10 tips on instilling optimism in Muslim youth

[Teens](http://www.soundvision.com/parentingteens)

[**Samana Siddiqui**](http://www.soundvision.com/authors/samana-siddiqui)

The Gallup Center reported in 2009 that Muslim youth in America aged 18 to 28 are the least happy and the angriest compared to youth of other faith groups in America.  Twenty-six percent of young Muslims, compared with 14% of young Protestants, say they experienced anger.

There seems to be a lot to be angry about. Apart from the usual stresses and pressures of the tween and teen years, ranging from the physical and hormonal, to the emotional and psychological, Muslim youth often have to deal with subtle and open discrimination based on their faith. It’s easy to fall into pessimism and despair, which is why parents and other family members, as well as community leaders and mentors, need to step in and help kick start some optimism.

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised, “Give glad tidings, and do not scare people away; make things easy, and do not make things difficult.” (Abu Dawud).  
Here are ten ways we can help instill optimism in young Muslims.

1. Adjust your own optimism level

Are you a cynic? Or have you become jaded with time? Of course, it’s understandable. Life can have a way of tinting those rose-colored glasses, but they shouldn’t become so shaded that we allow ourselves to fall into pessimism or despair. We need to be very careful about what kinds of comments, for instance, we make in front of our youth, who carefully watch what we say and do.

Whether it’s a sarcastic comment about a politician or simply a snort in response to the idea of a Muslim fundraiser starting on time, start becoming conscientious about these small but significant expressions of cynicism that kill optimism in you and others around you.

2. Bedtime/Dinnertime burst of optimism

Bedtime stories are a staple for many households, and with older kids, the shorter tuck in and good night kiss remain so for a number of years. Take less than five minutes to ask your Muslim youth about three positive things that happened during the course of their day. It can be anything, but it can help them reframe a seemingly bad day into a good one, as well as boost their optimism muscles. If there’s time and the inclination, share three of your own.

If bedtime is difficult, try to do this over family dinnertime. If you aren’t there during these times on a particular day, have them text them their list of three to you.

3. Family optimism listserv/FB page

Set up a Facebook page or listserv only open to family members that will allow you to share positive Muslim news, in particular. It could be about your family in particular, but better yet, share news about good things Muslims are doing worldwide, something you will certainly not come across in the mainstream media on a regular basis.

4. Find and share positive Muslim news

In line with the above-mentioned idea, set up a Google alert for the terms “Islam” and “Muslim”. Sift out the usual negative stuff from the gems of positivity that do come up on occasion and share that with youth via texting and tweeting, maybe even posting it on their wall on Facebook, if they don’t mind.  
  
You can also find this kind of news by using the same search terms on websites like [World News](http://wn.com/), which collects information from media outlets around the globe.

5. Encourage them to take the Weekly Good Deeds Challenge

The Prophet said, "Indeed, the deeds of humanity are exhibited every Monday and Thursday. Then Allah will further pardon every Muslim for every behavior, except the two believers who part from each other's company; Allah will say to the angels delay the two of them” (Ahmed).

Encourage young Muslims to aim for a number of good deeds to be completed by every Monday. See if they can do 10, 15, or 20 specific ones, and “match” their contribution by engaging in your own good deeds. Then discuss what you both did on Thursday.

Good deeds can range from getting someone a glass of water to holding the door for a person on crutches to donating a large chunk of allowance for a good cause.

Doing good makes you feel good, thus instilling a higher sense of optimism all around.

6. Read and reflect on Surahs 93 and 94 of the Quran

During a family study circle, discussion, or before bed, talk about these two Surahs, which are among the best pieces of Divine advice about being upbeat and getting through life’s rough patches. In particular, talk about how Allah reminded the Prophet of the many blessings He had given him in Surah 93, as well as the verse, “with every difficulty there is ease” in Surah 94.

7. Help them develop those Tawakkul muscles

Tawakul is a major concept in the relationship of a believer with his or her Creator. When a Muslim fully practices Tawakul by putting his or her full trust in Allah, this person realizes that they are not all-powerful, Allah is. Although we all control some variables that Allah has given us in our control, He ultimately controls all the other variables known or unknown to us.  
After any type of disappointment, in particular, help a young Muslim see that as long as they did their best in a given situation, we all need to exercise Tawakkul and not succumb to despair or frustration.

8. Smile

Yes, not only is it Sunnah to smile, it’s scientifically proven to lift your mood. It may be hard the first few weeks if you’re not the smiling type, but make an extra effort to do so, smiling particularly at your favorite young Muslim and encourage them to do the same. The short burst of good mood will eventually, insha Allah, become a habit.

9. Question media cynicism

Cynicism and pessimism are cool in youth culture, particularly in sitcoms and movies. They are also reflected in the dark humor you’ll find in them.  Take some time to watch a couple of television shows or movies with youth and openly question these displays of negativity, without attacking the program or film. Simply ask so that they can come to their own conclusions.

10. Help them reflect on the rough patches

Remember that nasty flu the family came down with a few weeks ago which has now vanished? Remember that huge fight your son or daughter got into with their brother or sister which has now been forgotten? Remind your young Muslim about how the bad times have only gotten better, and we need to thank Allah and be grateful to Him for it.

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| Wednesday | Safar 16, 1438 AH | November 16, 2016 |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Take a one-day or half-day social media break. The post-election rhetoric online is very heated, which will only depress you or push you to respond rashly to commentary. | |  | | |  | Think of those who are suffering war, starvation, and hunger around the world, as well as in America. Remember that even in this difficulty, Allah has blessed us to be safe from these struggles. | |  | | |  | In the holiday season more volunteers are needed. Call around to find volunteer opportunities, where you can find new friends and connect with others. | |  | |   [https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/u-mC0rsX6i-A-iicpfiJ6rTs0QKpbAG_uFNEhyTgj8MM1IdhThzMtONnjL4DiwjmQvRgujVxjmwiXK3YfFT457Q3-lMpPmf0A7REMNk0M0t9xtxF2tqWJA=s0-d-e1-ft#http://www.soundvision.com/sites/default/files/OptimismMatters.jpg](http://org2.salsalabs.com/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=2GaQMp1YBzh6e/yvFwA2c5OjoAIEH0lH)  **12 Sayings of the Prophet to Inspire Optimism**  ***By Taha Ghayyur***  Those who don't know him and haven't studied his life, often think of Prophet Muhammad's teachings to be full of negative or harsh messages. Many seem to be fixated on his sayings about the Day of Judgement and Hellfire, while conveniently ignoring his vocal messages of glad tidings and productive work.  After all, the mission of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was described by God as follows, "O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness (Shahid) and a bringer of good tidings (Basheer) and a warner (Nazeer). And one who invites to Allah (Daee) , by His permission, and an illuminating lamp (Sirajan Munira)" [Al-Ahzab 33:45-46].  Prophet Muhammad was a beacon of hope for those around him. His ever-beaming smile would exude optimism. His words, whether of warning or of good news, inspired positive action.  Here is a selection of some powerful sayings of the Prophet to help us stay positive and productive in all circumstances.  **1. Be a Bearer of Good News**  “Give glad tidings, and do not scare people away. Make things easy, and do not make things difficult” (Abu Dawud).  **2. Optimism is an Act of Worship**  “Hoping for good is also an act of worship of Allah” (Tirmidhi and Hakim).11  “There is no infection and there are no bad omens, but I like optimism… [Optimism is] a good word.”  **3. Be Positive & Certain About Your Dua (Supplication)**  “Supplicate Allah Almighty and be certain that He will answer your prayer” (Tirmidhi).  **4. Optimism is from Allah, Pessimism is from Satan**  “O son of Adam! You are free to choose from what befalls you in your life, between despair and hope, pessimism and optimism. However, you shall find your hope and optimism with Allah, and your despair and pessimism with Satan, 'in order that he may cause grief to the believers. But he cannot harm them in the least, except as Allah permits' [Al-Mujdilah: 10]” (Bukhari and Muslim).  **5. Strong Believer Doesn't Make Excuses**  “The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although there is good in each. Desire that which will bring you benefit, and seek help from Allah and do not give way to incapacity. If something happens to you, do not say, ‘If only I had done such-and-such.’ Rather say, ‘The decree of Allah. He does what He will.’ Otherwise you will open yourself up to the action of Shaitan” (Muslim).  **6. Do Good Regardless of Others' Treatment**  “Do not be people without minds of your own, saying that if others treat you well you will treat them well and that if they do wrong you will do wrong. But (instead) accustom yourselves to do good if people do good and not to do wrong if they do evil” (Tirmidhi).  **7. Be Patient & Positive in Difficult Times**  “Whoever abstains from asking others, Allah will make him contented, and whoever tries to make himself self-sufficient, Allah will make him self-sufficient. And whoever remains patient, Allah will make him patient. Nobody can be given a blessing better and greater than patience” (Bukhari).  **8. Think Positive about God**  “Allah the Most High said, ‘I am as My servant thinks (expects) I am. I am with him when he mentions Me. If he mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself; and if he mentions Me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly greater than it. If he draws near to Me a hand’s length, I draw near to him an arm’s length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed’” (Hadith Qudsi).  **9. Istighfar Makes a Way Out**  “Whoever does a lot of Istighfar (asking for forgiveness), Allah will provide him a way out of each concern he has, and will solve all his troubles, and will provide him with livelihood from sources that were not known to him” (Ahmad).  **10. Affair of a Believer is always Positive**  “Wondrous is the affair of the believer for there is good for him in every matter and this is not the case with anyone except the believer. If he is happy, then he thanks Allah and thus there is good for him. If he is harmed, then he shows patience and thus there is good for him” (Muslim).  **11. Hope Prevails Over Fear at the Time of Death**  Once our Prophet, peace be upon him, went to a young man who was on his death bed and asked him 'How do you feel?' The young man said, 'I have much hope from Allah but I also fear for my sins'. The Prophet said, 'The believer who has these two ideas simultaneously at such time, Allah fulfils his hopes and grants him security from fear' (Tirmidhi).  **12. Be Positive & Productive till Your Last Breath**  “If the Day of Resurrection were established upon one of you, while he has in his hand a sapling (small plant), then let him plant it.” (Ahmad).  *Got any Hadiths of the Prophet that inspire positive thinking? Feel free to share them along with reference in the comments section!*  [***>> Read this article online***](http://org2.salsalabs.com/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=YGLT5caQYD1YH0QgLJK0GJOjoAIEH0lH) |

[Anxiety and Stress Management](http://www.soundvision.com/stress)

25 ways to deal with stress and anxiety4



[**Abdul Malik Mujahid**](http://www.soundvision.com/authors/abdul-malik-mujahid)

Stress is life. Stress is anything that causes mental, physical, or spiritual tension. There is no running away from it. All that matters is how you deal with it. This article does not deal with the factors of stress, anxiety, and depression, nor is it a clinical advice. If you feel depressed, you are not alone. It has been estimated that 75 to 90 percent of all visits to primary care physicians in America are for stress-related problems. This is why it is wise to consult a doctor if you are having physical symptoms of stress. However, here are some tips that can help from a spiritual perspective.

Torture. Beatings. Loss of property. The death of loved ones. These were just some of the enormous challenges the Muslims of Makkah faced in the seventh century following their acceptance of Islam in fiercely tribal and polytheistic Makkah.

Detention. Harassment. Beatings. Discrimination. Loss of Job. Profiling. Hate Crimes. Constant media attention. Surveillance. These are just some of the challenges Muslims in America today face, post-9/11. Like our predecessors in Makkah, we have begun to face great stress, anxiety, and pressure, more than ever in our recent history on this continent, although Muslims who were brought here as slaves faced worse than what we can even imagine.

1. Ask Him. He Listens: DU`A

Turn each anxiety, each fear and each concern into a Dua (supplication). Look at it as another reason to submit to God and be in Sajdah (prostration), during which you are closest to Allah. God listens and already knows what is in your heart, but He wants you to ask Him for what you want.

The Prophet said: Allah is angry with those who do not ask Him for anything (Tirmidhi).

The Prophet once said that in prayer, he would find rest and relief (Nasai). He would also regularly ask for God's forgiveness and remain in prostration during prayer praising God (Tasbeeh) and asking for His forgiveness (Bukhari).

Allah wants you to be specific. The Prophet advised us to ask Allah for exactly what we want instead of making vague Duas. Dua is the essence of worship (the Prophet as quoted in Tirmidhi).

"Call on your Lord with humility and in private: for Allah loveth not those who trespass beyond bounds. Do not make mischief on the earth, after it hath been set in order, but call on Him with fear. And longing (in your hearts): for the mercy of Allah is (always) near to those who do good" (Quran 7:55-56).

2. Tie your Camel: DO YOUR PART

One day Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, noticed a Bedouin leaving his camel without tying it. He asked the Bedouin, "Why don't you tie down your camel?" The Bedouin answered, "I put my trust in Allah." The Prophet then said, "Tie your camel first, then put your trust in Allah" (Tirmidhi).

Muslims must never become fatalistic. Although we know only Allah is in control and that He has decreed all things, we are each2 responsible for making the right choices and doing the right thing in all situations of our lives. We must take action (link to planning articles on SV). We must work to alleviate the hardships we, our families and our communities face.

Ask yourself the following questions if you are worried about the state of the world: are you part of the peace movement? Is your Masjid part of the peace movement? Are you part of an interfaith group with an agenda of peace and justice? Are you working with a group fighting discrimination? If your answer is no, it is time that you sat down to plan your share of time and money in finding solutions to the problems you face.

"Verily Allah does not change men's condition unless they change their inner selves" (Quran 13: 11).5

Turn each worry into a Du`a and each Du`a into an action plan. That will show your commitment to your request and will focus your energy in the right direction.1

3. Remember that human responsibility is limited

While we need to carry out our duty to the best of our abilities, always remember that you don't control the outcome of events. Even the Prophets did not control the outcome of their efforts. Some were successful, others were not. Once you have done your duty, leave the results to Allah. Regardless of the results of your efforts, you will be rewarded for the part you have played.

However, never underestimate your abilities. Understand the concept of Barakah (blessings from Allah) and remember that Allah can and Insha Allah will expand them if you are sincerely exerting your energies for the right path.

4. Leave the world behind you FIVE TIMES A DAY1

Use the five daily prayers as a means to become more Hereafter-oriented and less attached to this temporary world. Start distancing yourself as soon as you hear Adhan, the call to prayer. When you perform Wudu, keep repeating Shahada, the declaration of faith, as water drops slip down your face, hands, arms, and hair. When you stand ready to pray, mentally prepare yourself to leave this world and all of its worries and stresses behind you.

Of course, Shaytan will try to distract you during prayer. But whenever this happens, go back and remember Allah. The more you return, the more Allah will reward you for it. Also, make sure your Sajdas (prostrations) are talking Sajdas, in which you are really connecting to God and seeking His Mercy, praising Him, and asking His forgiveness. (link to Sajda article...ramadan page)

5. Seek help through SABR

Seek help through Sabr and Salat (Quran 2:45).

This instruction from Allah provides us with two critical tools that can ease our worries and pain. Patience and prayer are two oft-neglected stressbusters. Sabr is often translated as patience but it is not just that. It includes self-control, perseverance, endurance, and a focused struggle to achieve one's goal. Unlike patience, which implies resignation, the concept of Sabr includes a duty to remain steadfast to achieve your goals despite all odds.

Being patient gives us control in situations where we feel we have little or no control. 'We cannot control what happens to us but we can control our reaction to our circumstances' is the mantra of many modern-day self-help books. Patience helps us keep our mind and attitude towards our difficulties in check.

6. Excuse Me! You are Not Running the World, HE is.

It is important to remind ourselves that we don't control all the variables in the world. God does. He is the Wise, the All-Knowing. Sometimes our limited human faculties are not able to comprehend His wisdom behind what happens to us and to others, but knowing that He is in control and that as human beings we submit to His Will, enriches our humanity and enhances our obedience (Uboodiah in Arabic) towards him. Read the story of the encounter of Moses with the mysteries behind God's decision (Quran: 18:60-82). Familiarize yourself with God's 99 Names, which are also known as His Attributes. It is a powerful way of knowing Him.

"God-there is no deity save Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsistent Fount of All being. Neither slumber overtakes Him, nor sleep. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Who is there that could intercede with Him, unless it be by His leave? He knows all that lies open before men and all that is hidden from them, whereas they cannot attain to aught of His knowledge save that which He wills them to attain. His eternal power overspreads the heavens and the earth, and their upholding wearies Him not. And He alone is truly exalted, tremendous." (Quran 2:255).

The Prophet recommended reading this verse, known as Ayat al kursi, after each prayer, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him. Once Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, approached the Prophet during a difficult time and he found the Prophet in Sajda, where he kept repeating "Ya Hayy Ya Qayyum", words which are part of this verse.

7. Birds Don't Carry their Food

Allah is al Razzaq (the Provider).

"How many are the creatures that carry not their own sustenance? It is Allah Who feeds them and you, for He hears and knows all things (Quran 29:60)."

By reminding yourself that He is the Provider, you will remember that getting a job or providing for your family in these economically and politically challenging times, when Muslims are often the last to be hired and the first to be fired, is in God's Hands, not yours. As Allah says in the Quran:

"And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is (Allah) for him. For Allah will surely accomplish His purpose. Verily, for all things has Allah appointed a due proportion (Quran 65:3).

8. God controls Life and Death

If you fear for your physical safety and security, remember that only Allah gives life and takes it back and, that He has appointed the time for it. No one can harm you except if Allah wills. As He says in the Quran:

"Wherever you are, death will find you out, even if you are in towers built up strong and high!" (Quran 4:78).

9. Remember that life is short

It's easy to get caught up in our own stress and anxiety. However, if we remember that our life is short and temporary, and that the everlasting life is in the Hereafter, this will put our worries in perspective.

This belief in the transitory nature of the life of this world reminds us that whatever difficulties, trials, anxieties, and grief we suffer in this world are, Insha Allah, something we will only experience for a short period of time. And more importantly, if we handle these tests with patience, Allah will reward us for it.

10. Do Zikr, Allah, Allah!

"... without doubt in the remembrance (Zikr) of Allah do hearts find tranquility"   
(Quran 13:28).

If you commute, use your time in Zikr. Pick any Tasbeeh and do that instead of listening to the radio or reading the newspaper. Maybe you can divide it up between Zikr and planning. Personally, I recite the Tasbeeh of "Subhana Allahe wa be hamdihi, subhan Allahil Azeem" 100 times as I drive. The Prophet taught us these two short phrases which are easy to say but will weigh heavy on our scale of good deeds in the Hereafter.

When your heart feels heavy with stress or grief, remember Allah and surround yourself with His Zikr. Zikr refers to all forms of the remembrance of Allah, including Salat, Tasbeeh, Tahmeed, Tahleel, making supplication (Dua), and reading Quran.

"And your Lord says: 'Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer)..." (Quran 40:60)

By remembering Allah in the way He has taught us to, we are more likely to gain acceptance of our prayers and His Mercy in times of difficulty. We are communicating with the only One Who not only Hears and Knows all, but Who can change our situation and give us the patience to deal with our difficulties.

"Remember Me, and I shall remember you; be grateful to Me, and deny Me not"   
(Quran 2:152).

11. Relying on Allah: Tawakkul

When you awaken in the morning, thank Allah for giving you life after that short death called sleep. When you step out of your home, say 'in Your Name Allah, I put my trust in Allah, and there is no power or force except with Allah' (Bismillahi Tawakal to al Allah wa la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah). At night, remember Allah, with His praises on your lips.

Once you have established a plan you intend to follow through on to deal with a specific issue or problem in your life, put your trust in the most Wise and the All-Knowing.

"When you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah" (Quran 3: 159).

Rely on Allah by constantly remembering Him throughout your day. When you  
lay down to sleep, remember that sleep is death. That is why one of the recommended supplications before going to sleep is "with Your (Allah's) Name I die and become alive".

12. Connect with other human beings

You are not alone. Muslims are not alone. We are not suffering in silence. There are millions of good people who are not Muslim with beautiful hearts and minds. These are people who have supported us, individually and collectively, post-9/11, by checking up on us and making sure we are safe. These are individuals and organizations who have spoken up in defense of Muslims as we endured harassment and discrimination.

We must think of them, talk to them, connect with them, and pray for them. Through our connections, we will break the chain of isolation that leads to depression and anxiety.

13. Compare your dining table with that of those who don't have as much as you do

The Prophet said: Whenever you see someone better than you in wealth, face or figure, you should look at someone who is inferior to you in these respects (so that you may thank Allah for His blessings) (Bukhari, Muslim).

Next time you sit down to eat, eye the table carefully. Check out the selection of food, the quality, the taste, the quantity, and then think of the millions of others who don't have even half as much. The Prophet's Hadith reminds us of this so that we can appreciate and thank God for all that we have.

Also remember that the Prophet only encouraged us to compare ourselves to others in two respects: in our Islamic knowledge and level of belief in God (Deen). In these two areas, we should compare ourselves with those who have more than what we do.

14. Say it Loud: Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar: Takbirat & Adhan

Find a corner of a lake, go out in the wilderness, or even stand on your lawn at your home and call the Adhan with your heart. While driving, instead of listening to the same news over and over again, say Allahu Akbar as loudly as you can or as softly as you want, based on your mood. Year ago, I remember calling Adhan on a Lake Michigan shore in Chicago after sunset as the water gushed against my knees. I was calling it for myself. There was no one else accept the waves after waves of water with their symphony. It was relaxing and meaningful. Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar.

15. Pray in congregation (Jamat)

Pray with other people instead of alone. If you can't pray all five prayers in congregation, at least find one or two prayers you can pray with others. If you are away, establish Jamat in your own family. During the Prophet's time, even though the Muslims endured great persecution, including physical beatings, they would sometimes meet on the side of a mountain or valley and tried to pray together. This is a great morale booster.

16. How is your Imam's Dua?

Does the Imam at your local mosque make Dua silently or out loud? Ask him to supplicate with the whole congregation. Suggest Duas for him to make. Ask him to make Dua for other people.

17. Work for the Unity of Muslims

Bringing Muslims together will not only help the Muslims, but it will also encourage you to focus your energies on something constructive versus zeroing in on and consistently fretting about difficulties you are going through.

Invite Muslims from other ethnic groups to your functions. Visit Masjids other than yours in your city. When you meet a Muslim leader, after thanking him for his efforts, ask him what he is doing for Muslim unity. Ask Imams to make Dua for this. These are just small ways you can help yourself and the Muslim community.

18. Sleep the way the Prophet slept

End your day on a positive note. Make Wudu, then think of your day. Thank Allah for all the good things you accomplished, like Zikr and Salat. Ask yourself what you did today to bring humanity together and what you did to help Muslims become servants of humanity. For everything positive, say Alhamdu lillah (Praise be to Allah). For everything negative say Astaghfirullah wa atoobo ilayk (I seek Allah's forgiveness and I turn to You [Allah]). Recite the last two chapters of the Quran, thinking and praying as you turn on your right side with your hand below your right cheek, the way the Prophet used to sleep. Then close your day with the name of Allah on your tongue. Insha Allah, you will have a good, restful night.

19. Begin the Day on a Positive Note

Get up early. Get up thanking God that He has given you another day. Alhamdu lillahil lazi ahyana bada ma amatana, wa ilaihin Nushoor (Praise be to Allah Who gave us life after death and unto Him will be the return). Invest in an audio tape driven alarm clock so you can get up to the melody of the Quran. Or Let Dawud Wharnsby's joyful notes put you in a good mood. Sing along if you like. Develop your to do list for the day if you didn't do it the night before. Begin with the name of Allah, with Whose name nothing in the heavens or the earth can hurt you. He is the Highest and the Greatest.

(Bismillahillazi la yazurru maa ismihi shaiun fil arze wa la fis samae, wahuwal Alee ul Azeem).The Prophet used to say this after every Fajr and Maghrib prayers.

20. Avoid Media Overexposure: Switch from News to Books

Don't spend too much time checking out the news on the radio, television or internet. Spend more time reading good books and journals. When you listen to the persistent barrage of bad news, especially relating to Muslims nowadays, you feel not only depressed, but powerless. Cut down media time to reduce your stress and anxiety. It's important to know what's going on but not to an extent that it ruins your day or your mood. (similarly, when you are in a sad mood, refrain from wallowing and listening to sad songs)

21. Pray for Others to Heal Yourself.

The Prophet was always concerned about other people, Muslims and non-Muslims, and would regularly pray for them. Praying for others connects you with them and helps you understand their suffering. This in itself has a healing component to it. The Prophet has said that praying for someone who is not present increases love.

22. Make the Quran your Partner

Reading and listening to the Quran will help refresh our hearts and our minds. Recite it out loud or in a low voice. Listen to it in the car. When you are praying Nafl or extra prayers, pick it up and use it to recite portions of the Quran you are not as familiar with. Connecting to the Quran means connecting to God. Let it be a means to heal your heart of stress and worries. Invest in different recordings of the Quran and their translations.

"O humanity! There has come to you a direction from your Lord and a cure for all [the ills] in men's hearts - and for those who believe, a Guidance and a Mercy" (Quran 10:57).

23. Be thankful to Allah

"If you are grateful, I will give you more" (Quran 14:7).

Counting our blessings helps us not only be grateful for what we have, but it also reminds us that we are so much better off than millions of others, whether that is in terms of our health, family, financial situation, or other aspects of our life. And being grateful for all we have helps us maintain a positive attitude in the face of worries and challenges we are facing almost daily.

24. Ideals: ONE STEP AT A TIME

Ideals are wonderful things to pursue. But do that gradually. Think, prioritize, plan, and move forward. One step at a time.

25. EFFORTS not Results Count in the Eyes of Allah

Our success depends on our sincere efforts to the best of our abilities. It is the mercy of Allah that He does not demand results, Alhamdu lillah. He is happy if He finds us making our best sincere effort. Thank you Allah!

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| Wednesday | Safar 16, 1438 AH | November 16, 2016 |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Take a one-day or half-day social media break. The post-election rhetoric online is very heated, which will only depress you or push you to respond rashly to commentary. | |  | | |  | Think of those who are suffering war, starvation, and hunger around the world, as well as in America. Remember that even in this difficulty, Allah has blessed us to be safe from these struggles. | |  | | |  | In the holiday season more volunteers are needed. Call around to find volunteer opportunities, where you can find new friends and connect with others. | |  | |   [https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/u-mC0rsX6i-A-iicpfiJ6rTs0QKpbAG_uFNEhyTgj8MM1IdhThzMtONnjL4DiwjmQvRgujVxjmwiXK3YfFT457Q3-lMpPmf0A7REMNk0M0t9xtxF2tqWJA=s0-d-e1-ft#http://www.soundvision.com/sites/default/files/OptimismMatters.jpg](http://org2.salsalabs.com/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=2GaQMp1YBzh6e/yvFwA2c5OjoAIEH0lH)  **12 Sayings of the Prophet to Inspire Optimism**  ***By Taha Ghayyur***  Those who don't know him and haven't studied his life, often think of Prophet Muhammad's teachings to be full of negative or harsh messages. Many seem to be fixated on his sayings about the Day of Judgement and Hellfire, while conveniently ignoring his vocal messages of glad tidings and productive work.  After all, the mission of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was described by God as follows, "O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness (Shahid) and a bringer of good tidings (Basheer) and a warner (Nazeer). And one who invites to Allah (Daee) , by His permission, and an illuminating lamp (Sirajan Munira)" [Al-Ahzab 33:45-46].  Prophet Muhammad was a beacon of hope for those around him. His ever-beaming smile would exude optimism. His words, whether of warning or of good news, inspired positive action.  Here is a selection of some powerful sayings of the Prophet to help us stay positive and productive in all circumstances.  **1. Be a Bearer of Good News**  “Give glad tidings, and do not scare people away. Make things easy, and do not make things difficult” (Abu Dawud).  **2. Optimism is an Act of Worship**  “Hoping for good is also an act of worship of Allah” (Tirmidhi and Hakim).11  “There is no infection and there are no bad omens, but I like optimism… [Optimism is] a good word.”  **3. Be Positive & Certain About Your Dua (Supplication)**  “Supplicate Allah Almighty and be certain that He will answer your prayer” (Tirmidhi).  **4. Optimism is from Allah, Pessimism is from Satan**  “O son of Adam! You are free to choose from what befalls you in your life, between despair and hope, pessimism and optimism. However, you shall find your hope and optimism with Allah, and your despair and pessimism with Satan, 'in order that he may cause grief to the believers. But he cannot harm them in the least, except as Allah permits' [Al-Mujdilah: 10]” (Bukhari and Muslim).  **5. Strong Believer Doesn't Make Excuses**  “The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although there is good in each. Desire that which will bring you benefit, and seek help from Allah and do not give way to incapacity. If something happens to you, do not say, ‘If only I had done such-and-such.’ Rather say, ‘The decree of Allah. He does what He will.’ Otherwise you will open yourself up to the action of Shaitan” (Muslim).  **6. Do Good Regardless of Others' Treatment**  “Do not be people without minds of your own, saying that if others treat you well you will treat them well and that if they do wrong you will do wrong. But (instead) accustom yourselves to do good if people do good and not to do wrong if they do evil” (Tirmidhi).  **7. Be Patient & Positive in Difficult Times**  “Whoever abstains from asking others, Allah will make him contented, and whoever tries to make himself self-sufficient, Allah will make him self-sufficient. And whoever remains patient, Allah will make him patient. Nobody can be given a blessing better and greater than patience” (Bukhari).  **8. Think Positive about God**  “Allah the Most High said, ‘I am as My servant thinks (expects) I am. I am with him when he mentions Me. If he mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself; and if he mentions Me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly greater than it. If he draws near to Me a hand’s length, I draw near to him an arm’s length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed’” (Hadith Qudsi).  **9. Istighfar Makes a Way Out**  “Whoever does a lot of Istighfar (asking for forgiveness), Allah will provide him a way out of each concern he has, and will solve all his troubles, and will provide him with livelihood from sources that were not known to him” (Ahmad).  **10. Affair of a Believer is always Positive**  “Wondrous is the affair of the believer for there is good for him in every matter and this is not the case with anyone except the believer. If he is happy, then he thanks Allah and thus there is good for him. If he is harmed, then he shows patience and thus there is good for him” (Muslim).  **11. Hope Prevails Over Fear at the Time of Death**  Once our Prophet, peace be upon him, went to a young man who was on his death bed and asked him 'How do you feel?' The young man said, 'I have much hope from Allah but I also fear for my sins'. The Prophet said, 'The believer who has these two ideas simultaneously at such time, Allah fulfils his hopes and grants him security from fear' (Tirmidhi).  **12. Be Positive & Productive till Your Last Breath**  “If the Day of Resurrection were established upon one of you, while he has in his hand a sapling (small plant), then let him plant it.” (Ahmad).  *Got any Hadiths of the Prophet that inspire positive thinking? Feel free to share them along with reference in the comments section!*  [***>> Read this article online***](http://org2.salsalabs.com/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=YGLT5caQYD1YH0QgLJK0GJOjoAIEH0lH) |

[Islamophobia](http://www.soundvision.com/islamophobia)

What Masjids Can Do To Fight Islamophobia?



[**Abdul Malik Mujahid**](http://www.soundvision.com/authors/abdul-malik-mujahid)

The Masjid is where the action is. Muslims and their resources are connected with Masjids. Rethinking how to use those resources will help the Ummah greatly.

1. Make “Islamophobia” a new menu tab:

Please develop a new menu item for Masjid website called “Islamophobia.” If you need content for it, Sound Vision can provide that.

2. Adopt a MSA:

Students have tremendous power to make change, but require guidance and funding. Some Masjids in America adopt MSAs to help them. Jewish Federations throughout the country fund Hillel on college campuses, since funding through students’ unions is limited.

3. Set goals for interfaith:

Interfaith work needs to have set goals. One is how to combat hate and Islamophobia. See our sheet on what interfaith partners can do to help. Let Muslim women speak: Muslim women can more effectively answer the top objections to Islam: violence and women’s status. The Masjid can provide training opportunities for this task.

4. Oppose war-terrorism-Islamophobia as a set:

War, terrorism, and Islamophobia feed off of each other. Muslims routinely condemn terrorism, but it will be considered more legitimate by the peace and justice movement when we condemn the whole set. Organize presentations on Islamophobia: Our neighbors want to hear about real issues. Sound Vision can provide a list of 20 such presentations for neighbors and interfaith partners.

5. Buy books in bulk:

There are now a number of books which can be given out as gifts to our neighbors of other faiths, not just about Islam but also on the issues facing American Muslims. Many Masjids distribute such books. If you need a bibliography, please let Sound Vision know.

6. Reorganize your budget:

Finally, let us revisit our budget. If you agree that we are facing serious challenges, we need to think, plan, and allocate funds to meet those challenges.

7. Develop partnerships with other Masjids at the regional level:

Chicago has the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, Michigan has the Michigan Muslim Community Council. These are regional partnerships between Masjids and Islamic organizations that pool resources, build unity, and strengthen our ability to speak with one voice.