

# To be unique

Experience, Self Reliance



To Be Unique To a large extent, individuals succumb to society's demands such as thriving for happiness and acceptance. In today's society, the society encourages people to get good friends, jobs, good looks, and get luxurious things. It is not a bad thing but at the same time, it is also not a good thing because it may hinder an individual's true self. If not followed for example, performing an "ill-action" that the society finds unacceptable, such as sharing a belief of homosexuals should be allowed to marry will most likely be shunned. In addition, following the society is a bad thing because it encourages adolescents — preferably middle school girls — to use make up and follow the appearances of female models in a fashion magazine. As a result, the society controls how a person's life should be like rather than expressing their beliefs which can possibly make a difference. In one of Ralph Waldo Emerson's essays, Self-Reliance, shows a variety or a step-by-step solution on how to become an individual without giving into the society's demands or other people's opinions. Emerson believes that a person's behavior should be expressed through his or her self-trust, non-conformity, and an independence of thought. Hence, to become an individual without the society preventing a person from reaching his or her true self, one must realize his or her beliefs; avoid being discouraged of what other people may think, and not regretting decisions. First, rather than being told what to do or what to become like a puppet, an individual should realize his or her goal and move forward. In Emerson's essay, he mentions "to believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men — that is genius" (259-260). In other words, rather than trying to go with the flow in the society, just freely do anything that brings

satisfaction. It is not guaranteed to be easy but using original ideas is even more satisfying because it may become a new trend for the society.

Therefore, rather than being a follower, try to share new ideas that may be suitable for other people and hopefully it becomes popular. Also, Emerson notes “ in every work of genius, we recognize our own rejected thoughts” (260). For instance, an artist can do a rough sketch of his characters but it will not be perfect. To other people, that sketch may be impressive but for the artist, he or she may think that it needs more work because there are some sections that need to be fixed. In addition, that artist may also think that other people may not like his or her work. Thus, rather than rejecting the idea before it is implemented, at least present it to everyone to see if people will whether like it or not. So, when developing a sense of individualism, having an independence of thought is a must because if everyone were to think the same, performing the same routine and moving passively, life would be a completely dull. So as a result, Emerson’s idea of having original thoughts is what makes a person a different human being like everyone else. Then, another way to move forward as an individual is to avoid being discouraged by opinions and negative commentary because otherwise, that person will start to doubt him or herself and possibly start acting differently. In Emerson’s point of view, “ it is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know what your duty is better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world’s opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude” (263).

Most of the time, it is hard for people to retaliate after receiving unfavorable

comments or when a student receives a failing grade in an exam. However, its common sense that these mistakes should be treated as a life lesson in order to move on to be successful. For instance, after receiving unenthusiastic reviews after being a waiter at a restaurant or receiving a low grade on an exam does not mean that it is the end of the world, it just means that he or she needs to step it up and try to make a difference. The disappointing results may affect one's personality every now and then but lingering in the past will not allow a person to move on with life. All in all, mistakes should be treated as lessons on how to move forward and not look back. When Emerson talks about how individuals should have the trait of nonconformity, he encourages people not to be overwhelmed by a disappointing outcome. Instead, people should prove their worth by trying again until they achieve their goals. Lastly, if a certain decision a person made did not receive any positive outcomes, it should not imply that he or she should regret that decision. Emerson mentions, " the other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word, because the eyes of others have no data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loath to disappoint them" (265). Whenever an individual makes any type of decision, he or she should commit to it with no regrets. Otherwise, making a decision knowing that it will be regretted later on is a waste of time and pointless. So overall, any type of decision in order to move on should be treated with more dignity and be natural about it. Because of this, when a person acknowledges his or her decision with no regrets, it would fit in one of Emerson's qualities of behavior, self-trust, as a form of searching for one's own sense of individualism. Even though the

society today encourages people to follow trends, it does not stop an individual from exposing his or her true self. Due to Emerson's qualities of behavior, self-trust, nonconformity, and independence of thought, any individual can find his or her potential on what they can do within the society and survive. In addition, as long as a person does not succumb to the society's peer pressure, negative assumptions, and regret, he or she will not face too many problems in his or her path. Regardless of the society's peer pressure towards people, it may change their looks and/or attitude, but it will not change their individuality because each human being has their own interests.