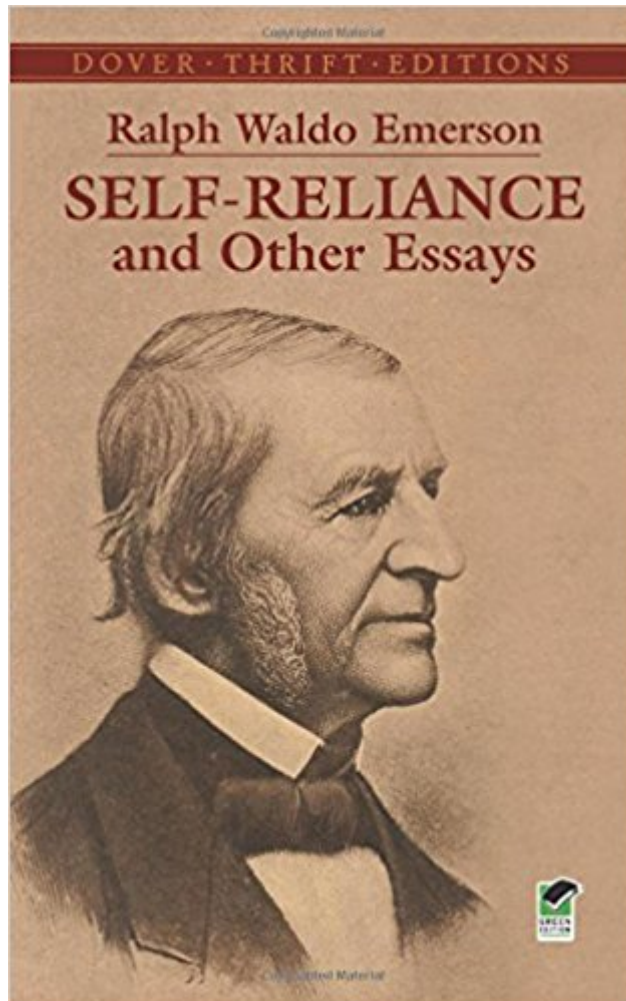


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Self-Reliance And Other Essays (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

Essayist, poet, and philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) propounded a transcendental idealism emphasizing self-reliance, self-culture, and individual expression. The six essays and one address included in this volume, selected from *Essays, First Series* (1841) and *Essays, Second Series* (1844), offer a representative sampling of his views outlining that moral idealism as well as a hint of the later skepticism that colored his thought. In addition to the celebrated title essay, the others included here are "History," "Friendship," "The Over-Soul," "The Poet," and "Experience," plus the well-known and frequently read Harvard Divinity School Address.

Book Information

Series: Dover Thrift Editions

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications; Unabridged edition (October 13, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486277909

ISBN-13: 978-0486277905

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 5.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (221 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

The first time I read "Self-Reliance," I didn't. It was assigned summer reading before my senior year AP English class and I was too busy golfing and playing pick-up basketball to waste my summer on a book written by a dead guy with weird sideburns. At age 23, I read it the second time, printing out a public domain edition using a temp job's laser printer then plowing through it on my lunch break. This week was my third time to read it and by far the most valuable thanks to the Domino Project's beautiful new special edition. Stunning design by my friend Alex Miles Younger places all of Emerson's original text on the right side of the page in this slim 73 page volume, with notable pull-quotes from the book as well as complementary and supplementary quotes from famous people on the left side. OK, fine, it's a bit ironic that a book that preaches you needing to think for yourself highlights the lines that you SHOULD think are the most important. Except for the fact, those ARE

the most important lines. They were to me at least. I somewhat always dismissed and ignored Emerson because I thought he was like his friend Thoreau, who I kind of hate. But, whether it was because of my age or this special edition, "Self-Reliance"--finally!--resonated with me on this third read like few books have ever before. (It could be a fitting companion to my beloved Meditations (Modern Library) even.) "Self-Reliance" is truly a book about artistic confidence and belief in one's own genius: "To believe your own thoughts, to believe what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, that is genius."

Get ready for a different reading experience. I mean, actually thinking while you're reading, because you'll see different kinds of words and they'll be in a strange order than what you're used to. This book wasn't written yesterday. You're in a different time and place when you read this one. And that's what makes it so much more meaningful. You're reading poetry (what else would you expect from Emerson?) which means that every word was carefully chosen, and each sentence has a deep meaning. You'll feel different after reading this book, as if you've been traveling through time and finding treasures of wisdom that have been preserved for us today. I appreciate the layout of this book where each left page (as the book is open faced) contains large red print of a key quote that is also highlighted in red on the right page where it is placed among the rest of the text. This actually helped me read it and glean the main points. The other reading help from the publisher (The Domino Project) was a quote on every other page from a variety of notable individuals that correlated somewhat with the message Emerson was conveying, except it was in language easier to digest. This helped clarify the message and made it sink in better for me. I shouldn't start quoting the book because I could go on and on, but here's one to give you a taste: "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." By just typing that sentence, I understood it better. Every sentence is like that. It's not a long book, 73 pages, and half of those contain the Emerson text.

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