

# RAISE Your *Standard*

*Along with advice from some of the most successful men in modern times, Napoleon Hill's inspirational masterpiece Think and Grow Rich told the tale of a discouraged prospector who walked away from a fortune, not knowing he was only three feet from gold. Now the Napoleon Hill Foundation has partnered with Greg Reid to carry on the tradition by inviting today's most successful leaders to share the principles, values, and attitudes they use to continue drilling toward their goals.*

**A Story:**  
**Evander Holyfield, world champion boxer**

Out of all the people I have had the privilege to interview over the years, the one that took me most off guard was with boxing legend Evander Holyfield.

During the regular small talk that is part of every interview, I slipped in a simple question that made me ponder my own dedication toward writing, speaking, and filmmaking. Holyfield's answer made me wonder if I was willing to do what



others *will not do* so that I can experience the success that others will only wish for.

"Evander, what makes you so special?" I asked.

"That's easy," he replied, "a higher standard."

I must have looked at him with a curious expression because he just smiled and went on to elaborate.

"It's like this: say you have a car, and unlike your neighbor, you will not accept it being dirty or running poorly. If this is the case, chances are you will have a



*"I never focused on the fights, I only focused on the end goal—to win the title."*

# “...when you keep your mind peeled on what’s really important and not let others distract you from your dreams, you can become a Champ, too.”

better, more reliable car than your neighbor.” He continued, “If you have a household and will not tolerate your husband coming home drunk, or the kids a mess, again, you too would have a better family dynamic. This is because you would have a higher standard than the others on the block.”

Nodding in agreement, the wheels in my mind kept spinning while internally I questioned my own willingness to do more than the competition.

Holyfield then went on to explain that he would show up before anyone else to train, he would leave after everyone else had gone home, and he even invented new exercises that his competitors were unwilling to do.

“That’s how I won more Heavyweight Championships than anyone in history...,” he continued. “It’s all about having a higher standard.”

As the conversation deepened so did the questioning. “That’s great and all, and I get what you’re saying,” I offered in an accusatory manner, “yet, give me something more. How exactly did you win all those belts?”

“By having a big enough WHY I suppose,” he answered. “You see, I never focused on the fights, I only focused on the end goal—to win the title. That was all that was important to me. The fights were just a stepping stone to get to what I wanted...to become Champ.”

“Didn’t it hurt getting hit all the time?” I inquired with a sincere interest.

“Sure it hurt, but I never let my mind fix on that. If I did, that would become fear, and then I would start focusing on how the next blow was going to feel, and that he would start hitting me more than I would be

hitting him. That’s how life is too; people always look at the punches they take in life, like how much gas costs, what others may say about them, who said what, etc. Once we let our minds fixate on that instead of



the goal, they end up on their backs knocked out in the game of life.”

“Wow,” was the most poignant response I could muster.

At this moment, Holyfield leaned in and finished his message. “Funny thing is,” he said with a wink in his eye, “when you keep your mind peeled on what’s really important and not let others distract you from your dreams, you can become a Champ, too.”

### The Lesson: Do More than the Others

So, are you willing to start doing more than the others so that you can become a champion in your chosen field of endeavor? It doesn’t matter if you’re a carpet cleaner, Realtor, or a rocket scientist, the same principle applies; will you do more so that you may become the best in the industry?

As I was leaving my interview, shaking Holyfield’s hand and thanking him for his time, the boxer pulled me in and whispered something that I will never forget: “You know what Greg?” he said. “When you finally reach your goal, they say your name and the crowd comes to their feet raising your hand in victory, and place that gold belt around your waist, you never feel even ONE of the punches you took along the journey. But the guy in the losing locker room, he’ll feel every bruise for the rest of his life, blaming every excuse why he failed rather than taking responsibility that he should have set his standards just as high.”

—Gregory Scott Reid

Greg Reid is a filmmaker, entrepreneur, author, and speaker. Learn more at [www.alwaysgood.com](http://www.alwaysgood.com)