

ON YOUR OWN

DEVELOPING SELF-RELIANCE

By The American Institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc

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Introduction

This is a book about self-reliance. It's a book about developing the ability to depend on your own skills in order to get ahead in the world. It's also about developing the confidence to depend upon those skills to get you through difficult situations. It's a book that explores the ways that you can become a stronger and more decisive human being.

In order to become more self-reliant, you first have to understand what self-reliance really entails. Yes, there is an element of physicality involved in being truly self-reliant. And yes, this element of physicality involves the techniques and skills that allow an individual to better survive in nature and to live off the land. Therefore a portion of this book will be devoted to taking a look at the self-reliant lifestyle and how those techniques and skills fit into that lifestyle. However, there is more to self-reliance than mere survivalist mentality.

Self-reliance is, at heart, a philosophy. It is a way of looking at the world and at your place in the world. It is about how you face the reality of existing. It is about how your choices in regard to that existence determine the quality of life. It is about how you choose to live your life. In the end, self-reliance is about freedom – the freedom to live your life under your own terms.

This is a philosophy that has attracted many great minds down through the years. As a part of the process of understanding what self-reliance, we will be taking a look at what self-reliance meant to two of those great minds – Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Now this is not dry stuff. It is the heart of developing an understanding of why you should choose a self-reliant lifestyle. It is the foundation upon which your self-reliance is built. Both Emerson and Thoreau articulated concepts and themes that lie at the heart of the self-reliance movement. We'll take a look at important ideas like nonconformity, personal authority, the need for solitude and the need for spirituality. You'll learn how each of these ideas provides critical support to any individual self-reliance philosophy.

Understanding what self-reliance is naturally leads to asking why self-reliance is important. After all, knowing the answer to what without having insight into why is simply an incomplete understanding. This is why we are also going to take a look at why self-reliance is important to just about everyone. We will also examine the paradox that lies at the heart of the urge to be self-reliant in a modern philosophy and how our ancestor's skills in the art of self-reliance led to an ever increasing dependence on things out of our control in modern society.

After we understand what self-reliance is and why it is so very important to your life, we're going to look at definite things that you can do to make yourself less reliant on others and more reliant on yourself. Specifically, we're going to examine ten key self-reliance lessons. These lessons will contain techniques that you can use every day to improve your own self-reliance skills, helping you to become a stronger and more independent person. So, if you're ready to become self-reliant, let's get started!

What is Self-Reliance?

Is independence a good thing? Most people would say that it is. The ability to live your own life on your own terms has to be a good thing, right? Yet, is that what self-reliance is all about? Is it simply living as you see fit, with no social responsibilities whatsoever? Is it possible that individual independence, without more, is a faulty concept which is perhaps, at its heart, morally wrong?

Let's start our examination of what self-reliance is by stating what self-reliance isn't. Self-reliance isn't about disconnecting from society. It isn't about living in an underground bunker in an out of the way location and off the grid. It isn't about being a hermit and withdrawing from everything. Paradoxically, self-reliance is about the exact opposite of these things. It is not about withdrawal. Instead, it is about engagement under your own terms. It is about interacting with others while maintaining control over those interactions. In fact, the concept of control may be at the heart of the self-reliance process.

Look at the way the average individual lives in our modern world. While modern life offers a myriad of conveniences that supposedly make life easier, all of those conveniences come with a price. In a modern urban environment, each convenience causes us to become more dependent on the convenience. At some point, that dependence becomes so great, that an individual has very little independence or choice when it comes to how he or she will live their life. They have traded self-reliance for comfort. This is why many people today feel trapped by their lifestyles. They are comfortable. They are well off. Yet, they feel no autonomy. In order to remain comfortable, they must remain static. It is this stasis, this lack of growth that gives rise to discontent. People realize that they are not living their lives on their own terms.

This is not a new phenomenon. It is as old as human technology. However, it became a much more acute phenomenon during the Industrial Revolution, when that technology began to change the face of the globe and the way humanity interacted with the planet. During this time, several great minds, seeing the profound changes around them, began to question whether these changes were all good. Two of these thinkers were Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Both Emerson and Thoreau developed concepts that centered on the idea of a self-reliant person being capable of surviving and thriving in an increasingly modernized and industrialized world. These concepts are just as important today as they were when they were first articulated, for they give us an understanding of what exactly the idea of self-reliance entails. Therefore, we will take a look at each man's ideas in turn.

Emerson and Self-Reliance

Ralph Waldo Emerson was a thinker, essayist and philosopher who developed his ideas on self-reliance in the nineteenth century. He is best known for an essay that was published in 1841 that contained the synthesis of all his ideas on self-reliance entitled "Self-Reliance". This essay was revolutionary for its time, since it challenged many of the prevailing social mores that were being developed and accepted in the wake of Industrial Revolution.

It is important to keep in mind that the Industrial Revolution was revolutionary precisely because it involved the mechanization of tasks that were normally performed in small lots by hand. Machinery allowed the production of products in large numbers. However, mechanization didn't mean that people were rendered disposable. In fact, the contrary was true. Large factories containing great amount of machinery required a large workforce to keep them all running and in good repair.

This workforce, made up of workers, was largely recruited from the countryside. People living in rural areas saw opportunity in the employment offered by the burgeoning factories that were increasingly manufacturing goods. They moved from the country to the city to be close to the source of this employment. In the course of a generation, more people were living in an urban environment than a rural environment for the first time in human history. Obviously, the populations of cities rose. This population density meant that people had to develop new social behaviors and habits that would allow them to live comfortable while in close proximity to their neighbors.

One of the major behaviors that developed was conformity. The idea of acting like the people who surround you began to be seen as a social asset. Likewise, nonconformity was seen as a negative social behavior. People who didn't conform were viewed with suspicion. They weren't trusted. They were suspect. Ultimately, those who didn't conform to societal norms were essentially outcast from the community. So, why did conformity become so desirable?

Well, to begin with, conformity benefited the industrialist who owned the factories that provided the employment to the workforce. They required individuals who could be depended upon to show up for work on time, to work long hours and to not make an excessive amounts of mistakes. Conformity allowed them to obtain what they required out of their workers. They used conformity as a way to mold the behavior of the workforce. Workers that did conform were rewarded with continued employment and the opportunity for increased compensation. Workers who did conform lost their employment, as well as their compensation. The nonconformists were quickly replaced with new individuals who were eager to do what was asked of them.

This use of conformity to mold behavior resulted in just that – people came to see that conforming led to positive results and not conforming led to negative results. Obviously the vast majority of these new workers chose to obtain the positive results that conformity brought. Acting like your fellow workers – getting up early, working hard, following orders, simply being like everyone else – brought comfort to an entire community. It made them feel that the employment upon which they all depended was secure. To a large measure, this conformist behavior did stabilize the community. However, it also gave rise to vast swaths of the social fabric that were entirely the same and, ultimately, drab. Trading individuality for employment security came with a price. There was, perhaps, increased prosperity, but there was also increased dependence.

It was this situation that caught Emerson's attention. He saw first-hand the results of industrialized conformity. He witnessed the dependence upon jobs and machinery. He realized that something was being taken from the soul of mankind by this process and he wrote about what he realized.

In essence, Emerson realized three main things that had been brought about by the dependence upon industrialization. First, he realized the choking effect that mass conformity had on personal independence. He believed that the process of questioning and rejecting opinions and behaviors foisted onto an individual by others would result in independence. A behavior that didn't conform to societal laws but was beneficial to an individual, as long as it was not harmful to others, was always preferable.

Second, he realized that the large numbers of people living in cities greatly restricted the opportunity for individuals to have time and space for self-reflection. Without self-reflection, a person would have no idea who they really were and what they really believed. This self-ignorance would then allow that person to be easily influenced by the opinions of the masses which, in turn, would lead to even more conforming behaviors. Therefore, solitude was a necessary element of self-reliance since it allowed for more opportunity to reflect.

Third, Emerson realized that self-reflection and self-discovery would ultimately lead to a personal belief system that made sense to the individual. Each person's belief system could share common elements, but it was essential for each person to develop a spirituality that made sense to them, despite what others said or advocated. He felt that organized religions largely stripped a person of self-autonomy and made spiritual decisions for them that may not resonate or make sense.

In the dependent and conformist cities, time was highly regulated. There was no space for reflection, so there was no opportunity to develop a personal belief system. Without a strong belief system, a person was victimized by conformity and lost independence. So, if Emerson was asked "What is self-reliance?" he would likely answer that self-reliance needs solitude, a strong personal belief system and the independence to be able to practice nonconformity in a way that makes sense to an individual. As he himself said, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of foolish minds."

In the end, self-reliance is behavior that provides satisfaction to an individual despite what society says or believes. That individual has had enough elbow room to develop a belief system that is unique to him or her. This belief system, in turn, helps the individual to rely on themselves to resist the urge to conform to society's expectations.

Thoreau and Self-Reliance

Henry David Thoreau was a contemporary of Emerson, albeit fourteen years younger. A graduate of Harvard University, Thoreau was introduced to Emerson through mutual friends. Emerson took the younger man under his wings and encouraged him to begin writing. Influenced by Emerson, Thoreau began producing articles and essays wherein he began articulating his own philosophy of self-reliance. Even though he lived in the Emerson household and was the tutor for the Emerson children, Thoreau was not a disciple of Emerson. Instead, he developed a view of self-reliance that built on Emerson's teachings but was also unique and different.

In 1845, Thoreau began living in a small hut that he built for himself on a piece of land that Emerson owned. The hut was located in the Walden Woods near Concord, Massachusetts. The idea was that Thoreau would live in the hut carrying out the precepts of self-reliance that he had developed. Thoreau ended up living in the hut and generally staying in the vicinity of the Walden Woods for over two years. The end result of this experiment was "Walden or A Life in the Woods" one of the most famous and influential books in the world. The ideas that Thoreau expounded in Walden not only influenced the philosophy of self-reliance, they also had a profound influence on environmentalism and the concept of civil disobedience.

Thoreau shared Emerson's belief on the importance of independence, the need for solitude and self-reflection and the significance of developing a personal belief system. However, he took these concepts further by adding his own flourishes and emphasis which differed from Emerson's. For example, Thoreau took the idea of personal independence much further than Emerson. He strongly believed that all individuals have the power, as well as the duty, to defy any action of a governmental entity that they honestly believed was unethical. This concept of "civil disobedience" was rooted in Thoreau's idea that dependence on any entity or group endowed with power over the individual was inherently wrong. This idea came from Thoreau's own personal experience. Massachusetts in the nineteenth century had instituted a poll tax. A poll tax is a fee collected by the state from any individual eligible to vote as a prerequisite to registering to vote. In many states, payment was mandatory whether the individual voted or not. Thoreau felt that the United States involvement in the Mexican American War was unjust. As a result he refused to vote in the general elections or pay the poll tax. Because of this he was arrested and jailed until the tax was paid. Although only jailed for a short period of time (a relative paid the tax against his will), Thoreau's concept of civil disobedience vividly demonstrates the hierarchy of the individual versus government when it comes to independence.

The core of Thoreau's idea of self-reliance lies in the concept of simplicity. Thoreau saw his contemporaries consuming more and more as a result of the production increases brought about by the Industrial Revolution. People were purchasing things on credit that they didn't need simply because they were available and were considered "proper" by society at large. This needless purchasing made the individual dependent upon the manufacturer of the goods purchased, as well as the bank that extended the credit that allowed for the purchases. For example, many of Thoreau's friends had purchased large houses in town by taking out mortgages. They really didn't own the houses, the bank owned the houses. Therefore, Thoreau's friends were living in houses owned by a bank over which they had no control. Their entire lives were dependent upon the whims of other entities. To Thoreau this was anathema, the very antithesis of self-reliance.

The small cabin in that he built in the Walden Woods was a direct result of this realization. When he looked around the walls of his cabin, Thoreau owned everything that he could see. He was secure and dependent upon no one. He achieved this result by simplifying his needs. Instead of wanting more, he started by needing less. He pared away everything in his life that didn't have a direct use. As a result he was able to love simply and securely, producing more than he used, turning a profit and contributing to society as well. Simplicity was the key to self-reliance.

For Thoreau, to need was to be dependent. Therefore, the more that one needed, the less one was self-reliant. This idea wasn't only limited to the economic sphere, it extended to interpersonal relationships as well. If an individual needed the company of other people, then that individual was surrendering a portion of his self-reliance because of that need. It's not that Thoreau didn't enjoy the company of others, he certainly did. It's that he recognized that the need for that company had the ability to undermine independence. It was only by being satisfied with one's own company, in solitude, that could one be free of the dangers of becoming a slave to one's needs.

Both Emerson's and Thoreau's ideas define the concept of self-reliance today. Self-reliance is, first and foremost, about independence. An individual cannot be independent and, therefore, self-reliant by conforming to behavior that is imposed from without. An individual cannot be independent and self-reliant by needing things and people in order to be content. Conformity and need are the enemies of self-reliance.

Solitude and simplicity allow an individual to become self-reliant. Solitude is necessary in order for the individual to be able to reflect on what in life is truly important and to develop a personal belief system based on that reflection. Simplicity is necessary in order to avoid becoming dependent upon possessions that society dictates are needed. Forced association and need are also the enemies of self-reliance.

So, what is self-reliance? You will, by necessity develop your own definition. However, a good definition to start might be that self-reliance is by necessity an independent existence that conforms only to one's personal beliefs. Emerson and Thoreau would be proud.

Why is Self-Reliance Important?

Why is self-reliance important? This may seem an odd question to encounter in a book devoted to teaching the principles of self-reliance. However, it is not as odd, or obvious, as it may seem at first glance. In fact, asking yourself why self-reliance is important is a necessary step to becoming self-reliant. Why? Because there is a paradox at work in the question itself – an important paradox that is critical to a complete understanding the concept of self-reliance. You see, the question shouldn't have to be asked at all.

Independence is the natural state of any creature. This means that any creature in its natural state is also naturally self-reliant. A predator has to rely in its own innate skills in order to bring down prey. Likewise, the prey has no choice but to also rely on its own abilities in order to survive. There are no dependencies in the wild. Each animal is on its own. The playing field is level and each player has an equal chance. It can't be any other way. Let's take a look at an example.

When the territory of a wolf pack overlaps the range of the whitetail deer, the wolves naturally begin to predate the deer. Now, there is a natural balance between predator and prey in any given ecosystem, including this one. If in one year, the wolves bring down more deer than usual, two things happen. First, the number of deer in a given area drops. This means that there are less deer to hunt. There are also less deer to breed and produce more deer. Second, and at the same time, because of the increase in food, the number of wolves that survive a lean winter goes up. It also means that there are more wolves available to breed. Thus, the number of wolves goes up at precisely the same time that the number of deer goes down. As a result, the next year there is less food for a greater number of wolves, so less of the wolves survive the winter. Fewer wolves mean more deer in the following year. More deer mean more wolves in the next cycle, and so it goes. It is a natural homeostasis that favors neither species, yet keeps both in balance. This entire balanced system is built on the self-reliance of the animals involved.

The deer don't worry about needing to be more self-reliant, neither are the wolves. Given this, why does man seem to have a problem when it comes to self-reliance and independence? The answer, in a word, is technology.

Our species was once part of the same sort of homeostatic environment like that of the deer and wolves. We existed in balance with the other creatures in that environment. There were no questions about dependence or conformity. We were completely self-reliant. Then, things changed. First, the environment that we existed in began to change due to alterations in climate. These climate changes, in turn, forced us to evolve. We began to walk upright. We developed strong stereoscopic vision. Our upright posture allowed us to use our hands more. These changes, again in turn, increased the size of our brains. As a result, we began to manipulate the environment. It was at this precise moment that we began to become less self-reliant.

Manipulating the environment through the use of tools not only changed the environment, it also changed use. Where we once relied on our natural skills to survive, we increasingly relied upon our tools to survive. Now, the intelligence that allowed us to develop those tools was indeed a byproduct of our adaptation to a changing environment. However, the environment that we began to create through the use of those tools was not natural. The advantages that we gained through the use of the technology that we developed were dependent on the continued use of that technology. From the first stone ax to the modern conveniences that surround us today, the story has been the same – our lifestyle is dependent upon the tools that allow that lifestyle to exist. Without the tools, we lose the advantage that they give. Therefore, we are dependent on both the tools and the life the tools allow us to live.

This dependence is entirely unique to our species and is of our own making. It is why the very subject of self-reliance exists in the first place. It is why the question “Why is self-reliance important?” needs to be asked. Our technology has separated us from the natural environment. This is why some of us are compelled to return there in order to re-experience a modicum of the self-reliance that was once naturally ours. Our technology requires most of us to dwell in large numbers in great cities in order to be nearer to the employment that produces the goods and services that supply us with the quality of life we have become used to. Yet, being in constant contact with other humans drives some of us again back into the wild places that remain in order to experience the solitude that our ancestors took for granted. It seems that we all, to one extent or another, realize that we are dependent on our technology and that this dependence has made us less self-reliant, both as individuals and as a species. This realization drives some of us to consciously attempt to regain control over our lives by returning to a more natural environment and seeking solitude, among other things. Others unconsciously do the same, perhaps not knowing the real reason why they find solitude and nature so attractive. In the end, lessening the dependence on technology, and on the lifestyle it brings, increases both self-awareness and self-reliance.

So, why is self-reliance important? In the end, it is important because it reminds us of where we came from and how much we have changed the world in the intervening time. It is also important because it also reminds us that our technology is both a benefit and danger and only by being self-reliant can we maximize the former while attempting to minimize the latter.

Six Self-Reliance Lessons

We've taken a look at what self-reliance is by examining the self-reliance principle's laid down by two of the philosophy's biggest proponents. We also took a look at why being self-reliant is important, not from the viewpoint of benefits, but instead from a position of caution. We learned that self-reliance is important precisely because it reminds us of our natural state and the dangers of allowing technology to divorce us from that state. In this section we're going to take a look at six lessons that self-reliance teaches. Why lessons instead of benefits? A benefit implies help, aid or some type of advantage. Self-reliance does not directly do any of these things. Instead, self-reliance is more of a way of living your life that is more closely attuned to the nature of our species. Hence, a self-reliant lifestyle allows us to see how dependence and conformity tend to negatively impact us in multiple ways. So, let's take a look at how.

Independence is Natural

We are naturally independent creatures. This doesn't mean that we don't or can't derive pleasure and satisfaction from others. It is absolutely true that no man is an island. However, modern life can place us in situations where we depend upon others or conform our behavior to others because that kind of behavior is easier or because it is expected of us or because it is so common we simply don't think about what we are doing. Being conscious of our need for self-reliance guards against what is, essentially, knee-jerk conformity and dependence.

We evolved in the wild and that wildness is still a part of us. Wildness is not synonymous with savagery. It does not imply a lack of sophistication. That reaction to the wild only came about with the development of technology. With technology, the elites in society (civil and religious rulers, nobility, the wealthy, etc.) naturally gravitated to cities. In the city, the levers of societal power could be wielded most effectively. An attitude developed among city dwellers that anything that remained outside of the city was of less worth and was inferior.

Our language still reflects this ingrained prejudice. The words pagan and heathen today are mild pejoratives, but they originally simply meant someone who lived in the country. (Pagan is from the Latin word "pagani" meaning country dweller and heathen meaning one who inhabits open country.) The pejorative sense that both words now possess derive from the attitudes of city dwellers towards those who were not city dwellers.

There are countless other examples – hick, bumpkin, yokel, rube, redneck hillbilly – the list goes on. The takeaway point here is that provinciality does not denote inferiority any more than wild denotes savagery. Our natural state is in the wild and it is important for all of us to keep some of that wild alive inside of at all times as self-reliance.

The Dependency Habit

Dependency on anything is a habit. It's not only a habit, but it also a bad one to boot. Dependency fosters weakness. It is the antithesis of free will. It is negative energy that keeps you tied down to the behavior is a circular, downward spiral. Perhaps worst of all, it keeps you from fully reaching your full potential. Dependency is a habit.

Habitual behavior is problematic precisely because it is habitual. It is done without thought. This action without thought is intended. You see, the brain is not only the largest organ in the body, it also the organ that consumes the most energy. It takes calories to think and analyze. Therefore, any thought processes that can be automated also save calories. When our brains were developing, our ancestors lived in a feast or famine cycle when it came to nourishment. One day there would be abundance, the next several days would bring nothing. Automating routine behaviors was a way for the brain to continue to function at a high level when needed during times that calories were scarce. It made no sense wasting precious fuel on behavior that was performed on a daily basis.

This ancient automation process has carried over to us. We've all experienced this. If you've ever driven home from work and realized once you arrived that you have absolutely no recollection of the drive itself, you've seen the process in action. The route from work to home is so routine that there is no need for your brain to devote energy in actively overseeing the task. It has simply become a habit. The problem is that any behavior that is practiced long enough on a regular basis becomes habitual. It's not only positive behaviors that become ingrained, negative behaviors also become routine. This is the case for dependent behavior as well.

The cure for any habit is simply establishing a new pattern of behavior. If the new behavioral pattern is continued on a regular basis, it will replace the old behavior. Take inventory of the things that you do regularly. Look for dependencies. Remember that self-reliance is itself also a habit.

Captain Your Ship

We've all seen Star Trek: The Original Series. Fifty years old, it is a part of the warp and weave of western culture. Its characters have become iconic, and perhaps none more Captain James T. Kirk. Captain Kirk was unflappable. Captain Kirk was clever. Captain Kirk was brave, but more than anything Captain Kirk was about duty. It was his duty to be the Captain of the Enterprise. The ship was his responsibility, as were the lives of the four hundred plus crew members who served under his command. That's why Captain Kirk was in control at all times. His sense of duty and responsibility made him a leader, not a follower. He wasn't afraid of making decisions. He wasn't above bending the rules to accomplish his goals. At all times, he was the Captain.

You are your own Captain. Your life is your Enterprise. It is your duty and responsibility to explore, seek out experience and boldly go wherever your duty and responsibility require you to go. You are in control. Your position requires you to lead and not follow. This means that it falls on your shoulders to make the decisions that will allow you to complete your mission – to live a full and rich life that matters to you.

You need to ask yourself if you are completing your mission. Are you fulfilling the duties and responsibilities that you have towards yourself? What does success mean to you? Are you trying to achieve a success that you've defined or that someone else has defined? Are you living life on your terms or someone else's? These are hard questions, but a true captain does not shy away from making hard decisions and taking difficult actions that will achieve a set goal. You are the Captain of your ship. Set in a course of your own making. Follow your own star.

Dream Out Loud

We all have dreams. We all have aspirations. We all have goals. Some of us reach those goals, meet those aspirations and make those dreams come true. Many more of us do not. What makes the difference between the two groups?

Let's start with a dream. What exactly is it? Is it a fantasy or is it a blueprint for the future – a future way of existing? Is it a comforting wish or is it concrete plan to effectuate positive change in your life. The difference in attitude towards a dream illustrate the differing attitudes about dreaming that exist between those who make dreams reality and those who do not. Dreams must be more than a wish in order to come true. Dreams must be anticipated reality. Dreams must be concrete. Dreams were made to be touched, molded and modeled into what you want them to be. Dreams are maps to get you from where you are to where you want to be. Dreams are real.

A poet once said that in dreams begin responsibilities. Nothing could be more on point or truer. You have a responsibility to dream out loud. What does that mean? It means that you don't keep your dreams secret. You act on them. You treat them like the life plans that they are or should be. If you dream it, you can do it, as long as you're willing to take action on that dream. If you don't take action, you convert your dream into a wish. Wishes are passive and dependent. They rely on outside forces to make them come true. Dream, on the other hand, must be active and independent. You can rely on no one but yourself to actualize them. Dreams depend on self-reliance in order to be made real.

Love Fully

What does it mean to love? Do you love someone mainly for what they do for you? Is love conditioned on a certain set of behaviors? Should love be withheld if those behaviors are not apparent? Is love a fifty/fifty proposition or is it a case of you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. The answers to these questions are important because they establish what kind of love you can expect in your life and what level of satisfaction you will feel due to that love.

If you give only as a bribe to get you are not loving, instead you are manipulating and manipulation is the antithesis of what real love is all about. From a self-reliant viewpoint, love can only be unconditional. There are no strings attached to actions of a lover. You give of yourself as a gift and you expect nothing in return. The ancient Greeks called this type of love "agape". Agape love comes from a place of completeness, of fullness. You take from yourself and give to another because you can. This giving does not leave you in want because you are complete and self-reliant. Your actions are not dependent. You are not looking for anything from the other person. You are content in them and you give because of that contentment. Only a person self-reliant to have enough is capable of loving fully and not dependently.

Change, Don't Manipulate

In life, challenges always arise. There are always decisions to be made. These choices can sometimes be difficult. Sometimes, mistakes are made and there is fallout as a result. It's just the way it is. There's nothing we can do to change the fact that challenges exist. What we can change is how we react to these challenges.

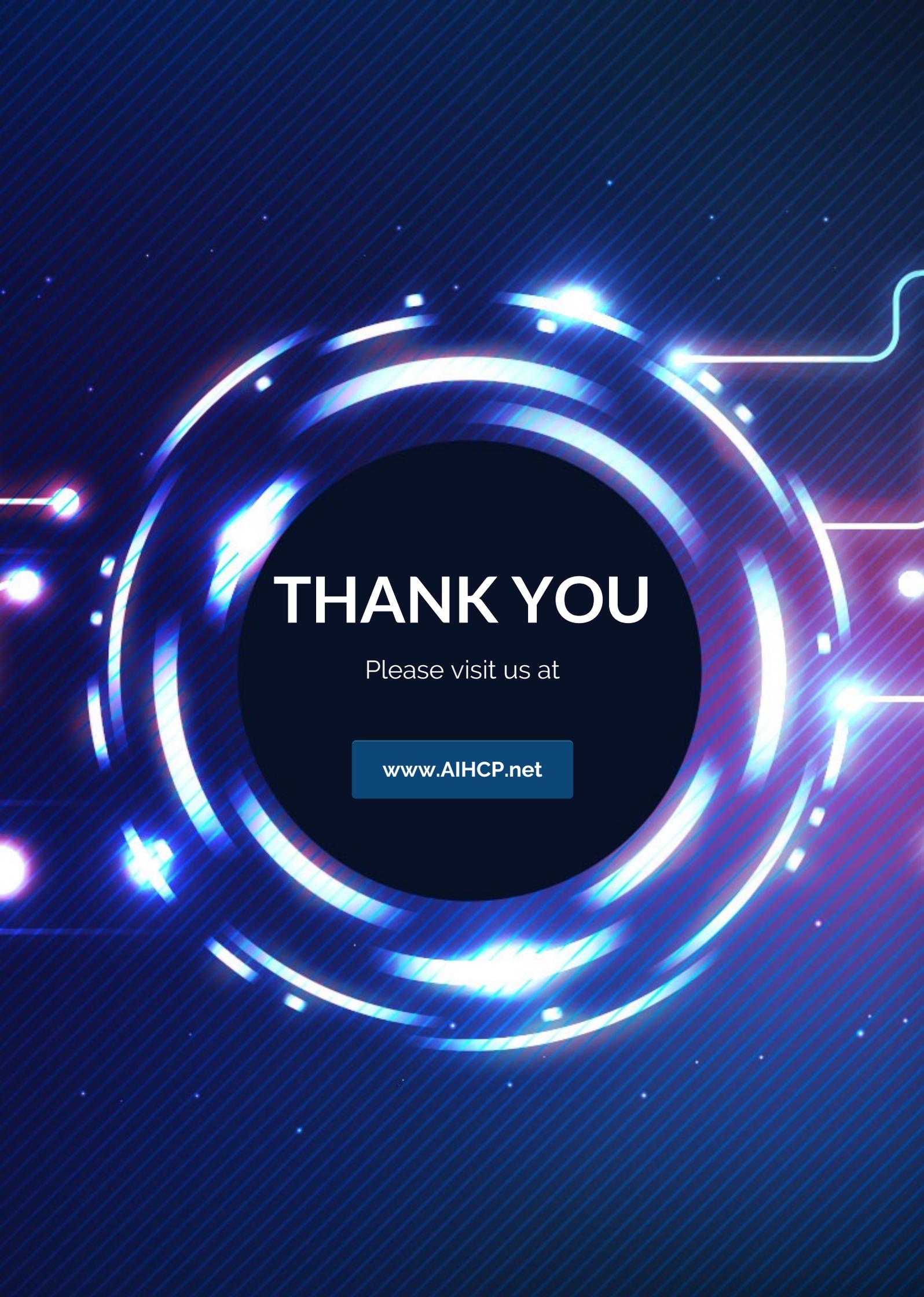
A self-reliant person faces the same sets of challenges as anyone. However, they rely on their own capabilities when making decisions in regard to what they are facing. They take a realistic view of situation, and act accordingly. If they make the wrong decision, then they reexamine their own decision making process and change the behavior that caused the mistake. In other words, they look within for the answers that they need and they make changes from within in order to arrive a correct conclusions in the future.

A dependent person operates differently when facing a challenge. They rely on others to help them make decisions, even when the points of view of these others are clearly not aligned with the person's best interests. This results in an unrealistic view of the situation that inevitably causes the person to take actions that result in failure. When the mistake has been made, the dependent person then uses that fact that others helped them to decide incorrectly as an excuse for their own behavior. Instead of looking within and changing, the dependent looks out and manipulates in order to deflect blame. It is always someone else's fault that things turned out the way they did. Own your decisions, stand behind your actions even if those actions are mistaken. Learn from your mistakes and make future decisions accordingly. Blame no one for what you are responsible for – yourself.

Conclusion

You are now in possession of the knowledge that you need to make yourself less dependent on outside influences and more reliant on yourself. You've learned what self-reliance is by looking at the thoughts of the men who started the self-reliant movement. You've learned why self-reliance is important by looking at the paradoxical relationship our species has with the technology we invented and the changes that technology initiated.

You've learned six key lessons that self-reliance teaches about critical areas in life – love, responsibility, decision-making and more. The time for learning has ended. The time for action has begun. Go out into the world armed with the knowledge you have learned and rely on no one but yourself.



THANK YOU

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