

Enjoy Your *Life*

the art of interacting with people

Dr. Muhammad 'Abd-Al-Rahman Al- 'Arifi



**A book Covering over
20 years of research**

**Deduced from a study
of the Prophet's life**



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Enjoy Your Life

THE ART OF INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE

Authored By: Dr. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Rahman Al-‘Arifi

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Publisher's Foreword



It so happened that in the year 2007, I was in the city of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). It has been my old habit that whenever I travel to a city, I always make it a point to visit all its bookstores. When it comes to books, the city of Madinah is in its own league. In the bookstores of Madinah, one is bound to come across all the newly published literature – and shopping for books is, of course, my favorite pastime. The staff who work at most of the bookstores near the Prophet's Mosque know me on a personal basis, as a large number of Darussalam's publications are available at these stores.

One day, when I was visiting one of these bookstores, I looked at the shelves and noticed a book called, 'Enjoy Your Life'. Just as I was about to pick it up, Abu 'Abdullah greeted me, hugged me, and asked, 'When did you arrive? How long are you here for?' Meanwhile, I reached out for the book... Abu 'Abdullah, who is originally from Yemen, has been involved in the book market for a long time. He is one of the many Darussalam distributors. He noticed the book in my hand and said, 'This book is excellent. If you were to publish its translation, it would be considered a valuable addition to the international Islamic book collection.' He continued as he held my hand, 'This book has made a record number of sales.'

Sometime later, in my hotel room, I began reading the book. As I continued reading, I became more and more captivated by it. There is no doubt that the subject of the book itself was the thing that most interested me.

Solutions to all the problems of the Muslim nation are present in the life of Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). His life is certainly an example for us to follow and a model for us to refer to at all times. No matter what problem arises in our lives, if we look to the Prophet's Seerah for a solution, we will surely find it. What makes this book outstanding is that it deals with our social problems in light of the Prophetic lifestyle. The work is filled with incidents from the Seerah, Islamic history, and the author's own experiences. By reading this book and implementing it practically, all of us can make our lives more enjoyable and more tranquil.

This book includes remedies for despondency and numerous tips on how to keep worries and stress at bay. The author of this book, Dr. Muhammad bin 'Abd ar-Rahman al-'Arifi is a well-known scholar and lecturer from Saudi Arabia. His audiences are left mesmerized during his lectures as he has such a unique way of speaking that even us, the non-Arabs, are enchanted by his words. A visit to any of the Islamic audiocassette shops in this land gives proof to the popularity of this talented lecturer, and a single hearing of any of his lectures guarantees addiction!

When I returned to Riyadh from Madinah, I requested one of our Egyptian Darussalam associates, Muhammad Shakir Qadhi, to establish contact with Dr. Al-‘Arifi and to request permission for the translation of his book. After a few days, we managed to establish contact with Dr. Al-‘Arifi. Fortunately, for us, he was already familiar with Darussalam. As he said himself, most of the books he takes on his international travels are of Darussalam publications. It is always easier to work towards an agreement if there is preceding familiarity. We invited Dr. Al-‘Arifi over to Darussalam’s headquarters for a visit, and he gladly accepted the invitation. Thus, we had the pleasure of his company.

I found him to be just as handsome and immaculate as are his works and lectures. He has a unique and charming character and a very humble personality. I know from my experience with people in the Islamic world, that the more famous and well respected a person becomes, the more modest and noble is his behavior. Dr. Al-‘Arifi signed the contract with Darussalam and then excused himself, saying he was in a hurry and that he would return soon to discuss further details.

After a couple of weeks or so, as I was travelling once again to Madinah, I coincidentally noticed Dr. Al-‘Arifi seated on the same plane. As the seat beside him was empty, we had the opportunity to sit together and familiarize ourselves with each other even more. We spoke at length and felt closer to one another. A few days later, he returned to Darussalam and gave us a number of new suggestions. We introduced him to some of our projects, and it was then decided that Darussalam would translate his books into various languages.

He explained how his book, ‘Enjoy Your Life’ is in reality a summary of his entire life experience. He spent a considerable amount of time authoring this book. There is no doubt that he wrote this work from the very depths of his heart, and one really must read it to realize and acknowledge the beauty of it. This book was published in Arabic in Sha’ban 1428AH, corresponding to August 2007, and within the span of one year, it had sold 100,000 copies.

As mentioned previously, Dr. Muhammad al-‘Arifi is indigenously from Saudi Arabia. He is from the famous Arab tribe known as Banu Khalid (Banu Makhzum) – it goes without mentioning that Banu Khalid are the descendants of the famous soldier, Mujahid and Companion of the Prophet, Khalid bin al-Walid – May Allah be pleased with him. Dr. Muhammad bin ‘Abd ar-Rahman al-‘Arifi was born in the year 1970. He graduated from Saudi universities where he acquired his PhD. The title of his PhD research thesis was “Ara’ Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya fi al-Sufiyya – Jam’ wa Dirasah” (The Views of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah on Sufism – a Compilation and Study).

Currently, he is a founding and dignitary member of various Da’wah organizations, as well as being a member of their advisory committees. He is also a member of the advisory board for many international organizations. Aside from being a visiting professor in various Saudi and foreign universities, he is also a professor in King Saud University of Riyadh. He has been delivering Friday sermons for over twenty years in different mosques in Saudi Arabia. Currently, he delivers his Friday sermons in al-Bawaardi mosque, which is a major mosque located in the south of Riyadh. Every Friday, so many people attend, that it is impossible to find a parking space anywhere in the vicinity of the mosque. Once I had the opportunity of praying the Friday prayer behind Dr. Al- ‘Arifi. We arrived at the mosque very early, but despite that, we had to park very far away. The ground floor of the mosque was fully occupied, so we went up to the first floor where we were able to find a place to sit. Soon afterwards, the first floor also became congested with worshippers. Dr. Muhammad al-‘Arifi is an amazing orator. He was fortunate enough to be a student of Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Aziz bin Baz for fifteen to sixteen years, and from whom he learnt Tafseer and Fiqh. For eight years, he took lessons from Dr. ‘Abdullah al-Jibrin in Tawheed. His other teachers include, Shaykh ‘Abdullah bin Qu’ud, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Nasir al-Barrak and various other scholars. His connections with the scholars of Madinah go back very far. During his days as a student and thereafter, he learnt Fiqh from those scholars. He has memorized the Qur’an and is known

for his fine recitation. He takes a special interest in Hadeeth literature and has received licenses for the chains of transmission for various Hadeeth texts from a number of scholars.

More than twenty of his works in Arabic have been published and distributed in nearly a million copies. His books, which are often published in four colors, are attractive and pleasing to the eye, and available at low-cost. It is because his books deal with issues affecting the lives of everyday people, that they are acclaimed and appreciated by all. Many well-wishers make his books their choice for their donations and free distributions.

The following is a list of some of the works of Dr. Muhammad al-‘Arifi:

A work on Tawheed called Irkab Ma’ana, an excellent work of which 400,000 copies have been published.

A work on Da’wah to Allah, called Hal Tabhath ‘an Wadhifa, of which 150,000 copies have been published.

Innaha Malikah, in 150,000 copies.

Fi Batn al-Hut, in 150,000 copies.

A work on the topic of worship in 100,000 copies.

A work on the topic of Hijaab called Sarkha fi Mat’am al- Jami’a, in 150,000 copies.

Rihla Ila al-Sama’ with 150,000 copies published and sold.

A compilation of counseling to doctors and patients called ‘Ashiq fi Ghurfat al-‘Amaliyat in 70,000 copies.

A pamphlet called Adhkar al-Muslim al-Yawmiyyah, of which 20 million copies have been published within only three years.

Many of Dr. al-‘Arifi’s lectures are available on the internet without charge; he also writes columns and essays for various newspapers and magazines and has appeared on a number of Arabic satellite television channels.

The administration of Darussalam hopes, in the very near future, to translate into different languages and publish the various works of Dr. Al-‘Arifi while maintaining a high literary standard, Allah willing.

I would like to thank our brothers Saleem Beg and Nasim Chowdhury for translating and editing this work respectively. We pray to Allah that He grants the author, the translator and the editor good health and long life, and that He blesses their knowledge and actions. We would be extremely delighted to receive any feedback or suggestions from our readers, and we hope you remember us in your prayers.

Your loving brother

‘Abdul-Malik Mujahid

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Introduction

All praise is due to Allah (SWT). May Allah's peace and blessings be upon the one after whom there is no other prophet.

As a seventeen year old, I came across a book called, 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' by Dale Carnegie, which I found to be quite excellent and which I subsequently read several times. The author suggested that one should read the book once a month, which is exactly what I did. I began to apply its principles when dealing with others and witnessed amazing results.

Carnegie would often mention a principle and then cite various examples of this by way of incidents related to prominent figures, such as Roosevelt, Lincoln, Joseph, and so on.

I contemplated and realized that the author's only goal was to attain worldly happiness. What if he were to have known Islam and the etiquettes it teaches? He would surely have achieved eternal as well as ephemeral happiness! How about if he were to have turned his wonderful interpersonal skills into worship, with which he would have drawn closer to Allah? When I later discovered that Carnegie had committed suicide, I knew for certain that his book, despite its merits, had not benefitted him.

I then began to search our own history and discovered that the life of Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), his Companions, and anecdotes of some of the prominent men of this ummah are more than enough for us to learn lessons from. From then on, I began to author this book concerning the art of dealing with others. Hence, this book is not the product of a month or a year's toil. Rather, it is the result of twenty years of serious study.

Although Allah (SWT) has blessed me with the ability to have produced twenty books so far, some of which have been printed in their millions, I nevertheless believe that the most beloved, precious and beneficial of all of them to me is this book, which I wrote with ink blended with my blood; I poured out my soul and squeezed out my memories as I wrote these lines.

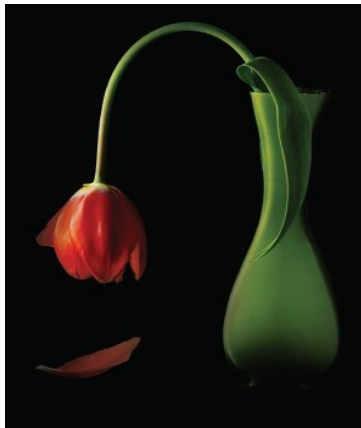
I have written these words from the very depths of my heart so it may penetrate the heart of the reader, and would be delighted to learn that he or she has indeed implemented its teachings, experienced an improvement in his or her skills, and therefore actually began enjoying life. If he or she were to then thankfully write a message expressing his or her views and feelings honestly and send it to me via email or SMS, I would be grateful for this kindness and remember to pray for him or her in their absence.

I pray to Allah (SWT) that the reader benefits from these pages, and that He makes my efforts purely for His sake.

Written by the one who is always praying for what is best for you.

Dr. Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-'Arifi

They Didn't Benefit



I remember once receiving a message on my mobile phone which read: “Dear Shaykh, what is the ruling on suicide?”

I called the sender to find a very young man on the other end of the line. I said, “I am sorry, I didn’t understand your question. Can you please repeat your question?”

He said with a grieving voice, “The question is clear. What is the ruling on suicide?”

I decided to surprise him by saying in response something unexpected, so I said, “It is recommended!”

He screamed, “What?!”

I said, “How about if we discuss the best way for you to do it?”

The young man fell silent. I said to him, “OK. Why do you want to commit suicide?”

He said, “Because, I can’t find work. People do not love me. In fact, I am an utter failure...”, and thus he began to relate to me his long story in order to prove that he had failed to develop his interpersonal skills and was unsuccessful in utilizing his talents. This is a problem with many people. Why do some of us feel inferior? Why do we look at those at the peak of the mountain while thinking of ourselves as unworthy of reaching that peak as they have, or even climbing it as they did?

The one frightened of climbing mountains forever lives in the ditches

Do you wish to know who will not benefit from this book, or any other similar book, for that matter? It is the unfortunate one who surrenders to his own errors and becomes satisfied with his limited skills, and says, “This is my nature. I have become too used to it now; I cannot change my ways. Everyone knows this is how I am. I can never speak like Khalid does, or have a cheerful countenance like Ahmad has, or be universally loved the way Ziyad is. That would be impossible.”

I once sat with a very old man in a public gathering. Most of those present were people with the usual skills and abilities. The old man was busy speaking to whoever was sitting next to him. He did not stand out in the crowd for any reason, except by virtue of his old age.

I delivered a lecture and during it mentioned a verdict given by the eminent Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Aziz bin Baz. When I finished, the old man said to me with pride, “Shaykh Ibn Baz and I were colleagues. We used to study together in a mosque under Shaykh Muhammad bin Ibrahim, about forty years ago.”

I turned around to look at him and noticed that he seemed very happy to share this information with me. He was delighted to have accompanied a successful man once in his life. I said to myself, “Poor man! Why did you not become as successful as Ibn Baz? If you knew the way to success, why did you not pursue it? Why is it that when Ibn Baz passes away, people cry for him from the pulpits, mihrabs, and institutes, and various nations grieve over the loss; yet, when your death comes, perhaps, nobody would shed a single tear, except out of kindness or custom!”

We all may say at some time or another, “We knew so-and-so and we sat with so-and-so.” But this is nothing to be proud of. What one can be proud of is to scale the peak as they did.

Be brave and from now on be determined to utilize all the abilities you possess. Be successful. Replace the frown on your face with a smile, depression with cheerfulness, miserliness with generosity, and anger with perseverance. Turn your calamities into occasions of joy and your faith into a weapon!

Enjoy your life, for it is brief and there is no time in it for anguish. As for how to do this, then this is the reason for my writing this book. So bear with me until the end, with Allah’s permission.

You will bear with us if...

You are brave enough to be determined and persistent on the development of your interpersonal skills, and if you are willing to take advantage of your abilities and talents.

What Are We Going To Learn?



People generally tend to share their moments of happiness and sorrow. They are happy when they become wealthy. They will be joyous when promoted at work, content when they recover from illness, and cheerful when the world smiles at them and fulfills their dreams.

Likewise, they all grieve over illness, disgrace and loss of wealth. Knowing this to be the case, let us look for ways in which to make our joy everlasting and hence overpower our sorrows. Yes, in reality life tends to be both sweet and bitter, and on this we would not disagree, but why do we often focus on our calamities and sorrows, and as a result become depressed for days on end? Where an hour is enough to grieve over something, hours on end are spent grieving. Why?

I realize that sorrow and anguish enter our hearts without seeking permission, but for each door of sadness that opens there are a thousand means of shutting it, and these are what we will expound here.

Allow me to bring your attention to another matter: How often is it that we see those people who are loved by everyone? Many long to meet them and be in their company, but do you not wish to be one of them? Why be content at being amazed by such people all the time? Why not try to be amazing yourself?

Here we will learn how to be amazing

Why was it that when your cousin spoke at the gathering, everyone listened to him attentively? Why were they amazed at his manners of speech? Why was it that when you spoke, they all turned away and began to talk amongst themselves? Why was that? You may be more well-informed, better qualified and possess a higher status than him. How then did he manage to get all the attention and you failed?

Why it is that one father is dearly loved by his children who love to greet him and accompany him wherever he goes, while another father begs his children to accompany him while they keep making all kinds of excuses to avoid doing so?

Are they not both fathers? Then why the difference?

Here we will learn how to enjoy life, know the various techniques to attract people, influence them, persevere with their faults, deal with people with bad manners, and much, much more. So, welcome!

A word...

Success is not to discover what others like, it is to acquire and practice the skills that help one gain their love.

Why Do We Search For Skills?



I once visited a deprived town to deliver a lecture, after which there came to me a teacher from outside the town. He said, “I hope you can help us finance some students.”

I said, “Strange! Aren’t the schools government funded, and therefore free?”

He said, “Indeed they are, but we would like to fund their university education.”

I said, “Well, the universities are also government funded. They even offer student grants.”

He said, “Allow me to explain to you...”

“Go ahead”, I said.

He said, “Our students graduate from their secondary school with no less than 99%. They are so clever that if their intelligence was divided amongst the ummah, it would suffice! But when a student becomes determined to travel outside his town to study Medicine, Engineering, Islamic Law, Computer Science or anything else, his father prevents him from going, saying, ‘What you know is sufficient! Now, remain with me and be a shepherd!’”

I screamed impulsively, “Be a shepherd?!”

He said, “Yes, a shepherd!”

And indeed, the poor boy stays with his father and becomes a shepherd, whilst all his abilities are wasted. Years go by and he remains a shepherd. He may even get married and have children whom he may treat exactly as he was treated by his father. Hence, all his children also become shepherds!

I asked, “So what’s the solution?”

He said, “The solution is to convince the father to employ someone as a shepherd for a few hundred riyals, which we will pay, and allow his son to take full advantage of his skills and abilities. Of course, we will also continue to fund his son until he graduates.”

The teacher then lowered his head and said, “It is inexcusable that such skills and talents in people are wasted when they long to utilize them.”

I contemplated upon what he had said and realized that we cannot reach the pinnacle except by taking advantage of the abilities we have and acquiring those that we do not.

Yes, I would challenge anyone to find a successful person, be they successful in academia, preaching, lecturing, business, medicine, engineering, or influencing others; or be they successful in family life, such as a successful father with his children, or a successful wife with her husband; or be they successful in their social life, such as a person who is successful with his neighbors and colleagues – and I mean a truly successful person, not one who simply climbs upon others' shoulders! – I would challenge anyone to find me any such highly successful person who does not practice certain interpersonal skills through which he has been able to achieve such success, whether they realize it or not.

Some people may exercise such interpersonal skills instinctively, while others may have to learn them in order to be successful, and these latter people are the types of successful personalities whose lives we would like to study and whose methods we would closely seek to follow in order to discover how they were successful, and to find out whether or not we can take their route to success.

A while ago, I listened to an interview with one of the most affluent people in the world, Shaykh Sulayman al-Rajihi, and found him to be a mountain in terms of his manners and thoughts. This man owns billions, possesses immense real estate, has built hundreds of mosques, and has sponsored thousands of orphans. He is hugely successful. He spoke of his humble beginnings around fifty years ago, when he was a regular person who would only have enough money to feed himself for the day, and sometimes not even that. He mentioned that he would sometimes clean people's houses to feed himself and continue working at night at a shop or money exchange. He discussed how he was once at the bottom of the mountain, and how he continued to climb until he reached the summit.

I thought about the abilities and skills he possesses and realized that many of us are well capable of being like him, if Allah grants us the ability. If one learns these skills, exercises them, perseveres and remains steadfast, then yes, he can surely be like him.

Another reason for us to search for these skills is that some of us may have certain abilities, which we remain unaware of, or which nobody has assisted us in discovering, such as the skills of delivering a lecture, business acumen, or possessing general knowledge.

One may discover these skills on his own, through a teacher's or a work colleague's help, or even through a sincere brother, however few they may be! However, these skills may remain buried inside the person until his personality becomes as stale as anyone else's, and this is when we all lose out on another leader, lecturer or scholar, or perhaps a successful husband, or a caring father.

Here we will mention certain skills which we would like to remind you of if you already possess them, or which we would like to train you in if you don't. So come along!

A thought...

When you climb a mountain, look to the top and not to the rocks that surround you. Make sure of where you step as you climb, and do not leap in case you lose your footing.

Improve Yourself



You sit with someone who is twenty years old and notice that he has particular etiquettes, logic and thought. You then sit with him when he is thirty to discover that he is exactly the way he was ten years ago and has not improved at all. Yet, you sit with others and you feel that they are actually taking benefit from their lives. You discover that they improve themselves on a daily basis. In fact, not an hour passes except that they improve either religiously or otherwise. If you wish to ponder upon the different types of people with respect to self-improvement, then think about the following:

There are those who like to watch those satellite television channels that help their general knowledge and intelligence grow. They benefit from other people's experiences by watching constructive discussions, from which they learn the characteristics of debating and improve their language, understanding, and expertise in debate and persuasion.

Then there are those who cannot miss out on a series about a failed love story, or an emotional play, or a horror film, or films about useless fantasies with no link to reality at all.

Notice the difference between the two after five or ten years. Which of the two would have improved the most in his skills and ability to fathom information, gain general knowledge, have the power to convince others, or successfully be able to cope with diverse situations? No doubt the first person! You will find the mannerisms of the first person to be completely different. When he argues, he does so on the basis of legal references, facts and figures, while the second can only quote the words of actors and singers, so much so that one such person once said during a discussion, "Allah says: 'Strive, my servant, and I shall strive with you!'"

We informed him that this is not a verse from the Qur'an. His complexion changed and he fell silent. I then thought about the phrase and it occurred to me that it is an Egyptian idiom which was imprinted on his mind after watching a drama series!

Let's look at it from another angle – that of reading newspapers and magazines. How many people take an interest in reading beneficial news and information that helps them in developing their personality, improves their skills and increases their general knowledge? Yet, how many are those who cannot read except sports and entertainment news? This is true to such an extent that many newspapers compete with each other by increasing the sports and entertainment pages at the cost of other sections. The same can be said about our gatherings and the things in which we spend our time.

Hence, if you would like to be a head instead of a tail, then eagerly try to practice all skills, regardless of what they may be. 'Abdullah was an energetic person but lacking in certain skills. One day, he left his home to pray Dhuhur in the mosque. It was his zeal for the prayer and respect for his religion which brought him out to pray. He was walking fast in order to reach the mosque before the Iqamah was given.

On his way, he passed by a date palm tree on top of which there was a man in uniform, working on the tree. ‘Abdullah became surprised and thought, “Who is this man that does not care about the prayer! It is as if he didn’t even hear the Adhan, or doesn’t care about the Iqamah, which is about to go!”

He shouted in anger, “Get down and pray!”

The man responded coldly, “OK, OK...”

He said, again, “Hurry up and pray, you donkey!”

The man screamed, “You called me a donkey?!” He then took a branch of the tree and descended in order to hit him over the head with it! ‘Abdullah hid his face with his headscarf so the man wouldn’t recognize him and went on to the mosque. The man descended from the tree in anger, went to his house, prayed and rested for a while. He then returned to the tree to finish his job. Then ‘Asr time came and ‘Abdullah went to the mosque again. On his way he passed by the same tree and noticed the same man working. He decided to change his method altogether and said, ‘As-salamu ‘alaykum! How are you?”

The man replied, “Al-Hamdulillah, I am fine!”

He said, “Give me some good news. How are the dates this year?”

The man said, “Al-Hamdulillah.”

‘Abdullah said, “May Allah give you success and provision, make your life easy for you, and not deprive you of the reward for your work!”

The man was overjoyed at hearing this supplication and said ameen to the prayer.

‘Abdullah then said, “It seems that you are so preoccupied with work that perhaps you didn’t notice the Adhan for ‘Asr prayer. The Adhan has been called and the Iqamah is about to be given. Perhaps you should get down, relax a little and get ready for prayer. After the prayer you can get on with your work again. May Allah keep you healthy.”

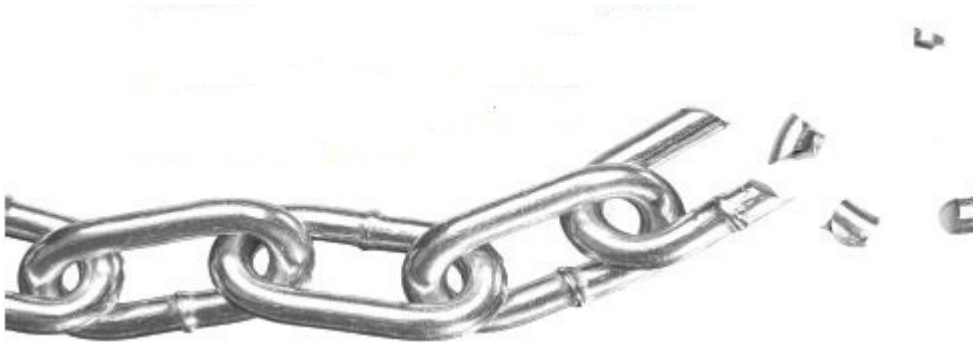
The man said, “InshaAllah... InshaAllah...” and began to descend gently.

He then turned to ‘Abdullah, shook his hand warmly and said, “I would like to thank you for your excellent manners. As for the one who passed by me at Dhuhr time, I wish I could see him and show him who the real donkey is!”

The result...

Your skills of dealing with others determine how they deal with you.

Changing In Attitude



Some people believe that the traits they have been nurtured on, which they are recognized by and which have left a certain impression about them on the minds of others can never be changed. They surrender to this thought, just as a person would surrender to the fact that he cannot change his height or skin color.

On the other hand, an intelligent person thinks that to change one's nature can perhaps be easier than changing his clothes. Our nature is not like spilt milk that cannot be scooped up again. Rather, we are always in control of it and there are certain ways in which we can alter it, and even the way we think!

Ibn Hazm mentions in his work *Tawq al-Hamamah* a tale of a famous Spanish businessman: There was competition between him and four other businessmen and as a result, they disliked him. They were therefore determined to aggravate him. One morning, he left his house to go to his workplace, wearing a white shirt and turban. One of the four businessmen met him on the way. He greeted the Spanish businessman, looked at his turban and said, "How beautiful this yellow turban is!"

The businessman said, "Are you blind? This turban is white!"

He replied, "No, it is yellow! It is yellow, but it looks good."

The businessman left him and moved on until he met the second of them. He greeted him, then looked at his turban and said, "You look handsome today! Your clothes look fine! Especially this green turban!"

The businessman said, "Actually, the turban is white."

"No, it is green," he insisted.

He replied, "It is white! Go away from me!"

The businessman walked on, talking to himself, and every now and then looking at the flank of his turban to make sure that it was indeed white. He reached his shop and opened up the lock. Meanwhile, there came to him the third of the four businessmen and said, "How beautiful this morning is! And especially your clothes, they look fine! And your beautiful blue turban only adds to your good looks!"

The businessman looked at his turban to ascertain its color, then rubbed his eyes and said, "Dear brother! My turban is white!"

"No, it is blue. But the important thing is that it looks good, so don't worry!" the man said, and left, as the businessman began to yell after him saying, "The turban is white!" as he looked at his turban to ascertain its color once again.

He sat in his shop for a while and couldn't take his eyes off his turban. Meanwhile, the fourth person came and said, "Greetings! MashaAllah! From where did you buy this red turban?"

The businessman shouted, "My turban is blue!"

He replied, "No, it is red."

The businessman said, "No, it is green! Actually, no, it is white! No, it is blue, or black!" He then laughed out loud, then screamed, then began to cry and then started to jump up and down!

Ibn Hazm said, 'Thereafter, I would see him in the streets of Spain. He had gone mad and children would pelt stones at him.'

If these four people, by using their skills, were able to change not only the nature of the person but also his mind, then how about the tried and tested skills that are supported by revelation which a person can put into practice in order to become closer to Allah?

Put into practice whatever good skills you come across and you will be happy.

If you say to me, "I cannot."

I would say to you, "At least try!"

If you say to me, "I don't know how."

I would say, "Yes, you do!"

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Knowledge is only gained through learning, and clemency is only gained through perseverance."

A point of view...

The hero is the one who goes beyond his ability to improve his skills, until he becomes able to improve, and perhaps even alter, the skills of others.

Be Unique



Why is it that some people's discussions end in argument while others may discuss the same subject and end their discussion in a friendly manner? It has everything to do with the skills of holding a discussion.

Why is it that when two people deliver the same sermon with the same words, you find that among the audience of the first person someone is yawning or sleeping, another is playing with a prayer mat, and others are repeatedly shifting, whilst the audience listening to the second are listening attentively to the sermon, such that they cannot even blink an eyelid nor of what is being said? It has everything to do with oratory skills.

Why is it when so-and-so speaks in a gathering, everyone listens to him attentively and focuses on him, whereas when someone else speaks, they began to talk about other side issues and start reading their text messages? It has everything to do with the skills of verbal communication.

Why is it when one school teacher walks through the corridor, all the students gather around him? One shaking his hand, another asking his advice, and yet another one complaining about a problem; if he were to sit in his office and allow the students to enter, it would be filled with students in seconds as everyone wishes to sit with him. Yet, another teacher walks through the corridor by himself and leaves the school's mosque and he is alone. No student approaches him to shake his hand, or to complain about a problem. If he were to leave his office open from sunrise to sunset, no one would ever come to it as nobody seems to like to be in his company.

Why?

It has everything to do with interpersonal skills.

One person enters a public gathering and everyone smiles at his face and feels joy at meeting him; everyone wishes to sit next to him. However, another person walks in and gets cold handshakes, either out of custom or kindness. He then looks for a place to sit but cannot find a person who gives him any space or calls him to sit next to him.

Why?

It has everything to do with the techniques of attracting and influencing others.

Why is it that a father enters his house and his children smile at him with joy, whereas another comes to see his children but they do not even turn to acknowledge his presence? It is all to do with the skills of dealing with children. You can say the same about the mosque, wedding parties and so on.

People differ in varying degrees from each other in terms of their interpersonal skills, and, accordingly, the way they are treated by others also differs to varying degrees. Influencing people and earning their love is easier than one can imagine. I am not exaggerating when I say this, since I have tried these skills a number of times and found that it is very easy to capture people's hearts, if indeed we are serious about interpersonal skills and training ourselves in them.

People are affected by the way we deal with them whether we realize it or not. For thirteen years, I have been an Imam at a military college. On my way to the mosque, I pass by a gate that is watched by a guard.

When I pass by the guard, I am always eager to smile at him and signal with my hand by way of giving my salams to him. After the Salah, I get in my car and make my way home. Usually, whilst I am doing my Salah in the mosque, I receive a number of next rebadged and missed calls, on my cell phone. When I pass by the gate on my way back from the salah, I am preoccupied with ???the message, so I forgot to smile at him.

Until, one day I was surprised when he stopped me and said, "Dear Shaykh, are you upset with me?"

"Why would I be?" I asked.



He said, "When you enter I noticed that you smile and you seem very happy. But when you leave, you neither smile nor seem pleased."

The man was very sincere, so he began to swear how much he loved and respected me, and how joyful he was upon seeing me. I apologized to him and explained to him the reason for my behavior.

I then realized that when we get used to such skills, they become part of our nature, and others certainly notice when we negligently fail to practice them.

Enlightenment...

Do not earn wealth and lose people, for earning people is a way to earning wealth.

Who Is The Most Beloved To You?



You will become the most proficient in using the various skills in dealing with others when you treat everyone in such a way that he thinks of himself as the most beloved of all people to yourself. For instance, you should treat your mother so grandly that she begins to think you have never treated anyone in such a fine manner.

You can say the same about the way you should deal with your father, your wife, your children, and your colleagues. In fact, you can say the same about someone you meet only once, such as a shopkeeper, or a petrol station attendant. You could get all these people to agree that you are the most beloved of all to them, if only you can make them feel that they are the most beloved of all to you!

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was an expert in this.

Whoever reads about the life of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) will find that he would deal with everyone in an excellent manner. Whoever he met, he would be very welcoming and cheerful, such that the person would think that he was the most beloved of all to him, and therefore, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would also become the most beloved of all to that person.

The shrewdest of the Arabs were four, and ‘Amr bin al-‘Aas (May Allah be pleased with him) was deemed one of them due to his wisdom, sharpness and intelligence. When ‘Amr embraced Islam, he was the leader amongst his people, and whenever he met the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), he would always find him very warm and cheerful. Whenever he entered a gathering where the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was sitting, he would be warmly welcomed. When the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would call him, he would use the names that were most beloved to him.

By experiencing such excellent treatment, he felt certain that he was the most beloved of all to the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). One day, he decided to confirm his feelings, so he approached the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and sat next to him.

He said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, who is the most beloved to you?’

He said, “A’ishah.”

‘Amr (May Allah be pleased with him) said, “No. I mean, from the men, O Messenger of Allah. I do not mean from amongst your family.”

He said, “Her father.”

‘Amr said, “And then?”

He said, “Umar bin al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him).”

‘Amr said, “And then?”

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then began to mention a number of people saying, “So-and-so and so-and-so...” in accordance with how early they had embraced Islam and the sacrifices they had made.

‘Amr then said, “I then remained silent, fearing that he may rank me last!”

Notice how the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) managed to capture ‘Amr’s heart by exercising his outstanding skills. In fact, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would rank people according to their worth. Sometimes, he would even leave what he was doing to tend to other’s needs, just to make them feel that they were loved and held in high regard.

When the Prophet’s influence extended after his conquests and Islam had spread far and wide, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) began sending preachers to various tribes to call them to Islam. Sometimes he even had to send armies. ‘Adi bin Hatim al-Ta’i was a king and the son of a king. When the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sent an army to the Tai’ tribe, ‘Adi ran away from the battle and took refuge in Syria. When the Muslim army reached Tai’ they found it easy to defeat them as they had neither a king nor an organized army. The Muslims would always treat people kindly in wars and respect their emotions, even during battle. The purpose of the battle was to prevent the plots of ‘Adi’s people against the Muslims and to display to them the Muslims’ strength. The Muslims captured some people from ‘Adi’s tribe, amongst whom was ‘Adi’s sister. They took the captives to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in Madinah and informed him about ‘Adi’s escape to Syria. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was surprised, thinking how could he have run away from the true religion? How could he have left his people behind?

However, there was no way for the Muslims to contact ‘Adi. ‘Adi himself did not enjoy his stay in Syria and was compelled to come back to the Arab lands. He then could not but help go to Madinah to meet with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and make peace with him, or to create some sort of understanding. (It is also claimed that his sister went to Syria to bring him back to the Arabs).

‘Adi said whilst relating his story, “None from the Arabs disliked the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as much as I did. I was a Christian and a king amongst my people. When I heard about the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), I despised him and left my people to go to Caesar of Rome. But I disliked staying there, too. So I thought that if I went to this man and he turned out to be a liar, then he wouldn’t be able to harm me, and if he was truthful, then I would know. So I decided to go to him...”

“When I arrived in Madinah, the people began to say, ‘This is ‘Adi bin Hatim! This is ‘Adi bin Hatim!’ I continued to walk until I reached the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) who said to me: “‘Adi bin Hatim?”

I said: ‘Adi bin Hatim’.” The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) became overjoyed by his arrival and welcomed him, even though ‘Adi had previously fought against the Muslims, ran away from the battle, despised Islam and sought refuge amongst the Christians. Despite all of that the Prophet

(Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) met him with a smile and took him by his hand to his house. As ‘Adi walked alongside the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), he considered him to be completely equal to himself, since Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was the ruler of Madinah and its outskirts while ‘Adi was the ruler over the Ta’i mountains and its outskirts. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was a follower of a heavenly religion – Islam, just as ‘Adi was a follower of a heavenly religion – Christianity. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had a revealed scripture – the Qur’an, just as ‘Adi had a revealed scripture - the Gospel. ‘Adi thought that there was no difference between the two except in terms of power and military might.



While they were on their way, three things happened. As they were walking, a woman came and began to shout in the middle of their path, “O Messenger of Allah! I need your help!” The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) left ‘Adi’s hand and went to the woman to listen to what she had to say. ‘Adi bin Hatim –who had witnessed many kings and leaders - as he watched this happen, began to compare this with what he knew of the actions of kings and ministers. He thought for a while, until it occurred to him that these mannerisms were not that of kings, but rather of the Prophets!

When the woman’s need was fulfilled, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) came back to ‘Adi and they both continued to walk, and as they did, a man came to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). What did he say? Did he say, “O Messenger of Allah! I have surplus wealth and am looking to give some to a poor person?” Did he say, “I harvested my crops and I have some extra fruit. What shall I do with it?” If only he were to have asked such questions so that ‘Adi would have felt that the Muslims had wealth.

Instead, the man said, “O Messenger of Allah! I complain to you about hunger and poverty.” The man was unable to find anything with which to abate his and his children’s hunger, whilst the Muslims around him could barely get by, and hence, were unable to help him.

‘Adi was listening as the man asked the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) his question. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then responded to him, after which he left. When they continued to walk, there came another man who said, “O Messenger of Allah! I complain to you about highway robbers!” Meaning, “O Messenger of Allah! We have numerous enemies surrounding us and therefore cannot safely leave the walls of our city due to the disbelievers and thieves.” The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) responded to him with a few words and continued. ‘Adi began to think about what he had seen. He himself was honored by his people, and he didn’t have any enemies waiting to attack him. Why then were so many people accepting this religion whilst they were weak and poor?

They both reached the Prophet's house and entered. Inside there was only one couch available so the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gave it to 'Adi in his honor, saying, "Take this to sit on." 'Adi gave it back to him and said, "Rather, you should sit on it." The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Rather, you should sit on it." 'Adi then did as he was told.

Then the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) began to break down all the barriers that existed between 'Adi and Islam. He said, "O 'Adi, accept Islam and you will be safe."

'Adi said, "I already have a religion."

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I know more about your religion than you do."

He said, "You know more about my religion than I do?"

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Yes! Are you not from the Rukusiyya?"

Rukusiyya was a subsect within Christianity with elements of Zoroastrianism. It was because of his skills of persuasion that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not ask, "Are you a Christian?" Rather, he circumvented this fact and mentioned something more particular, i.e. the subject of Christianity which he belonged to.

This is just as if you were to meet someone in a European country who said to you, "Why don't you become a Christian?"

And you were to say to him, "I already have a religion."

And he didn't reply with, "Are you a Muslim?" or even, "Are you a Sunni?" But rather, with, "Are you a Shafi'i or a Hanbali?" You would then realize that he knows much about your religion.

This is exactly what the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did with 'Adi by asking, "Are you not from the Rukusiyya?"

"Indeed, I am," replied 'Adi.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "When you go to war, do you not share one quarter of your people's gains?"

He said, "Yes, I do."

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "This is not allowed in your religion."

"Adi admitted in embarrassment, "Yes."

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "I know what is preventing you from accepting Islam. You think that the only people to follow this man (i.e., himself) are the oppressed people who have no strength: the Arabs have discarded them. O 'Adi! Have you heard of al-Hira (a city in Iraq)?"

'Adi said, "I haven't seen it but I have heard of it."

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “I swear by the One who has my soul in His Hand, Allah will complete this affair, until a woman travels from al-Hira to make Tawaf around the Ka’bah, without fearing anyone.” Meaning: Islam will one day become so strong that a woman would be able to travel from al-Hira to Makkah without a male guardian and without any need for protection. She would pass by hundreds of tribes and no one would dare to harm her or take her wealth. This is because the Muslims will become so strong that no one would dare to trouble a Muslim from fear of other Muslims rushing to his or her help.

When ‘Adi heard this, he began to picture this in his mind – a woman leaving ‘Iraq and reaching Makkah, i.e. approaching from the north of the peninsula, and passing by the Ta’i mountains where his people reside.

‘Adi became amazed and said to himself, “What will the bandits do who terrorize us and the rest of our cities?!”

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “You will seize the treasures of Kisra bin Hurmuz.”

He said, “The treasures of Ibn Hurmuz?”



Yes, “Kisra bin Hurmuz, and you will spend it all in the path of Allah. If you live long, you would see a man offering a handful of gold or silver to others but none will accept it.” Meaning: wealth will be so plentiful that a rich man will look for someone to accept his charity but will not be able to find a poor person to give it to.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then admonished ‘Adi and reminded him of the Hereafter. He said, “One of you shall meet Allah on the Last Day without anyone to translate the dialogue between you and Allah. He will look to his right and not see anything except Hell. He will then look to his left and not see anything except Hell.”

‘Adi remained silent and began to think. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) abruptly said, “O ‘Adi! What is preventing you from saying: There is none worthy of worship but Allah? Do you know of a god greater than Him?”

‘Adi said, “In that case, I am a monotheist Muslim; I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Servant and the Messenger of Allah!”

The Prophet’s face became overjoyed.

‘Adi bin Hatim (May Allah be pleased with him) later said, “I have seen a woman riding a camel travelling from Al-Hira till it made Tawaf around Ka‘bah fearing none but Allâh, I have also been one of those who opened the treasures of Kisra bin Hurmuz. I swear by the One who has my soul in His Hand, the third prophecy will also be fulfilled, since Allah’s Messenger has said so!” (Muslim and Ahmad)

Contemplate the way the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) dealt with ‘Adi, how he welcomed him, something which ‘Adi no doubt felt. Think how all of his fine manners contributed to ‘Adi accepting Islam. If we were to practice these skills with people, we would also successfully capture their hearts.

A thought...

With gentleness and interpersonal skills, we can achieve our objectives.

Enjoy The Skills



These skills give us physical pleasure, and I do not mean by this the pleasure of the Hereafter only. Rather, it is that pleasure one actually feels in this world. So enjoy these skills and practice them with the old, young, rich, poor, near or far. Use these skills with them in order to guard yourself from their harm, to earn their love, or to rectify them.

‘Ali bin al-Jahm was a very eloquent poet, but he was a Bedouin. The only life he knew was the desert life. The Caliph, al-Mutawakkil, was very powerful. People would go to visit him and return with whatever they wished. One day, ‘Ali bin al-Jahm entered Baghdad and it was said to him, “Whoever praises the Caliph is bestowed with honor and gifts.”

‘Ali became excited and went to the Caliph’s palace. There he saw the poets reciting their poems in praise of the Caliph and returning with gifts. Al-Mutawakkil was known for his authority, awe and power. ‘Ali began to praise the Caliph with a poem in which he likened him to a dog, a goat and a bucket, whilst other poets likened him to the sun, the moon and the mountains!

The Caliph became angry, and his guards unsheathed their swords and prepared to strike off his neck. But then, the Caliph realized that ‘Ali bin al-Jahm was from the desert and that his personality and poetic taste was shaped accordingly. He decided to change his personality, so he ordered his men to house him in a section of the palace, be treated with kindness and be given all the available pleasures.

Al-Jahm tasted some of these bounties and sat on couches side by side with eloquent poets and authors for seven months. One day, as the Caliph was sitting in his nightly gathering, he remembered ‘Ali bin al-Jahm, so he sent for him. When al-Jahm finally came to him, he said, “Sing some verses to me, O ‘Ali bin al-Jahm!” Al-Jahm began to move emotions using soft and kind words, and likened the king to the sun, the stars and the sword.

Notice how the Caliph was able to change Ibn al-Jahm’s personality. How often have we been upset by the bad behavior of our children and friends? Did we ever try to change their nature successfully? Even more, you should be able to change your own personality by replacing a frowning face with a smiling one, replacing anger with forbearance, and miserliness with generosity. None of this is difficult, but it does require determination and persistence, so be brave!

Whoever reads the life of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) realizes that he would deal with people with these skills and capture their hearts. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would not simply pretend to have these skills in front of people and replace his forbearance with anger when being alone with his family. He was never one to be cheerful with some but sulky with his own family. He was never one to be generous with everyone except his own children and wives.

Rather, he always acted naturally. He would worship Allah by his fine manners just as he would worship Him by offering the Duha or night prayers. He would consider his smile to be a virtue, his gentleness an act of worship, and his forgiveness and leniency a good deed. The one who considers good manners to be acts of worship will always remain well-mannered, in war and peace, when he is hungry and when he is full, when healthy or ill, and even when happy or sad.

How many women only hear about the refined manners of their husbands, such as their patience, cheerfulness and generosity, but never witness any of these qualities at home? Such husbands, often when at home, are ill-mannered, impatient, sulky and constantly cursing.

As for the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), he said, “The best of you is the one who is best to his family. And I am the best of you to my family.” (al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, Sahih)

Now read how he would deal with his family: Al-Aswad bin Yazid said, “I asked ‘A’ishah – May Allah be pleased with her – how Allah’s Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would behave in his house. She said: ‘He would be serving his family, and when the time for prayer would come he would perform ablution and leave to pray.’”

The same can be said about parents. How often is it that we hear of the good manners that some display, such as generosity, cheerfulness and kind behavior towards others, and yet with the closest people to them who have the greatest rights over them, such as their parents, wives and children, they are distant and cold.

Yes, the best of you is the best to his family, to his parents, to his wife, to his servants, and even to his children. One night, as Abu Layla – May Allah be pleased with him – sat next to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), there came to him, either al-Hasan or al-Husayn, so the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) lifted him up and placed him on his stomach. The toddler then urinated on the Prophet’s stomach. Abu Layla said, “I saw the urine trickling down from the Prophet’s stomach. So we leapt up to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), but he said: ‘Leave my son alone. Do not scare him.’”

When the toddler had finished urinating, he called for some water and poured it over his stomach.’ (Ahmad and al-Tabarani, with trustworthy narrators)

How amazing was the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to train and adorn himself with such manners! No wonder he was able to win the hearts of the young and old.

Opinion...

Instead of cursing the darkness, try to fix the lamp.