

Ralph waldo emerson assignment

[History](#)



How would you describe the everyday observations you make in our modern day? Ralph Waldo Emerson once said “ Perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time, all mankind, — although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun. ” Ralph Waldo Emerson had an outlook on life that people in the present should truly focus on. He perceived people to be thinkers, although he felt the actual act of speaking your mind had sincere hesitation. That statement is still true to this day.

If he were to return and walk the earth, he would thoroughly be overwhelmed with society today. Christmas in American Society, for example, has lost its true meaning. It should be a time to celebrate not only one’s religion, but it is also a time to celebrate family and friends. Today, not only has Christmas lost its true meaning, but most Americans have lost the true meaning of living your life, freely and openly. “...Perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time, all mankind, — although it may chance that no one has seen it before me.

For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun. ” Webster defines perception as an immediate or intuitive recognition. Imagine Emerson strolling about the Freehold mall at a chaotic time such as Christmas. His perception of people would be entirely negative. The hustle and bustle of the season unfortunately leaves people feeling stressed and in a negative state of mind. The quote above describes how observing someone can be fatal, because of the perception one receives. And worse, he describes how

children would then recognize these traits and carry them throughout their lives.

This would then carry onto mankind, and continue with the vicious cycle. We live in a world where materialistic things show more of a persons worth than their own self. We live in a world where one’s character is measured by the amount of money they have. It is also a world where following trends assumes more stability than speaking your mind. Emerson states his opposition of this by expressing “ be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances, and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this.

What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. ” In summary, if you ridicule someone, you always will. Who ever you are, be a good one. “ Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life’s cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another, you have only an extemporaneous, half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. Emerson would walk around the mall and notice that no one is insisting on themselves. He would see that society today is based on imitation, and the inner gifts our souls possess are just gathering dust. “ A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds...with consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. ” Emerson would feel compelled to tell this to every person that passes him. His outlook would not change, but become stronger. The world would appear to be in complete turmoil, and his perception would be correct.

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Emerson's philosophies have prospered in American Literature, yet in everyday activities, his great philosophies fall short. His essay, "Self Reliance", is full of wise quotations that society today should embrace. Amazing isn't it? How it seems that Emerson could have written "Self Reliance" yesterday and it would still apply. "For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face." He would notice that there are people that do not conform to society, yet they are punished for doing so.

An example of this could be as mere as a young girl or boy, teased because they are not wearing the latest popular trend of clothing. A larger example of this would be the War on Iraq. I'm sure Emerson would be able to write endlessly explaining how he feels about this "societal decision". He stated that "Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. Its unity is only phenomenal. The persons who make up a nation today, next year die, and their experience with them. Our nation is a free one, and Emerson would be appalled by our lack of expression. "Self Reliance" describes how to be a good person, what outlook should be applied to life, and most importantly, how necessary it is to produce your own thoughts. What we think and what we feel are the most valuable gifts a person can give for themselves. The quotation I am going to conclude with is "Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events."

Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. ” Ralph Waldo Emerson would not change his opinions at all based on society today. His philosophies would not only be more obvious to him than ever, but he would assert that the world is still filled with people with great gifts and even greater thoughts. He would conclude that expressing your ideas is beyond trusting yourself.

Maybe it is the fear of rejection, and of overriding the societal means. Life is about being as you are. Emerson’s “ Self Reliance” may just merely be an essay to some people. And unfortunately those people are lost in the wave of society. Before Emerson would walk out the doors of the Freehold Mall and return back to a past-tense, he would leave us with a message. Regardless of the observations he made by the disgruntled shoppers and materialistic human beings that we are, he has left us with the greatest gift that he could possibly give to American Society.

His series of essays and novels and quotations are now in our possessions. It is up to us to change the life we are living, and reevaluate our outlooks and most importantly, ourselves. He explains that the greatest gift we individually have to offer is ourselves, and coincidentally, that is the greatest gift he left to us. He left us his thoughts. Ralph Waldo Emerson, although in disbelief of the actions of American Society would still turn to any person and say “ I hate quotations. Tell me what you know. “