

Show up for a Decade



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“Most people overestimate what they can do in one year and underestimate what they can do in ten years.” — Bill Gates

Good things take time

- A human needs 20 years to grow into an adult
- A tree needs 10 to 30 years to reach full size
- An olive tree needs 65 to 80 years to reach stable yields, and then produces fruit for 500 years

Why are we in such a rush?

For results to show up, they need time. Time to take root. Time to grow. Time to blossom. Time to compound.

Most things need at least a decade.

Why do we want it faster?

You know what grows uncontrollably fast? Cancer.

Do we really want cancer as our role model?

Many of us are in desperate need to adjust our expectations and perspective.

Things that don't change

First, we need a set of guiding principles, so we can decide on a general direction.

A good way to find them is to try a lot of different things when we are young. Different lifestyles. Different life philosophies. Different role models. Exposing ourselves to as many ideas and approaches as possible.

Then, let's find the things that won't change in 10 or 20 years.

For me, a decade or two from now, I likely will still be a lifelong learner, an investor, improving myself, expressing myself, trying to live a healthy and fulfilled life.

Show up for a decade

"All overnight successes take about 10 years." — Jeff Bezos

Once we have found our general direction, we can stop rushing. We can take our time to go deep and let things compound.

We can experiment with different styles and tactics. Not jumping from one to another, but reflect and adjust regularly.

Many of us are trying a thing for a year or two, and then stop. Or we jump to the next shiny idea, just to repeat the process a year or two later.

I'm no exception. That's one reason why I'm writing this article. As a reminder for myself.

So here's the bottom line:

- Want to write? Then write for a decade.
- Want to invest? Then invest for a decade.
- Want to improve yourself? Then do it for a decade.
- Want to read books? Then read for a decade.
- Want to build a YouTube channel? Then make videos for a decade.

Show. Up. For. A. Decade.

If someone asks: "How's your investing?" or "How's your YouTube channel?", a good answer is: "Ask me in 10 years."

What is the secret of Warren Buffett's success? It's not his investment returns. There are many investors with higher returns. His success is that he found his guiding principle and then kept showing up for 70 years. And he's still going.

If you show up for such a long time, compounding will work wonders. Warren Buffett built 95% of his net worth after he turned 65. Compounding produces the best results at the end, and rewards those that show up for a long time.

For it to work, it's important to find a solid general direction, to select the right role models, and to find a pace that is sustainable.

Choosing the wrong role models or the wrong principles, and we can show up for one hundred years. It won't do us any good. And if the pace is not sustainable, you will burn out or quit sooner or later.

To summarize

- Good things take time: be like a tree, and not like cancer.
- Find things that won't change: solid guiding principles and mentors.
- Show up for a decade, and let things compound.