



muslim mums

Smart Phone
Dumb Child

Postnatal Depression
Don't Suffer in Silence

The Path
to Leadership

Disability
Is Not Inability

Raising a
Compassionate Child

Ash-Shakoor

NEW
Children's Section
Youth Section, Competitions,
Recipes, Poems and more...!

Disclaimer: All content in this magazine has been composed with sincere effort, and in no way intended to cause offence. For any mistakes we may have made, we humbly ask for your forgiveness.

Mother

I never knew until I became a mum myself
Of all the roles that my mum played

For nine months she bore me in great discomfort and pain
Yet every moment thanking Allah (SWT) for
this blessing again and again

In her womb she protected and nurtured me
And in her lap she cured and cuddled me

She held my hand and taught me to climb uphill
To rise against the tide and master my will

She was my defender when the trials were daunting
My benefactor when the times were lonely and haunting

The heavenly blessing, for which my gratitude is never ending
I stand today strong and tall

Because she taught me to rise after every fall

In all these years I have never known another home
It's always been her heart, her lap, her womb

She is not just an ordinary human being
She is a mother, amongst the best of Allah's beings

By: Atiya Sumar

muslim *what's inside?* mums

Kid's
Corner

Pg 27

MEET THE TEAM - PG 2

SMART PHONE, DUMB CHILD - PG 4

A WIDOW'S STORY - PG 5

SIMPLICITY IS THE TRUE IDEAL - PG 8

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN - PG 9

DISABILITY IS NOT INABILITY - PG 12

KIDS AND NEWS - PG 16

POSTNATAL DEPRESSION - PG 18

DON'T SUFFER FROM POSTNATAL DEPRESSION IN SILENCE - PG 20

YOUR QUESTIONS - PG 22

RAISING A COMPASSIONATE & THANKFUL CHILD - PG 25

PLEASE DON'T LOOK AWAY - PG 37

HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT? - PG 39

HOLIDAY REVIEW TAWHEED CAMP - PG 42

GROWING FEET - PG 44

THE UNLIMITED MERCIFER - PG 48

A MOTHER IN GAZA POEM - PG 50

IS YOUR BELLY FLAT OR FAT? - PG 63

DID YOU KNOW? - PG 64

Also Included...
BOOK REVIEWS

Also Included...
PRODUCT REVIEWS

Youth Section
Pg 52

Food Focus
Pg 65

Al-Gha

Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction. (13:28)

This issue of Muslim Mums is centred on three of the Asma ul Husna:

Ar-Rahman – The Merciful

- Are we compassionate in our treatment towards others?
- Recite Ya Rahman 100 times after every wajib salaa to develop a good memory, keen awareness, be freed of a heavy heart and instil rahma in a hard heart.

ASMA UL HUSNA



Ash-Shakoor - The Rewarder of Thankfulness

- Repeat Ya Shakoor 41 times on water and wash your face to lighten a heavy heart and maintain composure. Recite 41 times for any difficulty.

Al-Muhaymin – The Guardian/ Protector

- Do we guard/protect others' rights?
- Recite Ya Muhaymin after wudhoo 115 times for inner illumination. Recite 5000 times for 7 days for success.

"The most beautiful names belong to Allah: so call on him by them." (7:180)

MEET THE TEAM

Welcome

Salaamun Alaykum

The new Muslim Mums team would like to thank the founders of 'Muslim Mums' for creating an exceptional and beneficial magazine. It is a great honour, and we hope to emulate the success they have had over the past few years.

We would also like to thank the S I Madressa for their backing and continued support. Last but not least, a huge thank you to our contributors.

We welcome feedback from our readers at Muslimmums@hotmail.co.uk

Jazakallah



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2

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A good book, parent's wisdom or blog; can never fully prepare you for the sleepless nights, tantrums and the youthful but joyful years to follow the excruciating yet blissful outcome of birth.

I am an optimist and a realist, and after my first child, I was still not prepared for the years to come.

With each child came a different personality and different methods of teaching and disciplining. Yet, as I watch them grow day by day, I continue to see the impact a few words and body language can have on such an innocent soul.

As mothers, we have been given immense responsibilities.

Our warmth through our words and our touch can create an individual who can have a great impact in this world.

Sukaina Mukhtar

Smart Phone, Dumb Child

By Aasiya Versi

I love my phone; but many a times for all the wrong reasons...

It is amazing how a whiny toddler can deplete your sanity levels and just when I convince myself to be patient, 'the apple of my eye' can push my buttons even further. As I give in to her request of 'screen time', her eyes adopt a trance-like state fixating her entire being on a phone. I breathe a sigh of relief. Silence at last. Smart phones and flat screens are a busy mum's best friend...or are they?

As I quietly watch her, totally absorbed in the flashing images in front of her, I find myself perturbed ... as much as I am thankful of a toddler who sits in one place while I shower, cook and clean, that is not my child. The Nabeelah I know and love will run around in circles for no good reason and talk the life out of her doll whilst laughing at the antics of a bouncy ball.

Screens, be they phones, TV's or tablets, render our children senseless, making them oblivious to their surroundings and more importantly oblivious to the tricky terrains of human emotions, unable to gauge what people around them think and feel. The increased usage of our screens to keep our children silent is alarmingly detrimental to their social development, and no amount of professional qualifications can fill that developmental gap.

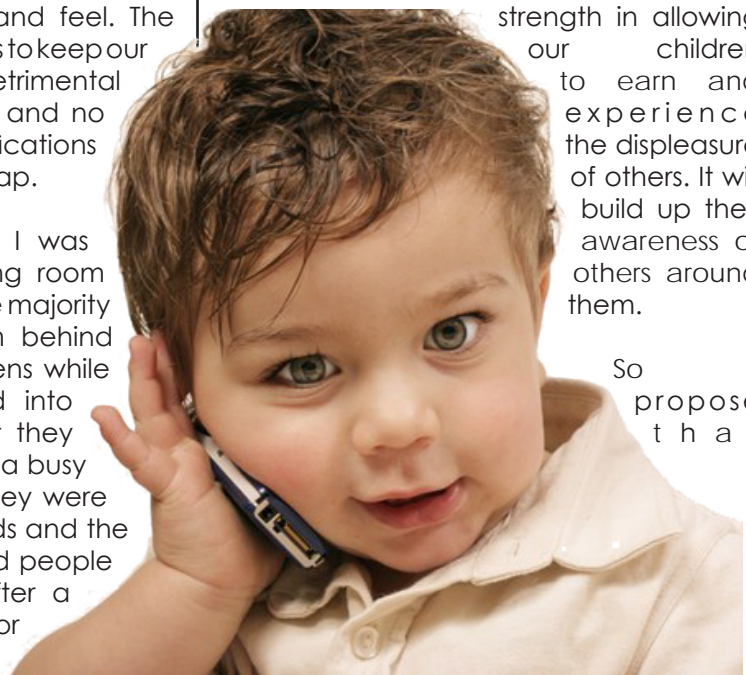
On a recent trip to Egypt, I was looking around a busy dining room and was astounded to find the majority of the children in the room behind tablets and hooked on screens while their parents scooped food into their mouth. Isn't it sad that they were unaware of the buzz of a busy holiday dining room? That they were not taking in the smells, sounds and the sights of over a hundred people in a feeding frenzy after a busy day by the pool or

beach? Is the information that the screen provides a replacement for the social dining experience or any other human experience for that matter?

A contributing factor I feel - is that as a community and society - we place too high an emphasis on orderly children, an orderly house, and orderly lifestyles, fixating the blame of disorderliness on the parents. It takes a community to raise a child, and we need to bring that ethos back. As embarrassing as it is when your child acts up in public, surely we should be more thankful for a child reacting to an environment, than one who is placid and unaware of it. As mothers and parents, we need to be okay with our children being disciplined by others.

Children are a lot of work, and I mean the physical sort of work, from their feeding to their clothing, to the cleaning up after them... Add disciplining to that task list and we - as parents - have an Everest-like mountain trek ahead of us. We have to be okay with sharing this load with others. It is not our weakness as mothers that we can't deal with disciplining our children, but our strength in allowing our children to earn and experience the displeasure of others. It will build up their awareness of others around them.

So I propose that



instead of making our phones the first port of call when things start going haywire, let us use it as the last. Something I recently read on a blog named 'Hands free mama', she describes the many moods of her child in colours; some vibrant and loving and some that are not so pretty to look at. If we are to accept and appreciate each colour as it presents itself to us, rather than attempting to mask it or hide it, perhaps we would be raising a

generation of socially astute children as opposed to children unable to understand the social fabric of a society. Our children will be stronger for it.

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In this issue's feature, we hear from two remarkable women, both widowed at a young age. Here they share their experiences of overcoming the sudden death of their husband, raising their children and how they maintained their immense strength and patience.

A Widow's Story

Interview:

Salaamun Alaykum. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to gain an insight into your experience as a widow and mother during the 1980's.

What were your initial thoughts after the birth of your first child?

Mixed feelings. Excitement, of course, and fear whether I would do justice to my role as a mother.

What were your feelings the second time round?

Excitement. This time I was more prepared, but the fear of balancing both children mentally and emotionally was a challenge. Living in a joint family, although there was help, there were still the responsibilities of having to balance different roles.

"But the presence of the father, however silent his role, is already security for the children."

Did the father play a large role in the children's lives?

When you live in an extended family, the father usually leaves the responsibility to the other members of the family. They are excited but there are usually many others

in the family to handle the responsibility. He would play with and enjoy the kids but did not need to be hands-on with them. He probably would have if they weren't many of us around. But the presence of the father, however silent his role, is already security for the children.

How many people were living in the house together?

10 people. The ages ranged from 2 years to 55 years.

What was the accommodation like?

It was a 3-bedroom apartment with one toilet/bathroom.

Did you ever think that you would be a widow at the age of 26 and have sole responsibility of parenthood?

No. Like many, we always think that such a tragedy will never happen to us. We only see it in movies and read about it in books. When the tragedy first struck, it was a shock. Coming to terms with the reality of it was very difficult.

Looking back, what was the last cherished memory with your husband and children?

We had our son's second birthday party. The first and last with his father. It was a very simple but joyous family occasion. Soon after that, he travelled to the UK and was involved in a car accident three weeks after arriving back in Dar-es-Salaam.

What gave you the courage and strength to continue after this tragedy?

When such a tragedy occurs it is definitely heart-breaking and heart wrenching. And it is very difficult to explain to your 2 year old son and 5 year old daughter why they will never see their loving daddy again. But however difficult it is, I have come to realise that Allah (SWT), in His infinite Mercy, pours patience first before the calamity occurs.

Although it was shocking and the pain was there, I did not feel as devastated as people thought I would be feeling. This convinced me that patience comes before a calamity. Everyone goes through different hardships in life. If Allah (SWT) did not equip us with patience beforehand, we would never be able to sustain grief of such magnitude.

In all that turmoil, a feeling passed through my heart for a fraction of a second telling me that everything would be alright. An inspiration perhaps? Until today, I can't put my finger on this feeling. I banked my life on that inspiration that Allah (SWT) was definitely giving me a message.

Alhamdulillah, I had good in-laws and had support from the family. However, I drew strength, courage and the motivation to move forward, from duas. And my bedside book was Sahifa-Al-Sajjadiya. My favourite duas were duas in hardship and difficulties, duas for children and duas in anxiety. These duas gave me solace and guided me to the right focus and goal in life through the words of The Imam (AS).

"His Will, will not take you to where His Grace will not keep you." This has been my inspirational quote. As destiny gradually unfolded, I slowly came to understand His Grace behind His Will. Pain, sorrows, difficulties and hardships are all tools towards personal and spiritual growth.

"His Will, will not take you to where His Grace will not keep you."

After your husband passed away, why did you choose to stay with your in-laws?

Firstly, the children were already growing up in a close family environment. It gave them a sense of security. The absence of their father would already be a void in their life, and to remove them from this environment would have added to their anguish and insecurity when they didn't understand anything at that age.

Secondly, the parents of my husband were extremely grief-stricken at the early death of the backbone of the family, and to take their grandchildren away from them would have been very selfish on my part.

What other challenges did you face?

Choosing the best parental method was almost impossible staying in an extended family. You may not be able to bring them up exactly the way you want to, but at the end of the day, if your intention is clear and you respect others in the home then you must also have faith that Allah (SWT) is also there for you.

Throughout their life, decision-making was a big challenge. Especially in their teen years, academic pursuits and spouse selection. As they say, everyone will be there with you but you have to walk the path and take the steps. At the end of the day, the responsibility is yours.

How did you overcome them?

I took counsel and advice from elders, experienced people, and relied heavily on Allah's (SWT) Guidance.

Throughout their life, decision-making was a big challenge. Especially in their teen years, academic pursuits and spouse selection.

Why did you choose to move to Pakistan?

I thought of the West but did not feel I could raise my children there without a father. We decided to go to Karachi because the children would get the culture and education without losing the family. I stayed in Pakistan for 10 years and felt it was the best decision of my life.

What were the benefits of this decision for your children?

They got the Eastern culture, a good education and the added bonus was the Urdu language.

What special moments do you recall having with your children?

Going for night drives along the beach and not worrying that the children had school the next day, even though they did. Watching movies together at night and analysing the different parts of the movie. Laughing together at jokes from the Reader's Digest, 'Laughter, the best medicine'. Finally, playing our countless memory games whilst driving or at home, hoping it would help them improve their memory.

Would you prefer to raise your children in this era?

No. There are too many challenges. At that time, 'your child' was the child of the village. Everyone would take responsibility of raising your child. Everything in this society is operated in very stringent parameters.

What advice would you give to mothers in this generation?

Learn from the experiences of elders. They have a lot of wisdom to impart which can prove invaluable to young parents. Always seek advice when making important decisions. You might see a better perspective. Take each day as it comes and don't sweat the small stuff. Most importantly, appreciate and sincerely thank The Almighty for the numerous bounties and blessings that we take for granted, before we lose them.

Finally, the theme for this issue is using the benefits of the Asma-ul-Husna in raising children; how do you feel you implemented the names Al-Muhaymin, Ash-Shakoor and Ar-Rahman in your life?

Ash-Shakoor: Alhamdulillah, I never complained about being a widow at such a young age and always thanked Allah (SWT) for his bounties. I accepted His Will and did not wallow in self-pity.

Ar-Rahman: I looked for His Mercy and Grace in all situations in life, and taught the children to see the same.

Al-Muhaymin: Had My Lord not protected me from misguiding thoughts and making wrong decisions, where would I have been and what would my life be like? May He protect our every thought, every word and every action at every moment, and not leave us to our nafs, even for a blink of an eye.

Islamic CDs and DVDs for Children

In the Muharram/Safar months, many parents like to educate their children about the event of Karbala through multimedia, especially if conventional entertainment media are less preferred in these days of mourning. We have in stock special Muharram titles:

- Animated Movie on Hazrat Abbas (A.S)
- Animated Movie on the Little Soldier of Karbala
- Animation on Muslim bin Aqeel
- TV Series on The Mukhtar Narrative (with English subtitles)
- Talks for children on Muharram by Sister Ummulbanin
- CD of Marthiyas/Nawhas for children by Sister Ummulbanin
- and much more...



Contact Gulnaz Dhanji on:
0208 9534315 or ggdhanji@hotmail.com

Simplicity Is the True Ideal

Looking back 15 years from present day, I shudder at the thought of how the years have passed. Going from living in an extended family with my husband, three children (17, 15 and 10 years old) and in-laws in Africa, to present-day widow, three children, two daughter-in-laws and three grandchildren. The journey has truly been a miracle and without Allah's (SWT) Blessing and Guidance, this journey would have been a difficult one.

After enduring the illness and sudden loss of my husband, we were left with no choice but to immigrate to London, as we were en-route when his health took a turn for the worse. When we arrived in London, apart from the cultural and climate shock, my main concern was to set up a home for us. This was not an easy task because most wives in East Africa were very dependent on their husbands. This was evident when I had to visit the bank. I had never been to a bank before or used a cashpoint. I couldn't drive either which made it very difficult to get to the mosque, go shopping and do the school runs.

With the children settled in school, I started taking cooking orders to earn every little bit of money. My sons took up evening and weekend jobs to help make ends meet. Many a time I would curl up in bed and think, 'How will I manage to hold my family together?' My nights used to end with a prayer to Allah (SWT) thanking him that we had survived another day.

As winter arrived, I tried to keep myself occupied to avoid getting depressed; I had to be strong for my children. I started by learning computers and hairdressing. I learnt how to drive and I enrolled on a teaching course. The first two years were the hardest, as I had to be both a mother and a father to my children - to help,

support and instil good values in my teenage children. My children learnt to live simply and be happy with whatever little they had. Through those tough times in the early part of my life in London, it felt like there was always 'someone' guiding me through all the difficult choices I had to make for myself and my children.

When we look back now, we realise we have come a long way. By the grace of Allah (SWT), my children are married and settled and I am a grandmother of three Alhamdulillah.

I can only advise you of what I learnt during the hard times, and that is to be happy and content with whatever you have because after every stormy night comes the warmth of the sun the following morning. I could have buckled and felt sorry for myself but I decided to stand tall and fight for a better life for my children and myself, as per the phrase, 'God helps those who help themselves'.

Cherish the time you have and spend it with your loved ones, for today does not come back again.

Regret/Repentance Comes When It Is Too Late.

Effective Communication with Children

By Umm Maryam

All of us have an innate desire to do our best in raising our children. We will sacrifice and compromise our needs to see our children succeed in their lives. Along the way, we are challenged and feel hurt at the way our children sometimes talk back to us, and may find our responses flying out in outrage, sarcasm or a stern telling-off. Although our attempts are intended to guide children to good manners and speaking respectfully, the art of communication is still a work in progress, since they are learning and making sense of this from the people around them. Fortunately, the way parents and other family members speak to their children and others becomes the first learning ground for children.



Most people will agree that one of the key aspects to a successful family, social and professional life lies in being able to communicate effectively with others, which includes listening and responding appropriately. Our Holy Prophet (SAW) and Aimmah (AS) were gifted with intelligence, sincerity and powerful oratory skills, which won them people's trust and acceptance of Islam.

Nurturing communication skills in children from the very beginning will lead them towards fruitful experiences in social, educational and later professional settings, in addition to enhancing the parent/child relationship. This relationship will flourish into trust, giving parents the opportunity to guide and influence their children through obstacles in life, thus creating a fulfilling and joyous parenting experience.

Various studies show that children learn most from what they see and hear. Effective communication with children is important in modeling and imparting the right skills.

In one narration, Imam Ali (AS) advises his son, Imam Hassan (AS), "The child's mind is like a virgin land. Whatever is put in it will be accepted. Therefore, before your hearts turned hard and engrossed otherwise, I took steps to make you polite".

Hence, each interaction between adults and their young ones becomes an opportunity to model and reinforce these skills before their hearts become absorbed in the outside world. Here are some of the core communication skills to focus on with children between 4 and 10 years old:

Good Manners

Do not underestimate the importance of good manners. Children will grow up to be kinder and more considerate of others if you teach them how to be that way when they're young. Imam Ali (AS) has imparted a hadith, "There is no better inheritance than good manners". If we lead by example in displaying good manners, our children will follow. For example, teach a child to say thank you by having them hear you say it. Always say please each time you ask your child to do something. Children learn by what they see and hear by their parents.

Encourage children to practice appropriate social manners.

To begin with, teach them to look at a person when they greet them or speak to them. It is important that young children are not nagged to greet, by adults they meet. Some children will find it helpful to understand why they should try to be the first to greet others. Islamic guidance imparts that Allah (SWT) likes the person who greets first.

Exhibit Good Listening Skills

Listening is a skill for children and adults. Encourage children to look at you when they speak or are spoken to. Listening to children helps them learn how to express their feelings, opinions, concerns and ideas. One of the best methods to teach children to listen to ideas, feelings or requests of others, is to listen to theirs as well. When we rush from one chore to the next, it seems customary to have our backs

turned to our children, or pretend to listen, but consistency in this kind of interaction promotes negative social behaviour.

Maintaining eye contact and turning off the TV, putting your phone on silent and removing other distractions when a child is speaking, reinforces that what he has to say is important to you, and also teaches him courteous behaviour towards others when they are speaking.

We all expect and benefit from a response when we talk and children are no different. A response from parents confirms what they hear and helps children understand themselves. For example, "It sounds like you had a busy day at school" or "It seems like you had an exciting time".

Resist The Temptation To Interrupt

Children, regardless of age, may not always express themselves quickly or clearly. If a child experiences difficulty explaining



something, gently encourage her to continue.

It seems acceptable for parents to cut short children's long predictable narrations, but do value their conversation. Don't grow impatient with a child who seems to be talking in circles, but gently guide her to be

more precise or try to explain in detail what she means or is trying to express.

On the other hand, children can find it difficult to control their urge to speak. When they do interrupt, mention kindly, "it's my turn to talk right now" or model this by deliberately interrupting them when they are talking and say, 'Sorry, I need to wait, you are still talking'".

Stay Calm

Children can find it challenging to handle strong emotions such as anger, fear or frustration. Therefore, a parent's calm response is vital. Guard against displaying anger or impatience with your facial expressions or stance when communicating with an angry child. Each time you start shouting or losing your temper, you may lose a little of your child's respect. Maintain eye contact and encourage your child to express what he's feeling and why. Most children benefit from a solitary moment to regain their composure before continuing the conversation.

Tone of Voice and Body Language

Actions speak louder than words. Remember that the way you say something carries weight. A hug and a smile convey love and care. Our face can communicate happiness, sadness or excitement. Our body language can hurt others, for

example eye-rolling, foot tapping, sighing or walking away. This can discourage a child from talking.

And Finally...

Positive two-way communication is essential to building your child's self-esteem. Children thrive on with words of encouragement and praise. Effective

communication with children means paying attention, respecting your child's feelings, and watching your tone of voice. If you have a busy schedule, make sure to allocate time every day to simply sit and listen to your child. Allow them to talk, discuss and express their thoughts without disturbance. Children may falter at it, which is why it is so important to have an adult's guidance to instill these skills. Be kind and patient with their slip-ups. Praise your child for positive behaviour, "Thank you for listening" or "I like the way you greeted the guests today" (with a smile). Use plenty of non-verbal praise such as hugs, smiles, a reward chart and stickers.

Book Reviews

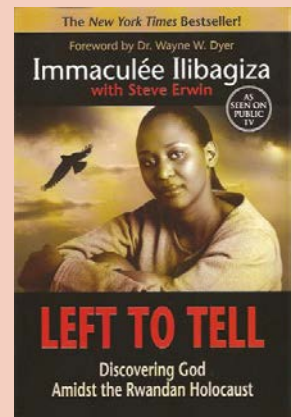
By Fatim Panjwani

Left to Tell

By Immaculee Ilibagiza

Left to Tell is the incredible story of Immaculee Ilibagiza's survival through the Rwandan genocide. Ilibagiza details her moving experience of horrific events of the genocide that took place around her. As a result of the power of her unshakeable faith in God, she survived.

God saved her life for a reason. "He left me to tell my story to others and show as many people as possible the leading power of his Love and Forgiveness". Her book proves that "with God all things are possible". Her objective is not to give a historical account of Rwanda or of the genocide. She gives her own story. She attests that through God's help, forgiveness is possible – even to those who killed her parents. Her book is meant to help people to let go of the chains of hatred and anger, and be able to truly believe in God, the epitome of love. Left to Tell is a breathtaking book that proves the fact that "the love of a single heart can make a world of difference".



Disability is not Inability

By: Murtaza Merali

In the year 1997, at the age of 14 years, after a few months of seeing increasing weakness and loss of control over my movements, especially of my hands and feet, I was diagnosed as having Spastic Paraplegia with essential tremor. This made it increasingly difficult for me to perform normal routine tasks.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as anyone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out day-to-day activities. More than 10 million people in the UK are disabled, 770,000 of whom are children.

Disabilities of any kind present challenges, but this doesn't mean that life with a disability can't be fulfilling. For most people, a fulfilling life means having control over their day-to-day activities and being able to choose how they live.

Disabled people are often talked about as though they are all part of one group, but through personal experience, I can tell you that every disabled person faces different obstacles and health conditions.

At every new obstacle that I needed to overcome -- just to do the normal basic things every student/teenager takes for granted -- I kept my spirits up and would not let anything deter me from living my life as I wanted to.

I was born in Hillingdon Hospital in London, in the year 1983. We then moved to Mombasa and I lived there with my parents until I finished High School in 2001. After High School, I applied to the University of Westminster, UK, to study for a BSc in Computing, and on being accepted, I moved there. I graduated in 2004, and was honoured to receive the award for the best upcoming student with a disability.

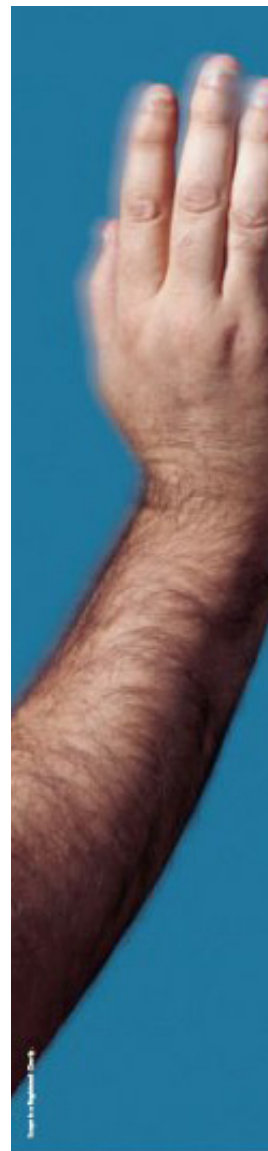
I feel quite strongly about how people view a person with disability. In many societies, they are thought to be a nuisance and an object of pity.

I firmly believe that, with a bit of empowerment and acceptance, disabled people can do as well as any other person. When educated, they can perform well, if not better than any other person - graduate, get jobs and fend for their families.

Ability beyond disability - this is how we should see disabled people in society. The disabled person also needs to come forward to educate the rest of society that disability is not inability; that what they need from society in general, and from their community in particular is:

- A sense of belonging and acceptance
- That the community focuses on their abilities and not disabilities
- To be included in decision making, more so when the decision made is about their lives
- Patience and tolerance in dealing with them
- Guidance and counselling where necessary, and
- Empowerment, not pity.

Unfortunately, a major part of the community has the perception that disability complicates life not only



Public transport
disabled people
Let me tell you the full story [www](#)

for people with disabilities, but also their families. It is this perception that disables an individual. Added to this, being treated as 'objects of pity' further demeans them and batters their self-esteem.

It is, therefore, our role – yours, as well as mine – as members of the community, and as members of society, to help change this negative attitude towards people with disabilities by involving them in development programs.



ort is leaving
ole behind.

ry www.timetogetequal.org.uk

scope

About cerebral palsy
For disabled people achieving equality.

It is only through treating them as equals, encouraging them to actively participate in projects and decision-making agendas, and giving them access to education and employment opportunities, that we can help them live a better life. It is through goodwill, not charity that we can elevate people with disabilities. This is what I aim and wish to teach my son, so that treating people with a disability equally becomes the norm and not something we have to fight for.

Alhamdulillah, I was surrounded by extremely supportive family and friends, who did not treat me differently and who went out of their way to make sure they included me in anything and everything. This cultivated a confidence and certainty in me that I could do whatever I set my mind to. Nothing was 'not possible because I am disabled'.

After graduating from university, I worked as a volunteer at Scope Charity for 11 months, and whilst there, I was selected as the most motivated volunteer. I received an award - which meant my photo was posted on tubes and buses around the UK as part of their campaign on disabled people.

In June 2006, I began working at Merchant Financial Services and I was there until August 2010. During that time, I got married to Siddiqia Jaffer, on 4th April 2008. I cannot thank Allah (SWT) enough for being fortunate enough to get such an understanding and appreciative spouse. With Allah's Grace, I was also blessed with a son - Mustafa - on 25th July 2009.

I presently work as a Data Administrator at MD Homes. Even though my disease is progressive, and I have gone from using only one walking stick whilst walking, to using one crutch, and now two, I find it gives me great satisfaction and pleasure to do more with my life, especially to build up my own spirituality; as well as instil selflessness and caring for others into my son's upbringing. For the past six years, I have been teaching Qur'an at Sunday Madressa to children from ages 11 to 14

approximately. I presently teach my 3 year old son Qur'an a few times a week, by going through the alphabet with him as he has an alphabet sheet in his room.

I am also a representative for Special Needs for the English Listening Centre. From January 2012, I have enrolled to study British Sign Languages, and Inshallah I am awaiting my results from the third level. I drive an automatic car or a mobility scooter to work to accomplish my needs, and this helps me get about independently.

My advice to other brothers and sisters who have disabilities would be to always be patient and cheerful. Try and always have a smile on your face. It is hard, but it works wonders. Seek solace from the fact that Allah (SWT) is Al-Muhaymin – The Protector, and Ar-Rahman – The Merciful.

I find reciting Ziyarat-e-Ashura, or some Quranic verses always helps when I am worried, or feeling low. As Shi'as and followers of the 12 Imams, we have the strongest support of our faith – our Tawakkul – and the guidance and prayers shown to us by our Aimmah (AS).

Most importantly, always be thankful to Allah (SWT) for what He has given you. Express your Shukr in every prayer. Another name of Allah (SWT), of His Asma-ul-Husna is Ash-Shakoor, which means The Thankful. We are told to elevate ourselves spiritually. To become the ideal mo'min, try to emulate the qualities of Allah (SWT) in yourself. This will help raise your status in His eyes. So pick this quality to emulate. And you know what? Being thankful is the most amazing pick-me-up that

you have ever known! Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran:

La in shakartum la azidannakum.

When you are grateful, I will increase my bounties on you (14:7)

What else do we need? So how should we be grateful? And for what should we give thanks?

Do not dwell on what you don't have. Appreciate the bounties you DO have, and be content with whatever Allah (SWT) has decreed for you.

Imam Sajjad (AS) teaches us this in his most beautiful collection of prayers. Dua no 35 of Sahifa-e- Sajjadiya so eloquently puts into words what we need to feel and say to our Lord. It is a dua that we should recite every day, to re-enforce that positivity and acceptance of whatever Allah (SWT) has decreed for us in the physical transient life of this world.



Allah has mercy on a parent who loves his child greatly - Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (AS)

If olive oil is made of olives,

what's baby oil made of?!

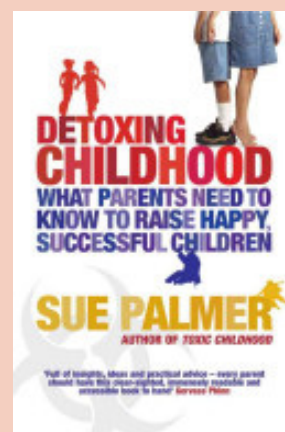
Book Reviews

By Fatim Panjwani

Detoxing Childhood: What Parents Need to Know to Raise Happy, Successful Children

By Sue Palmer

Palmer's earlier book, 'Toxic Childhood', is a controversial book that explains how a complex web of factors is affecting the development of children in the modern day. Among some of the toxic substances she lists are, televisions in bedrooms, poor quality food, lack of exercise and outdoor play, and endless material goods. In her later book 'Detoxing Childhood', Palmer, a former teacher, now writer, broadcaster and consultant on the education of young children, provides a range of simple tips and strategies to help parents overcome some of the challenges of modern day parenting. She advocates a style of parenting that is warm but firm. Palmer gives practical advice on children's eating and sleeping habits, family life and playtime. She then goes on to outline the different options on childcare and education in three phases; birth to three years, three to six years and six to twelve years. Palmer touches on some of the most pertinent issues many parents are grappling with, such as the work-life balance, state or private education, and the effects of technology (this is even before the iPad generation!) She presents some strong views and concludes by saying that the wisdom of our grandmothers still applies today. Definitely food for thought!



Kids and News

By Shenaz Kermalli (Canada)

"There are rockets falling in Palestine," my three-year-old son Ali solemnly told my sister and her family one evening over dinner at their home. "The children don't have houses anymore."

He was recounting our conversation from the previous night during a BBC television report on Israel's latest assault on the Gaza Strip. Ali watched intently, before turning to me: "What happened? Was there a fire?" Fires tend to be the most frequent story he hears on the news - at least through the way I filter them. Aerial strikes and drones seem a bit too vicious and complex to introduce at his age. Plus, the thought of trying to explain occupation to him seems tantamount to explaining to an elephant how to fly.

But while 'fires' tend to dominate the news reports we watch and listen to in the car on the way to school, positive stories surface occasionally too. Take the headline: 'Palestinians win approval for statehood' ("The rockets have stopped in Palestine so everyone's having a party on the streets!"), or 'Will and Kate are expecting' ("There's a princess in London that has a baby in her tummy!").

It's important to realise that as bleak news stories often are, both to adults and children; we don't let that perception rub off on our kids. Just because some stories are difficult doesn't mean they shouldn't be told. Learning and discussing current affairs is one of the lesser appreciated - and lesser understood - forms of education that kids need to acquire for their own personal development.

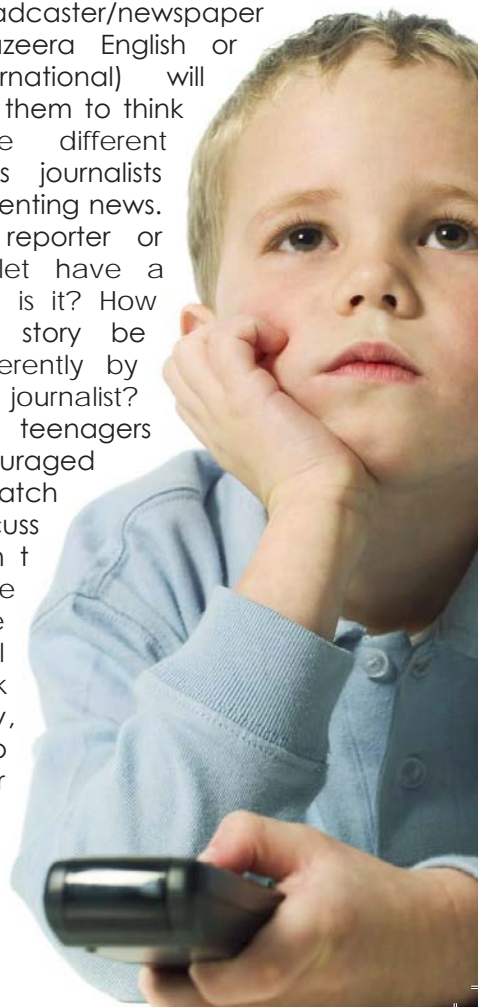
A world bigger than them

A child's world almost entirely revolves around their own family, friends and local community. And while familiarity and comfort are not bad things, a little exposure to the unfamiliar world

outside their home will introduce them to the reality and richness of different cultures and lifestyles. For a younger child, this can be served through listening to the news on the radio or watching a newscast on TV together. A one or two-line explanation is sometimes all they need to grasp that something else is happening outside of their own home and country - some of which can be learnt from, and some of which is just pure entertainment.

Create open dialogue

With older children, it's important to acknowledge the complexity of some news stories, and be open to hearing their thoughts. Reading or watching the news regularly - and introducing them to a range of news outlets (for example, a British broadcaster/newspaper plus Al Jazeera English or CNN International) will encourage them to think about the different perspectives journalists take in presenting news. Does the reporter or media outlet have a bias? What is it? How could the story be written differently by another journalist? The more teenagers are encouraged to read/watch and discuss current affairs, the better able they will be to think objectively, develop an eye/ear for detail and think critically as adults.



Instil moral values

For children of all ages, watching the news can also be used as an opportunity to instil your own sense of values and moral principles. News reports about dishonest politicians and wars can be discussed alongside with how important it is to tell the truth and give to those in need. Stories about conflicts, refugees and poverty are great ways to get your child thinking about the simple necessities of life that we all take for granted - shelter, food, medicine and security.

Encourage social change

Research indicates that if children are exposed to and encouraged to read and understand the news from a young age, they are more likely to feel like an active part of the world around them. If the Six O' Clock evening news broadcast or a broadsheet paper seems like too much of a stretch, you can try introducing your child to child-friendly news outlets, such as www.Teachingkidsnews.com, www.timeforkids.com or CBBC Newsround. Joyce Grant, a Canadian freelance journalist and founder of Teaching Kids News (TKN) explains how her online newspaper has helped children gain both a greater appreciation of different cultures and make a real difference to their community:

"One Canadian grade five/six class read the TKN story about the Uganda Little League baseball team that won its division but couldn't travel to the Little League World Series because the kids didn't have birth certificates. They were so moved that they contacted the school in Uganda. Their teacher arranged for the two classes to become pen pals (email pals). The Canadian and Ugandan children spent the year learning about each other's culture."

In another example, when the local council body in Toronto threatened to shut down some school pools in the city in order to save money, some children decided to take a trip to City Hall in swimsuits and scuba gear. Their trip was covered by TKN and the budget cuts were eventually reversed. "The pools were saved and the children learned about politics and the importance of making their voices heard." Grant says.



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Book Reviews

By Fatim Panjwani

Three Cups of Tea

By Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin

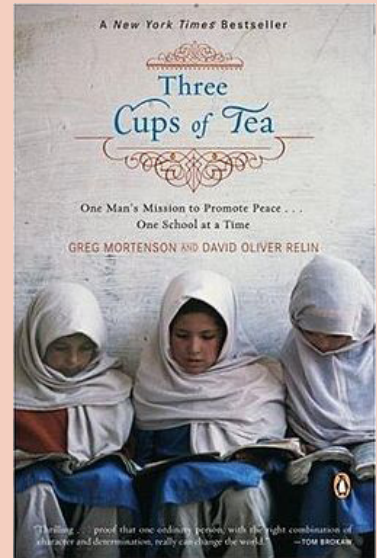
I'm sure many of you are familiar with the biography of American, Greg Mortenson, who after a failed attempt at summiting the earth's second highest peak, K2, stumbles upon an even greater challenge; building schools in the most remote mountains of Pakistan.

Mortenson was injured during his climbing expedition and was kind-heartedly nursed back to health in Korphe, a remote region of Pakistan. He was stunned to see the village children squatting outside in a makeshift school with no materials or teachers. After recovering, he made a promise that he would return and build a school for the children of Korphe, and he did just that!

Mortenson was determined to fulfill his promise and so he returned to his job as a trauma nurse in California. He kept his belongings in a storage building and lived in a car that he'd inherited from his grandmother.

He committed himself to fundraising and eventually built the school that he had promised. Despite the odds, Mortenson went on to build many more schools for both boys and girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Three Cups of Tea: Young Readers Edition simplifies Mortenson's remarkable story. It inspires children and calls them to action. The Young Readers version is full of useful extras, including an introduction by Jane Goodall, a timeline, a glossary, and a first-hand interview with Mortenson's 12-year-old daughter, Amira.



Personal Moments

Postnatal Depression

By: Nayaab Bhaloo

A cute little Moses basket, trendy travel system, the most adorable babygros and little outfits. Nothing beats the excitement of the arrival of a new baby.

But nothing prepared me for what happened after.

I had the most wonderful pregnancy Alhamdulillah and was quite geared up for this new phase of my life. Our son was born full-term with two holes in his heart, known as Atrial Septal Defect and Ventricular Septal Defect respectively. We found out about his condition at my 20 week scan, and during that difficult week, I questioned, "Why me?" many times. Then I remembered Allah (SWT) only tests those He loves, and He only sends such tests to those who can handle them.

We were very well informed of our son's heart defect, and we knew what steps and tests would take place after he was born. We also knew that he would have to undergo open heart bypass surgery at one point in his young life.

Two days after our son was born, I remember feeling very hesitant when my husband would leave the hospital to go home for the night. I did not want him to leave me. We were discharged the next day with a temporary clean bill of health, with many outpatient visits to follow.

I will always remember that first night at home. Our baby cried and didn't feed all night. We tried everything possible. We were back at the hospital at 7am the following morning. He had lost more than 12% of his body weight, so he was immediately admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). The moment I watched them wheel him away, I felt faint. After pulling myself together, we headed down to the NICU fifteen minutes later. My 3-day old baby was lying on the examination table with all sorts of intravenous lines sticking out of him and a feeding (NG) tube down his tiny nose. They also performed a spinal tap and multiple echocardiograms on him. I cried my heart out when I got the chance to step up to his incubator and just manage to grasp his tiny fingers. He was under a UV light for jaundice and had an eye mask over his eyes. I could see him struggling with the eye mask and nose tube, terrified. I could feel my heart tearing into pieces.

I remember thinking, "This isn't what I signed up for! This isn't motherhood. Why did I have this baby?"

That night, after expressing whatever breast milk I could, we had to leave him at the NICU and go home. That night, I also heard his distinct crying while I was in the shower at home. I was back at the hospital early the following morning, not being able to do anything else and determined to keep up with the breastfeeding. I remember the joy when the doctors said that his feeding tube could come out as he was doing so well. However, when they weighed him the next day, he had lost weight again, and they put another tube down his nose. I was sent home again that night. I felt like a complete failure. By some miracle, he was home three days later. That was when the trouble started.

Breastfeeding was very important to me, and I would be on the clock with it. If he didn't feed well or for long enough, I would be fretting. At about 2.5 weeks post-partum, I started feeling strange. I couldn't physically eat or even think about putting anything down my throat. I started feeling empty and very alone. I felt like I was constantly under this immense pressure, which I couldn't identify. And very scarily, I started feeling like I wasn't in control of my life anymore, and that I couldn't do a thing. Out of nowhere, I would start crying, and would be gripped with fear. I remember thinking, "This isn't what I signed up for! This isn't motherhood. Why did I have this baby?"

I would panic for no reason. Then I noticed these patterns; at 4pm every day, I would get palpitations. During these episodes, I would literally feel like I was being buried alive. I couldn't breathe, I felt like I was being swallowed under and I didn't have the strength or the will to fight it. I would feel overwhelming anxiety, and my fear was that someone would take my baby away from me. At the same time, I felt no love for him. The more I could hand him over to someone else, the better. I remember laying my head on my grandmother's lap like a child, saying, "Don't leave me alone". My mother-in-law was overcome with worry.

I would be afraid to sleep, because as soon as I would fall asleep, I would wake up with palpitations – the same "being buried alive" feeling again. I would beg my

husband not to go to work. I felt like I had no one else. I would find an excuse and happily leave my son at home to go and pick my husband up from the station. All this happened every single day, and I could not see how it could get better in any way. I was stuck in a deep, black hole and no one understood.

Being a health professional myself, I knew I was suffering from Post-Partum (Postnatal) Depression (PND). I also knew this was normal and happened to a lot more women than I thought. I also knew that I needed help.

A series of visits to the GP and health visitors confirmed my self-diagnosis, as well as that of anxiety for my son's immediate medical future. I asked for some 'magic pills' to help me cope, and was prescribed Oxazepam. I took one and decided never to take another one.

At the age of 5 weeks, my baby went into heart failure. And that's exactly when ALL of my symptoms disappeared. This is Allah's mercy! He had emergency surgery 10 days later, and there is no way we can say enough Shukr to Allah (SWT) for our now perfectly healthy two-year-old.

I did occasionally have 'low' moments in the first year post-partum, and they are now increasingly less. The reason for me sharing my story is so other new mothers don't feel like they have to struggle alone. It will come to an end! PND is not a disease, and if you have it, you are not sick. You need the support and help of your loved ones, and talking to someone who has been through it seemed to help me greatly. Today, knowing what I went through has made me stronger than ever. And I know Allah (SWT) loves us and will always take care of us if we put complete faith in Him. Stay strong sisters – you are not alone.

Don't Suffer From Postnatal Depression in Silence

By: Dr S Merali
General Practitioner

Holding your child in its first year can be the most overwhelmingly joyful experience. You look for your nose and your husband's forehead in that gorgeous little face. It's the perfect union of your loved one, reflected in your bundle of joy. Well, that's how it's "meant" to feel, isn't it?

When my father told me that my jihad is inside the house, nobody except Allah SWT, will know how happy that made me – Lady Fatemah (AS)

Pregnancy can be a tough and confusing time. You may have had to give up your financial independence by leaving your job. There are the physical changes your body is going through, topped with the hormonal fluxes you experience that are essential for the foetus' development. There is the balancing act of looking after yourself, your family and sometimes younger children, while feeling exhausted most of the time. These factors can make you feel low and vulnerable.

Labour and childbirth can vary from the half-hour labour, with a baby being born on a sneeze from mum, to the drawn-out 48-hour labour, ending in a caesarean section delivery.

How can one say what you are "meant" to feel after such challenging and different experiences that pregnancy and childbirth can bring along. Everyone has a different experience.

Postnatal Depression (PND) is a common condition experienced in the first year after childbirth. It is often the result of lots of different factors which started in

pregnancy, and may be precipitated by a long and difficult labour. After childbirth, you may experience a tricky balancing act. Your responsibilities and roles can be overwhelming. On top of this, your roles and relationships are quickly and dramatically changing, from being a daughter to your mum; you are transformed to a mum yourself and the mother of her grandchild. As you can see, it is quite acceptable to be feeling overwhelmed and sometimes depressed because of all these changes. To help identify if you or someone close to you is suffering from PND, I have put together a list of symptoms to look out for: Feeling low or despondent, lack of interest in the outside world, feeling unable to cope and inadequacy, irritability,



wanting to cry, loss of appetite, being unable to sleep, being hostile to your husband, feeling indifferent to your child, losing interest in intimacy, having panic attacks, overpowering anxiety, difficulty in concentrating, obsessive fears about the baby's health, negative thoughts about yourself like, "I'm useless as a mother" or "everyone else is coping, why can't I?" and thoughts about death.

PND is not the same as feeling low for short periods. This is normal and quite expected in such a challenging time. You may have heard of the term "baby blues". This is very common and is a mild form of depression, which up to eight out of ten mothers may experience. You may feel emotional, anxious and tearful for no apparent reason

but these symptoms only last for a few days after childbirth and normally settle as quickly as they came on. Doctors think it is the sudden changes in hormones which bring on the baby blues. PND is not solely caused by hormonal changes.

If you suffer from a combination of the above symptoms for a prolonged period of time, then you are probably suffering from PND. You may be wondering how PND is different from depression. The symptoms are very similar in both conditions and the only difference is that the depression starts in the first three months and up to a year after having a baby. Most mums do not recognise that they have PND because it happens at a time of great change; new mums often don't know what to expect, and what is normal. The problem can creep up on you, and you may just think you're not coping, rather than recognising that you are suffering from PND.

Help is at hand. The earlier you recognise you have PND, the better. The treatments can work more effectively in the earlier stages of PND.

Talking can be a great therapy. You should talk to someone you trust. You may find that the other person has been through similar experiences, which may be reassuring in itself. Make sure you are looking after yourself. It is very easy to forget about what is important for you when you are feeling depressed. Make sure you are resting, eating healthily, finding time for yourself and try and do some exercise. Health visitors are very accessible and a great source of information. They can act as a support or they can signpost you to resources or to other health professionals. Your GP would be very happy to help. Don't feel that social services will be involved if you involve health professionals. This happens very rarely. Only if your baby's safety is at risk, as can happen in the more severe cases of PND, would a social

worker be involved. And to be honest, in these cases, you would probably want social services to step in for the safety of your baby. Otherwise, in vast majority of cases, your GP or health visitor can manage you. If appropriate, you may be referred to a counsellor or a specialist. Counselling and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can be very helpful for mums not wishing to go down the route of taking medication. However, if you and your GP feel it is suitable, you can be managed with antidepressants. Many mums are concerned about antidepressants. They are very effective in treating PND and indeed all kinds of depression, and are NOT addictive, as is a common misconception. They can take up to 2-3 weeks to start working, and you would normally need to be on them a minimum of six months to gain maximum benefit from them.

May Allah have mercy on the one who helps his child towards righteousness by being good to him, appealing to him, teaching him knowledge, and training him - Imam Ali (AS)

I hope this short article will give an insight to those experiencing Postnatal Depression and to those supporting anyone going through it. It is a well-recognised and treatable condition, which is common, with up to 1 in 10 women suffering from it. If you are going through PND, please remember that you do not have to deal with this on your own. Help is very accessible.

Your Questions



You asked...

I desperately want to breastfeed my baby because of all the benefits and Islamic recommendations but was unable to ever produce milk. I feel like I've missed out and was robbed of this opportunity to provide the best start in life for my baby and bond with him.

We answered...

Although breastfeeding is highly recommended and its benefits confirmed, there will be times when a mother cannot nurse her baby through no fault of her own as is in your case. There the concept is having tried your best and recognising that there must be something in His Will that we may not understand. Thank Him for the ne'ma of the child you have been granted and maybe it is an opportunity to bond in other ways and make a greater effort to ensure that his dietary requirements are structured to ensure good health. May He bless you for your concern in these matters. That's what makes awesome mums...

Answered by: Umami Merali

You asked...

I am going back to work soon and my child will be staying with my mother-in-law while I am at work. However, we have very different opinions on how to raise children so I'm worried about how this will affect my little one and interfere in how I want him to be brought up.

We answered...

The first thing to come to terms with is the fact that no two people will raise children exactly the same way. If your mother-in-law and you happen to differ quite a lot then that simply means that her ways will be different to yours. For me, I had to accept that I chose to go back to work and so I had to relinquish some control, as hard as that seems. Where there are issues that are of utmost importance to you, then try to raise them in a way that will foster co-operation and understanding. But learn to choose your battles. If you oppose her ways on a constant basis, it may cause tension and it will not help in convincing your mother-in-law to do things your way. I'm not saying it's as easy as that – there are times when I feel frustrated when I see that simple things I have requested that should (or should not) be done are not followed, whether deliberately or not. What I constantly remind myself, though, is that my child is in a safe and loving environment and, for me at least, that trumps all.

Answered by: Someone who has been in the same situation before!

You asked...

I am much stricter on my child than my husband, and place a greater importance on discipline. For example, I will often place restrictions on things like TV and games until homework and responsibilities have been completed; but when my husband comes home, he overrides this and lets them do the things I had restricted. It's very frustrating! Now the children go and ask their dad for all the things I have said no to. Not only do I always feel like I'm the 'bad guy' but I also feel like I am unable to discipline and teach them certain values. I have tried talking to him but he says I'm being too strict and they are just kids.

We answered...

Your predicament is one that has existed from time beyond. My two pennies worth ... (In addition, I have raised 5)... is communication. Ensure that your 'restrictions' are reasonable and then communicate them when everyone is present (including dad) and discuss, debate and get consensus from all that they are fair. I use a whiteboard after a dinner discussion and make sure everyone agrees to them. Having raised four and in the process of raising the fifth, I have learnt (the hard way) that 'strictness' is over rated... Discussion, debate and a little positive bribery works wonders.

Answered by: Ummi Merali

You asked...

My little one is allergic to dairy. Can you recommend some alternative sources of nutrition to make up for what they will miss from dairy products?

We answered...

Dairy products are important in the diet as they are a good source of energy and protein, and contain a wide range of vitamins and minerals. They are rich in calcium, which growing children and young people need to build healthy bones and teeth.

I am assuming that your child is allergic to the cow's milk protein in dairy and the good news is that 90% of children will outgrow this allergy by the age of three. Calcium requirements for children aged 1-3 years are 350 mg. If your child is below 1 they will require a specialist formula feed and so it will probably be worth getting them to have a full assessment by a registered dietitian.

Dairy alternatives will tend to be Soya milk and products, and other plant-based dairy-free alternatives, for example, calcium enriched oats or quinoa milk. Milk from the dairy alternative groups can be used as a main drink from the age of 2 years. It is probably a good idea to opt for products which are higher in fat, protein and calories and which are enriched with vitamins and minerals.

Dairy-free calcium sources including those mentioned above; breakfast cereals and green vegetables should be routinely included within the diet.

Below is a list of alternative foods that are high in calcium.

Food	Calcium Content
Tinned sardines (eaten with bones)	250mg/ 50g serve incl. bones (2 sardines)
Tofu (soya bean curd)	255mg/ 50g serve
Calcium fortified breakfast cereal (e.g. Ready Brek, Cheerios, Frosties)	140-400mg/ 30g serve
White bread	110mg/ 100g (2 slices)
Soya yogurt (e.g. Alpro soya alternative to yogurt)	150mg/125g pot
Soya custard (e.g. Alpro soya alternative to custard)	120mg/ 100ml serve
Soya desserts (e.g. Alpro soya desserts in chocolate, vanilla or caramel flavours)	150mg/125g pot
Calcium enriched orange juice (e.g. Minute Maid Original Plus Calcium)	146mg/ 100ml serve
Calcium enriched water (e.g. Danone Activia)	75mg/ 250ml serve
Baked beans	80mg/ 150g small tin
Orange	70mg (1 large orange)
Broccoli	30mg/ 90g (3 florets)
Spinach	80mg /50g serve
Dried apricots	26mg/ 35g (4 apricots)

Reference:

http://uk.health.alprosoja.com/fileadmin/www_alprosoya_com/content/health.alpro-soja.com/EN/nutrition-inpracticefocus/Dairy_Free_Infants_and_Children_Best_Practice_ALPRO_ENEWS_JLY_01.pdf

Raising A Compassionate & Thankful Child

As mothers, we often wonder whether we are raising our children the 'right' way. From the very beginning, we research by reading plenty of books, blogs, and some of us may even turn to social networking sites for relevant information. We read, read and read, but are we able to apply this to our children's daily lives? More importantly, are we using the correct source of information...

Fostering gratitude and compassion in a child flourishes from mindful parenting. We leap into parenthood after forty weeks of carrying this precious unborn child in our wombs. We initiate our child's existence, showing him with love, compassion and mercy. It's like building a house

- our goal is achieving the end product so why would we leave it incomplete? It's part of everyday life; how to answer your child's questions, how to resolve a conflict at the park, how to nurture his growing capacity to understand and think about other people.

As parents, we need to set the best examples for our children, as in their early years they only look to us as role models. They emulate every single action of ours, and we may think at times that they are not paying attention, but this is soon evident from their behaviour. If we express thankfulness in everything we do, they will

soon begin to appreciate the little things in life. From when they are babies, we should try to incorporate stories about Allah (SWT) and the world around us, pointing out His creations - the sun, the moon, the stars and clouds - all with a "Subhanallah". His vast mercy and immense blessings upon us need to be emphasised at all times. When we feed them, or buy new things for them, we should always say "Alhamdulillah", and this becomes embedded into their tiny minds.

Another great way to instil compassion into our children is to teach them humanity. For instance, helping a less abled person perform something simple like doing up his shoelaces, or giving way to an elderly person with a smile. If possible, we need

to expose them to those less fortunate from a very young age, and teach them the art of giving up something precious. It's always hard in the beginning, but foregoing something for a person, who would never have dreamt of receiving such a thoughtful present, is in itself, teaching our children thankfulness. An incident I read recently on a dear relative's memorial page seems like such a great story to share here.



The event itself may seem tearful, but the morals a father tries to embed in his daughter have stayed with her for life, or in her words, a fingerprint on her heart and soul. She vividly recalls the year 1974, when her aunt gave her a pistachio-green coloured bicycle as a gift. She fell in love with it, and used to race with her dad in the evenings; and whilst he rode his bike, they would attempt to ride as fast as a 'jumbo jet'. Over time, her dad realized how attached she had become to her bicycle and how much she loved it. He sat down with her, placed the bicycle in front of them, and asked her how much she liked it. Her response was

unconditional - she absolutely adored it. He questioned whether she would be willing to give it up, for something better in return, that Allah (SWT) would give her at a later time. She thought about it, and then this 5 year old eventually agreed.

He told her they would be going on a short journey the next day. They set off after lunch, her riding her bicycle whilst her dad walked besides her. It felt like an eternity, as the destination was not nearby. They arrived at a house, and he asked her to knock on the door and tell the woman that this bicycle was for her children! They were an extremely poor family who were looked down upon by the community. And so this young girl did as she was told, and father and daughter returned home in silence. She recalls the pain she felt parting with her bicycle as inconsolable, and she quietly cried about it, but neither of them ever mentioned it again.

She says it took years for her to slowly remove that pain, and to understand what her father was trying to teach her. Each pedal towards that house, etched in her a gratitude and appreciation that she will remember until her death. To reinforce this act, her dad constantly reminded her of the ayah in the Holy Qur'an, "By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love" (3:92).

A great time to start this may be in the forthcoming month of Mahe Ramadhan, which is a joyous time for many of us. We could gather a few friends, and prepare Iftar for a family in need. Another idea may be to make Eid cards and gifts with our children, to distribute to the homeless, or terminally ill children in hospital.

Empathy is another great way to be more deeply attached to our family, friends, and even strangers. Developing empathy begins at home. If your kids are fortunate enough to have grandparents around, then allow them to start there. Helping out around the house from a very young age will give them responsibility, so that when a younger sibling appears, they can step into an older person's shoes

and feel helpful. The simplest of tasks, like building a tower, to helping entertain a baby during meal times, automatically makes them feel more useful. As they get older, we must remember to challenge their empathy-boosting experiences.

We need to recognize and praise kindness, but never overdo it! If we begin to praise them for every deed of kindness, as with everything else in young children, their focus will waver and it won't be as much about being helpful or compassionate. We have to remind them whenever possible that Allah (SWT) is "Ar-Rahman" and "Ar-Rahim", Merciful and Compassionate. Instilling these vital qualities in ourselves first, then in our children, will create a better Muslim Ummah. Of the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah (SWT), we can teach our children "Ash-Shakoor", The Rewarder of Thankfulness! If we repeat Ya Shakoor forty-one times on water and wash our faces with it, it lightens a heavy heart and maintains composure.

Love is one of the main principles in the upbringing of a child, and has been strongly emphasized in several hadith. However, alongside love, firmness in raising a child is strongly recommended, and that seems to be the formula for a happy child. Once a child is happy and feels cared for, he reciprocates, showing kindness, affection and tolerance.

With so much hatred and turmoil in the world today, it's more important than ever to raise children who can understand and be kind to other people. At the end of each day, speak to your child, and let him recount the good or bad he may have done that day. It's a step towards training them for muhaasiba (accounting of your deeds). With my little ones, it brings out the best in them. Little things like one-to-one uninterrupted conversations are precious to both them and us. And just before they are ready to retire for the day, all tucked up in bed, drifting away to dreamland, they are happier knowing they have made a difference that day.

Kid's Corner

Ramadhan Calendar

Finding imaginative ways to motivate and inspire children to make each day of the holy month of Ramadhan count is a challenge! Well, here is an idea - why not create a 'Ramadhan' advent calendar.

Each day, the child has to open a 'box' and inside is an activity they must complete that day in order to get their chocolate. The task should be simple, yet meaningful.

Your calendar doesn't need to be the traditional type – in fact the more creative you are with it, the better. In addition, they will enjoy making it with you! Make sure it is displayed somewhere prominent and central within the house, and each day one is opened as a family. Perhaps there can be activities that the whole family have to do!

Check out the following ideas on how to create it and we've listed some suggestions on what you can include as the tasks.



Buy some chocolates for your neighbour and include a note on what the month of Ramadhan is about

Write a list of 50 things that you are (and should be!) grateful for

Write an ariza to the 12th Imam (AS) and ask him to help you with something you are finding difficult

Find a verse in the Qur'an that you like, and memorise it

Pray 2 rakat namaz for your parents

Write down 10 things that your mum and dad each do for you, then go and thank them

Go for a walk and admire Allah's creations in nature

Recite a surah and dedicate the thawab to marhumeen in your family

Read an article about people in the world who are going through hardship and then pray for them

Spend some time with your sibling, doing an activity

Smile at people when you are out and about

Donate something you love to charity

Call a family member you haven't spoken to in a while and ask them how they are

Write 3 things you love about each of your family members and show them

Visit the graves of relatives

Prayer Bucket

Create a Prayer Bucket. At dinner time (or iftar time!), let each of the children pick one or two sticks out of the prayer bucket and let them pray for whoever or whatever is written on the stick.



Ash-Shakoor Jar

Start the month with an empty jar and fill it with notes of good things that happen. Open the jar on Eid (or even the next Eid) and see what an amazing month (or year) it has been.



Building your House

An elderly builder was ready to retire. He told his employer of his plans to leave the house-building business to live a more leisurely life with his wife, and enjoy time with his family. He would miss the pay cheque each week, but he wanted to retire.

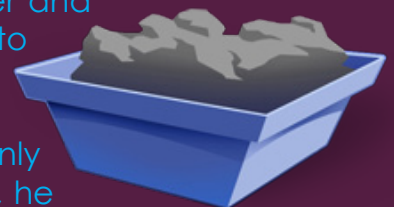


The employer was sad to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favour. The builder said yes, but over time, it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. He didn't try his best and took every shortcut he could. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the builder finished building the house, his employer came to inspect it. Then he handed the front-door key to the builder and said, "This house is for you. It was my leaving gift to you."

The builder was shocked! What a shame! If only he had known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

Story Time



This is exactly how we are sometimes. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into it. Then, with a shock, we realise we have to live in the "house" or "life" we have built.

Remember, you cannot go back. Your attitude and the choices you make today, will help build the "house" you will live in tomorrow. Make sure you build your life wisely!

Some of the building blocks to our life include:
Our education and how well we do at school

The way we treat our family members and the relationship we build with them

The friends we make

The things we eat and drink

The way we talk to other people

How we make use of our spare time



What's On this Summer?

Here are some recommended places to visit when the sun is out. Perfect for family walks and picnics, each place hosts various events throughout the summer. Some even have accommodation where you can spend the weekend.

Hughenden Woodcock Wood walk

High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP14 4LA

Email: hughenden@nationaltrust.org.uk

Clivedon - Family Walks and Boat Trips

Email: cliveden@nationaltrust.org.uk

Osterley Park Stroll, London

Jersey Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4RB

Email: osterley@nationaltrust.org.uk



Chilterns Countryside - Picnicking, Walking and Kite Flying

Myddelton House Gardens, Bulls Cross, Enfield, Middlesex

08456 770 600 | info@leevalleypark.org.uk



EUROPE

The United Kingdom is currently investigating its meat industry after pork was found in Halal prison food and later on, horsemeat was found in supermarket products – FEBRUARY 2013

The economy continues to suffer across all European countries as leaders debate the best solution to get unemployed people into jobs and take the continent out of a recession – ONGOING (as at April 2013)

CENTRAL AMERICA

It has been ten years since the war in Iraq, when former US president George W. Bush sent American troops to fight in Iraq in an illegal war – MARCH 2013

A stranded cruise ship has arrived in the US after drifting into the Gulf of Mexico for several days – FEBRUARY 2013

SOUTH AMERICA

Venezuela's President, Hugo Chavez, died aged 58 after battling cancer for nearly two years – MARCH 2013

Rivalry between different groups in Colombia has led to the deaths of several people, making negotiations extremely difficult to take place – FEBRUARY 2013

Plays

Fortunately we are spoilt for choice on where to take the little ones this summer, with lots of choice in and around London. Why not embrace the cultural aspect of our diverse capital and check out the following:



Polka Theatre from 27th April – 17th August 2013
Charlie and Lola's Extremely New Play

ASIA

The Rohingya population in Burma is a Muslim group that is pleading for international support as they continue to be persecuted by the government – ONGOING (as at April 2013)

Pakistan has urged the US to stop its drone campaign, which has killed innocent people and is a violation of international law and human rights – ONGOING (as at April 2013)

MIDDLE EAST

Shias in Bahrain continue to protest against the Sunni-led government and are demanding more rights – ONGOING (as at April 2013)

Syria has been torn apart by civil war as rebel groups demand the current President Bashar al-Assad to step down and hand over his powers – ONGOING (as at April 2013)

AFRICA

Kenyans are preparing to vote in the next presidential election and will select a president to run the country – MARCH 2013

French troops have entered Mali after the president asked foreign troops to intervene and fight off rebel groups that are threatening to disrupt the peace – JANUARY 2013

Regent's Park Open Air Theatre - THE WINTER'S TALE RE-IMAGINED - 29th June 2013 – 20th July 2013 for ages 6 and above and DINOSAUR ZOO - 9th August 2013 – 8th September 2013



Wembley Arena, Empire Way, London, HA9 0DH - A spectacular staging of JM Barrie's children's classic, Peter Pan: The Never Ending Story World Arena Tour - 21st August 2013 - 26th August 2013



We asked a number of children within the community to describe the role model in their life, with emphasis placed on the qualities they admire most

Dear Prophet Muhammad,



You are very special to me because you are Allah's special messenger. You protect Islam so everybody can become good Muslims. You always help people like Bibi Fatema (A.S) with the housework. You forgive people and teach about Islam. You share because it's good to share. Allah (SWT) sent the Quran to you and you taught people how to recite the Quran.

I will pray namaz everyday and read the Quran everyday and I will share my toys. I will listen to mummy and baba. I will become clever. When I go to heaven, I will say Salaam to you and I will show you my friends.

Love,
Salman Mukhtar

SPECIAL



To me the word 'special' means something or someone that holds a very high level of importance to me. There are many things I can think of that would be special to me; for example, my family, friends, books and so on but from all these what is most special to me is my mum.

My mum is the most special person to me, as I know no matter what I do or say she is always there for me. She helps me when I need it, corrects me when I am wrong and cares about everything that goes on in my life. I get excited at the thought of meeting my mum after school and telling her about my day. She always puts a smile on my face when I am unhappy. In one word, my mum is amazing and makes me feel like I can be anything.

She has the attributes of the appreciative and the merciful. She is appreciative of everything I do, be it clean my room, or a small chore for her, and even the effort I put into my schoolwork. She is merciful in that she forgives me for all the mistakes I make, no matter how many in number. In the end, she will give me a hug and make me feel good.

By Safiya Zahra Bandali

KIDS WEEK



Also takes place in August, where children aged 5 to 16 years old can see a selection of West End hits for free - as long as an adult pays full price - and another two children can go half price. Advance booking is advised. Additionally, there is also a whole range of free children's activities. Kids can peek backstage, participate in workshops, scribble a few lines in writing classes and much more.

TO MY IMAM,

Assalamu Alaykum

In the morning I wake up and I say Salaam to you and I lower my head when I say your name because you are important and special to me. When I go to sleep my mum reminds me to think about what I did all day and tell you all the good and sometimes the not good.

My Imam, you are like all superheroes in one - strong - and when we need you, you will come and protect us. My Imam doesn't need a shield or need to spin webs or point lasers from his eyes. I can talk to my Imam everyday and you make me feel safe.

Thank you Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s) for being there for us all. Inshallah I will have more good than not good to tell you every day.

From Qasim Hadi



LolliBop Festival

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Olympic Park, London, E20 2ST

Tube: Hackney Wick Overground Station

Dates: 16th, 17th and 18th August 2013



Live acts, plenty of activities and various workshops including an Arts and Crafts tent. Fairground rides are available as are baby changing facilities.

Jolly Day Out

A family festival with dancing sheep, arts and crafts, and theatre shows.

Hampton Court Green, Farm Cottages, Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey, London, KT8 9AT

Tube: Richmond Station

Dates: Saturday 31st August and Sunday 1st September 2013

There are live shows in the theatre tent, circus skills, arts and crafts, and animal farms. There is also a summer market and food stalls.



EID In the Square

Free festival marking the end of the holy month of Ramadhan.

Trafalgar Square, Central London, Westminster, WC2N 5DS

Date: Sunday 11th August 2013

The event features live performances, food stalls, exhibitions and displays about Islam.

KIDS HEALTHY MENU

By Benazir Merali

DRINK: STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE

Prep: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

- 2 ice cubes
- 1 cup of milk
- 2/3 cup frozen strawberries
- 1½ teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract



Method:

1. Pour all of the ingredients into the blender
2. Run the blender for 45 to 60 seconds until smooth.
3. Pour into a glass and slurp away!

Recipe: *Junior Chefs: The Guide For Young Cooks*, Banaat An Noor

STARTER: EASY PEASY HUMMUS

Prep: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

- 400g canned chickpeas, liquid reserved
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- Dash of lemon juice
- Salt to taste



Method:

1. Combine chickpeas, garlic, cumin, pepper and olive oil in a food processor.
2. Blend on low speed, gradually adding reserved chickpea liquid, until desired consistency is achieved.
3. Add salt and lemon to taste.
4. Pour into a bowl and serve with bite-sized pita bread or vegetable crudité's.

Recipe: *Junior Chefs: The Guide For Young Cooks*, Banaat An Noor

MAIN: MACARONI AND CHEESE *with a twist!*

Prep: 5 minutes Total Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups elbow macaroni
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- ½ cup skimmed milk
- ½ cup cauliflower puree (the twist!)
- 1½ cups grated cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup low-fat cream cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon paprika



Method:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil. Add the macaroni, and cook according to package directions. Drain in a colander.
2. While the macaroni is cooking, coat a large pan with the oil. Then add in the flour, stirring constantly, until the mixture resembles a thick paste but has not browned.
3. Add the milk and cook, stirring every now and then, until the mixture begins to thicken. Add the cauliflower puree, cream cheese, cheddar and seasoning, and stir until the cheese is melted and the sauce is smooth. Stir in the boiled macaroni and serve warm.

Note: Trying to feed fussy eaters can be a mission; but try feeding them vegetables and that can sometimes be impossible. Pureeing vegetables and adding it to the foods they love is a good way of getting the necessary vitamins into their growing bodies and also allowing their taste buds to familiarise themselves with different flavours.

Recipe: *Deceptively Delicious*, Jessica Seinfeld

DESSERT FROZEN YOGURT POPS

Time: 1 to 2 hours

Ingredients:

- 500g tub of your favourite flavour of yoghurt

Method:

1. Pour the yoghurt into small-sized paper cups (or alternatively use plastic ice-lolly moulds). Fill them almost to the top.
2. Stretch a small piece of cling film across the top of each cup.
3. Using a wooden popsicle stick, poke a hole in the cling film. Stand the stick straight up in the centre of the cup.
4. Put the cups in the freezer until the yoghurt is frozen solid.
5. Remove the cling film, peel away the paper cup, and enjoy!



Recipe: http://kidshealth.org/kid/recipes/recipes/yogurt_pops.html

Young Poets' Competition

Topic

Select a figure of your choice who you feel has inspired you. Your poem can be written in any style – choose one and base it on your chosen figure. Make it creative with pictures or drawings.

Each poem will be judged on content, written style and age of poet.

Entry Guidelines

Age: 8-13 years

Word limit: 150 words

The submission deadline is 23rd August 2013. Poems should be scanned (if necessary) and emailed to Muslimmums@hotmail.co.uk. Please include your name, age and contact details.

The winning poem will be published in the next issue of Muslim Mums and the winner will receive a £50 Toys R Us voucher. Two runners-up will each receive a £25 Toys R Us voucher



One who kisses their mother's feet, it is like kissing the wall of the Ka'bah and one who kisses their mother's forehead, it is like extinguishing the fire of hell – Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

An advertisement for Bilton Cakes. At the top, a pink banner contains the website www.biltoncakes.co.uk, the company name "Bilton Cakes" in a large, white, cursive font, the tagline "Completing your occasion", and the phone number "Tel: 07986786909". To the right of the text is a small icon of a cake. Below the banner, several cakes are displayed on pink stands. From left to right: a large chocolate bear-shaped cake, a white cake with "Happy Birthday" written on it and a doll on top, a blue and white swirl cake with a single candle, a brown teddy bear-shaped cake, and a red cake with "Happy 2nd Birthday" written on it and Mickey Mouse figures on top. The background features colorful balloons in green, purple, orange, and yellow.

Please don't look away

By: Saba Ali Arain (New Jersey, U.S.A)

My four and half year old daughter Sarina has twinkling brown eyes, beautiful long, black curly hair, dimples like her daddy, a big toothy grin like her mama, and spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy. She is not defined by her diagnosis, but it is an essential part of her life, and ours. My husband and I have been on a long journey to come to terms with the reality of our lives and have found ways to find the hidden blessings in it. We have formed a stronger bond with each other and our children. We have overwhelming joy at the tiniest of milestones and bittersweet acceptance of watching our younger daughter Aleena move with such ease and grace while her older sister struggles to make her body work. We know we're not the 'typical' family, but to us, we're as normal as can be.

We go out to the mall, eat out at restaurants, hang out with friends. And we do this as best as we can. Yup, we're the family with bags and bags of crayons and coloring books, iPads and activities, in addition to the adaptive stroller and booster seat we carry along with us. Every now and then we venture out with Sarina's walker to give her more practice. You might see us out and about; praising Sarina's every step, running after Aleena to catch up, watching the girls interact and play with each other. And you might not see us, or, at least, all of us. There's always that person who sees Sarina, and either pretends not to notice, or watches a little too long.

I can understand-I felt that way myself about 4 1/2 years ago. Didn't want to seem like I was staring, but was just trying to understand all of the varieties of human beings Allah (SWT) created. I would pretend not to see the little boy who was a little too loud while his parents were trying to calm him down. Or the teenager in the wheelchair that was so tricked out that it was practically screaming out for attention. But no, 'just keep looking straight ahead' I would tell myself. And now I realize that was the wrong thing to do.

I don't want people to pretend not to see my beautiful daughter as she makes huge strides in her life. I don't want people to look away as she struggles and regains her balance and act as if she isn't there. Or not hear the words coming out of her mouth as she sings her princess songs or tells us about her day. I don't want people to act as if my daughter is invisible. I see the ones who can't spare a moment to repeat themselves or wait for Sarina's response to a question. The ones who are too busy interacting with Aleena to recognize that there is another child present. They might think she doesn't know any better. And she doesn't, yet. But we do. And she



will. She might feel that people think her contributions are less worthy because of the time it takes for her to accomplish them.

Or she may think that her value as a human is less because of her different appearance. But she would be wrong, and so are the many others who feel this way and act on it.

When you see us in the mall, a big gangly group trying to stay together as we walk the halls, please say hi. Let your kids point and ask, 'Why is that little girl walking differently?', and answer kindly, 'Because that's how Allah (SWT) made her'. After all, "He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases. La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the All-Mighty, the All-Wise". (3:6)

If you see us frazzled parents, trying to manage bags and equipment, please smile at us and our kids. You have no idea how much it means to us. If you see our child in a walker, adaptive stroller, motorized wheelchair, orthotic braces or anything else that might set her apart, just take a second and see her for the unique and wonderful creation she is. And smile at her. And if you're lucky, and chances are you will be, she will flash a huge toothy grin right back at you. And THAT is definitely worth seeing.

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Have You Ever Considered Becoming A Foster Parent?

By Khalil Jaffer (Canada)

In many Western countries, when a child loses his or her parents (temporarily or permanently) and has no other caregiver in the family, the government has a 'foster care' system that places minors in pre-approved and registered private homes called foster homes. The child remains at such a home, as part of the foster family, until they can go back to their family or get adopted by another.

Whilst most foster families are encouraged to honour the heritage and religion of the child in their care, it is not easy when their backgrounds are very different. Sadly, very few Muslims are foster parents so when Muslim children come into care, very often they must live in non-Muslim settings, often for a long time, where they are unable to live by and practice their faith easily. Many Muslim families who can get involved are unaware of the foster care system and others are held back by misconceptions about Islam's view on adoption and fostering. My wife and I began fostering infants some eight years ago with the Children's Aid Society in Ontario, Canada; with the intention of helping all children, but also with the knowledge that if a Muslim child should ever come into care (which they do), we would quite likely be asked to care for the child (which we are). There are however numerous Muslim children in non-Muslim foster homes because there simply aren't enough Muslim foster homes.

When children first come into foster care, no one can really tell how long they will remain in care. There are often times where children are separated from their parents due to unfortunate circumstances such as domestic violence or neglect,

and/or abuse of the child; and unless other family members (such as uncles, aunts, grandparents etc.) step forward to take over, the child could remain in foster care for months, and even years, until the case is sorted out. We have had infants stay with us for a few days or weeks, to others staying for over a year. Some have even gone back home only to return after a few weeks.

A question we always get asked is whether it is hard to let go of them when it is time for them to leave. And the answer is always, 'Yes!' We have had some twenty-five children come and go, from varied backgrounds and you never get used to seeing them leave. In one instance, we had a girl come to us from birth and leave when she was a year and a half old. We were the only parents she'd ever known so it would be impossible to describe how difficult it was to see her leave our home. In most cases however, children are reunited with their birth families and this is always heart-warming.

You also have to keep reminding yourself that it is not about you, but about the child, and why you do what you do. What is heartbreaking however, is when no one in the family is willing to take the child or when a child is brought into care straight from the hospital (after birth), and you see them afraid and uncared for, wrapped in a swaddle cloth and accompanied with one diaper and a milk bottle in small brown paper bag. That is all they possess, with no one to show them love. You cuddle them and assure them 'all will be well', yet the truth is - you only hope so. We once looked after an older child, and a day or so after he had been with us, he asked innocently: "Is it ok if I call you mum and dad?"

Yet another sad experience that foster parents often witness is children getting dressed and ready for their

weekly visit with their birth mum and/or dad but the parents don't bother to show up. The child's hopes are raised only to be disappointed. On the flip side of course, is the joys of seeing a neglected, underweight child regain health and confidence under your care. What life teaches you through all such experiences is that all you have is the present moment. You can choose to worry about the future or place your trust in Allah (SWT). Rejoice and celebrate today and let Him take care of tomorrow.

A common myth is that only couples with no children of their own foster. Many foster families have their own biological children. They foster to give back to society, to make a difference in a child's life and even to nurture selfless values in their own children.



The best part about fostering is that you always go in thinking you are going to help, but you always end up taking more than you have given. Besides Allah's love, very little comes close to the

unconditional love that a child will give you. Personal pain and loss pale in comparison to the heartbreaking experience of seeing a child's trust and sense of security broken and torn apart; and you feel blessed to be able to do the little that you can to help and be a part of the child's life. It is also a myth that one cannot love another's child like one's own biological child. When you see a child take his/her first step or say his/her first word or put his/her arms around you and say, 'I love you mama/baba', it makes no difference whatsoever. If anything, the thought that this child is no different from an orphan fuels you with even greater love for the child and ensures you never take him or her for granted.

As for Islam's stand on fostering, it is true that there may be challenges like hijab, taharah and so on. But these do not pose



issues if you choose to foster infants, for example. And should a foster child stay with you indefinitely, you can always consider adopting them permanently. The rules in Islam surrounding adoption can be respected and observed and are not meant to be obstacles or reasons to discourage adoption. On the contrary, Islam places great importance on caring for orphans and children in need. The Qur'an, for example, stresses the rights and care of orphans frequently. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself adopted a son – Zayd b. Haritha. And he is reported to have said, "I, and the guardian of an orphan shall be like 'this' in Paradise" as he joined his index and middle fingers together. (Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, 5/597/23)

If you would like to consider becoming a foster parent, the first step is to contact your local Children's Aid Society or a similar agency under the Government's Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Find out what the

requirements are and typically, you would be invited to attend a general information session at first. Even if becoming a foster parent is not feasible for you, there may other ways in which you can help; such as becoming a volunteer driver or doing relief work (such as babysitting) for other foster parents. The process usually involves a home study, interviews, police checks, training and so on. But do not let that discourage you. It is all worth it and the training never stops. You will have tremendous opportunities to learn more about child psychology and human behaviour, how to help those who grieve and suffer, more effective parenting skills and so on.

If you're considering adoption, fostering is also a great way to experience what it takes to care for a child. And even if you then decide not to adopt or continue fostering, you will have learnt invaluable lessons in selflessness, compassion, giving of yourself, and the meaning of unconditional love.

Becoming foster (and even adoptive) parents is very natural. It is in us to find love by first giving it to others, to deal with our own suffering and fears by helping others overcome theirs, and to appreciate the miracle of life through the eyes of a child. And when it comes to giving up our 'self'-ishness by being selfless to others, very little comes close to caring for a child in need of parents.

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Holiday Review Tawheed Camp

In this part of the world, I feel we are always looking for suitable holiday destinations where, as a Muslim family, we can bond and grow together within an environment which doesn't require us to compromise our faith. Various Muslim countries, especially around the Middle East have become popular destinations for us ... be it a pure 'holiday' (Dubai!) or a 'spiritual' one (Iraq!); but who would have thought venturing out a bit more West would provide a combination of both.

Tawheed Camp is a two-week family summer camp, based in Michigan, USA. It aims to enhance the mind, body and spirit of youth and families from all over the world, within an Islamic environment. Located in beautiful and tranquil surroundings, the daily activities integrate Islamic principles with all aspects of life. A typical day could include a range of sports, from swimming to kayaking, archery to tubing; followed by Qur'an Tafsir and group discussions beside the bonfire, based on the

lecture from earlier that day. There are daily congregational prayers, Qur'an recitations and of course, halal meals.

"The sense of brotherhood and sisterhood is amazing. Enjoying all the fun activities with your fellow campers throughout the day while coming together for the worship of Allah really

emanates a sense of unity and love, and working towards our main goal, which is to learn to live sincere lives towards Allah." Quote from a previous camper.

The activities aim to promote religious education, good moral behaviour, a responsibility to society, leadership and public speaking.

The camp boasts excellent facilities, including comfortable log cabins for families, or



**If you want something done...
just do it yourself!**

"Camp Taha allows me to escape my daily routine and focus more on my characteristics and principles to become a good Muslim in the West"

The best of you are those that are best with their family and I am the best with my family – Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

accommodation in the separate Villages for boys and girls. The girls' Noor village is completely secluded and has its own swimming pool, tennis courts, basketball courts and other playing fields, allowing privacy to play sports without hijab.

The programs for each camp are packed with a variety of physical and mental activities such as:

Physical

Basketball, Tennis, Swimming, Soccer, Adventure Runs, Canoeing / Kayaking, Lake Water Slide, Volleyball, Tubing, Baseball, Archery, Wall Climbing

Mental

Islamic Lectures, Q&A Sessions, Bonfire Discussions about various topics, Quran Tafsir, Presentations


Character / Skills development

Plays & Recitations, Quizzes, Debates

For more information, visit

www.tawheedcamp.org or watch the video on YouTube by entering in the search box TawheedInstitute





For more information on our classes and sessions contact
Azra Hassanali
azrahassanali@hotmail.com
 +44 7711607894
 Twitter: @azrahassanali
www.facebook.com/BabblenChat

Come along and join in our weekly fun-packed Islamic group for Parents and Babies run by a Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist with 9 years' experience working in Early Years.

Each week we will:

Bond with our babies through stories, songs and activities around a different theme

Introduce Islamic concepts to our babies (eg, Salaam, Fi amaanillah, Allah is One)

Discuss issues such as using dummies, maintaining home languages, watching tv and helping our babies to develop speech.

iDigitalize.com

Growing Feet

Providing parents with "Pearls of Wisdom" (Islamic and Secular) through the growing years

PREGNANCY – Activate Your Hormones to Become a Better Mother – and a Happier Person!

(Extracted from <http://www.ahaparenting.com/ages-stages/pregnancy/oxytocin-pregnancy-birth-mother>)

Why are some women better mothers than others? Turns out that some women have more "love" hormones than others do. Oxytocin is one of the key maternal hormones, but it doesn't just make women more maternal, it makes them more loving in general - and happier! Scientists have known for decades that animals with less oxytocin exhibit slower pup retrieval and less licking and grooming of their babes, but not much research has been done on human mothering and oxytocin until now.

The latest results are fascinating. Researchers have found that women's oxytocin levels during their first trimester of pregnancy predict their bonding behaviour with their babies during the first month after birth. Additionally, mothers who had higher levels of oxytocin across the pregnancy as well as the postpartum month also reported more behaviour that create a close relationship, such as singing a special song to their baby, bathing and feeding them in a special way, or thinking about them more. Quite simply, the more oxytocin you have, the more loving and attentive you are to your baby. What's more, oxytocin reverses the effect of the fight or flight hormones once danger is past, and helps us restore our sense of calm and well-being. It lowers blood pressure and promotes friendliness, or the desire to connect with others. In general, oxytocin makes you happier.

Here's the obvious question. If you don't have high oxytocin levels in your first trimester, are you just fated to be a lousy parent, and your kids are out of luck? Or are there ways for us to increase our oxytocin levels? Let's start with the bad news. We can't just take oxytocin pills to increase blood levels because oxytocin does not cross the body's "blood/brain barrier," except in the form of nasal sprays; and long-term use of oxytocin spray can damage your brain. So there's no magic pill. We have to do the work to increase our oxytocin.

However, the good news is that our brain's production of oxytocin is actually easily impacted. And it isn't just limited to moms. Men have oxytocin too, and in almost the same amounts as women, although few studies have been conducted on men's oxytocin pathways.

The happy fact is that we can all raise our oxytocin levels, every day! The methods are simple, and enjoyable. Some activities that will help you produce more oxytocin: Touching another person, loving your baby, loving a pet, connecting deeply with another human being, yoga, exercise, giving or receiving a massage, meditation, worshiping, participating in a group that you enjoy, gardening, volunteering, snuggling your child...

Quite simply, we produce oxytocin when we feel love. In fact, some researchers call it the love hormone. And for pregnant women who wonder about their oxytocin levels: the single best way to increase your oxytocin is to breastfeed your baby. Not only do your blood levels increase, but your body makes more receptors, permanently increasing your feelings of love -- and your ability to feel loved.

Because the even better news is that, the more oxytocin we produce, the more oxytocin receptors our nervous system produces and the more love we feel. It's an upward spiral.

INFANCY (0-24 Months) – Cherish Your Baby

(Extracted from <http://www.ahaparenting.com/ages-stages/newborns/cherishing>)

Humans are born ready to love, and to be loved. All parents recognize the adoration reserved especially for parents, the small arms reaching up, the joy of infant and parent in their cocoon of mutual delight. Babies expect to be cherished.

This cherishing, this affirmation of the infant from head to toe, teaches the baby who he is. In interaction with the parents, the baby learns "Yes, these are my toes, how good they feel when Dad kisses them!" and "Mom makes that happy noise when I smile at her!" The baby also learns "Mom and Dad love to bathe me, to nurse me, to care for me: I am worth taking care of. I am lovable."

Cherishing our babies is natural, if we listen to our instincts. It is our secret weapon, the nourishment that helps them grow inside, the source of self-esteem, the foundation on which their ability to love and be loved rests.

This expectation of being loved is what allows our children to learn so quickly, to risk bumps and scrapes and hurt feelings: the security of knowing that someone who adores them is watching out for them, supporting their growth. Cherishment is the security of unconditional love. For the parent, cherishing is revelling in being this baby's parent, being grateful even in the middle of diapers, sleeplessness, and colic that this baby was sent to these arms.

But if we have not been cherished ourselves, cherishing can be challenging. When we have been frustrated in our attempts to love and be loved, we may find it difficult to revel in our new baby. We may find ourselves annoyed rather than delighted by her need for our attention, angry rather than sympathetic when he howls. We may avert our eyes from her adoring gaze. We may become uncomfortable when engaged in reciprocal play with our baby and interrupt it without really noticing what we are doing.

Often, parents who have not been cherished themselves are envious of the attention the baby receives from others. These parents may insist that the baby adapt to their needs, by, for instance, refusing to adequately baby proof and then becoming angry when the baby persistently attempts to explore the VCR or the stack of magazines. And for the baby, what happens when this need to cherish and be cherished is frustrated? Frustration, of course, is anger. Lack of being cherished creates an angry child.

Some parents are conditionally accepting. They might adore the baby, for instance, but find it difficult to deal with her when she's angry. What happens? The baby simply rejects the parts of herself that have not been accepted. The ability to love herself is compromised, shadowed with self-hatred; she is not, after all, good enough to evoke what she needs and wants most: cherishing. As she rejects parts of herself, her emotional growth is compromised.

The need for cherishing, like all survival needs, doesn't vanish when thwarted. It goes deep underground. We defend ourselves against this dangerous need that would make us vulnerable; we ward it off with anger, which eventually turns into bitterness.

In extreme cases, the hope of being loved becomes too painful, and the child defends against it by consciously expecting rejection. We all know these children,

who become experts at soliciting dislike. In very extreme cases, these can become the kids who are capable, one day, of taking a gun to school and opening fire. The famous researcher Rene Spitz said it most succinctly: "Infants without love ... will end as adults full of hate."

Luckily, virtually all of us get enough cherishment that we don't end up as killers. Few of us, though, get enough of this "soul food" that we don't end up with a heart that is, at times, more hungry than we would like. That hunger, those unmet needs, are what drives all "bad behaviour" on the part of our children. Kids whose needs for cherishment are met become cooperative kids who will certainly display age appropriate behaviour - noisiness, thoughtlessness, losing things -- but will always want to cooperate to please their parent.

Want to raise a happy, cooperative, responsible child? Cherish your baby.

THE TODDLER YEARS – Developing Competence

(Extracted from <http://www.ahaparenting.com/ages-stages/toddlers/toddlers-terrific-tuos>)

Give her the opportunity to experience competence. Toddlers tantrum less and cooperate more when they feel more powerful. How can you help your toddler feel more powerful? Three key ways: Listen to her, let her make decisions whenever possible, and give her the opportunity to experience competence.



Toddlers need daily experience with work to gain confidence in their own capabilities and begin to think of themselves as competent people. I do not mean burdensome work, I mean work in the spirit of Maria Montessori, and Tom Sawyer making the other kids think that whitewashing the fence was the world's best game. In other words, toddlers LOVE to understand how the household functions, and to participate. They LOVE to contribute. They LOVE to learn.

Invite your toddler to be involved with whatever you're doing. Ok, so the help may be minimal, but he's learning and gaining skills for the future, and you're bonding.

What kind of household tasks? They can stand on a stool or bench in the kitchen to help. They can help you as you run errands. They can help in the yard. Specifically,

- Make themselves a snack - such as peeling fruit or an egg, or slicing soft cheese and making sandwiches with crackers
- Help wash pots and pans or other unbreakable dishes
- Wash vegetables in the sink
 - Wipe the counter
 - Help you clean the refrigerator
 - Help set the table

- Help clear the table
- Help you by turning lights on and off
- Dust
- Scrub the tub (from inside, barefoot!)
- Pair the socks as you fold clothes
- Sort clothes (which clean clothes belong to which family member?)
- Help you transfer clothes from the washer to the dryer, pull clothes out of the dryer, or hang them on a line
- Pick out fruit at the grocery store
- Clean the table or floor

These activities are ultimately more educational and satisfying than TV, and most young children love them. After completing such a task, the toddler says, "I did it!" and feels like a more capable, powerful person. (Compare that to how they feel after they watch a TV show.) Sure, it's more work for the parent than just doing it yourself. That's not the point. Toddlers and preschoolers who feel competent and powerful don't need to assert their power by being contrary. They are more confident. And they are more helpful! That's what I call a win-win.

THE OLDER YEARS – Dinner: 30 Minutes To A More Connected Family

(Extracted from <http://www.ahaparenting.com/parenting-tools/family-life/dinner-connected-family>)

You've probably heard that having dinner together as a family is a good thing for your kids, but you may not realize that it could change your child's life. Dinner is the best predictor we have of how kids will do in adolescence. The more frequently kids eat dinner with their families, the better they do in school, and the less likely they are to suffer depression, get involved with drugs or alcohol, or consider suicide.

Why? Maybe because families who eat together talk more, which helps them stay connected and build better relationships. Maybe because parents who show up to eat with their kids are more likely to express their love constructively in other ways, in the form of both attention and supervision. Maybe because families who offer kids more structure are more likely to keep kids attending to their homework as well as out of trouble. Maybe because dinner transforms individual family members into a "group," which gives parents more clout to rival the power of the peer group.



Or maybe because children, even more than the rest of us, need something to count on every day, the tangible security of belonging and being nurtured that is represented by the ritual of sharing food with those we love.

Whatever the reason, dinner is an easy insurance policy to build into your home life. If you're too busy to have dinner as a family on a regular basis, you may want to re-examine your priorities.

The Unlimited Mercifier

By: Iman Amin

As we enter the blessed month of Ramadhan, I know that I, amongst you all, take great comfort that Allah (SWT) has opened the doors of His Infinite Mercy. As a mother in the modern world, I often find myself falling into the rut of constant rush; consoling myself with the thought that I will devote proper attention to my daughter, "just as soon as I've finished..." (Insert item from endless list here!). I then take this chance, to pause, and to really think just what it is that I can do, on a daily basis, to enrich my child's life with a deep reverence for Allah (SWT), simply by being a reflection of His Mercy. So here is a simple two-step plan for bringing us a little closer to our children, a little closer to fulfilling that most sacred of trusts as a parent, and a little closer to the lives of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his Household inshAllah!

1. Trust Allah (SWT) by trusting your child.

Our children, no matter how small, have been graced with two powerful faculties – fitra and reasoning. Fitra means that our children have the capacity of recognising when they have erred. Just as you or I, no sooner are the words escaping our lips, we think, "uh-oh, this isn't the right thing to say", so do our children. We must think of effective ways of nurturing this gift. Sometimes we don't even need to do anything – we can see in their attitude that our child is ashamed or regretful, and that they are processing this experience within themselves. Just as we beseech Allah (SWT) not to humiliate us by exposing our flaws before others, so too must we as parents be mindful of humiliating our children by a misguided form of discipline. We do not need to conform to certain parenting ideals that dictate a child should be labelled 'naughty' and soundly told off in front of peers or loved ones. Have the courage to be strong in the face of pressure from the yummy mummies at the children's centre! Just as Allah

(SWT) is our Protector, we are the protectors and stewards of our children's delicate souls and minds – the fleeting satisfaction of 'saying the right thing', as far as others are concerned, is most certainly lost when weighed against the potent negative message we are sending our child – that their dignity is not worth protecting.

In their powerful book 'How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk', Faber and Mazlish outline how to effectively engage cooperation from our children, by trusting that they are inherently good beings who will make the right choice, given the correct information and opportunity. One of the most critical points that they make, which resonates with our Islamic philosophy, is to not rob our children of their autonomy – they are thinking beings. Yet most of us have become accustomed to making our children reliant on our opinions by denying their feelings and taking away their opportunity to wrestle with a problem themselves. Our child is fussing: we tell them they're just tired; our child cries: we tell them it's not a big deal and not to worry; they say something we don't like: we tell them they don't really feel that way. As Faber and Mazlish say, "not only were all our conversations turning into arguments, I was also telling my children over and over again not to trust their own perceptions, but to rely on mine instead."

We can express our disapproval of our child's actions without making a personal attack on their character. If they're wreaking havoc in the supermarket aisles, rather than resorting to saying they're behaving like a wild animal, it is more constructive to express how we personally feel about the matter and what changes we'd like to see; for example, "I don't like what's going on as it's disturbing to shoppers when children run in the aisles." Such statements credit our child with the intelligence to recognise what they've done wrong, and give them the opportunity to make amends.

2. Demonstrate Mercy with Realistic Expectations

This sounds very simple in theory, but in practice it is a daily test of our patience and resilience. Just as Allah (SWT) has blessed us by having realistic expectations of us – ‘On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear’ (2:286) – we must also take caution that we are not placing too great a burden of expectation on our children. The faculties of fitra and reasoning within our children are nascent abilities that must be gently cultivated. I am constantly amazed by what I hear parents saying to their children. The magnitude of an 18-month old forgetting to say ‘please’; the bribery and blackmail employed to force a child to finish a meal; being called ‘disgusting’ for something as inherently childish as wiping their nose on their sleeve.

By remaining in the constant awareness that every word, every twitch of my body language is causing physical and lasting changes to their brain chemistry, we have a powerful motivation to not violate our children's souls. And really, if you can't run around screaming at the top of your lungs, or smear your dinner all over your hair at the age of 2, when can you do it?

I realise that there is much more to be said on both of these points, but I hope that the general sentiment of responding to our children with compassion and intelligence – taking the time to first take charge of our own egos and patience – has been conveyed. InshAllah, whilst we are being cautious in how we treat our bodies in this month, we will also pay a little more heed to how we treat our children.

Product Reviews

By Azmina Mawjee

Islamic Behaviour Chart



Teaching your child to be appreciative starts at birth with your loving regard towards him or her, and continues throughout life. As they observe the way you view and deal with people, things, and situations, they will no doubt learn to appreciate too.

A great way to begin training your children and maintaining their behaviour is implementing a reward chart. There are many available online and in the shops, but I came across an Islamic one which can be used with a dry white marker and the Behaviour Sticker packs. Priced at £2.50, the chart comes with 46 stickers and instructions.

<http://muslimstickers.com/islamic-behaviour-chart/>

Sproggie Clip-On Spoon



For less mess whilst on-the-go, Sproggie have come up with the perfect pouch food clipper; a great mess-free feeding solution particularly for mosque and wedding mealtimes. Asda have brought out empty fillable pouches so you can put your own home pureed food into a pouch and use a Sproggie spoon with it. The only downside is that it wasn't around when my kids were young.

<http://www.sproggie.com>

Aquadoodle

Keeping with the no-mess idea, I came across this ideal must-have item from Argos. Priced at only £9.99, it keeps the kids entertained everywhere, whether you're at a restaurant, in the car or at the mosque. A wonderful noiseless toy, it works simply with water and it comes with its own aquadraw refillable water pens. Watch the pictures disappear after a short while and it's ready for the kids to draw again. The numbers and shapes around the edge make learning that little bit more exciting. I would say suitable for any age as children won't be able to mark any surface except the aquadraw cloth page



Poetry is a great means of communication, a means of creating awareness, allowing us to express our own thoughts, attitudes, interests, values and feelings. Below is a beautifully articulated poem describing the current situation in Gaza. It reminds us of the suffering and oppression being endured by those around the world - be it in Palestine, Pakistan, Burma, Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Egypt – everywhere.

A Mother in Gaza

By Fatema Valji

At every moment, you fight
With every choking breath, you strive
With every fiery tear, you inspire
... Do I?

Youthful sons incarcerated
Aging husband assassinated
Feeble mother shelled in her bed
Brutal casualties of Cast Lead
A sleeping angel survives, tossing in terror
Nightly haunted by blood and snipers and
massacre

At every moment, you fight
With every choking breath, you strive
With every fiery tear, you inspire
... Do I?

For your child, a brave smile creasing your
worn face
Father is with Grandma, in God's embrace
Your brothers will return, have faith in God's
grace
Loneliness will fade, fear abates, have faith,
have faith!

At every moment, you fight
With every choking breath, you strive
With every fiery tear, you inspire
... Do I?

You face the glass gaze with unwavering
eyes

As he sneers, spits, barks and pries
Hour upon hour of callous indignity
Checkpoint upon checkpoint, day after
day, to teach, to survive
Borne with raised chin and flashing eyes
Silent resilience, unbroken dignity, undying
fire
Infusing your tired, bent frame behind the
barbed wire

At every moment you fight
With every choking breath, you strive
With every fiery tear, you inspire
... Do I?

You return to a crumbling concrete confine
Walls scarred by bullets and shell-fire
Racked by agonising, lonely silence
Echoes of laughter long subsided

At every moment, you fight
With every choking breath, you strive
With every fiery tear, you inspire
... Do I?

I claim, I profess, I believe
In your call for justice, freedom, peace
Your supporter, friend, sister
... Am I?
I know, I weep, I pray
I rise, I struggle, I fight for you everyday
... Do I?

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Youth Section

Enjoy them Young?

By: Sukaina Mukhtar

As I sat amongst a group of people, young and old, the discussion turned to the topic of 'raising children'. A common and vital conversation parents should not tire of. Young mothers dote on their babies, yet frequently share their experiences of physical exhaustion, sleepless nights and lack of time for themselves. This increases as the number of children increase. As some mothers physically exhaust themselves, others with teenagers commonly remark: "Enjoy these years as it only gets more difficult." This creates a pessimistic view in what is an incredibly joyous part of one's life. Many remarks made in response to the growing teenager often negate the joys of having children. So, why have them? In hope of raising a child who will keep Islam alive and who will continue to represent the faith in the most impeccable way possible? A child who will become a Muslim role model? A child who is 'not' our treasure but our responsibility in this world, and who will continue to grow to become the 'apple of our eye'?

The youth play a pivotal part in the current state and future of the community. Some people have preconceived judgements of youngsters if they do not follow traditional behaviour, considered to be the 'norm'. As a result, this can cause people to 'brand'

the child. Once this occurs, the child senses the negative perception that people have of them, and in turn, any hope for change reduces immensely or diminishes. I am far from a traditionalist, but I speak for myself when I say, I have realised how sensitive one must be towards the growing teenager.

In this section, we wish to convey information regarding teenagers, in hope to further enhance our parental abilities. The following section includes articles by a scholar/parent and a youth who have kindly shared their experience and knowledge in the importance of growth in the teenage years.

In ones 'youth' it seems that a person forgets that death can befall them at any time and their 'fun' can come to an end as quickly as it began.

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**For further details
(Boys):**

**Abdul Virji -
07833209279**

**Sohail Chohan -
07919-213127**

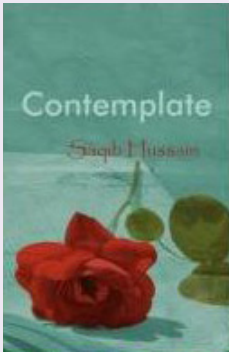
**Riyaz Rajabali -
07803-895531**



For further Details (Girls):

**Fatima Mawjee - 07725161844
Aiman Poptani - 07921712437
Zehra Rashid: 07515 823373
Sidika Dewji: 07545 134210**

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Morals...

Saqib Hussain is the author of the book "Contemplate", a contemporary poetry collection. He has kindly donated a PDF version to the Muslim Mums Magazine to help us raise money towards our running costs. You can request a PDF copy of 'Contemplate' by emailing the Muslim Mums team at muslimmums@hotmail.co.uk. We suggest a minimum donation of £1. We are very grateful to Saqib for his support of the Muslim Mums magazine and for his interest in our work. To purchase a hard copy visit: www.amazon.co.uk

Morals

What shall I talk about?
Anger? Peace? Love? Hate?
Things which you have experienced
Things to which you can relate
Or things from which you feel far removed
And hearing them would make you unmoved
But then what is there that we don't have
an opinion on?
Don't we all classify most things into right and wrong?
And why is this?
And where from?
Do we base opinions on our experiences in the past
Or on views of people now gone
Or is this sense of what is right innate
So that moral righteousness is our natural state
Or maybe it is both, and our natural state
Simply agrees with echoes of those
who have said the same:
Truth, love and peace over materialism and fame
And do these questions even matter?
What are morals, why, who cares?
But aren't on these grounds based all our affairs?
When we discuss things, we don't expect people to lie
When we pay someone for work
we expect they will try
From our responsibilities we are not expected to hide
And our endeavors towards right conduct are
expected to be high
Law in all countries on such principles is based
That we do right and act in good faith
So because morals are ingrained in our daily life
To think why, where from is itself right
Know yourself and why you do the things you do
How you expect to be treated by others
And why you expect others to be true
Then you will see morals, righteousness
are essential for peace
Not just for society, but for your own minds ease.



In Preparation for Raising Teenagers and Cooking Frogs

By: Abbas Jaffer

Raising a teenager is one of the greatest challenges that any parent will face in their lives. As kids reach their teens, they begin to undergo mental, physical and emotional changes that can transform their personality and behaviour. Both the child and the parents are often unprepared for this sudden change and its consequences. If steps are not taken early on, it may lead to an unhealthy and abiding build-up of bickering, anger and resentment within the household.

It is said that those cultures who consider frogs a delicacy cook them in an unusual way. A few frogs are put into a pot full of water which is set on gentle heat. The frogs are content to lay in the warm water, oblivious of the danger that is to come. In time the frogs realise with alarm that the water is getting too hot, but by now they are unable to escape because the muscles in their powerful hind legs are partly cooked and useless. In their last moments they are powerless to forestall their inevitable fate, despite knowing what they need to do.

Raising children is not dissimilar – there is a critical window of time during which parents have to work hard on their parenting. Typically, this is before the children reach 12 years of age. In order to have a harmonious relationship with their children later when they cross puberty and into adolescence, parents will have to take active steps beforehand to make their household a moral and religious environment, to communicate constantly with their children, to take a caring and genuine interest in their lives, to gain their respect and trust, and to inculcate positive traits and

qualities in them by leading by example.

Early steps that will reap rewards also include keeping a careful eye on the influences on the children. A parent must generally know what his child is watching on TV, what he is reading about and especially what kind of friends he has made. Parents must realise that they cannot ultimately police everything that their children see and hear; they need to focus instead on helping their children understand these experiences by discussing it with them and teaching them how to evaluate the merit of all matters within an Islamic framework, as taught in the Qur'an and Hadith. In this way they are better equipping their children to cope on their own when they are older.

There is a fine line between allowing natural expression of your child's individuality and independence, and indulging the child's every fancy. This can be very subjective and different households may set different parameters for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. In all matters however, the parents must be guided by Sharia, and especially never give the impression that they are not particular about observing wajib and haram. When rules are set, they must be adhered to so that the children grow up knowing what lines cannot be crossed and why.

If parents do not become mindful of the importance of the nurturing care that they must put in during the early years of their children's lives, then they may find themselves in the same kind of hot water as the frogs...

Mother Us - Don't Smother Us

Every decision a parent makes affects a child's life, and this is linked with the need to protect them and raise them the right way, adhering to Islamic principles. In my opinion, the mistake parents often make is the overindulgence of that protectionist nature. This in turn may hinder the child from achieving their full potential, as laying down excessive restrictions hamper both the child's intellectual and emotional growth.

As a teenager, I'll be honest. We are selfish. Yes, we love and care for our parents, respect them, and carry out most, if not all of their wishes, with a few complaints along the way. But at times the process is harder than you think it is. What parents don't realise is that we are not going to stray from the righteous path if given a little freedom. Quite the opposite actually. With freedom comes responsibility, and the overwhelming sense of pleasure we feel when parents trust us, is enough not to disregard the rules. Too many restrictions result in a totalitarian approach to governing your child's life and making choices for them, and this leads to the child either becoming too dependent on their parents or overly rebellious. Neither of which will benefit them in the long run. As parents, you only want what is best for your child, and we know this. We really do! But you have to let your child make their own decisions, make their own mistakes and learn from them. The need to have full control out of fear of us going astray makes us want to challenge your authority. Each of our natures are different from one another, be it due to innate characteristics or those that surfaced due to the environment we were brought up in. Teenagers feel desolate.

Be our friend and give us that quality time we need to thrive. A strong family unit is one that can survive any obstacle, and by instilling such an attitude, I feel you are able to gain a child's trust. Befriending a child will allow them to open up to you and you can have the comfort of knowing their secrets, their needs and desires, which before were hidden from you.

My mother is my friend and although I don't have as much freedom as I'd like, I have as much as I need.



From the time that a woman conceives a child, she is constantly in the shadow of Allah's mercy. For each time she feels discomfort she gets the thawaab for the following:

Freeing a mu'min slave, One who fasts in the day and stands for prayer at night, One who sacrifices herself and her possessions in the way of Allah - Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

The Path to Leadership

By: Murtaza Manji
Business Coach

It is among the topics most focused on today, from the corporate world to classrooms to community centres. The talk of 'building the leaders of tomorrow' is widespread, particularly in our communities. While there may be some good intentions, not having a plan to achieving it is just as dangerous as having an incorrect goal to start with. Let's face it: how many of us can actually describe what an ideal 'leader' is? And if we aren't quite sure what it is we need to become one, how are we going to get there and how do we know when we've succeeded?

We live in a society obsessed with public opinion. But leadership has never been about popularity. — Marco Rubio

The focus of this article as well as the upcoming ones will be to examine the concept of leadership – what it is, what it isn't and what it takes. This is not prescriptive; you may have a different opinion, and that is great! The last thing I'd want is for everyone to agree with what I say, because then we'd have nothing to debate over! Having said that, what I'm going to discuss in this article has been used with thousands of people worldwide, and it has helped create tremendous leaders. It should, therefore, help you to define leadership to some extent. The first question therefore, is - what is a leader?

To begin, I want you to write down six qualities that are must-haves in order for someone to be a great leader. Write them down below (no going ahead without this step):

Now answer this: how many of those relate to the 'leader' and how many relate to the 'follower'? For example, 'charismatic' and 'influential' relate to the leader's interaction with the followers (since a leader can't be charismatic to themselves), whereas 'sincere' and 'honest' refer to the leader's behaviour (which is exercised even when alone). A good leader would have a 50-50 split, and a great leader would have more – if not all – referring to the self. How does that make sense? Aren't 'charisma', 'influence' and so on vital for a leader to have? Perhaps, based on your definition of leadership. Here is the one that I personally love:

A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. — John Maxwell

The 'knows the way' is all about education, the 'goes the way' is the integrity that a leader must have, and the 'shows the way' is the result of the first two – not the goal. The goal of a 'leader' is not, "to be followed". Rather, 'the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers' (Ralph Nader). Getting more followers is a goal on Twitter. For now, we will work on knowing the way and going the way. That may not sound very glamorous, but please keep one thing in mind: you can only lead others to the extent that you have led yourself. Leading yourself means being proactive, not reactive. Leading yourself means accepting that you are not immune to problems and challenges, and it is how you solve them that defines you. Leading yourself means recognising your own shortcomings and striving to overcome them. Every leader understands the importance and necessity of education, since "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other" (John F. Kennedy). Leadership – like parenting – is all about growing and helping others to

grow to reach their full potential, not about 'advising' – telling others what to do or how to do it. What does leadership take? It takes passion, integrity, honesty, humility and courage.

I want to bring in an exercise now; one that is massively powerful in helping each of us reach our true potential, and thus be better leaders. I'd just like to clarify something first: I call it an 'exercise' but it's more of a tool. This is not something to score yourself on and leave it at that. Rather it should be applied and reapplied every day and in every situation (particularly the challenging ones). It only works under the condition of complete honesty (to yourself). It is easy to remember, and works no matter what it's being applied to - be it school, university, kids or work. It's something I use in coaching, and I call it 'Where do you play?'

This is how it works. There is a line dividing the two areas that people 'play' (or live) in. Each side has its own characteristics and behaviours that define it. You're already in one of the two sides – your attitude to life and your responsibilities will make it clear which one. The two sides look like this:



Above the Line:

Your Attitude:

You recognise that your success and setbacks are yours, and no one else's. You accept what has come to you, and regard a challenge as a success in disguise. You hold yourself responsible for the outcome of your work, and the work of those to whom you delegate your tasks. You are willing to take account of

yourself, and are not worried if taken to account by others, since you know you did the best possible. You will admit if your existing skill-set and knowledge is not enough for the challenge at hand, and you will then strive to acquire what you need.

Your Behaviour:

You are proactive in your work. You make the effort and go far beyond the 'extra mile' that others pride themselves on going. You work willingly, happily and confidently. You work to achieve results, not because you 'have to' or are 'told to'. Your passion is clear, even if it isn't your ideal task - you will do it since it is your responsibility and needs to be done.

Your Mindset:

You have a 'victor' mindset – you have a goal and work hard to reach it. You recognise that sometimes you won't have the resources to hand, but winning is not about resources, but resourcefulness.

*If you take **Ownership**, hold yourself **Accountable** and are **Responsible**, you have the **OAR** that you need to steer your life where you want it to go.*

(See the challenge chart on the next page)

Below the Line:

The Attitude and Behaviour:

Looking for others to pin the blame on when something goes wrong – usually as a result of a half-hearted attempt at solving the challenge. Coming up with a long list of fancy excuses (sometimes known as 'Reasons') for not meeting the basic targets set by someone else, as the person was not passionate enough to set their own targets. Work is done to avoid negative consequences, not to gain positive ones. Work is also done grudgingly, lazily and sloppily, just good enough to be acceptable. No pride is taken in what one has done, as though doing one's own work is doing a favour to someone else. And when all else fails, denial of responsibility is always the last resort.

Challenge Chart	
My Challenge:	
Ownership:	This is my challenge because:
Accountability:	I will hold myself accountable by:
Responsibility:	To win, I need to:

The Mindset:

There is a 'victim' mindset; always seeing what one has (usually negative) because of the actions of others. No dream, no goals, low ambitions. Negligible effort put in, but very vocal in complaining and blaming when things don't get done.

*If someone wants to play the **Blame game**, come up with **Excuses** and be in **Denial**, that is the **BED** they make for themselves, and that is what they have to lie in.*

So what does this tool have to do with leadership? Answer: Everything. Look at the successful leaders, especially when things go wrong: you'll see them engage in 'above the line' behaviour (By the way, the leader isn't always the one standing in the front, but that's for another discussion). It's possible that we might slip below the line once in a while, and that's fine – as long as we get back above as soon as possible. The more we stay above the line, the more we will overcome our own challenges, and the better our 'leadership' becomes. Think about it: if we were in charge, would we want those we lead to be above or below the line? Whatever it is, we have to 'Know' and 'Go' before we 'Show'. Use this tool to measure your own approach and attitude, and work hard to stay above at all times!

Leadership, like all the greatest things in life, is a journey, not a destination. And like every journey, there are signposts, guiding lights, wrong turns, maps, dead ends...but none can affect you beyond the point that you allow it to, for better or worse. We will look at three of the biggest ones - one in each of the following articles: religion, family and friends (society). Until next time, I'd like to leave you with an amazing quote by Warren Bennis:

"The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born-that there is a genetic factor to leadership. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born."

Stanmore Jaffery's Social Wing

By: Ammar Ali Farishta
Head of SJ Social

The Stanmore Jaffery's (SJ) Social Wing has only been around for a couple of years but it has a lot of potential for growth. Alhamdulillah, we have managed to start a **weekly Youth Club for boys every Friday night from 8-11pm.** We have FIFA and Mario Kart on the games consoles, outdoor football, indoor table tennis, discussion circles on topics the youth might be struggling with, and snacks are always provided (with a small donation involved). The number of attendees has been increasing week on week, which is promising. We have plenty of exciting trips and events in the pipeline. For more information, email Ammar at social@jafferys.org

Sports have always been a very popular thing for the gents' side at SJ. **We have a number of sports available throughout the year, which include football, cricket, badminton, volleyball, and swimming.** The SJ League has restarted, and badminton is proving popular with sessions being held twice a week. Volleyball is always a lot of fun with plenty of people coming down to the London Academy on a Friday night to play. Cricket is confined to indoor nets once a week during the colder months and outdoor matches during the warmer months. Last but not least, swimming has always been a hit! It is held every Sunday morning after Fajr prayers at the Aspire Centre and is always filled with fathers and sons having a great time together. To join in the fun and for more information, email Imtiaz at sports@jafferys.org

There are several sports running throughout the week for ladies.

There is netball and badminton on Tuesday evenings, at separate venues. Netball has a good turnout even in the colder months! We've had a coach in to improve playing techniques. Many of the girls enjoyed having the coach as they found it allowed them to play a better game and practice for the annual tournament. **We are also planning to start sisters' football, so watch this space!** For more information on the sports, contact Nazira Shah at sisterssports@jafferys.org

SJ Social for girls has been relatively quiet in the last few years. We have been trying to slowly introduce more activities to build up on our youth base so that the girls can meet up and have a good time with their friends, without being in a strictly mosque atmosphere. Our first initiative was to create a **Youth Club, once a month on a Friday.** Activities available include table tennis, Nintendo Wii, board games, netball, treasure hunts and discussion circles. All youth are welcome to attend. If you have any questions or suggestions please email Zahra Dato at sisterssocial@jafferys.org

Giving Something Back...

By: Aaseem Mulji

Aaseem Mulji's account of a recent trip to Africa is an inspiring story of giving up a precious commodity - time - for the greater good of helping others. Below is his remarkable and touching account.

I set off on a journey to Makkah, Madinah and parts of Kenya and Tanzania at the start of October 2012, having taken 3 months off work just to focus on improving myself and to focus on the plight of those less fortunate than me. By doing so, I have inadvertently alerted my children to the importance of being focused on Allah (SWT) and humanity at large by fulfilling the following objectives:

- 1) Reflect on my ability to become a better person by going for Hajj for the second time, to ask for Allah's forgiveness and to pray to Him in order to purify myself. Only Allah (SWT) protects us and only He provides our risq (happiness, health, wealth, etc).
- 2) To reach out to those less fortunate, and try to help them by using the ability and skills that Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon me so graciously.
- 3) Raise awareness through Social Media, the Internet and Intranet (SKY's internal web portal), and in doing so remind everyone that:
 - We are extremely fortunate to be living in such luxury in the West, whilst others in the world just about survive
 - Giving charity when times are difficult is as important as giving it when times are good
 - Muslims are humanitarians too and they do not discriminate. Helping to raise the profile of Muslims during a period of Islamophobia is essential for the Muslim Ummah.



This approach raised over £10,000 from both Muslims and non-Muslims, with my employer SKY contributing a large sum in support. The use of various media helped propagate these charitable causes, predominantly in Muslim countries.

I decided to represent Beta Charitable Trust (www.betacharitabletrust.org), and volunteered my time on numerous projects that will ultimately help dozens of communities in rural East Africa.

As part of my travels so far, I have visited Northern Kenya and neighbouring Tanzania, meeting women and children abandoned in slums, families from remote villages searching for fresh water, and hundreds of children packed into tiny rural schools.

In the Nairobi slums, 35 children are taught how to read and write in a room no bigger than 4 metres squared. They get porridge once a week.

A typical school may have anywhere between 50 and 100 children crammed into tiny classrooms, four to a desk, or on stone seats on the floor. At one school, there were three toilets for 500 students – with no doors or water. Can you imagine using such facilities?

Many of our activities have involved trying to help communities become more self-sufficient, by building water wells and irrigation systems that will sustain farming and cattle, and providing access to education and other learning opportunities so that people can get themselves out of poverty.

One of the projects involved building seven classrooms, twelve toilets and three water wells for one community, and a Mosque for the elders in a village called Manthare near Mwanza. In time, homes will be built there too, but as a first step, within six months, they will have a place children can learn and elders can congregate. It is a model project and one we hope will help us create a vibrant community.

In another activity in a remote village near Bukoba, we spent weeks digging three water wells to service 3000 people and hence stop the need for them to collect dirty water from infected rivers daily.

Completing that particular challenge was one of the most satisfying moments for me and for our team, although I'm not sure how I will get the gift of a cockerel past UK customs...! The villagers, who had nothing, gave me a gift to say thank you.

This particular trip has ended, and while I am left with the concern about how the children of Africa can develop and learn if they are faced with such hardship, I have met so many people whose lives have been improved by our work and the work of other volunteers.

I have seen projects that provide grants for tailoring and cooking that are helping single parents (mainly women) become more self-sufficient. For example, one woman who was given a loan to set up a leather belt-making business has sold enough to repay that loan and expand her business further so she can provide for her family.

The main aim of this experience was to do something to help those less fortunate than my family back home in East Africa; and to help give others the chance to escape poverty and make a difference in their own communities.

During my travels, I have been truly humbled at how lucky we are in the West with what we have, and have found myself questioning how I would survive in conditions like these.

My experiences are just a tiny glimpse into the hardships in Africa, but I hope I can kick-start some interest, and encourage my children to follow these principles of Asma ul Husna.

- **Ar-Rahman (The Merciful)**

Begin every task by first asking for Allah's forgiveness and mercy, and seek his guidance. We are all tainted with sins, and it is important that we cleanse ourselves first before beginning to help others.

- **Al-Muhaymin (The Protector)**

Rich or poor, Allah (SWT) protects us all. It is our duty to help and protect those less fortunate than ourselves, from poverty and other difficulties, by sharing our wealth to improve their well-being, and by being selfless in doing so.

- **Ash-Shakoor (The Thankful)**

We must appreciate what we have and understand how blessed we are. Be thankful to Allah (SWT) for His mercy and learn to appreciate his many bounties. In addition, we must recognise the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves, and do something to give them dignity and an appreciation of Allah (SWT) by our actions.

Inshallah Allah (SWT) will help and guide us to be good parents through our words and actions, and become worthy role models for our children, so that they can continue to progress our Ummah in the path of Islam.

You can read more about Aaseem's experiences and/or donate to his Hope to Survive Campaign at: www.justgiving.com/Aaseem-mulji

Alternatively, if you would like more information, you can contact Aaseem directly at: aaseemulji@gmail.com

Essay Competition



Topic

'Youth comes but once in a lifetime. Make use of it before old age strikes.'

Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

How can the youth utilise this phase of life to maximise his/her potential? Why is this stage in a person's life important?

Entry Guidelines

Age: 14-17 years

Word limit: 250 words

The submission deadline is 23rd August 2013. Essays should be emailed to Muslimmums@hotmail.co.uk.

Please include your name, age and contact details.



The winning essay will be published in the next issue of Muslim Mums and the winner will receive a £50 Debenhams voucher. Two runners-up will each receive a £25 Debenhams voucher.

Is Your Belly Flat or Fat?

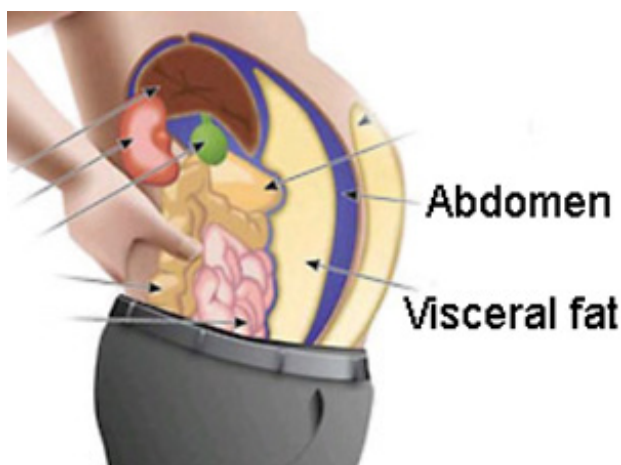
By Soraya Janmohamed
Personal Trainer & Nutritional Coach

Post baby fat, love handles or plain old fat.

Let's get things straight – you are **not** fat, but you **HAVE** fat. There is a distinct difference! Whatever you want to call it, excess weight around your middle can be the most difficult weight on your body to lose.

As it is difficult to lose, it is more likely to accumulate and it is more dangerous to your health than those extra pounds that amass on your hips or thighs.

The fat around your stomach is an outward sign of deep, internal fat surrounding your organs. Fat in this area causes an increase of hormones that raise blood pressure and increase bad cholesterol, putting you at risk of heart disease, stroke, and premature death. Belly fat has also been associated with an increased risk of dementia, Alzheimer's, osteoporosis, type 2 diabetes, colorectal cancer, and metabolic syndrome.



What's to blame for belly fat? Stress, age, poor lifestyle choices, and genetics play a role - but so does your diet.

Here's what not to eat and what to eat if you want to banish belly fat.

Recipe for a Fat Belly

It is fair to say that weight gain around your waistline and anywhere else on your body is caused by the consumption of too much food. That being said, there does seem to be certain foods and drinks particularly associated with an increase of fat cells in the abdominal area.

Sugar-sweetened beverages and sodas are the worst culprit for belly fat. The empty calories and high amount of high-fructose corn syrup (a manufactured sweetener) cause abnormal weight gain in the midsection. High-fructose corn syrup is also found in ketchup, mayonnaise, jam, canned fruits, yoghurt, bread, and even fruit juice.

Foods containing trans-fat are another contributing factor to a large waist. Trans fat is a man-made fat created with partially hydrogenated oil. This unnatural fat leads to belly fat and moves fat from other parts of the body to the abdominal area. Where can you find trans-fat in your diet? Cookies, crackers, pastries, crisps, margarine, fried foods and packaged foods all have this unwanted intruder.

Finally, refined, low-fibre grains are also responsible for stomach fat. To avoid these, omit foods such as white rice, white bread and sugary cereals.

Recipe for a Flat Belly

Whittling your waistline starts with fresh natural foods, a well-balanced diet and regular exercise. A recipe for a flat belly starts with a diet rich in vegetables, good fats, whole grains, and lean meat. Moving towards a slimmer waistline also requires you to move away from the fatty foods and drinks listed above.

A truly flat stomach comes from a combination of a consistent, challenging exercise routine coupled with clean eating.

Did You Know?



Salt

Hot and dry in the third degree, salt, when taken moderately, is beautifying to the skin, giving it a soft glow. Excessive use causes the skin to itch.

The Prophet (SAW) recommended beginning and ending each meal with a pinch of salt. He said: "From the one who begins a meal with salt, Allah (SWT) wards off three hundred and thirty kinds of diseases, the least of which are lunacy, leprosy, bowel troubles and toothache. The rest is prescribed in the supreme knowledge of Allah (SWT)."

Vinegar

The Prophet (SAW) was reported to have once remarked that vinegar was the seasoning of all the prophets who came before him. Vinegar is both cold and hot, nearly balancing between the two. Mixed with rose water, it is an excellent remedy for toothache and headache. Vinegar dissolves phlegm. Another Hadith states that a house containing vinegar will never suffer from poverty.

Honey

Allah (SWT) has said, "There comes forth, from within [the bee], a beverage of many colours in which there is a healing for you." Mixed with warm water, and taken in several small doses, honey is considered the best remedy for diarrhoea. The Prophet (SAW) once said, "By HIM in whose hand is my soul, eat honey. For there is no house in which honey is kept for the angels will not ask for mercy. If a person eats honey, a thousand remedies enter his stomach and a million diseases will come out. If a man dies and honey is found within him, fire [burning of hell] will not touch his body." The Prophet (SAW) himself used to drink a glass of honey and water each morning on an empty stomach.

Reference: <http://www.deenislam.co.uk/foods4.html>

Food Focus



Looking to add to your recipe box?

We asked the champions of Stanmore MasterChef (Eid Al Adha 1433AH) to share their delicious collection of winning recipes. A five course oriental meal which was cooked by:

Sabera Alloo, Tanveer Bandali, Benazir Merali and Aliya Gulamhusein.

CHICKEN SATAY

For the marinade:

- 1/8 teaspoon grated ginger
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon lime juice
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon runny honey
- 1 teaspoon peanut butter, smooth or crunchy
- 1lb small chicken cubes

For the sauce:

- 100g plus 1 tablespoon peanut butter, smooth or crunchy
- 75ml coconut milk
- 75ml water
- 1 tablespoon sweet chilli sauce, to taste
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce

Method:

1. Add the garlic and ginger to a bowl, along with the lime juice, soy sauce, honey and peanut butter. Whisk together.
2. Toss chicken cubes into the marinade. Leave for 10 minutes.
3. To make the sauce - put the peanut butter, coconut milk, water, sweet chilli sauce and soy sauce in a small saucepan. Warm gently, stirring constantly, until everything has melted together. Bring to a simmer and cook for 1-2 minutes until the sauce thickens.
4. Remove from the heat, stir in 1 teaspoon of lime juice and set aside.
5. Preheat the grill to high. Thread the chicken cubes onto skewers and put on a foil-lined baking sheet.
6. Grill for 5 minutes, then turn and grill for a further 5 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through.
7. Carefully remove the skewers and put them on a plate.
8. Warm the sauce again and add an extra tablespoon of water if it has become too thick. Drizzle a little sauce over the skewers.



FISH SOUP WITH CORIANDER

Ingredients:

- ¼ kg fish fillet
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3½ cups of chicken broth
- 4 slices of ginger
- 3 tablespoons of vinegar or 3 stalks of lemon grass
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1½ tablespoon coriander
- 1 teaspoon fish sauce or 1 fish cube
- 1 piece of capsicum and 1 green chili



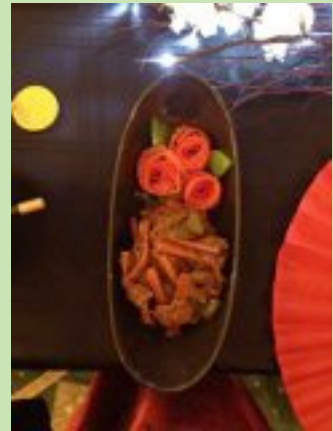
Method:

1. Rub the fish slices or cubes with salt and cornstarch.
2. Bring the stock to boil in a pan, adding ginger, capsicum, green chilli and the fish sauce or cube.
3. Dip the fish in the boiling stock.
4. Let the soup simmer gently for 5 minutes.
5. Before serving the soup, add coriander and the vinegar (if required).
6. Season to taste. Garnish with fresh coriander leaves. Serve hot.

SWEET CHILLI BEEF

Ingredients:

- 1lb beef/steak strips
- 2 teaspoons of oil
- Salt to taste
- 1 teaspoon of Garlic & Ginger
- A handful of green chillies
- 1 diced onion
- 1 large green pepper cut into strips
- 1 grated carrot
- 1 chopped spring onion
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- Ketchup to taste
- Sugar to taste



Method:

1. Marinate the meat with salt, garlic and ginger.
2. Heat the oil in a pan and fry the meat until cooked, then set aside.
3. Add some more oil into the pan and fry the onions and chillies until soft. Keep adding some oil with some soy sauce, ketchup and some sugar until you start getting a sauce.
4. Add the peppers and carrots and keep frying until it is all soft. Add the meat and stir in, then add the spring onions. Simmer for a few minutes then take off the heat.

Serve with noodles or rice.



TAMARIND CHICKEN

Marinate chicken pieces in the following (slit chicken slightly):

- 1 heaped teaspoon of garlic and ginger
- Salt (less than 1 teaspoon)
- A dash of vinegar
- 3-4 tablespoons of ambli chutney (I use homemade ambli/khajoor chutney)
- 3-4 tablespoons of ketchup
- 1 teaspoon chilli powder
- 1/4 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon dhana jeeru
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground jeeru
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds (Sim sim)
- Few methi seeds (optional)



Allow the chicken to marinate for at least 1/2 an hour

Additional Ingredients:

- Handful of curry leaves
- 2 large slit green chillies
- Thick Tui of one coconut (approx. 1 cup)

Method:

1. Heat the oil in a wok (Do not be stingy with the oil - use enough oil to give the chicken a good fry and excess oil can be removed later).
2. Add the curry leaves and slit green chillies.
3. Before the chillies begin to blister, add the chicken pieces. Keep some of the marinade aside.
4. Fry the chicken until golden-brown on both sides.
5. Add remaining marinade and fry for a bit - cover partially with the lid, and let it cook on low heat until the chicken is cooked through and the oil separates.
6. Remove the excess oil and add the coconut tui. Let it boil through once and remove from the heat. Serve with coconut rice or naan.



MANGO AND LYCHEE DELIGHT

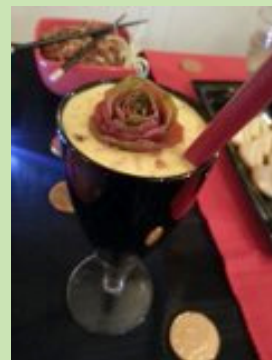
Additional Ingredients:

- 1 tin mango pulp
- 1397g can of condensed milk
- 568ml double cream
- 1 tin of lychees
- 1 mango diced
- Lemon Madeira cake



Method:

1. Mix the cream, mango pulp and condensed milk with an electric beater until thick, and keep aside.
2. Cut the Madeira cake into slices and lay on the bottom of your serving dish.
3. Pour the syrup from the lychees tin onto the cake to soften up.
4. Place the diced mango and lychees over the cake.
5. Pour the mango cream mixture over the cake and fruit and leave to set overnight.
6. Garnish with fruit before serving. Enjoy!





Learn Surahs with Aamina and Yousuf.



Arabic Alphabet sound puzzle



Desi Doll's Innovative Range



Arabic Letters fun Dough buckets, Gujarati puzzle, and English phonics puzzles (2).

The Desi Doll Company based in the UK provides unique and innovative range of toys including the famous talking Aamina and Yousuf dolls and their best selling Arabic Alphabet wooden Sound puzzles.



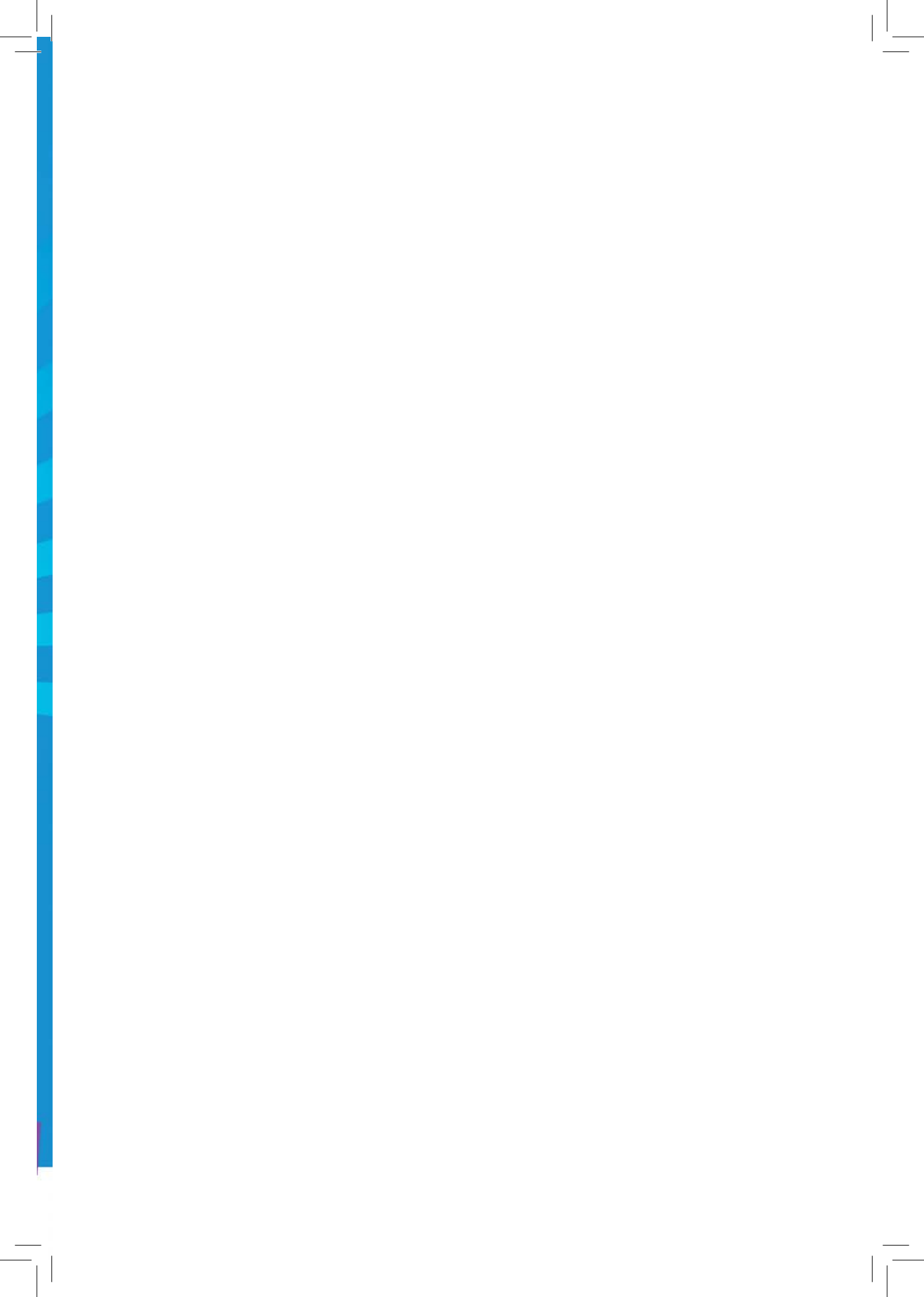
Don't forget to say Bismillah



Replaceable cartridges for the dolls! Learn 5 new surahs!

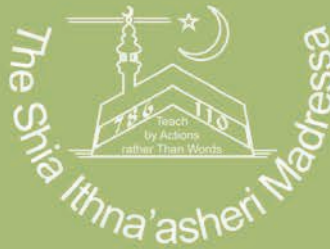


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