



The end of DIY

Description

Self-reliance is one of the hallmarks of mature adulthood. By most accounts it takes time to develop. It is often associated with access to nature.



Outdoor pursuits fall into the orbit of “rational” outdoor

recreation as promoted by 19th century reformers intent on helping the working classes do something healthy with their spare time.

Outdoor sports, walking in the countryside and more adventurous pursuits are good for you and promote the ability to be independent. You learn not to rely on the comforts of city living and its attendant support structures “including minders, helpers, guides, counsellors, authority figures and the state.

Of course, to develop “self-reliance” is really to shift reliance structures from the paternal/maternal to teams of peers and contexts of mutual support, and to assume a demeanour that complains less, takes responsibility and gets on with the job at hand.

Technologies confound this journey to self-reliance somewhat. In the face of our increasing dependence on digital technologies it gets harder to maintain the illusion, let alone the reality, of self reliance.

So there's a conflict. Those of us who believe in the primacy of the individual are self-sufficient, and independent become aware of our dependence on transportation systems, networks, smartphones, and other accoutrements of the modern world.

Techno-reliance

Nature comes to stand in for self-reliance. It's the site in which our independence is most clearly exercised. Amongst all the technologies on which we rely, our phones and other personal devices demonstrate the countervailing condition of technological reliance. So no wonder we are conflicted in our love affair with our devices.

I think there are two main ways that digital devices offend our ideal of self-reliance.

- The first is via the functions provided by such technologies of information, communication, navigation, and countless other app functionalities. We can't do without many of them, or at least we let ourselves be persuaded that they are indispensable. See post: [A nation addicted to smartphones](#).
- The second affront to self-reliance is our increasing dependence on tech support from other human beings. It's not just that you have to learn how to select, purchase and use these things, but there are upgrades to download and install, new access protocols to negotiate, new peripherals and features to purchase. Many people need help with these challenges from others.

I attended a [conference](#) a few weeks ago on ageing, which inevitably included informal discussions about technology, where I discovered that **gerontechnology** is a thing with a [journal](#) as well. The situation is particularly acute with older people, but not exclusively so. As any educator knows, not everyone is willing to ask for help or to play the student. Calling on tech-support after all challenges our self-regard (especially if we can't follow their instructions) and our sense of self-reliance.



Note

- The [Outward Bound website](#) list training in self-reliance amongst the skill set it imparts to leaders in training: "Skill development is the backbone of all Outward Bound wilderness expeditions. You learn to read a map, develop teamwork skills, and find hidden reserves of inner strength just when you think your tank is empty. Wilderness Skills: You learn wilderness skills such as

shouldering your pack, paddling your boat and surviving and thriving in the wind, rain and cold.

Team Skills: You set goals and make decisions as a group while relying on compassion and tolerance to transform from a group into a team.

Leadership Skills: You practice personal leadership, initiative, good judgment and self-reliance.â?•
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Category

1. Nature

Tags

1. recreation
2. self-reliance

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