

The



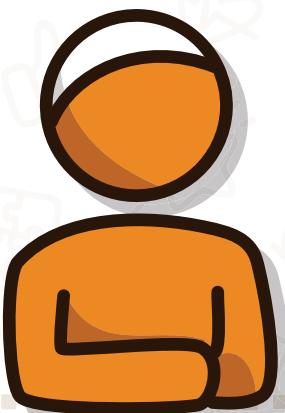
MANIFESTO

10 Essential Qualities Every Muslim Needs to Rebuild a Productive Ummah



The ProductiveMuslim manifesto is for every Muslim and Muslimah who:

- ✓ Strives to please Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'aala.
- ✓ Strives to follow the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam*.
- ✓ Strives to uphold their responsibility as *khulafa* (vicegerents) of the Earth.
- ✓ Feels helpless or frustrated with the plight of the *Ummah* worldwide and is looking for a productive way they can help.
- ✓ Wants to achieve a healthy and balanced life spiritually, physically, and socially, in accordance to the teachings of the Qur'an and the *sunnah*.
- ✓ Struggles with personal daily challenges of juggling work, studies, family life, social life, and their Muslims responsibilities.
- ✓ Wants to be part of the solution to rebuild a 'Productive Ummah' for the sake of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'aala.



Is this manifesto
right for me?

The world can change. It starts with you.

Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.

[Qur'an: Chapter 13, Verse 11]

Assalamualaikum brothers and sisters.

You are here because you have a seed in your heart waiting to sprout.

Within that seed there is a great potential – and with that – a great responsibility to fulfil your highest potential so that you can help the *Ummah*, take part in restoring truth and dignity in society, and uphold Islam for the sake of Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'aala*.

You are excited to plant this seed where you can be of benefit. Yet at the same time, you are crippled by fear and doubt. It almost feels like the precious seed inside of you does not have the nourishing support it needs to thrive.

Just by looking around, you see many challenges that go against the Muslim way of life. Our *Ummah* has plunged into a painful plight from poverty, war, terrorism and Islamophobia, to Muslims themselves who have gone astray due to ignorance or influence from the secular society that tends to be distanced from what pleases Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'aala*.

SubhanAllah. Things seem bleak. But YOU have a choice.

You can choose to simply accept the situation and become a passive observer watching from the sidelines as the *Ummah* plunges further into chaos; or you can

choose to take active steps, water that seed in your heart, and become productive participants in rebuilding this *Ummah*; person by person.

I know just by reading this report that you want to become a productive participant in rebuilding this *Ummah*, *ma sha Allah*!

I also know that you, like millions of other Muslims who share the same sincere intention, just don't know where to start. After all, you can barely manage your day-to-day responsibilities, so how are you possibly going to tackle the *Ummah*'s problems?

In sha Allah, the next few pages will be aimed at giving you the starting platform you need to become a ProductiveMuslim.

In this manifesto, you will find 10 essential qualities that every Muslim needs to develop within themselves so that they become a beneficial part of the solution that rebuilds this *Ummah*, *in sha Allah*.

Here's what you can expect in this manifesto:

The 10 Essential Qualities

You will learn 10 essential qualities needed to live a truly productive lifestyle for the sake of Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'aala* – spiritually, physically, and socially. As we introduce each essential quality,

we will explain why it is a pre-requisite to being a ProductiveMuslim, and how it is a starting point to rebuilding a 'Productive *Ummah*'.

Practical Holistic Productivity Tips

After each essential quality is explained, you will find actionable steps that you can implement right away to start developing that quality. The steps are small and easy, but do not underestimate its power! Just by following these steps, it will create an essential change that propels you towards a productive holistic lifestyle, which in turn can grow to become a foundational piece to rebuilding the *Ummah*, *in sha Allah*.

If you're excited to begin this change and are ready to put behind you the days of heedlessness and wastefulness, then you're ready to join us and millions of other brothers and sisters in the ProductiveMuslim movement.

Welcome. May Allah accept your deeds and make your path easy.

Sincerely,



Mohammed Faris, a.k.a. "Abu Productive"
Founder, ProductiveMuslim.com

Is this manifesto right for me?

The world can change. It starts with you.

Essential Quality #1

Essential Quality #2

Essential Quality #3

Essential Quality #4

Essential Quality #5

Essential Quality #6

Essential Quality #7

Essential Quality #8

Essential Quality #9

Essential Quality #10

The Ummah is waiting for you

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Acknowledgements & Contact

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essential
Quality #1

pursue —————
EVERYTHING
in life
with an —————
ACTIVE
intention

If you were to review your life today, will you describe it as an “Intentional Life” or a “Spontaneous Life”?

Knowing the distinction between a life of intention and a lifestyle where you simply go with the flow is important. It's the first step to becoming a ProductiveMuslim, and it requires you to rethink and reapply the concept of Intention more powerfully to your daily life.

What do I mean by an intentional life? Let me explain with an example.

Imagine two friends – Ahmed and Omar – who both started college around the same time. Ahmed was leading an intentional life. He planned and focused his time and effort on different areas of his life towards the betterment of his akhirah (hereafter) and dunya (this world).

Ahmed focused on his daily prayers, got involved in da'wah activities, focused on his studies, and stayed physically fit. At any point in time, Ahmed is focused and knows exactly what and why he's doing something. Even his rest, fun and social times are intentional. As a result he builds healthy and loving relationships with family, friends, and the community.

On the other hand, Omar is more of a “go with a flow” person. Although he attends his classes and does his homework, he's not too bothered to give it full focus. It's just something that he “has to do” and he does the bare minimum he needs to get by.

Omar might have one or two intentions related to getting good grades and finding the right job, but beyond that, he won't push himself too hard. He doesn't really bother taking care of his health either. His focus on his spiritual life is much the same; without much time and effort spent to strengthen his iman or get involved with the community.

Now which of the two lifestyles is more powerful? Which one do you think will lead to more success – in this world and the next?

It is, without doubt, an intentional life.

So what is an intentional life and how do you achieve it?

We tend to think of intention as the thought we have before we perform an act of worship or embark on a good deed or project. Yet, this is just the basic form of using intentions.

An intentional life goes beyond the basic form of intention, and leverages its true power to achieve excellence and high levels of productivity.

How do you leverage the true power of intentions?

Simply by thinking differently about the moments in your life and asking yourself better and higher-quality questions like:

“What's my intention now?”
“How am I serving Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'aala by doing this act?”
“Why do I want this/Why should I do this?”
“How can I benefit myself and others by this act?”
“How can I have a higher/better intention to boost my productivity?”

You might be thinking, “Well, I like the go with the flow attitude. I don't want to stress myself out with too much planning”. That's fine if you want to join Abu Unproductive :) !

Now that you're on this journey, I want you to reach your full potential and be more intentional about your life.

From this moment onwards, think differently about INTENTION and try to be more INTENTIONAL about your life. Be intentional about your work, your family, your deen, and your community. Have clear purpose, goals, and drive for each area of your life. Be conscious of your intentions and use the power of intentions to push yourself and lead a productive lifestyle.

pursue
EVERYTHING
in life
with an
ACTIVE
intention



Practical tips to get started:



Get an intentions journal

Buy any journal/notepad and call it your Intentions Journal.



Write your intentions

Write specific intentions such as, "I intend to complete memorising Surat Al-Mulk this month", as well as general intentions like, "I intend to choose positivity over being negative".



Review your intentions

Every week, go through your intentions and review them and see how you're applying them in your daily life, and if you're happy with them or need to revise them and update them.



#2

essential
Quality

seek SPIRITUAL
connectivity
& BARAKAH
in every moment

What is *barakah* and why is it important?

Have you ever had the sudden realisation that you're not as strong, smart, special, or amazing as you think you are?

I don't mean disrespect, but we all go through these realisations. It can come to us during times of trial and calamity, or it can dawn upon us during moments of sincere reflection.

These moments are humbling. Yet they can also be disempowering.

That's why, whenever such thoughts cross your mind, I want you to link it with another thought: "Yes, I may not be as strong, smart, special... but with Allah, I'm more powerful than I can imagine!"

Being consciously aware of Allah's presence and attributes in your life, and seeing the Power, Beauty, and Majesty of Allah all around you can truly help you lead a productive lifestyle.

This is because awareness of Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'aala* translates to constant remembrance of Him, obedience to His commands, and the realisation that you need to do more for Him.

Moreover, this conscious awareness of Allah in every moment develops spiritual connectivity to the Divine and invokes barakah in your life.

***Barakah* is the secret sauce of the ProductiveMuslim!**

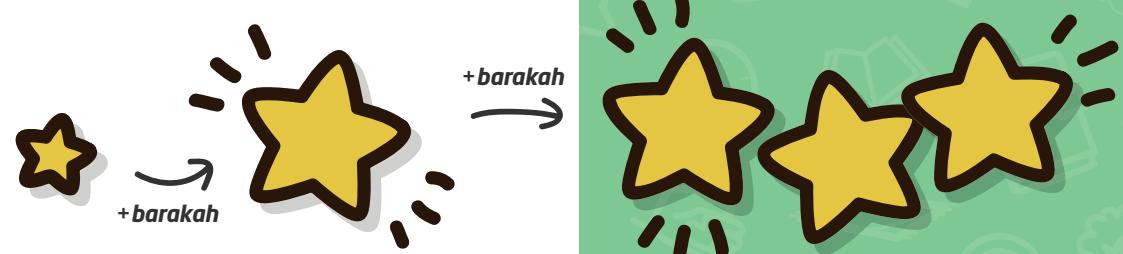
You can achieve so much more with *barakah* than without it.

In scholarly terms, *barakah* is the '*divine attachment to a thing that increases it or makes it beneficial*'.

For example, if there's *barakah* in your time, you can do more in an hour without feeling exhausted. If there's *barakah* in your sleep, you can sleep for just a few hours but feel refreshed and energetic when you wake up. If there's *barakah* in your money, you can do more with your money.

It really is the secret to a Muslim's productivity and it's a blessing available only to you – a Muslim who believes in Allah and His Messenger *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam*.

So...will you tap into this abundant source?



Practical tips to get started:



Learn

Read our article [18 Sources of Barakah](#) - to learn about how to increase *barakah* in your life.



Practice

Attempt to tap into at least THREE sources of *barakah* every single day and make them part of your daily habit.



Remind

Download and print the "18 sources of Barakah" [infographic](#) and place it in a prominent place as a daily reminder.





essential
Quality #3

fill your
HEART
WITH
abundant
POSITIVITY

Imagine a ZERO negativity life.

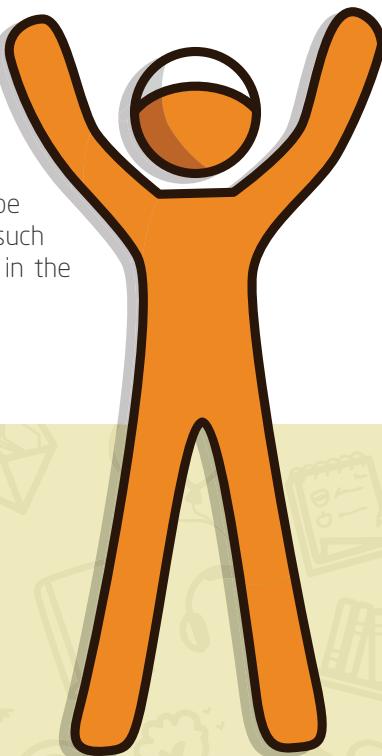
No complaints. No blaming. No excuses.

How will you feel? I bet you'll feel super positive!

This is exactly how Allah wants you to lead your life - no matter what the circumstances. He brought us Islam, which is an extremely POSITIVE religion and way of life. It doesn't dwell in sadness, depression, or negativity. It provides guidance to rise above adversity to become stronger and happier.

Just reading the verses of the Qur'an and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam* will instil positivity and excitement to live a fulfilling and productive life!

An example from the life of Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam* is when he was digging the trench in the Battle of the Trenches, whilst 10,000 men were marching towards his city. He was giving glad tidings to his companions that they'll be victorious in Yemen, Syria and Persia. This is such a powerful example of positivity from a man in the midst of being attacked!



Are you choosing a life of abundant positivity?

Be honest. How much negativity truly seeps into your life?

Maybe you are constantly complaining about yourself, your family, your neighbours, your community, and the *Ummah*. Maybe you always find reasons for why things don't go a certain way and how everything is somehow messed up.

Regardless of how small that morsel of negative thought is, it will have a big impact on your behaviour, productivity, results, and life.

This is why negativity is not the manners of a ProductiveMuslim!

A ProductiveMuslim is extremely positive. A ProductiveMuslim finds inspiration in the Qur'an and the *seerah* of Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam*, and so he or she recognises the seed of a negative thought and chooses to replace it with abundant positivity.

When you adopt the abundant positivity of a ProductiveMuslim, you will pursue a limitless life; seeking ways to become a positive force on Earth as Allah's *khalifah* and to fulfil His commands.

fill your HEART WITH abundant POSITIVITY



Practical tips to get started:



PRO TIP: Remember, going through difficulty is always easier when you seek spiritual connectivity and barakah, because with Allah, you are stronger than you can imagine!



PRO TIP: Got a friend on Facebook or Twitter whose updates are always negative or bring you down? Block them! Unfollow them! If there is no benefit in what they are sharing and it only ruins your mood or day, you don't need it.



When you have a negative thought, STOP IT!
Think about how can you make it positive.

When faced with a difficult situation, ask yourself, 'Can I do something about it?' If the answer is 'no', then accept it with patience and don't complain. If the answer is 'yes', pick yourself up, don't complain, and do what you need to do make the change happen.

Surround yourself with positive people who'll push you to achieve positive results. Turn a deaf ear to the negativity around you.

Stop being addicted to the NEWS! It's filled with negativity on how the world is all doom and gloom. Whenever you read something saddening, think about a positive action you can take to help change the world into a more powerful and positive place. Be very selective about what you allow into your life and sphere of consciousness.



essential
Quality #4

PLAN *your*
.....
day,
week,
month,
life
in detail! !

One of the powers of the human imagination is his/her ability to plan; to imagine what steps he/she can do in the future in order to achieve higher goals.

This power is immensely useful and – when used correctly – can be the key to one's success in *dunya* and *akhirah*.

As a ProductiveMuslim, you need to be on top of your planning and self-organisation. Your days, weeks, months, and years should be thought through and planned in detail.

You plan whilst admitting that everything is in Allah's command and nothing would happen without His permission. Yet instead of just sitting back and letting life plan for you, you actively plan for yourself.

One might argue, "*Where's the spontaneity? I like to see where life takes me and I don't want to be rigid in my life*".

This is the point; planning doesn't mean you lead a rigid life.

It means you develop structures within your life through which to develop yourself further.

It's precisely this planning that leads you to experience spontaneity; because if you didn't plan, you'll simply be sitting back, watching TV, stumbling through life, and have no time to actively pursue what's beneficial for you in *dunya* and *akhirah*.

Another argument I often hear is, "*What about people around me?! I can't plan for them too! I'll be a control freak!*"

Here I argue that planning is not the same as controlling. Planning means you have in mind what needs to be done by when. Of course you should discuss the relevant plans with your family, co-workers, boss, and community and not force your ideas upon those around you. But nevertheless, it's no excuse for not planning.

In fact, you'll soon find those around you turn to you for advice on what to do next or what the plans are for the day, week, and months ahead, because they know that you're a good planner.



What should I plan for?

That's a good question.

There are four levels of planning that I recommend:



FOR EXAMPLE: Perhaps you'd want to develop a routine of reading 20 pages of a beneficial book before you sleep, or a routine of praying with each night. Unless you plan for it and think of it as a 1-month (30-day) challenge, such habits/routines will rarely get established.



FOR EXAMPLE: Someone might plan to memorise the Qur'an over a period of 5 years. He plans for it, signs up at a Qur'an school, and does his best to memorise. But halfway through, he passes away. Those who are anti-life planning would say:

You see! We told you! No point in planning, he was going to die and never achieve his goal.

But I argue:

Because he planned, he set himself the intention that might be rewarded by Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'aala even though he didn't achieve his goal.

Daily Planning

This is where you sit at the beginning of each day and plan your day hour by hour. Ensure that you complete at least three M.I.T.s (Most Important Tasks) and that you balance between your spiritual, work, home, and personal commitments in that one day.



TIME TO SPEND: 15-30 minutes

Weekly Planning

At the end of each week, perform what is known as the "Weekly Review"; look back at your previous week and see what you were able to achieve. Then, look ahead to the new week and decide what you'd like to achieve. Have clear projects in mind that you'd like to tackle in the coming week and identify M.I.T.s that will move you forward in your projects.



TIME TO SPEND: 30-45 minutes

Monthly Planning

It can be quite difficult to plan for a whole month. Here, I recommend planning:
Major events happening in the next month (e.g. travel, big projects) & **Habits or routines you want to achieve in the next month**

The latter is often neglected but can be quite powerful in moving you ahead with your life.

Life Planning

This is where I tend to lose people. Everyone agrees with me when it comes to daily, weekly, and monthly planning. However, as soon as I say "Life Planning", I hear two types of resistance:

How can I plan for my whole life, it's too daunting!

How can I plan for my whole life, this is up to Allah!

Here's the key factor: life planning is not a definitive plan for your life, but an opportunity to explore and imagine what your life can become if you plan for it.

Planning is a powerful tool of the human imagination that cannot be underestimated. Start planning today.

Practical tips to get started:

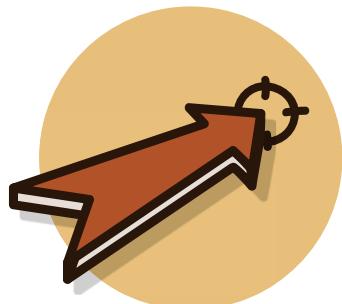


Download the ProductiveMuslim worksheets and start planning! There are 4 worksheets to consider:

- ✓ [**The Daily Taskinator**](#) to help you plan your days and ensure that you don't miss an important task in the four spheres of your life (Islam, Family, Work, Personal)
- ✓ [**The Weekly Taskinator**](#) to help you plan your week and know what big project you'll work on each day of the week.
- ✓ [**The Monthly Habitator**](#) to help you start good habits and stop destructive ones within 30 days.
- ✓ [**The Ultimate ProductiveMuslim Goal Planner**](#) to help you plan your life and link your goals to the *akhirah*.



Review your plans daily, weekly, monthly, annually, and stay flexible.



Follow through your plans and don't just let them sit there and collect dust.





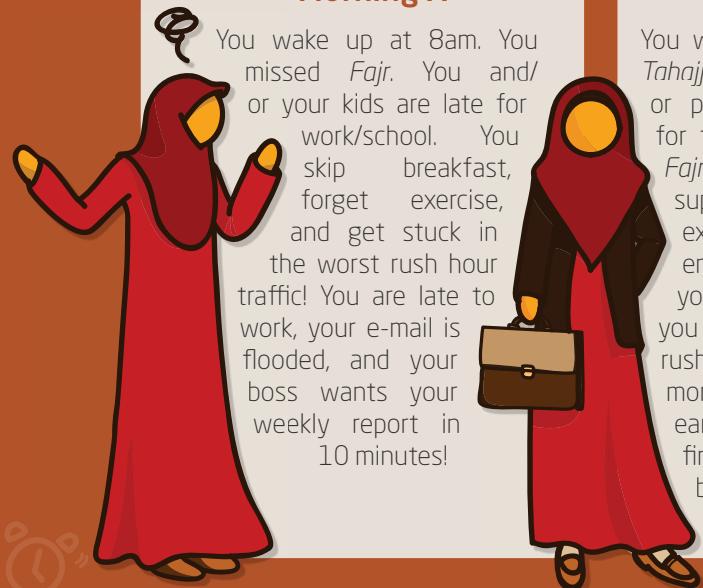
essential

Quality #5

rise
EARLY &
seize
the
BARAKAH

Which of these two mornings sound better?

Morning A



You wake up at 8am. You missed *Fajr*. You and/or your kids are late for work/school. You skip breakfast, forget exercise, and get stuck in the worst rush hour traffic! You are late to work, your e-mail is flooded, and your boss wants your weekly report in 10 minutes!

Morning B

You wake up at 4.30am. You pray *Tahajjud* and then read a good book or plan your day while waiting for the *Fajr* prayer. After praying *Fajr*, you recite the morning supplications, read the Qur'an, exercise and shower. Then you enjoy a relaxed breakfast with your spouse and children before you head off early, beating the rush hour traffic and enjoying the morning commute. You reach work early, plan your work day, and finish your most important tasks before checking your e-mail and meeting people.

Slight difference, huh? ;)

The two scenarios illustrate the difference between a successful person and an unsuccessful person.

There's something powerful in early rising and making the most of the early hours before the day starts.

Perhaps the secret is in the hadith of Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam*, which says "The early hours are blessed for my nation".

It's *barakah* again!

Barakah is the secret sauce of a ProductiveMuslim that I mentioned earlier. Early rising is a huge source of *barakah*.

If you want to become a ProductiveMuslim, I highly recommend that you join this early morning club. It is an exclusive club for those who want to be successful and never want to be rushed in the mornings again.

The club has three basic rules:

Rule #1

You must wake up BEFORE *Fajr*. Every. Single. Day.

(Ladies, even on days you're not praying.)

Rule #2

You must stay awake AFTER *Fajr* until sunrise at least.

(Yes, ladies, even on days you're not praying.)

Rule #3

You should have a clearly-defined plan of what you will do, from when you wake up before *Fajr* until sunrise and beyond. We'll call this the "Morning Routine".

Do you think it's not practical? Do you believe it's impossible for you to join this club, and still be active and productive for the rest of the day?

Allow me to invite you to join my course, "[The ProductiveMuslim Guide to NEVER MISS FAJR Again](#)". It's available at [ProductiveMuslim Academy](#), and you'll learn practical tips to join the early rising club and plan a powerful and productive morning routine.



rise
EARLY &
seize the
BARAKAH

Practical tips to get started:



Join the course: "[The ProductiveMuslim Guide to NEVER MISS FAJR Again](#)" at [ProductiveMuslim Academy](#).



Read the following three articles articles on waking up for *Fajr*, which are extremely practical and apply to all time zones:

- ✓ [How to Wake up for *Fajr*](#)
- ✓ [7 Tips on How to Stay Up after *Fajr*](#)
- ✓ [How I Consistently Wake Up \(By Allah's Permission\)](#)
[45 Minutes Before *Fajr Adhan*](#)



Sign up to the early morning club and invite your family and friends to join you too and watch how all of your productivity soars!



essential
Quality #6

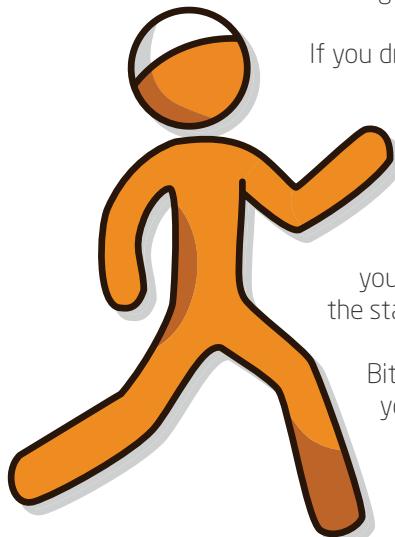
AIM for
physical
vitality

I hate it when I feel sluggish, inactive, and basically a couch potato. And I love it when I feel lively, physically active, strong and healthy.

Over the years, I've learnt that those positive/negative conditions don't come by themselves. They are directly related to my eating habits and activity levels. There are no easy answers.

I'm not going to give you a lecture about the importance of skipping the greasy burgers, crispy fried samosas, or sugar-loaded soda. Nor will I give you a sermon on the virtues of exercise and living an active life.

But if you're seriously committed to becoming a ProductiveMuslim, you'll need all the help you can get from your body.



Taking care of your machine

Our bodies are powerful machines that need to be maintained well in order to function at the optimum level.

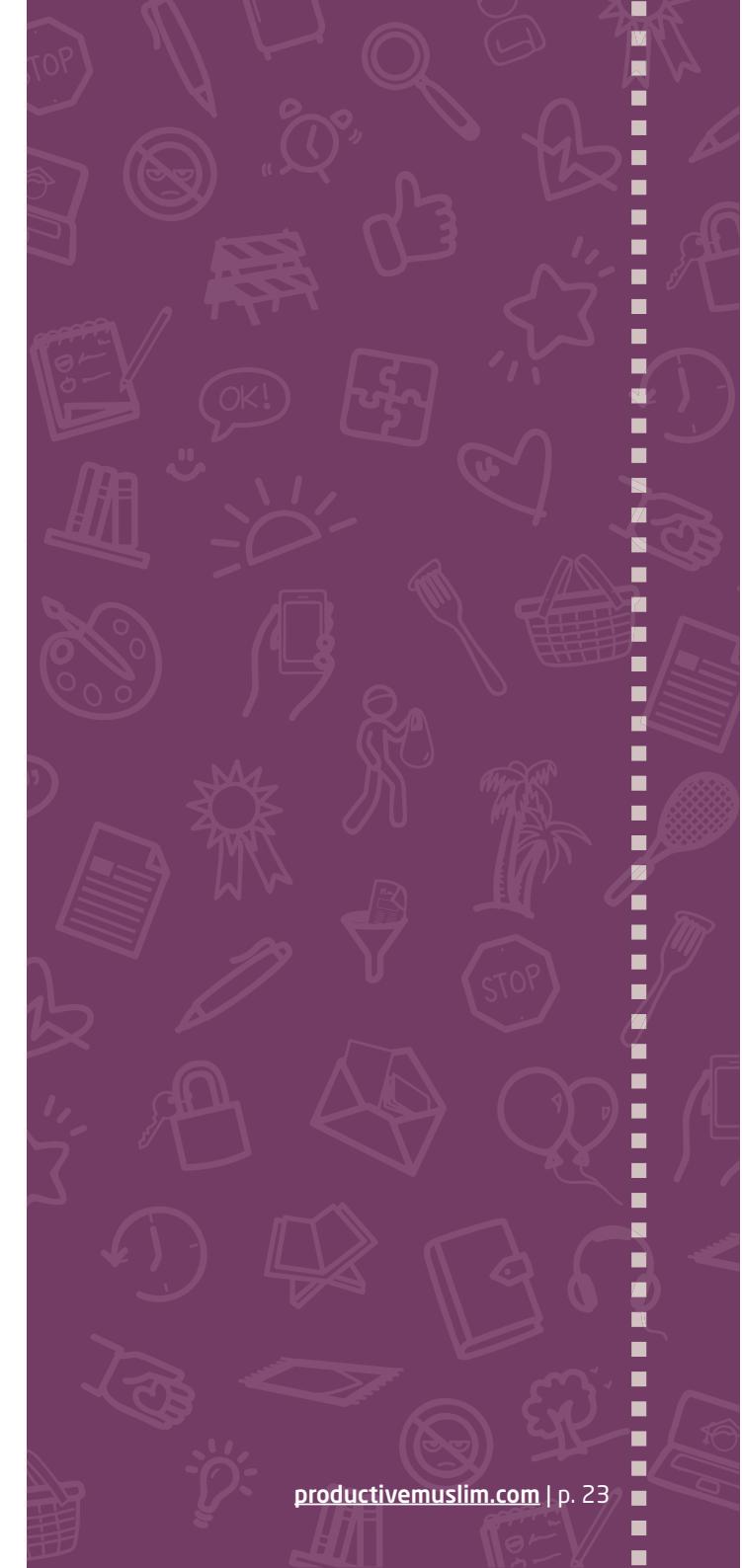
The better we maintain them by fuelling them with the right energies and exercise, the better they function to give us amazing results.

Have you noticed how top successful CEOs are normally in such good shape? Do you think that's just a coincidence?

These CEOs know that in order to function at an optimal performance, manage billions of dollars, and lead a global workforce, they must eat well and stay fit.

If you dread a drastic change; I have some good news: don't make a drastic change immediately. I don't expect you to skip unhealthy meals and hit the gym from tomorrow. But promise me one thing: Each week, you'll make one small change to your diet and to your active lifestyle. For example, this week you'll stop having desserts after dinner and take the stairs instead of the elevator. Do-able? Great!

Bit by bit, you'll get there and you'll enjoy what your new active body gives you.



Practical tips to get started:



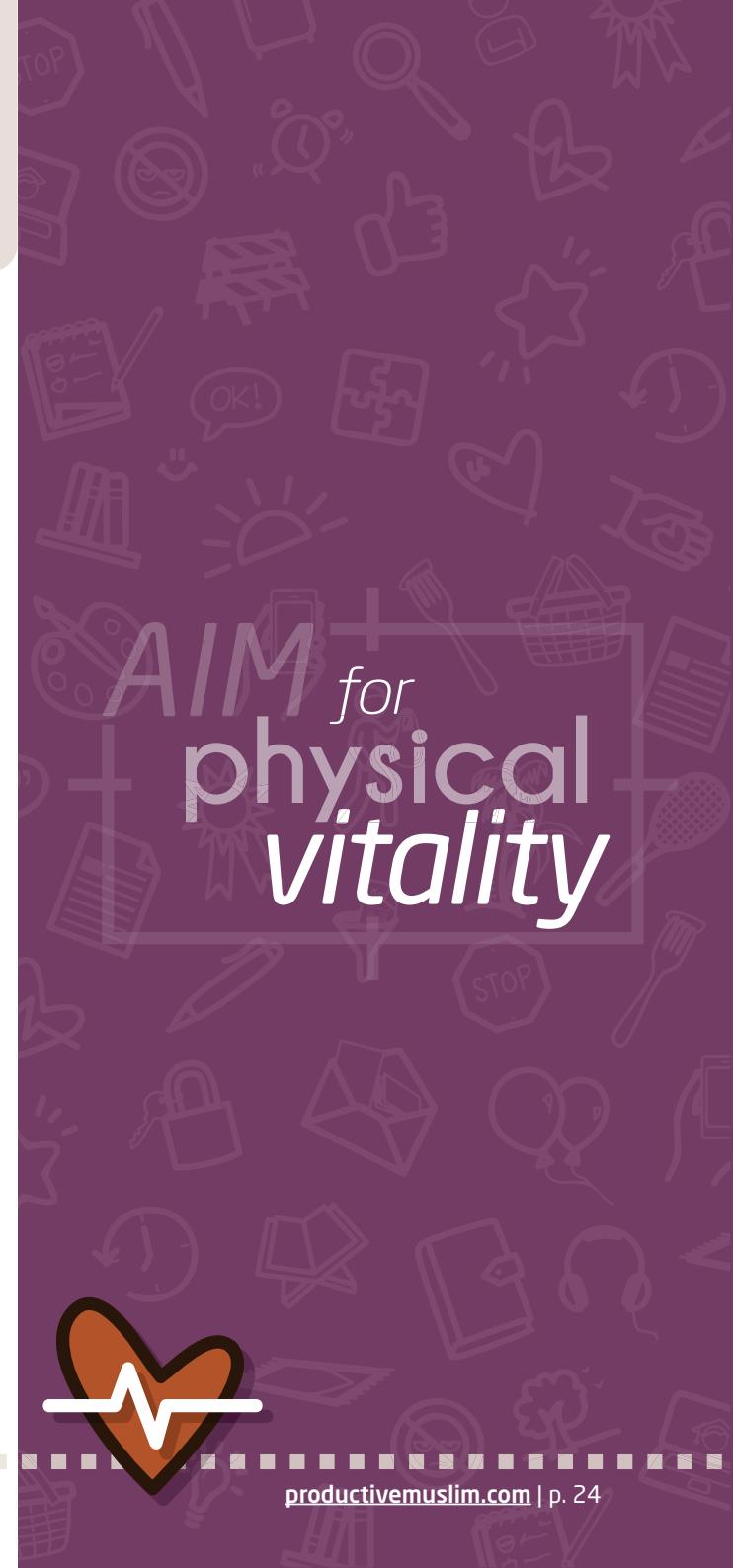
Keep a food diary of what you eat each day and think carefully about the impact this food has on your physical vitality.



Make small changes to your diet/exercise level each week as advised above.



You don't have to join a gym to exercise; as long as you move more than usual, that's a good start. Incorporate an active lifestyle as much as possible by playing sports with your co-workers, or playing with your kids in the park each day, etc.





essential
Quality #7

pursue
HOLISTIC
learning
for a
HOLISTIC
life

Imagine the time before the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam.*

For 500 years, the heavens were quiet. No new revelation came down to mankind. The last scriptures - the Torah and Bible - have lost their authenticity and mankind plunged into darkness.

Then Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam* is born, and the anticipation of the new Prophet is increasing through signs that appear to learned people in the Arabian lands. When he *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam* reaches 40 years of age, the first revelation descends in cave Hiraa, in the Mountain of Light.

After 500 years, what do you think would be the first commandment that Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'aala* would reveal to humanity? What would be His first teaching? You know it. It is "iqra" (read).

Iqra... read!

We could write pages about the beauty and power of this choice of word.

First, let's not confuse "iqra" (read) with simply "reading", which is the act of comprehending words on paper. Iqra refers to a wider understanding of "reading".

It encompasses reading the signs of our Lord in His heavens and Earth; reading and understanding His Creations and learning what benefits or harms them; reading and understanding mankind and how to live in a better society.

Iqra is not simply about going to school and getting degrees and PhDs. It's holistic learning for a holistic life. It's learning to understand, to increase our expertise, to grow and think, and to reach higher levels of awareness and knowledge.

A friend of mine once told me, "If you face any challenge in your life, I assure you, someone, somewhere wrote a book about it". This was an eye-opening understanding for me. You don't have to face challenges alone. You don't have to be stuck or feel you're not sure what to do. There's a book out there waiting for you to read it and learn from it that can help you move forward in your life. And isn't this what life is all about? Learning and moving forward and not getting stuck.

Each night, before you sleep, ask yourself: "What did I learn today?" (whether from a book, or a person, or any other medium). Don't sleep when you haven't obeyed your Lord when He said to you, "Iqra".



pursue

HOLISTIC

learning

for a
HOLISTIC

life



Practical tips to get started:



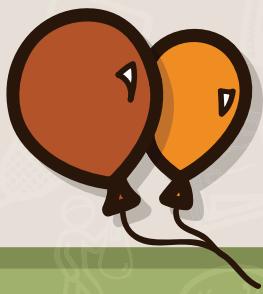
Read. Read. Read. I cannot emphasise this enough. Set a target to read one or two books a month. Read about your deen and how best to worship Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'aala* especially in relevant situations. For example, if you're about to get married, read Islamic books on marriage. If you're about to pay *zakat*, read about *zakat*. Read non-fiction. Read books on issues you're facing difficulties with (choosing a career, improving relationships, how to parent, etc.). If you want *halal* entertainment, then read stories or fiction books that have a good moral message and strong values.



Listen. Listen. Listen. Listen to audio books. This is a great way to finish more than one book each month. You can get a great set of audio books from [Audible.com](https://www.audible.com). Listen to your mentors, teachers, wise men/women who have a lot of knowledge and experience to share with you. Listen to Islamic lectures of prominent scholars online and benefit from them.

Think and take note. Don't be a passive learner who simply reads or listens to whatever comes your way without processing that information. Think about what you're reading or listening. Think about how it applies to your daily life, how you can take action with it, and how you can share it with others. Take note of these important key learnings and record them in your journal for future reference.

Read the wider signs of Allah's creations. Reflect on His Power and Majesty through the creatures He created for us. Observe the sunrise and its beauty and how everything wakes up with its arrival. Observe the moon and its changing of shape and position over the nights. Take a closer look at the flowers and trees around you. Admire the beautiful and delicious fruits in the markets and how they are beautifully packaged. Always be reflecting and 'reading' Allah's signs.



essential Quality #8

TAKE *time* *to*

have
FUN!

What comes to mind when you think of a productive person?

Do you think of a super busy person who barely has time to have fun or sit with his/her family and is always on the run?

Well, you'll be happy to hear that that's not the ProductiveMuslim definition of being productive.

Being productive doesn't mean all work and no play. Being productive means knowing WHEN to play and have fun, and WHEN to work hard and be serious - and to keep both in a healthy balance.

The Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam* had a lot to do (he was a Prophet, an Imam, a father, a husband, and a leader of his people). Yet in his biography we see numerous examples of him taking time to have fun and enjoy himself. He'd race with his wife, watch amusing performances, and spend quality time at home with his family. It wasn't always about work, work, work; even though he was THE most productive man that ever lived!

Similarly, we should interject our productive lifestyle with moments of pure halal entertainment and recreation. This could mean having a picnic at the park, going out on a date night with your spouse, taking your kids to the theme park, or simply having a quiet time at home watching cartoons with the kids or sipping tea whilst reading a good book.



And before you think that these moments of play are a waste of energy and time; studies have shown that taking regular breaks improves productivity and creativity and allows your brain to see new connections that it wasn't seeing before when it was too focused on getting things done.

Productivity for the *dunya* and *akhirah*:

Another important question to ask is: am I being productive for Allah?

Even during rest or play, we can be productive for Allah as long as we are busy with the remembrance of Allah. Spending time with our parents, spouse, and children are all forms of *ibadah* when we remember that maintaining good ties with our family is for the sake of Allah. Even sleep is a form of *ibadah* when we have the intention of resting for the sake of Allah, so that we may be refreshed to serve Him at our best the next day.

Here's a *hadith* to contemplate upon.

A companion once came to Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam* and said, "**O Messenger of Allah, when we are in your company, and are reminded of hell-fire and Jannah, we feel as if we are seeing them with our own eyes. But when we go away from you and attend to our wives, children and business, much of these things go out of our minds.**" The Prophet *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam* replied, "**By Him in Whose Hand is my life, if your state of mind remains the same as it is in my presence and you are always busy in remembrance (of Allah), the angels will shake hands with you in your beds and in your roads; but Hanzalah, time should be devoted (to the worldly affairs) and time should be devoted (to prayer).**" He (the Prophet *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam*) said this thrice [\[Muslim\]](#).

Moments of entertainment and recreation should be stations for you to rejuvenate, refresh, and recharge before plunging back into our spiritual or occupational tasks.

Practical tips to get started:



Have some fun/quiet time for yourself each day to rejuvenate.

(P.S. This is where early rising comes in handy, the kids are asleep!)



Plan a weekly recreation event with your family, e.g. a picnic, a date night, a cartoon night, etc.



Plan a vacation to a new location (within your country or internationally) at least every 3-6 months. Try to spread your vacations throughout the year instead of only having them once a year. Of course, this is dependent on many factors, including finances, school vacations, and weather conditions, however, you can still have regular rejuvenating breaks if you plan your weekends and public holidays well.

have
FUN!



essential
Quality #9

always
BE OF
SERVICE

When you think of the word "service", you might think of being served at the restaurant, your housekeeper cleaning your house, or some form of customer service with a company.

However, rarely do we think of service as an act that we owe those around us.

How many of us think of "serving" our families, or "serving" our neighbours, or "serving" the community, or "serving" humanity and the *Ummah* at large?

If there's one verb that should describe a ProductiveMuslim, it would be "serving".

A ProductiveMuslim is always serving others; serving his/her family, serving his/her community, serving his/her *Ummah*. This is the example of Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam* who was constantly in service of his family, community, and *Ummah* and never let the comforts of life distract him from this primary duty.

Service means sacrifice. It means being less selfish about our needs and wants and more caring and compassionate to the needs and wants of others.



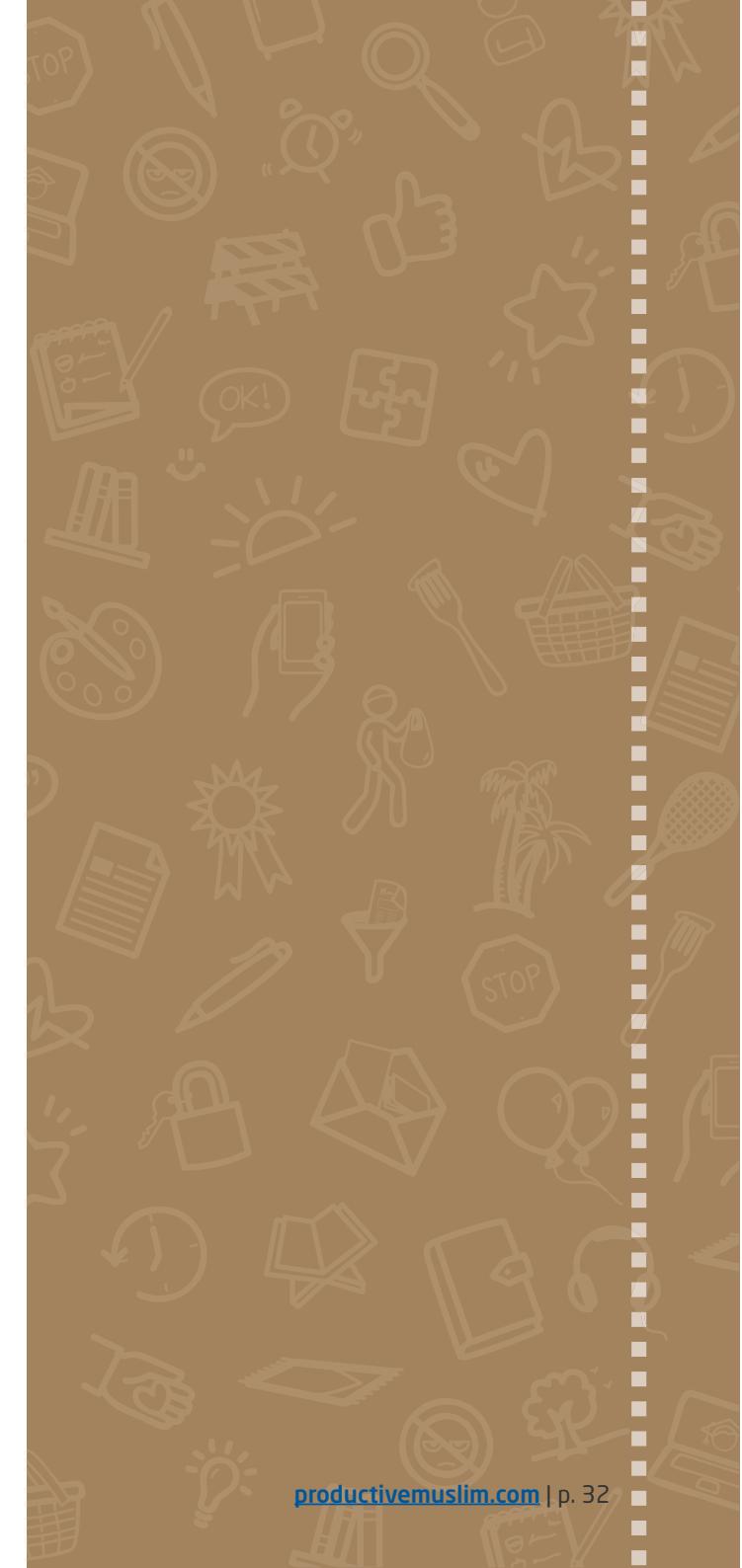
Our service is our *ibadah*

Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) was performing *i'tikaaf* in the *masjid* of the Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam* when a man came to him and requested his support in doing something. Ibn Abbas left the *i'tikaaf* to serve the man. When he was asked, "How come you leave your *i'tikaaf*?" he replied, "For me to go out and serve my brother is better than to perform *i'tikaaf* one month in the *masjid* of Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam*".

This is how they understood service!

If you're finding it difficult to serve others and feel you're being fake when you do, then here's my suggestion: *fake it till you make it!* Being of service is a skill that can be learnt, especially if it's not something you've been trained on since childhood. When you start doing small acts of service to others, you'll be encouraged to do more until it becomes part and parcel of your life.

So...whom will you serve today?



always
BE OF
SERVICE



Practical tips to get started:



List all your family members, co-workers, and neighbours and think how you can serve them best. What can you do for them? It could be something special, such as going out of your way to help them with an important task they need done; or it could be something that you do consistently and daily, such as removing the garbage can for them on the weekly garbage collecting days.

Be biased towards saying 'YES' when someone asks you for help or advice. Try not to say 'NO' unless you're absolutely busy or swamped and need some time to yourself to get something done. And if you say 'No', explain why so that they don't feel discouraged coming back to you and asking you for help in future.

Show gratitude and appreciation when someone serves you. Don't "expect" it from them even if they are your children or spouse. Always truly appreciate their acts of service. Remember that they made a choice to serve you; so thank them.



essential
Quality #10

H A V E ————— &
commitment ————— *discipline*

We've shared a lot of advice and practical tips with you here and perhaps by now you're concerned about how well you'll implement them and be consistent with them.

My advice for you is to take baby steps with commitment and discipline.

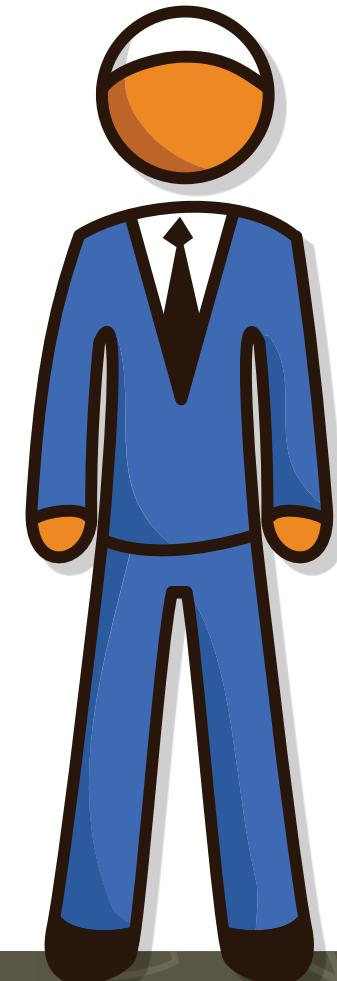
Tackle each essential quality of this ProductiveMuslim manifesto one at a time, and see if you can focus on each one of them for one week at a time.

I know this might sound hard, and perhaps you have tried before and failed...

But remember the *Ummah* is waiting for you.

It's best to die trying to emulate these essential qualities than to give up and go back to your old sedentary life.

Also remember that you don't become a ProductiveMuslim overnight. It takes time and effort, and it's a process.



Practical tips to get started:



Please visit us daily at [ProductiveMuslim](#) and check out our latest advice and tips we have for you.



Sign up to our [ProductiveMuslim Academy](#) if you want to take your productivity up a notch and be ready to constantly learn how to lead a productive lifestyle.



Sign up for our coaching program if you are really serious about being productive, which will not only guide you and give you customized solutions for your productivity challenges, but will also hold you accountable to sticking to them. You can find out more about the coaching program [here](#).

The *Ummah* is waiting for you.

I started this series by saying that we live in difficult times, and that we have a choice of either accepting the *Ummah*'s status quo or actively being a part of its revival.

I'm positive and certain that with people like you – people who care about the *Ummah*, who love Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'aala* and His Messenger *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam*, who want to change and are willing to learn and apply the advice that would help them grow, develop and improve – our *Ummah* will be revived again.

The *Ummah*'s revival is coming. There's no doubt about that.

The question is - will you be part of the cause that leads the *Ummah* to revival; or will you just be a passive bystander?

Let's all step up our productivity to be part of the cause that makes the *Ummah* alive once again.



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ProductiveMuslim is a global team passionate about serving the *Ummah*. We are dedicated to support our fellow brothers and sisters to become ProductiveMuslims who contribute righteously to their family, society, and service for Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'aala.

ProductiveMuslim offers the *Ummah* an Islamic paradigm of productivity – a productivity that's driven on faith and values; that isn't void of a soul; a productivity that recognises we are not cogs in a wheel. We are humans and each of us is a *khalifah* on this earth with a specific purpose.

By understanding that purpose and living according to the values of the Qur'an, and following the role model of Prophet Muhammad *sallAllahu alayhi wasallam*, we'll achieve a faith-based productive lifestyle that brings success in *dunya* and *akhirah*.

PRODUCTIVE MUSLIM

About the Author



Mohammed Faris is an internationally-sought thought leader, speaker and trainer who specialises in and spearheaded the niche of productivity in Islam.

His most notable accolade is as the Founder of ProductiveMuslim.com, the popular online platform, blog and productivity training organisation that serves the "e-Ummah" who struggle to integrate the practice of their *deen* with their modern daily lives and responsibilities. This seven-year-old blog and organisation has been recognised by Brass Crescent Awards for three years in a row as the best Muslim blog and/or group blog.

Popularly known as "Abu Productive" on ProductiveMuslim.com, Mohammed Faris was born in Tanzania (of Yemeni descent) but spent the majority of his life growing up in Saudi Arabia after his parents migrated there. He later pursued his tertiary education in the UK and holds a Master in Finance and Investment from the University of Bristol.

It was at the University of Bristol that he first developed his leadership skills and engagement with numerous grassroots Muslim projects and developed his vision to serve the *Ummah* in whatever capacity he can.

Starting with a personal blog in 2008 called "ProductiveMuslim.com" he combined his love for productivity with love of teaching to help Muslims worldwide understand the unique perspective of connecting the demands of today's modern world with Islamic values and principles to lead productive lives.

His journey with his blog and later online training organisation has set Mohammed Faris apart as an international speaker, trainer, and author who can distil the broad concepts of Islamic values into practical, actionable steps for Muslims to acquire the tangible skill sets and motivation needed to lead productive lives for the sake of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'aala and find true success in *deen*, *dunya*, and *akhirah*.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following ProductiveMuslim volunteers for their wonderful support in the production of this manifesto:

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- ✓ **Mohammed Athif Khaleel** for managing this project and helping this manifesto reach far and wide.

May Allah reward you all and reward the entire ProductiveMuslim team who are tirelessly working to help the *Ummah* become productive.
JazakumAllah khair.

Sincerely,
Your brother,
Mohammed Faris



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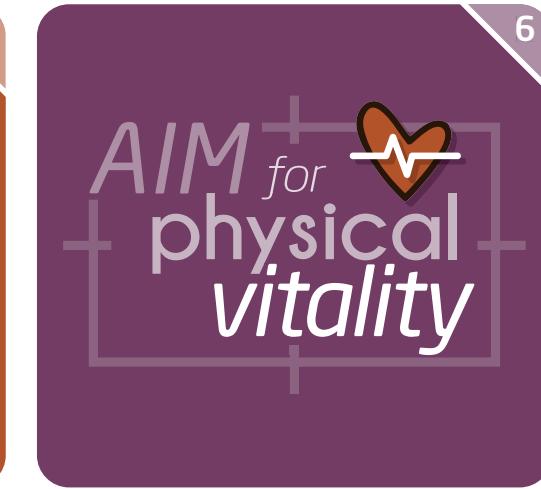
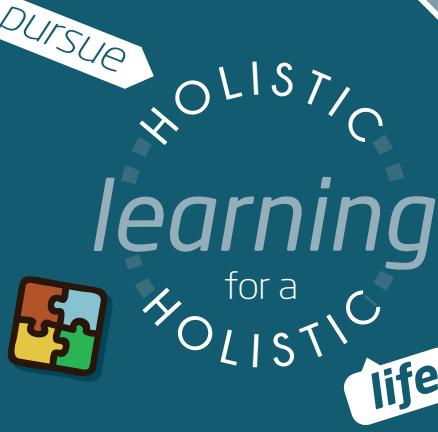
You can also contact us any time via our website at [ProductiveMuslim.com](#)

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10 essential qualities EVERY MUSLIM NEEDS TO rebuild A PRODUCTIVE UMMAH

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With your help we translated the manifesto into Seven Languages of the Ummah:

(Click on any of the languages below to access the translated manifesto!)

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Urdu

Malay

French

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May Allah bless all of those who contributed but chose to remain anonymous.

May they find their reward with Allah in this world and the next (ameen)!

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