, collectively reflect and share on why it is important to keep trying till we succeed at something, with the attitude of taking failure as feedback.