**8 Productivity Tips for a Successful Back to School Season**

**Attention Busy Moms.**



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The back to school season is in full swing and you’re probably already readjusting to busy school days, the anticipation of new lessons learned and the happy (and sometimes not so happy) stories that come home with your child everyday.  It can get pretty hectic and overwhelming. That’s why I’ve asked some pretty busy moms their productivity hacks for maintaining order, reducing stress and keeping their sanity. Enjoy and please implement!

**Rise Early:**Most moms I’ve talked to mentioned the absolute necessity of waking up early.  ProductiveMuslim has been advocating [rising for fajr](http://productivemuslim.com/7-tips-on-how-to-stay-up-after-fajr/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) and staying up since its inception and here’s just one reason why:From Shakr Al-Ghamidi that the Messenger of Allah said: “O Allah bless my Ummah in what they do early (in the day).” [[Tirmidhi](http://www.sunnah.com/tirmidhi/14/11)]The hours immediately after Fajr are peaceful. Use this time to start your day off right with recitation of the Qur’an, quiet reflection and preparation for the day to come. This is a quiet time, unlike any other part of the day. Getting a head start on your day will help you feel energized and ready to conquer whatever the day has in store for you.

 **Schedule Your Meals:** Planning ahead will save you the headache of not-knowing, or what I like to call the ‘not-knowing syndrome’. Think back to a moment when your day was hectic and when you stepped into the house and all you could hear was: “Mom, I’m hungry” over and over again. You realized you hadn’t even thought this far ahead in your day. Panic set in and you just didn’t know what to do. You ended up scrambling to make a meal, or chose an unhealthy option (pizza, anyone?). Think about what you’ll be cooking for the week over the weekend and create a schedule. Make sure this list is handy when grocery shopping (you don’t want to waste time running to the grocery store during the week!). Having a menu for your home will save you time and energy.

 **Prepare the Night Before:** You wake up and realize the kids don’t have their clothes for the day ready. You have to pack lunch, make breakfast, and would like to squeeze in a cup of coffee somewhere in between. Here’s the magic key to an organized, stress-free morning: have everything ready the night before.If your kids are old enough, have them put out their clothes for the next day before they go to sleep.  If they still need your help, make sure their clothes are clean and ready for the next day before you go to sleep. The night before, pack all book bags and if you’re heading out to work, your workbag and clothes for the day should be ready as well (sometimes we prepare for everyone else and forget ourselves!).  Have the lunch boxes on the counter ready to be filled in the morning. If you really want to get fancy, make sure your coffee pot is ready and all you have to do in the morning is press the start button on the machine.

 **Recruit the Help of Family and Friends:** Remember, you are not a machine. Although we may like to think we can do it all, the fact is we’re human and we can’t. Saying that is pretty refreshing and makes it easier to ask for help. You’ll be surprised how willing your family and friends will be to help out. Have your kids pitch in; you’ll be surprised how much your 5-year-old can do, at least make (or try to make) his/her own bed. In addition to helping you tidy up, you are teaching your child responsibility as well. Ask your spouse for support, both in the household chores and emotional support. If you have sisters or cousins, you can exchange babysitting days, giving yourself some much needed quiet time.

 [**Set a Daily Routine**](http://productivemuslim.com/productive-mums-establishing-an-after-school-routine/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)**:** I may be pretty boring but when it comes to school days. I hardly go out with the kids unless it’s to a park. Incorporating fresh air and physical activity helps the kids (and myself) release the stresses of the day. I’ve found it’s easier to get them to sit down during homework time when they’ve already had their physical activity. Otherwise, we’re pretty much homebodies after school. This helps when it comes to getting ready for bed and maintaining an early bedtime.

 **Build Strong Family Ties over Meals:** Make it a point to sit down with your kids over a meal. It’s hard to have all family members present during the workweek but whoever is at home when dinner is served should be sitting at the table. It’s important to talk about what’s going on in school, ask questions and listen for answers. Too often, we get caught up in juggling our responsibilities that we forget to listen. Creating a time to listen is essential, especially when they’re young. In sha Allah, when we instill a habit of open dialogue with our children when they are young, they will remain open and honest with us even as they get older.

 **Give Yourself a Break:** It’s pretty hectic during the week, and as the CEO of your household you work hard to maintain order and keep things running smoothly. This is why you are entitled to a break! Once a week, make sure you schedule in productive downtime (I promise, ‘productive downtime’ is not an oxymoron). Productive downtime means you are shifting gears and taking it easy. Things you can do include journaling (reflection is always positive and helps beat stress) and treating yourself to a no-cook day. Having one day a week when you focus on yourself will give you something to look forward to and helps you reenergize for the week to come.

1. **Focus on the Task at Hand:** Thinking about everything that needs to get done all at once can be overwhelming. This is why being present in the moment helps reduce stress, gets the job done better and allows you to be mentally present at all times. Remember, [multi-tasking](http://productivemuslim.com/did-muhammad-peace-be-upon-him-multi-task/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) is overrated anyway.*What is your #1 productivity tip that helps keep your household running smoothly? Please share in the comments section below.*

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| [**[Muslimah Entrepreneurship Series] Pillar 1 – The Ultimate Guide to a Productive Mindset**](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=G.2D0Sx4DSzZ1RMVAfNlAg)*Become an active member of the ProductiveMuslim community and enrich it with your thoughts.* ***Leave a comment on this article*** *and with it, your presence. We look forward to reading your comments.*https://ci4.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ircfipQFS63MSVG9sLWMaSwRGbUb-Ouuc5rzU-2HGI_5G3BTnehBorpRW-m-9kK1PFEEdpnh6Jg6bzTSyTCUL4fjNgdaOaRzEGJ1MZWheQ8DxJCLR2qTXhOt8y-YGQ=s0-d-e1-ft#http://cdn.productivemuslim.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/div-brown.png*Are you a Muslimah with big dreams?*The Mothers of the Believers were strong women, who achieved perfect iman and utilized their skills to the best of their abilities. Contrary to the common misconception, women can make successful businesswomen, while maintaining their other roles as a wife, mother and sister in the community. Khadija bint Khuwaylid was such a woman – a wealthy and successful merchant who traded goods across Arabia, becoming the most loyal support system to the Prophet Muhammad . What was her secret? Well the secret lies in pursuing your passion while finding a perfect balance in your business and personal life.In this series, I will discuss three “pillars” that I believe are essential for a Muslimah to become a [productive entrepreneur](http://productivemuslim.com/productivity-tips-for-every-aspiring-entrepreneur/?awt_l=EHVDU&awt_m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) in the 21st century. Each month, I will focus on a new “pillar” to ensure success for your business and ongoing personal development.For women who are thinking of becoming an entrepreneur or are already running a business or project, this will serve as a timely reminder to help you achieve prosperity in your affairs, In sha Allah.**Pillar 1 – A Productive Mindset**This month, we will begin with “a productive mindset”. The first pillar to becoming a productive Muslimah entrepreneur is to have a positive mindset. After studying many successful leaders in the world, I have found one thing in common with them all – a positive, spiritual and productive mindset. [It all begins in the mind!](http://productivemuslim.com/productive-thinking-series-part-1/?awt_l=EHVDU&awt_m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)A mindset refers to our predominant state of mind day to day. As women, we are naturally emotional beings and it is quite normal to become dominated by things happening around us. But if we make a conscious choice to let go of external distractions, we can stop them from misleading us from our true purpose, and guarantee our success.As a Muslimah entrepreneur myself, I believe it is my mindset that has played a key role in all of the tough decisions I have made in my life. It has helped me repel negativity, improve my belief system and has motivated me when I felt lazy. Without having this initial mindset, your endeavour won’t be enjoyable and could lead to stress and disappointment.Here are 8 strategies to ensure you have a mindset tailored for success!**Mindset Strategy #1: Have a vision**As a Muslimah first, our entrepreneurial [visions](http://productivemuslim.com/workshop-review-timelenders-strategic-vision-workshop/?awt_l=EHVDU&awt_m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) should be aligned with seeking pleasure of Allah as an ultimate goal. Some examples of may be to start a social enterprise linked with a non-profit initiative in the name of Allah or on behalf of a loved one; to earn more money and be a supporting hand for the family; or to seek knowledge and help other sisters seek knowledge.**Mindset Strategy #2: Align your driving force in the right direction**Whether we are consciously aware of it or not, we all have some kind of driving force in our lives – the energy that drives our intentions and actions. [Knowing our driving force](http://productivemuslim.com/reconciling-contentment-versus-ambition/?awt_l=EHVDU&awt_m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) and aligning it with our life goals can lead us towards fulfilling and meaningful success.Being the eldest of 5 sisters, I was ambitious since childhood. I had the burning desire to become a proud daughter of my parents and achieve excellence in academics and in my career. Serving my parents in the best means, to gain Allah’s pleasure, has always been a driving force in my life. To me, being the source of bliss to my parents is something that ignites me to strive for more in life.Alhamdulilah, I fulfilled many of my parents dreams but there are still some ambitions I have not achieved yet. Now this has become my driving force in my life. Whenever I feel lazy or de-motivated, I remind myself of what drives me and this has pushed me to achieve my long-term visions.**Mindset Strategy #3: Be mindful of your intentions**It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hafs ‘Umar bin al-Khattab , who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah , say:*“Actions are according to intentions, and everyone will get what was intended”* [[Bukhari and Muslim](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=XLXm2KQ.IF9EDBDuSi8Qzg)].Since our actions are the product of our intentions, we consistently try and [purify our intentions](http://productivemuslim.com/refine-your-intentions-for-productivity/?awt_l=EHVDU&awt_m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking), as this determines whether our actions will be rewarded or not. Our actions will be blessed if our intentions are solely for the purpose of pleasing Allah . In all of the examples above, the visions are centered around pleasing Allah . No endeavour should be for any other purpose.**Mindset Strategy #4: Aim high but don’t let the dunya become your goal**Aiming high is essential for success, although we need to balance this with being grounded and not letting material things become our goal. Additionally, aiming high can lead to stress and disappointment when things do not happen as we expect. We need to couple aiming high with putting our complete trust in Allah and accepting that He is the Best of Planners. We must do everything we can, then leave the rest to Him.So [keep the dunya in your hand](http://productivemuslim.com/working-productively-in-dunya-for-akhira/?awt_l=EHVDU&awt_m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking), don’t let it rule over you as Allah says in Qur’an:*“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children – like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes [scattered] debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion”* [[Qur'an: Chapter 57: Verse 20](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=znLYTUqplvRl5jihftA9tA)].**Mindset Strategy #5: Value growth more than money**Measuring ones success in terms of the amount of money per month or year is usually what we use to measure success. However, if you are making good sum of money it does not necessarily mean that your business is growing. A stagnant business feeling may cause procrastination and demotivation.To make sure you are continually doing something to make your business move forward, set some growth goals for what you see your vision to have become in 3, 5 and even 10 years. Long term goals will ensure that you never settle with where your business is, and will consistently try to develop it, one small step at a time. As sisters, we may become sidetracked with the other roles in our lives, but having these long term goals will give you the motivation you need to push yourself, even if your business grows slowly. Slowly but surely!**Mindset Strategy #6: Increase positivity and block sources of negativity**Women are more emotional and is very easy to fall into circumstances where we allow negative emotions to prevail in our lives. [Blocking negativity](http://productivemuslim.com/combating-negative-thinking/?awt_l=EHVDU&awt_m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) is the key to secure your precious time and emotional well-being.Here are ways to continuously invite positivity in your business and all aspects of your life:1) Practice dhikr and meditationMaking conscious remembrance of Allah and performing meditation can help you be more content and peaceful. It is not about just offering prayers but really connecting wholeheartedly with Allah throughout the whole the day, and even during menial tasks such as cooking and cleaning.Allah mentions of His servants in Qur’an as *“Those who remember their Lord standing, and sitting, and lying on their sides”* [[Qur'an: Chapter 3: Verse 191](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=qAnLGsr2jJDyCk18y2HOKg)].2) Talk less if possibleTalking less is recommended by the Prophet Muhammad and can save you from many undesirable situations and disputes, especially when running a business. If speech does not have value or benefit, then remain silent. Women can especially fall victim to gossip – refrain from this, least of all because of the weight of sin it carries.Remember Ibn ‘Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah said, *“Do not indulge in excessive talk except when remembering Allah . Excessive talking without the Remembrance of Allah hardens the heart; and those who are the farthest from Allah are those whose hearts are hard”* [[At-Tirmidhi](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=6mOHb8HKF_I7gYcDCIeShw)].Instead, listen more! Surround yourself with positive, inspirational and motivational people. I am an inspiration junkie; I love listening to entrepreneurs and speakers who help me maintain a positive mindset. [Ted.com](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=cOVHk2s6Hv.KSiJJ5Wk90Q) is a fantastic resource for short, inspirational and moving talks from everything to business, science and psychology.3) Take criticism positivelyI used to be very reactive when it comes to criticism. Realize that not everyone will like you, pamper you or support you. Everyone has a different psychology and a different perspective. Take [criticism as a point of view](http://productivemuslim.com/top-tips-to-dish-out-and-deal-with-criticism/?awt_l=EHVDU&awt_m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) as it might not need to be your reality.**Mindset Strategy #7: Dare to admit failure, and then move on**All the great leaders in the world have tasted many failures before achieving success. So if you’re stuck, or have failed, take the first step and openly admit that.**Mindset Strategy #8: Be ready to invest in your growth**We as women sometimes always give ourselves the lowest priority, because of all the other demands of our role as a Muslimah. We support our husbands, our parents, children and community but forget to support our dreams. One thing which I have learned is that you not only needs to invest your time and energy but it’s also essential to set apart a monthly budget for personal and business growth. There is no such thing as a low- or no-cost for success or business growth. These will only keep you stuck in a place for years. While you play small, others will take your idea, invest more money and grow fast. Why? Because your dreams were not given a priority.*Train your mindset to believe that you are your greatest asset. You are more precious than gold and emeralds. So invest in yourself, you will never regret it!**Stay tuned for the second part of this series which is about productive planning and marketing.* **About the Author:****Shereen Pasha** is multi-passionate entrepreneur and small business coach with more than 7 years of work experience in web development, digital marketing and online business development. Shereen helps businesses align their branding, marketing and mechanics to grow their businesses online. Shereen is passionate to build platforms for women entrepreneurs. She is the co-founder & CEO of [Muslim Women Coach](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=Fh1zX2uKRScB3qK3rcGw5w), a [Socially Conscious Enterprise](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=TtYGzFx8nd6pJ3yWvhE.Aw) with the vision to shape entrepreneurial growth of Muslim women. Muslim Women Coach offers strategic business consulting, marketing plans, personal coaching and web presence services to Muslim women entrepreneurs.Website: [http://muslimwomencoach.com/](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=Y6cfHDiZfKrzrHUUWKQqCg) | [http://shereenpasha.com/](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=H9TGbLoSHvUCqcOSFtKZuQ)Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/MuslimWomenCoach](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=WGgfHwHkHNa90BGhy4bzPA) | [https://www.facebook.com/ebusinesscoach](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=Otu7kJoFgQuAc5gmHBD5zw)Twitter: [https://twitter.com/muslimahcoach](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=a6b9BYviJ9VYIwxOl_OFZg)LinkedIn: [http://uk.linkedin.com/in/shereenpasha](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=EHVDU&m=3WJRBEqejoSbnEz&b=SEfbPJ9N.n9AKz5gOq0HeQ) |