

Self-Care and Clarity of Mind...a weekly column by Princess Lakshman (Sister Iqra)



Welcome to my weekly column on **Self-Care and Clarity of Mind**. If you're taking time out to read this, pat yourself on the back because you have shown commitment to taking care of your mind and body.

Today, In Shaa Allah, we will explore **Strategies To Develop And Maintain Positive Relationships** with people in our lives.

From the moment we wake up in the morning to the time we retire to bed, our lives revolve around other human beings. They all impact our lives in ways that propel us to respond or react. These responses and reactions shape the life we lead. How we choose to respond to people is completely up to us.

When someone says, "I didn't have a choice", it simply means they **chose to remain in the situation** instead of **choosing an alternative**. The truth is, there are always alternatives.

Our daily relations and dealings with family members, friends, colleagues, strangers and virtual entities (those who are communicating with us online) form a vital part of our existence. These dealings and relations give rise to experiences. Experiences become memories and memories subsequently become a significant component of reasoning. Most of these memories are as a result of inherited memories. For example, how we respond to an angry outburst of another person is often the same way our parents and guardians respond to such outbursts. We grew up watching their reactions and responses and adopted them accordingly.

Relationships are formed and maintained with some basic ingredients in life, such as love, trust, respect, compassion and duty. The following communication exercise will help you nourish your relationships to be more meaningful, joyful and engaging.

The vital thing to remember for this exercise is one has to be able to **hear the tone of the voice** of the other person. **Text messaging will not work as you are unable to hear the actual tone of the voice.**

Telephone or face to face is always the best way to have an engaging, effective communication.

Married couples

Spend a few minutes **daily** with each other **alone** in conversation regarding the following specific topics and ensure that when one person is talking, the other is listening with full attention without any interruption whatsoever. When you engage in a meaningful conversation such as the one below, your mind opens up to embrace the joys of life.

“What was most joyful about your day today and why?”
“What are you most grateful for today and why?”
“What did you do today that has made you a better person than yesterday?”
“How can I be of help to you to realise your purpose in life?”

Children

Spend time **daily** with your child and have the following conversation. If you have more than one child, spend time **individually** to have this conversation. Remember, every child is different and experiences the world differently. Ask your child the following questions and give full attention to her/his responses.

“What was most joyful about your day today and why?”
“What do you feel most thankful to ALLAH for today?”
“What was uncomfortable for you today and why?”
“What would you really like to tell me but feel scared to share? You can tell me anything. You can trust me.”
“What would you like to do to improve yourself?”
“How can I help you to be better?”

Siblings and Friends

Often the people who manage to irritate us most are our siblings and close friends. The following exercise may help open the mind to enjoy a meaningful, loving relationship with siblings and friends. Again, the tone of the voice is a vital part of this exercise.

Spend a few minutes at least once a week to touch base with your sibling(s)/ friends. Ask them the following questions and pay attention to the answers without interrupting or formulating a counter-argument.

“What was the most joyful part of your week so far?”
“What challenges did you face last week?”
“What can I do to be of help to overcome those challenges?”

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