



EPISODE NO. 309

5 Standards To Upgrade Immediately

Are there things or maybe even people that you're tired of tolerating in your life? If so, it's time to raise your standards. In this episode, I'm going to talk about five specific standards that I think you should upgrade immediately. Let's dive in.

Welcome to The School of Self-Image, where personal development meets style. Here's your hostess, master life coach, Tonya Leigh.

Hello, my beautiful friends. How's everybody doing? How are you feeling? I am feeling great. I am about to leave for Scottsdale for the SOSI Desert Live event and I just have to just do a big shout out to my team. I have been to quite a few events and I don't know of anyone that does events like me and the SOSI team does an event. We know how to host an experience that is unique and transformative and unlike anything else that you'll find out there, and it's happening next weekend. I'm so excited.

The theme of this event is all around how to live your stylish life. And do you know what is at the core of living a stylish life? Having standards. Now, the truth is we all have standards in our life, but a lot of us have standards that are holding us back because life does not give you what you want, it gives you what you expect and what you expect is a reflection of your standards. The definition of a standard is what is considered to be normal or average. Do you know what determines your standards in life? Your self image.

Your self image has standards that it's always working to be consistent with because that is how you see yourself.

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Let me give you an example, because I'm always doing this work right alongside all of you all. Back in 2020, I had an old Jeep Cherokee and I loved that car. I bought it brand new, it was paid off. But to say that it was not up to standard is an understatement. In fact, my friend Brooke got in the car one day and if y'all know my friend Brooke, she's very fancy and she was like, "What is that smell?" She's like, "It smells like ass in here." It probably did because I had used that car to take my dogs back and forth to the lake and they were wet and it did have an odor. I mean I kept the car clean, but when I looked at that car, it was like a wake up moment.

You all have probably heard who have listened to this podcast for any amount of time, 2020 was a big year of me raising my standards. When I thought about the version of me that was in the future, she didn't ride around in a stinky car. In fact, it was so opposite of who I am. I'm sure the valet guys at my building looked at me and the way I'm dressed and the way I carry myself, and then they were looking at this old stinky car that I was riding around in and just sensing that it didn't match up and it didn't. But even though I had raised my standards and other areas of my life, this was one standard that I had not yet raised. It did impact how I saw myself. It did impact my self image.

One of the stories that it reinforced for myself is that I shouldn't want for too much. Can some of you all relate to that one? I mean, that was the year that I moved into a penthouse and my business was taking off and I'm like, "Whoa, hold up. I shouldn't want for too much. Things are so good, calm down." This is what we do to ourselves. So, what I did is I went and bought a new car. It was ridiculous. It was an Audi SQ8, beautiful car. That experience really changed my self image. I had a new standard of what was normal and average in my life. I don't drive old stinky cars. Now, don't get me wrong, an older car that's been well cared for, that's like vintage and doesn't stink, I'm all about, but I'm talking about old stinky cars and it's just a no, it's not who I am anymore.

I raised that standard for myself and by raising that standard, I started to change my self image. You will know your standards when you start paying attention to what you're tolerating. We don't want to live a life where we're tolerating things. We want to raise our standards so that we feel really good about who we're being in our lives and what we're allowing into our lives and what we're saying yes to and what we're saying no to.

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Recently, I had someone ask me a really great question because standards is something that I talk about a lot and she asked me, she was like, "Okay Tonya, if you were to raise five standards immediately that would have the biggest impact on your self image and on your life, what would those be?" That was such a good question and I've been thinking about how I want to answer that. In fact, when she asked me, I'm like, I'm going to have to think about this one because there's so many standards that we can raise, but which ones would have the biggest impact on our lives if we were to raise them immediately?

I started to think about my own journey from where I come from and who I've been, to who I am now and the life that I've created, and I asked myself, which areas did I stop tolerating certain behaviors that had the biggest impact on my life? These are the five that I came up with. Now, they may not be the same five for you, but if you're looking for some direction and you're wanting to have some big changes in your life and you're ready to up-level your standards, AKA what you are and are not willing to tolerate, here's what I suggest.

The first one is actually the most important one, and that is your self opinion standard. What do you accept as normal and average as it relates to how you see yourself, your opinion of yourself? If you are feeling discouraged, if you're feeling frustrated, if you are feeling a lack of confidence, if you're feeling insecure, it tells me that most likely you have a low standard as it relates to your self opinion, meaning you allow your brain to offer you thoughts without question that don't serve you. You sit around and let your brain give you thoughts and you don't even question them, you just accept them as truth. 99% of the time, they're not going to be amazing thoughts because your brain doesn't automatically go to amazing thoughts when you haven't been practicing them, right?

You have to create new neural pathways so that your brain defaults to better opinions of yourself. But if you haven't been doing this work, your brain is probably going to go to places where my brain used to go: you're too fat, you're not enough, you're too much, you don't have what it takes. Who do you think you are? You're going to fail. I'm just sitting here and trying to think of all the thoughts. It's a lot. But I'm sure you know because you probably have struggled with the same once. What we do is we sit around and our brain offers us these low standard opinions and we never question them. We allow those opinions to determine our self image and therefore, how we show up in our lives. We end up not creating what we want because our standards are so low in terms of how we talk to ourselves and how we see ourselves.

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We also look to other people to have great opinions of us, so that then we can have great opinions of us. If someone comes along and they don't have a great opinion of you, it rocks your world because you depend on that to tell you what you should think of you. But what if you didn't? What if you just decided how you wanted to think about yourself on purpose? What if you just decided, here are the top 10 opinions I want to have of myself, and you focused on them and you practiced them and you didn't allow the other lower opinions to be something that you entertain. You raise your standard as to what you tolerate from yourself about yourself.

Imagine who you would be and what you would be capable of if you had your own back and you believed in yourself and you didn't tolerate poor opinions about yourself any longer. Let me tell you all, that is a choice. It's a choice and a practice. You decide and then you practice that decision until it's no longer requiring effort, it's just what you do. It's just who you are to have a high opinion of yourself. That is the number one standard I would love to see us all adopt, the standard of having high opinions of ourselves.

Standard number two that will change your life if you raise it immediately, and that is your style standard. What is acceptable to you in terms of your style? What you wear, how you carry yourself, how you show up, all of that is your style. What do you see as normal and average as it relates to your style? And do you like that answer? Do you like how you're showing up? Does how you are showing up confirm the vision of the life you want and the woman you need to be to create that vision? If not, you need to raise your style standard. You need to stop allowing yourself to show up in any old thing, to wear the hole-y sweatpants, to wear the big baggy clothes, to slouch in a room full of people to keep yourself small.

What if you just didn't tolerate that anymore? What if you had a conversation with yourself that went something like this? I want you to think about it's the version of you who knows that you're capable of more, that knows you're worthy of more, that knows that you are meant to live a life bigger than what you're living, talking to the version of you right now. She would say something like, "Hey, listen up. We're about to get rid of all these janky clothes because we know that this is not how you show up in the world. And not only that, you're going to stop slouching in a room full of people. You're going to carry yourself with pride and confidence and we are going to make this world our runway. That's what's about to happen."

You set a standard. I like to call it a style minimum of what is allowed. I love having a style minimum that says, this is the worst you will ever see me. This is the worst I will ever see myself.

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For me, it's always my workout clothes and even those are well thought out and they're cute. Because at the gym when I'm working out and I'm looking at my reflection in the mirror, I don't want to see a version of me who's wearing old ugly t-shirts. I deserve to look good no matter where I am, and so do you. But that is my style minimum and I have rules around that even. I'm not going to spend five days in my workout clothes unless it's intentional and on purpose for some good reason.

When you have style standards, you know what your minimums are. When you have standards, period, you know in each of these areas, this is the minimum of what I'm willing to tolerate and I can guarantee all of us need to raise our standards in some area of our lives because we're tolerating something. When it comes to your style, what are you tired of tolerating? Where are you not taking care of how you're showing up and expressing yourself in the world? And what could be a style minimum that will raise your standards and allow you to show up in such a way that you begin to see yourself differently? Because that's the purpose of raising standards, my friends. It changes your self image. When you do that, everything else is so much easier.

Okay, standard number three to raise immediately to change your self image is your self care. Now, I've lumped a lot of things under self care because I know that for all of us, maybe we're doing really well and we have high standards in one area of self care, but maybe not another. But think about what self care means to you. When I think about self care, it's how am I taking care of me? That comes down to food. What am I consuming? What's my standard around what I eat? How am I moving? What's my standard? What's acceptable? What's average? What's normal in terms of my exercise? I think about sleep. I think about hygiene and grooming.

Some of y'all need to up-level your grooming. We need to exfoliate the skin. We need to take better care of our nails. We need to take better care of our teeth. We need to go have our hair done by a professional, right? But just think about your self care and how you take care of yourself. What is it saying about you? How do you see yourself when you see how you take care of yourself? In fact, as I just said that I want you all to think about you are in a room watching you take care of you. What would you say about that? Do you like what you would see? If you followed you around for a week and watched you take care of you, what would that confirm about how you see yourself and how you feel about yourself?

Upgrading your standards will cause you to see yourself differently. I want us all to have a self care routine that says, "I matter. I am worth the effort. I am worth the time. I respect myself. I take exquisite care of myself." That is going to require that you raise your standards as to what is acceptable, normal, and average.

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I want what is average for all of us to be that we take exquisite care of ourselves. What if that was our average?

Standard number four to upgrade immediately is your mental food standard. Mental food is what you feed your mind. Many of you are feeding your mind junk food. What happens when we feed our bodies junk food? We don't feel good. We feel lethargic. We start gaining weight, we feel bloated, and emotionally we don't feel good. Well, the same goes with your mental food. Maybe you feel tired, you feel heavy, your mind feels bloated or constipated because you're taking in so much crap and you're not producing anything with it, and it's just weighing you down.

That's why I'm very careful about what I take into my brain because my brain is my most important asset. It's what is creating my entire life. I don't let just any random person implant thoughts and my brain. This is why I rarely watch the news because every time I turn on the news, which is very rare, but anytime it happens, I instantly feel awful. I start to feel anxiety and worry and moments before I was feeling great, so why do that to myself? Even in terms of what I watch, the movies I watch, the books I read, the podcasts I listen to. All of that needs to be at a certain standard for me.

That's going to be different for all of us. I'm not telling you what you should or shouldn't watch, but notice what you're consuming and how it makes you feel. I want you to ask yourself this, "Does this belong in my future?" Do you see yourself sitting around and watching what you're watching when you are living your most extraordinary life? Are you listening to what you're listening to now when you're living your most extraordinary life? And if not, you need to stop. If it doesn't belong in your future, it doesn't belong in your present. Your mental food is another standard that when you elevate, you'll begin to feel an immediate shift.

In fact, I've had women who have come into the School of Self-Image membership and taken part in some of our environmental upgrades and they'll tell me some of them in a day, they're like, "Oh my goodness, this is the first day that I haven't felt extreme anxiety." Listen, the things around you are affecting you. The things outside of you if you ingest them, become you. We have to have high standards, especially in this day and age where there's so much information knocking at our door. We need to have what I call a "red velvet rope policy" around our lives about what we allow in. I will tell you personally, this is one standard that when I started to upgrade, I did feel and see an immediate shift.

Along the same lines, this is going to be a big one for almost all of us, but if you want to elevate your self-image, this is one standard that I want you to consider raising immediately, and that is your people standard.

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What is average and normal for the people around you? This is such a good point. Look at the people around you and look at what is their average and normal? What are their standards? Look at their health, look at their financial wellbeing, look at their happiness, look at their relationships, look at all of it. What is their standard?

Because here's the truth, those people are affecting you. You know the saying, "You become the five people that you're hanging out with the most," and what you're really becoming is their standard. Whatever your environment has accepted as normal and average is going to impact what you think is normal and average. I was actually having a conversation with Fonz this week and he was asking me why I haven't connected with a couple of people that we've been out with, and I just said to him, based on the conversations that we've had, I didn't resonate. I didn't feel like this is a relationship that's going to actually add value to my life. I'm just at the age, you all, where I'm just not willing to waste my time.

I want the people around me to add value to my life as I want to add value to theirs. I mean, you think about it. Do you just want any old person to come into your house? No. We have boundaries, we have standards. And yet in a weird way, we just let people come into our lives or people come into our homes, let's use that metaphor, and they're hanging out for a couple years. But we are changing in that home. We are growing and evolving and we look over and they're just sitting on the sofa being the same person watching Netflix, hasn't changed at all, and we realize we're no longer a match. But some of you all let that person continue to stay in your home, the home of your life versus being like, "Hey listen, I love you, but you got to go."

I love what my friend Abrielle says. She was like, "I didn't leave them. They just decided not to come." Because I know so many of us and I've dealt with this so I get it, but so many of us are afraid of leaving people behind. But you're going to have to be willing to let people go if you want to live the life you came here to live. I believe that a hundred percent. And there will be people when you start raising your standards, they'll start to rise up to those new expectations because they want to grow too. I've had many relationships like that where, as I'm growing, the people around me are growing as well. But then there have been those who don't, and that's okay. It doesn't make me better than them at all. It doesn't make them wrong. It just makes us so that we're not a match anymore.

But the people around you are affecting you. What do you tolerate with your relationships? What do you accept as normal and average in the people around you? Is it normal and average for the people around you to be complaining? Is it normal and average for the people around you to be jealous?

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Is it normal or average for the people around you not to have any goals or ambition? And is that what you want surrounding you? If not, you're going to have to raise your people standards. You're going to have to be willing to let people go and know this, as you raise your standards, as you raise what you expect and what's normal for you, the universe will begin to mirror that back to you.

New people will begin to show up who fit your people standards. But first of all, you have to know what those are. What don't you want to tolerate in relationships? I'm very clear about what is a "no" when it comes to the people around me. I'm very clear also about what's a "yes." What types of people do I love being around? Those are my standards. We have to get clear and we have to make it so that not just any old Harry can come walking in our lives and take up residence. As hard as this is, and I get it, you all, this has been some of the most uncomfortable work I've done around my people standards because I used to be a people pleaser. Not anymore, but back in the day when I was, this was the hard work.

But here's what has happened, the people around me now, we all have such higher standards and if you look at our lives, our lives reflect that. When you start to be very discerning about the people around you and you raise your standards as for the people that you allow into your life, those people are going to mirror back to you new possibilities, new ways of thinking, new perspectives, new opportunities, new realities that are available to you and creating your most extraordinary life starts to become easier and easier. You begin to slip stream with these people and that is always a good time.

Those are the five standards that I suggest you raise immediately to change your life. Have a beautiful, beautiful week everyone and I will see you in next week's episode. Cheers.

Hey, have you grabbed your free copy of the School of Self-Image Manifesto? If not, what in the world? Head over to schoolofselfimage.com/manifesto and get a copy that teaches you how to think and show up in the areas of mindset, style, and surroundings so that you can transform your self-image.