

# Standards



## Overview

Personal standards are an important component of self-discipline, confidence, and self-esteem. In contrast to adults with relatively lower standards, those with high standards are more likely to do better in their jobs and/or school, are more motivated to seek connections with others, and report more positive mental health.

Should you score in the at-risk range on personal standards, please watch the video that accompanies this module. Beyond those recommendations, here are some additional strategies that can help you improve your standards over time.

## Evaluating What Your Standards Are

Using the “Evaluating my Standards” sheet, rating your expectation levels across life domains. (Some domains may not apply to you depending on your life circumstance). You also have the option of other areas that are not considered. Rate each domain on a 1-6 scale, with higher scores generally meaning higher satisfaction with your standards.

Consider any ratings that are less than a “2”, or a “5.” (The latter may be surprising but there are instances when having too high of standards can lead to personal distress). For these relevant domains, list 1-2 expectations that you would like to target for change in the next 3-6 months, and then complete the remaining part of the sheet.

It is important that you identify new behaviors that you will perform to achieve your goal(s). While an abrupt, wholesale behavior change may be in store (e.g., “I will increase my health standards by quitting smoking tomorrow”), research shows that new behaviors become permanent through thoughtful, deliberate, and gradual changes. For example, rather than increasing health standards by “cutting out all the bad food in my diet”, it may be more reasonable to slowly phase out certain bad foods, increase the percentage of healthy foods in your diet per week, or simply consult with a professional to formulate an effective food plan.

New behaviors must be measurable and attainable. Under self-discipline, for example, a person who no longer wish to yell at others when they become angry lists “I will not get angry”. However, this goal is almost impossible to achieve and is difficult to monitor. In place, they may consider “I will take two deep breaths when I notice I am getting upset”. They then then list what will change for them by meeting this goal.

After you have listed your newfound goals (just for domains rated as a “1”, “2”, or “5”), transfer the information to the Changing My Standards sheet. On regular occasions, review your progress to your goals. If you feel that there is no steady progress, list possible barriers but also reflect on information you listed on the “Evaluating my Standards” sheet.

### *Personal Growth Project*

Select one activity that they have always wanted to explore but have not had a chance to do so. The activity may involve a new skill (such as learning to play a musical instrument, a new language, or a sport) or experience (traveling to a region and immersing themselves in a new culture) but must comply with the following requirements.

- The activity must be something completely new for you; you have not tried it before
- The activity must be ongoing (at least for 6 weeks)
- Your first activity should be under the guidance of a coach, instructor, or mentor

Record your experiences in a personal journal, specifically detailing your triumphs as well as frustrations or roadblocks that hindered goal attainment. Do not focus on the outcome. Rather, focus on your self-discovery. What did you learn about yourself and others over the course of your journey? How did addressing your standards change your enjoyment of the activity?

# Evaluating My Standards

Below, consider your expectations in various areas. You can ignore areas that don't apply to you. Rate each area according to the following:

<i>Don't have any</i>	<i>Very low and I am <u>not</u> fine with this</i>	<i>Very low but I am fine with this</i>	<i>Neither high nor low</i>	<i>Very high and I am <u>not</u> fine with this</i>	<i>Very high and I am fine with this</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>

*The expectations I have for myself in...*

*Are....*

My health	1	2	3	4	5	6
My schoolwork	1	2	3	4	5	6
My friendships	1	2	3	4	5	6
My Spouse/Significant Other	1	2	3	4	5	6
My relationships with my parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
My relationships with my siblings	1	2	3	4	5	6
My attitude to people in general	1	2	3	4	5	6
My self-discipline	1	2	3	4	5	6
My mindset	1	2	3	4	5	6
My future	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other _____	1	2	3	4	5	6

List the areas that you rated either a 1, 2, or 5 and that you would like to change over the next 3-6 months. Then, answer the following questions

Area to Target	What is My New Expectation?	What will I no Longer Accept from Myself or Others?	What New Behaviors Will I need to Adopt?	When I Succeed, What Will Change for Me?

# Changing My Standards

Area That I am Trying to Change: \_\_\_\_\_

How I Know I Achieved My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Progress to Change (circle one) <i>No Progress at All</i> <i>Very Slow Progress</i> <i>Steady Progress</i> <i>Goal Attained</i>	If no Steady Progress, What is the Barrier?	a) <u>Reminder</u> : What will I no Longer Accept from Myself and Others?	b) Am I Being Consistent with Adopting New Behaviors?	Considering a) and b), What Can I do to Overcome the Barrier?