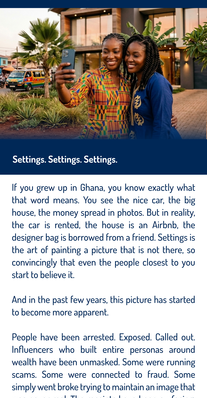
Why Comparing Yourself to Your Peers Is Quietly Ruining Your Finances



Settings. Settings. Settings.

If you grew up in Ghana, you know exactly what that word means. You see the nice car, the big house, the money spread in photos. But in reality, the car is rented, the house is an Airbnb, the designer bag is borrowed from a friend. Settings is the art of painting a picture that is not there, so convincingly that even the people closest to you start to believe it.

And in the past few years, this picture has started to become more apparent.

People have been arrested. Exposed. Called out. Influencers who built entire personas around wealth have been unmasked. Some were running scams. Some were connected to fraud. Some simply went broke trying to maintain an image that was never real. The receipts have been surfacing, sometimes in court documents, sometimes in DMs gone public, sometimes just in the quiet disappearance of someone who used to post every day and suddenly has nothing to say.

This is not gossip. This is a warning.

Because if you are adjusting your financial behaviour to match a lifestyle you are seeing online, you may be reorganising your real life around someone else's fiction.

The Feed Is Not Reality

Comparison is not new. It has always existed. What is new is that you now have a 24-hour feed of everyone's highlight reel delivered directly to your phone, formatted beautifully, attached to the latest viral song. That combination is not just emotionally uncomfortable. It is financially dangerous.

You eat out more because you saw someone posting from a restaurant you'd been meaning to try. You buy an outfit you didn't need because someone whose style you admire wore something similar. Ei. In this expensive Accra?

You do not have room in your budget for spending that isn't yours. And maybe that's harsh, and maybe you do. But we'll get to you later. For now, we want to address the settings.

There's a term for this: lifestyle inflation triggered by social comparison. Researchers at the University of Warwick found that people are more likely to take on debt when they perceive their peers to be wealthier than them, regardless of whether that perception is accurate. In Ghana, where social spending carries real cultural weight, whether it's contributing to a friend's wedding, showing up at a naming ceremony with something substantial, or simply not wanting to appear like you're struggling, this pressure compounds even further.

Now, For the People Who Have Actually Made It

Here's where it gets more complicated, and more honest.

Not everyone you're looking at is performing. Some of those people genuinely have it. Some of them have built real businesses, invested early, made smart decisions with money, and are living lives that are actually as good as they look. That exists too. And if anything, that version of the story is the more important one to understand.

Because if you are comparing yourself to someone who built their wealth legitimately and feeling behind, the answer is not to spend your way into the appearance of being at their level. The answer is to understand how they got there and build your own version of that path. Earnestly. Patiently. In your own lane.

This is, in fact, what this entire platform is about. Not to lecture you on what money is. But to give you the tools to actually build something real, so that one day, the life you post about is the one you are actually living.

You grew up differently. You carry different financial obligations. Your starting point is different. Comparing your chapter three to someone else's chapter nine is not motivation.

What the Fix Actually Looks Like

The answer to comparison is not forcing yourself to feel nothing when you see other people thriving.

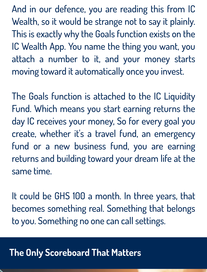
The answer is this: if you want what they have, set up goals that move you toward it. Build toward the thing, instead of performing it before you have it.

And in our defence, you are reading this from IC Wealth, so it would be strange not to say it plainly. This is exactly why the Goals function exists on the IC Wealth App. You name the thing you want, you attach a number to it, and your money starts moving toward it automatically once you invest.

The Goals function is attached to the IC Liquidity Fund. Which means you start earning returns the day IC receives your money. So for every goal you create, whether it's a travel fund, an emergency fund or a new business fund, you are earning returns and building toward your dream life at the same time.

It could be GHS 100 a month. In three years, that becomes something real. Something that belongs to you. Something no one can call settings.

The Only Scoreboard That Matters



Stop asking what they are doing. Start asking what you are building.

Some of what you see online is settings. Some of it is real. Either way, it is not yours. Stay in your lane. Build honestly. Let the IC Wealth App be the place where your real numbers live.

Open the app. Set a goal. Then put your phone down and let IC do the hard work.