

Unit 8

Self-Reliance

Introduction

In Grade 10, you discussed the significance of self-reliance, examples of dependency and decision-making. In this unit, you will discuss the same issues in more detail. Self-reliance is being dependent on one's own power, resources and judgments. It is an attribute shared by both individuals and communities. Individuals or communities that lack self-reliance are dependent on others to satisfy their needs.

Lessons

1. Attributes of Self-reliance
2. Dependency and its Consequences
3. Self-reliance and Decision-making

- discuss dependency and its consequences.
- analyze the importance of self-reliance for decision-making.

What you will learn

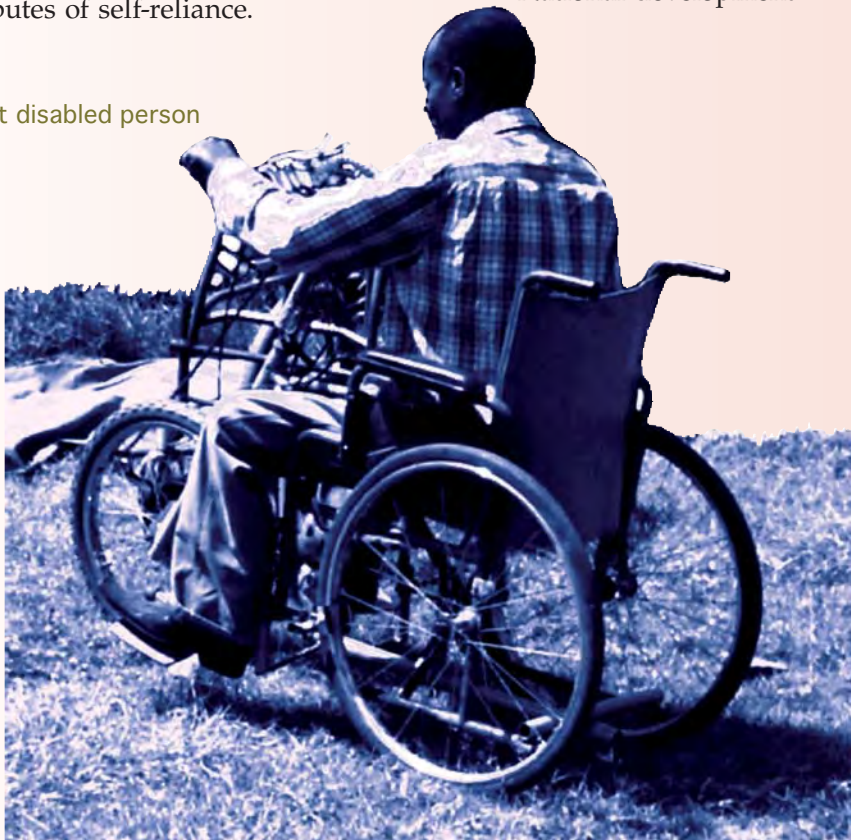
You will:

- explain attributes of self-reliance.

Key words and concepts

- Assertiveness
- Flexibility
- National development
- Public welfare
- Rational decision
- Rightful perception

A self-reliant disabled person



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LESSON

Attributes of Self-reliance

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- define rightful perception about oneself or self-awareness.
- explain some features of assertiveness.
- identify the outcomes when we rely on others.
- describe the advantages of not being dominated by others.

- What are the main characteristics of assertive person?
- How can individuals free themselves from being dominated by others?

Self-reliance

As individuals it is important that we all develop the ability to be self-reliant. We all have to make our own way in the world and cannot expect others to carry us through this life. It is necessary for us to develop the skills to be independent both in our thinking and in the way that we live.

Self-awareness includes recognition of our abilities, strengths and weaknesses. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others. Some people are not prepared to face the truth about themselves. For example, a student may use his perceived self-image as a fun-loving person as an excuse for doing poorly in his

school grades. In reality, he does not like working hard, doing his homework or studying for the exams. When you know who you are, you may have to change things about yourself. Some people do not want to change because change demands effort. Self-awareness demands honesty and courage to get in touch with what we are thinking and feeling in order to face the truth about ourselves.

Self-awareness has many benefits. Knowing yourself includes being aware of your strengths. When we know what we are good at, then we can make the most of these abilities in order to help both ourselves and others. The better you understand yourself, the better you are able to accept or change who you are. If you fail to know yourself, you will be influenced, and possibly dominated, by others. As we move through the 21st century, the knowledge-based economy demands that we upgrade our knowledge and skills to keep up with an ever-changing society. However, the starting point should be the knowledge of oneself as a unique individual and how one relates to this new economy. Try to answer these questions: Who am I? Where have I been? Where am I going? Explore your capability to chart your own destiny and realize your potentials.

In your quest to know yourself, do not think of yourself more highly than you should. In other words, do not have a superiority attitude. Rather have a moderate view of your strengths. On the other hand do not exaggerate your weaknesses and look down on yourself, but do not excuse your

Attributes of Self-reliance

weaknesses. You need to be realistic about both your strengths and weaknesses if you are to know your true self and develop as a person.

Identify two strengths and one weakness that you have.



How do you think your friends describe you?

What are your plans for the future? What steps do you need to take to achieve your dreams?

Assertiveness

To assert means to state an opinion and claim a right. If you assert yourself, you behave in a way that expresses your confidence, presence and power to earn you recognition. Assertiveness is standing up for yourself and making your voice heard. It is expressing your opinions, needs and feelings, without ignoring the needs of others. Assertiveness is necessary for making yourself noticed and getting people to listen to you.

Assertive behaviour includes:

- Taking a positive role in conversations;
- Sharing feelings, opinions and experiences with others;
- Making requests and asking for favours;
- Refusing others' requests if they are too demanding;
- Questioning rules or traditions that do not make sense or do not seem fair;
- Addressing issues that bother you.

Many people are concerned that if they assert themselves others will think of their behaviour as aggressive. But there is a difference between being assertive and aggressive. Assertive people state

their opinions, while still being respectful to others. Aggressive people attack or ignore others' opinions in favour of their own while passive people do not state their opinions at all.

How Assertiveness Can Change Your Life

Being assertive can lead to a more rewarding life. For example, it can improve your relationships with friends and family, and introduce you to new personal or career opportunities. While the decision to develop your assertiveness is a personal one, the rewards can be much greater than personal satisfaction. Being assertive not only improves your self-respect, but also earns you respect from others. The change in your behaviour can positively influence those around you, both in their behaviour toward you and towards others.

How people deal with personal boundaries, their own and those of other people, is important for getting on in life.

- Passive communicators do not defend their own personal boundaries. They allow other people to harm or unduly influence them. They are unlikely to risk trying to influence anyone else.
- Aggressive people do not respect the personal boundaries of others and thus are liable to harm others while isolating themselves as a consequence.
- When assertive people communicate, they speak their minds to influence others, but they do it in a way that respects the personal boundaries of others. They also defend themselves against aggressive incursions and may try to include the views of passive group members.

Attributes of Self-reliance

The table below shows the differences between passive, assertive and aggressive behaviour. From these descriptions, identify what your characteristics are. How do you think you can improve your behaviour? Share your ideas with your neighbour.

| Passive Person | Assertive Person | Aggressive Person |
|--|---|--|
| Is afraid to speak up | Speaks openly | Interrupts — 'talks over' others |
| Speaks softly | Uses a conversational tone with confidence | Speaks loudly |
| Looks down or away | Maintains good eye contact | Glares and stares at others |
| Shows little or no expression | Shows expressions that match the message | Shows aggressive/threatening expressions |
| Slouches and withdraws | Relaxes and adopts an open posture and expressions | Stands rigidly, crosses arms, invades others' personal space |
| Isolates self from groups | Mixes well with groups | Controls groups |
| Agrees with others, despite feelings | Speaks to the point, agrees when ideas of others are convincing | Disagrees and does not listen to the points of others |
| Sees self as inferior | Values self equal to others | Looks down on others |
| Hurts self to avoid hurting others | Values feelings of others | Ignores the feelings of others |
| Does not reach goals and may not have a set goal | Balances achievement of goals with relationships with others | Reaches goals but hurts others in the process. |

CASE STUDY

Tolla finds the clock, that he has just bought, is broken. He and his friend go to the store to return the broken clock. After being turned away by the clerk, Tolla asks to speak to the manager and convinces him that the store should return his money. Finally Tolla manages to get his money back. At the same time he feels good about standing up for his rights and his friend is impressed with the way Tolla handled the situation.

The next day, Tolla feels more confident at work and suggests an idea for a new project. His boss likes the suggestion and asks Tolla to oversee it.

Meanwhile, Tolla's friend, who doesn't understand

an electricity bill she has received, remembers how he handled the situation in the store yesterday and calls the billing company for an explanation. She feels better about herself when she get an answer and more confident about speaking up.

Is Tolla a good example of an assertive person?

Why is it important to be assertive when your rights, or the rights of others, are violated?

What is the difference between being polite and being passive?

Attributes of Self-reliance

Avoid the tendency to live on others

An independent life is one that is lived at a pace and in a place of your own choice. It is a life where you are rewarded for the work that you do. You also are responsible for risks that you take. You are free to choose what you want after careful considerations. You recognize that you have rights that are inherent and not dependent on the recognition of others. In short, you live your own life.

Most importantly, living an independent life means living on your own terms, not subject to others. Being subject to others is a result of not making decisions of your own, but passively accepting the decisions of others. We are not anyone's subject, and should avoid being taken advantage of without good reason. A subjected human is someone who can never achieve a free and prosperous life. It is a

life lived for someone else rather than for yourself. We have responsibilities towards others and need to consider our role in society. However, being independent means that we can choose the direction our life takes.

Characteristics of an independent person

Independent people:

- have their own views, explore different options, for example, in listening to music, reading books and meeting people. They do this because they are hungry for new ideas and want to understand, explore and appreciate the richness of life.
- desire to earn their living from their own efforts and expect to be rewarded for them.

CASE STUDY

Atitegeb is a widow living in a rural area. She has two sons and a daughter. After the death of her husband she made an effort to bring up her children and to improve her economic status. She knows, from previous experience, the fertility of her land and how to irrigate it.

She is polite and disciplined as well as being very strong at convincing others, including the agricultural development workers and other farmers. They are always surprised by her agricultural knowledge and skills as well as her confidence in using them. She is always ready to learn new farming methods from other farmers and development workers.

The productivity of her land has increased from season to season and she has become one of the few surplus producers of her locality. She sends her children to school because she knows the value of education. Her children are among the best students

of the school. From time to time Atitegeb diversifies her agriculture beyond cultivation. With the help of her children she begins to fatten sheep and oxen. Atitegeb is one of the Ethiopian farmers who was given an award by the government because of her effort in increasing agricultural productivity.

Which quality of Atitegeb do you value the most? Why?

What do you imagine Atitegeb's life was like before the death of her husband? How does this compare to the present?



What are the advantages of Atitegeb's interactions with the other farmers and development workers?

What can you learn from the life story of Atitegeb?

Attributes of Self-reliance

They do not desire a subsidy, unwarranted payment or handouts. They will plan for their future by saving.

- value achievement and do not seek power over others; they recognize that the purpose of life is to realize one's own potential.
- choose their own lifestyle. They seek an existence that provides adequate time for relaxation and enjoyment of life, not rushing through life, or working like a slave.

Self-confidence

If you find yourself satisfying your own needs, this would definitely develop self-confidence. It could

be said that self-confidence and self-reliance are complementary. Self-confidence is essentially a trust in yourself and your inherent competencies, which result in a high level of security. Self-confident people believe in helping themselves.



A productive farmer

REMEMBER

- ❑ Rightful perception includes recognition of our personality, strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes. The better you understand yourself, the better you are able to accept and develop yourself as a person.
- ❑ Assertiveness is standing up for your right to be treated fairly. It is expressing your opinions, needs, and feelings, without ignoring or hurting the opinions, needs and feelings of others.
- ❑ An independent life is one that is lived at a pace and in a place of your own choice.
- ❑ Self-confidence is trust in oneself and one's competence that results in a high level of security.

LESSON 2

Dependency and its Consequences

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain how dependency resulted in risks to public welfare.
- explain how dependent nations are subjected to interference from outside.
- argue how dependency retarded national development.

How do you know whether a country is dependent or self-reliant?

What are the consequences of dependency at country level?

How does dependency affect the decision-making of a country in its domestic affairs?

Dependency is the notion that a country fully relies on the support of other countries and international organizations in many different ways. They may rely on them for food donations, financial donations and skill support. This increases the risk that the dependent country will not develop the ability to support itself and may even become lazy and not want to support itself. This can also create a power imbalance between the dependent country and donor states.

Dependency results in risks to public welfare for the following major reasons:

- Poor nations provide free market access to wealthy nations. This means people in poor countries buy manufactured goods, obsolete or used goods from wealthy nations. From these trade relations, rich nations make

profit and enjoy a high standard of living.

- Wealthy nations actively perpetuate a state of dependence by various means. This influence may be multifaceted involving economics, the media, politics, banking and finance, education, culture, sport and all aspects of human resource development (including recruitment and training of workers).

Dependency also results in being susceptible to interference from outside in the following ways:

- financial and technological penetration by the developed capitalist countries.
- producing an unbalanced economic relationship within the poor countries and between them and the wealthy nations.
- limitations on self-sustained growth of poor countries.

Due to the way the world economy works these days, poor countries become subject to the will of rich countries and are frequently exploited. This increases the stagnation of their economy and, as a consequence, the social welfare of the people suffers. This in turn increases the dependency of the country as they then need more support in order to look after their people.

There are many different and conflicting ideas on how developing countries can alleviate the effects of this system. Several protectionist or nationalist practices were adopted at one time or another by such countries. Some of them are listed below:

- Promoting domestic industry and manufactured goods. By providing subsidies

Dependency and its Consequences

to protect domestic industries, poor countries can sell their own products rather than simply exporting raw materials.

- Limiting the importation of luxury items and manufactured goods that can be produced within the country, the country can reduce its spending.
- Taking steps to keep foreign companies and individuals from operating businesses that draw on the resources of the country with the money being channeled out of the country.
- Forcibly taking over foreign-owned

companies on behalf of the state, in order to keep profits within the country.

Read the previous list of protectionist practices and discuss the following questions:

- Do you think that they help to minimize dependency of poor countries on wealthy countries?
- Do you think any of the practices are helpful to promote the development of poor countries like Ethiopia? Explain your answer.
- Is there an alternative?

CASE STUDY

A Lesson from History

Emperor Menilek wanted to modernize the country. He attempted to introduce modern systems and import goods from abroad. He introduced new transportation and communication systems, clothing, tools, fire arms and drinks. No attempt was made to develop or modernize practices and industries within the country. The indigenous way of producing crafts, weaving, ploughing, even cooking and brewing were not modified or encouraged, rather they either continued as they were, or gave way to imported materials.

The consumption of imported items began to be considered as an indication of modernity. Ethiopian local drinks remained as they were or were replaced by imports. The same is true of Ethiopian weaving. The present textile factories are not the results of local

evolution, rather they were directly introduced from abroad. These factors led to the Ethiopian producers and consumers being dependent on foreign imports, thus weakening the local industries.

How did this experience affect the local economic interdependence?

Has this economic system resulted in dependency? Explain your answer.

If you had been an economic advisor for Emperor Menilek what would you have recommended regarding his attempts at modernization?

REMEMBER

- ❑ Developing countries are highly dependent on rich nations and international organizations.
- ❑ Dependency results in risks to public welfare and leads to interference from outside.
- ❑ Dependency will also lead to a tendency to work for the will of others, which results in backwardness, stagnation of the economy and social welfare in developing nations.

LESSON 3

Self-reliance and Decision-making

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain what making decisions by oneself is.
- discuss the main features of rational and informed decisions.
- explain how flexibility is important for decision-making.

When was the last time you had to make an important decision?

How did you decide what to do?

You studied the relationship between self-reliance and decision-making in Grade 10. Decision-making needs different pre-conditions. One of them is self-reliance that can be manifested in the form of self-confidence and positive perceptions about oneself. Decision-making helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives, assessing the different options and reflecting on the consequences of our decisions. Decision-making can be regarded as a thought process leading to the selection of a course of action. Decisions may be made based on facts,

opinions and feelings. Making a decision implies that there are alternative choices to be considered, and in such cases we want not only to identify as many of these alternatives as possible but to choose the one that best fits with our goals, desires, lifestyle, values and so on.

Decision-making is the process of sufficiently reducing uncertainty and doubt about alternatives to allow a reasonable choice to be made from among them. This definition stresses the information gathering function of decision-making. It should be noted here that uncertainty is reduced rather than eliminated. Very few decisions are made with absolute certainty because complete knowledge about all the alternatives is seldom possible. Thus, every decision involves a certain amount of risk. Risk and uncertainty can create anxiety, yet they are necessary components for an active life.

Sometimes you come across situations that need immediate decisions with limited options. In these kinds of situations, you have to try and make the best decision.

CASE STUDY

One day Lambebo was walking down the street when he came across a briefcase. He looked around to see whether or not anyone was there. There was no one. When he opened the briefcase he found money and a mobile phone. He also found a business card with a name and telephone number.

Discuss the following questions in groups



- What choices does Lambebo have?
- What will be the consequence of each decision?
- What would you choose to do?

Self-reliance and Decision-making

When making a decision, you have to be sure that this is going to be the best decision in the given situation. In order to make the most of your situation, you should find out as much information as possible. It is important to be informed of what choices you have and consider the consequences of each choice. From this information you should then be able to decide the best course of action, taking into consideration the risks. When making decisions there are times when you will need to take risks and often you will reap the rewards. However, there may be consequences when the risk is high; it is up

to you to decide. Often taking a risk is better than not making any decision at all.

Flexibility is often key to making effective decisions. When we are faced with a choice we are often restrained by the amount of time that we have to gather knowledge and become informed. We may also be faced with other limitations on resources in which case what we want may not be available or practical. As we are rarely the only people to be affected by a decision, it is important to consider the impact that it will have on those around. Flexibility is an important attribute of a good decision maker.

CASE STUDY

An Interesting Ambition

Shmebo is a preparatory school student who scored a very good GPA in his tenth grade matriculation. He wants to be an outstanding individual who has a great respect among his community. He has an ambition to alleviate the problem in his community. He is in a dilemma as to whether he will study for a long time at university or take a short-term placement in vocational training; both will enable him to begin working for improving social and economic conditions. He is not

sure whether the short-term training would enable him to overcome all the challenges he will face while working. He also needs social prestige which, most of the time, comes after university studies. He raises the issue with his friends at different times and gets different ideas and advice that made him even more confused.



Students discussing their future plans

What are Shmebo's choices?



What might be the outcome of each?

What are the risks and will he need to be flexible about anything?

If you were one of Shmebo's friends what advice would you give him?

REMEMBER

- ❑ Decision-making involves identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of the decision maker.
- ❑ Sufficiently reducing uncertainty and doubt about alternatives will allow a reasonable choice to be made.
- ❑ Every decision involves a certain amount of risk but it can be reduced.
- ❑ It is better to take a risk than not make any decision at all.

UNIT SUMMARY

Rightful perception includes recognition of our personality, strengths and weaknesses. The better you understand yourself, the better you are able to accept or change who you are. Assertiveness means standing up for your right to be treated fairly. It is about expressing your opinions, needs and feelings, without hurting others. An independent life is one that is lived at a pace and in a place of your own choice. Self-confidence is trust in oneself and one's competence which results in a high level of security.

Developing countries are highly dependent on rich nations and international organizations. This results in a risk to public welfare and being susceptible to interference from outside. It also results in a tendency to work for the will of others, which results in backwardness, stagnation of the economy and social welfare in developing nations.

Decision-making is about identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of the decision maker. Sufficiently reducing uncertainty and doubt about alternatives will allow a reasonable choice to be made. Every decision involves a certain amount of risk but it can be reduced. It is better to take a risk than not make any decision at all.

GLOSSARY

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Assertiveness: | The quality of behaving confidently and without being frightened to say what is wanted or believed. |
| Flexibility: | Is being able to change one's mind or decision according to situations. |
| National development: | The economic, cultural and social development of a country. |
| Public welfare: | The well-being of the people in general rather than being limited to a particular individual or group of people. |
| Rational decision: | A decision based on reason rather than emotion. |
| Rightful perception: | A belief or opinion based on facts and evidence. |

UNIT REVIEW EXERCISES

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

Part I – Multiple choice

- Which of the following goes with assertiveness?
 - maintaining good eye contact while speaking
 - considering feelings of others
 - hurting oneself to make others happy
 - accepting ideas of others when they are convincing
 - all of the above
- Which of the following are not characteristic of a passive person?
 - ignoring feelings of others
 - mixing well with other people

- (c) speaking openly and firmly
- (d) looking down on others
- (e) considering self as inferior

Part II – Short answers

1. Why is it important to be assertive?
2. Some people have a tendency to live off

others. What might be the impact of this tendency?

3. What is the relationship between self-confidence and self-reliance?
4. Some scholars argue that there is a dependency relation between poor and rich countries of the world. Do you agree? Explain your answer.

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