

RAISING YOUR STANDARDS IS THE KEY TO PERSONAL PROGRESS

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If you're not as successful as you'd like to be, your standards are probably too low. If being 20 pounds overweight is acceptable to you, you're probably 20 pounds overweight. If living in your mom's basement is okay with you, then you'll likely be down there until you're 40.

Most people believe they're being reasonable, or non-selfish, when they set low standards. But you get what you tolerate in life.

Having high standards is a way of respecting yourself and getting the most out of your life. Life will rarely give you more than you demand from it. Ensure you're demanding enough.

Try these ideas:

1. **Identify the area of your life you'd like to change.** Of course, you could raise all of your values. There's nothing wrong with that. However, **your short-term success will be greater if you focus your attention on a single part of your life.** It might be finances, relationships, health, or any other category.
2. **Set a new minimum.** Let's imagine that you want to improve your finances. You might need new standards for your income, rate of savings, and spending. Take a look at all the items that are related to your area of focus and set a new minimum for what you're willing to tolerate.
 - Do you think Donald Trump would be satisfied with only earning \$250,000 per year? Do you think Warren Buffett would be satisfied with a 2.2% return on his portfolio? Of course not, and that's a big part of the

reason they're wealthy.

3. Begin making changes. New standards are a starting point. Now, you have to make actual changes to your life and behavior to meet those new minimums. If you need to increase your income to meet your new standard, it might be necessary to look for a new job or to create a business you can run on the side.

- **A standard is really just a goal. What do you need to do in order to reach that goal?**

4. Incorporate those changes into your identity. You can force yourself to go to the gym a few times, or to save an extra \$200 each month, but it's not easy to make those changes stick. **You have to believe that it's part of who you are.** Here's how you can accomplish that:

- If you're beginning a gym habit, make a note of each time you set foot in the gym. Say to yourself, "See that? I'm the type of person that goes to the gym. I go even if I don't feel like going. That's who I am."
- It sounds silly, but it works over time. Keep proving to yourself that you're the type of person that does that behavior religiously.

5. Monitor yourself. Measure your progress and congratulate yourself for it. Give yourself a verbal reward. Jump up and down and smile. Ensure you're enjoying your progress. You'll be more likely to stick with the changes you're making.

6. Keep going. You'll probably raise your standards many times over your life. Pick a new area of your life to address and go for it. You're turning yourself into a more successful person with each iteration.

Raising your standards is the first step to improving the quality of your life. Most people don't consider their standards at all or have standards that are far too low to live the type of life they desire.

Demand more from yourself, the people around you, and from life. You'll struggle to receive more than you're willing to tolerate.