

Be Patient

The Rules Revisited | 10 November, 2014 | by Andrew

Blogs that give dating and relationship advice can be hugely motivational. When you read them, you can feel like you've uncovered some huge secret, and that everything in your life is immediately going to change for the better. The e-mails I get from readers confirm this. I've had the same feeling myself many times in the process of reading about how to [improve my workouts](#) or to improve my success with women.

In spite of being a little naive, this feeling isn't a bad one. In fact, it is often a great one in the sense that it usually results in the kind of enthusiasm that propels you a long way towards success. But a few months later, when reality sets in, and you start to realize that what you read didn't completely revolutionize your results with men - that that you are still single, or that you still haven't been asked out - it can be easy to lose steam.

Putting advice into practice is never as smooth and easy as experiencing the initial "wow" factor when receiving or reading it. That one post you read about [personal boundaries](#) might have completely changed the way you think about behaving towards the men you date, but following through under the sway of a man's attractiveness proved far more difficult than you expected. Another post affirmed [your emotional intelligence](#) and gave you all kinds of confidence in yourself, but the practical applications were difficult to find. And although you agree with that post that claimed [you can control your looks to a very large extent](#), there just isn't enough time in the day to worry about everything you'd need to in order to look your best. Ideas are perfect; reality is anything but.

However, after you go through a few (maybe even several) of those initial "wow" moments, only to find yourself disappointed by your progress, you start to realize something: you really have changed. You really have improved. The progress is much rougher and more halting than you expected, and certainly far slower than you hoped. But when you look in the mirror a couple years after you started, you really do see a different person - one who has changed for the better.

Ideas work on the mind in subtle but powerful ways, such that their effects are often unrecognizable for a long time after their seeds are planted, or even after those seeds have taken root. The efforts you make might seem to have next to no impact at first, but they do slowly and inevitably accumulate. Eventually, if you work hard and thoughtfully, you will see real changes. They might not be what you dreamed of at first, but you [wouldn't appreciate them if they'd come easily](#). And what you find is that, although the improvements are far smaller than you expected, they are also much more satisfying than you expected - you don't need to improve as much as you think you do to be happy.

Eventually you learn to temper your expectations so that they don't get out of control each time you digest a new idea or learn a new lesson. This also serves to rein in your disappointment when you find yourself feeling like you've made no progress since a few months ago, when you were sure that you finally figured out what was wrong. Experience teaches us that each new effort made and new truth learned is not some panacea that will change our world overnight, but rather a small (yet important) piece of a very large puzzle - one that we will continue to work on for a long time, perhaps for the rest of our lives. This recognition is a sign of maturity, and the first step toward real, concrete progress.

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