

## **SELF RELIANCE**

A subject that comes up often during therapy sessions is motivation. We need this little magic power-booster for all things big and small in life and are often unaware of how it is quietly sitting in our brains, ticking along and helping us in our daily activities. Yay! Brilliant!

But.... motivation does not just appear out of thin air, it needs to be made - created - born - whatever, and there are a number of ways this can happen. It can come from many wherewithals. For example, confidence, self-worth, love, kindness and all sorts of other wonderful happy hormone-inducing ways of self.

But one thing that has been seeping into my conscious mind, and is so important for me as a therapist to help people to rediscover and build up, is self-reliance..... Having self-reliance means you have the capacity to do the things you want to do without having to check in with anyone else, this leads to confidence and more importantly, helps to achieve your goals. This in turn brings an ENORMOUS dosage of all the happy chemicals we have in our brain to make us feel great...

If you google self-reliance, the first thing that comes up is the late great American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson c.1841, who wrote a well-known essay on the subject, of which he has some points that I like - he explains how life is "learning and forgetting and learning again" . From this, we can allow ourselves to make mistakes and move on. His essay also focuses on individuality and the importance of thinking for yourself. This can offer the opportunities in order to change and improve and move on and all the rest of it. It helps to provide the space in the brain for us to yield more of those wonderful happy-hormones so to keep us in the most fully-aware state of goodness, happiness, fulfilment etc etc etc.

First and foremost, it's not about doing everything yourself. Quite the opposite; it is meaningful that we look at what being self-reliant really looks like and how we are able to build it up within ourselves. After all, being yourself is so much easier to do and so much more freeing! We should embrace all our oddities, be able to

think independently and express ourselves. Who are we to judge?

"Self-sufficiency," Emerson wrote, "gives a person in society the freedom they need to discover one's true self and attain one's true independence."

There are some controversies Emerson wrote about, but this is not what I am talking about today (I do like a soapbox). In the context of what I do, I want to encourage and help people to be their own boss, develop confidence and to live a life where they are able to get out and do the things they want to do.

There are so many buzz words thrown around which can reduce the meaning for the "self" words - self-worth, self-love, self-expression etc. They can be a bit repetitive and lose their message. But self-reliance is something that can be so liberating. It can be small changes, and it can be bigger changes, but it can have the same impact for someone and really be beneficial to us and transform our lives.

Self-reliance is clearly linked with self-definition - we can have the strength to stand up for ourselves and be able to speak up on matters which we have previously felt unable to speak on, which in turn builds confidence and integrity, boosting confidence which is the springboard of all spring boards.

Everything in life is linked - physical → mental → spiritual, and I understand this more and more, but if we are to improve our self-reliance then we need good, healthy neuroplasticity which will have the knock-on effect of being less stressed, having greater clarity, creating resilience, and this can only lead to a calmer, peaceful and more positive attitude to our lives. It's a win-win.