

## **MODULE 1**

**Class Title:** 90/10 Principle

**Aim of the lesson:** To understand how we ourselves are responsible for most of the things that go wrong in our lives.

**Category:** Personal Development

**Lesson Format:** Power point presentation with narration and discussion

Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(*Taooz*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

Today *inshaAllah*, we are going to talk about a very interesting and important principle of life. It is called the 90/10 Principle.

Have you heard about it?

Adopting this principle can have a very positive impact on your life and it can transform the way you react to situations.

Slide 2:

What is this principle? In order to understand it, I'm first going to ask all of you a very simple question.

Imagine an average day, in which you do hundreds of things and experience so many situations, for example:

- You get up in the morning,
- You go brush your teeth,
- You do your breakfast,
- You go to school,
- You have a fight with a friend,
- You get great grades in your exams or you flunk them, and so on....

Let's say, a hundred things happened during the whole day. Now if I ask you how many of these things were in your control, what number comes to your mind?

Let me give you an example before you start calculating: you're going to school; this is in your control; you can either go to school or stay home; you might have to do a bit of convincing and cajoling with mum, but you can stay home if you want to or if you're not feeling well. Similarly, doing an assignment for your class is in your control.

But let's say your friend picks a fight with you. Whatever she does to you, is that in your control? No, that's not in your control. Or let's say, while you're on your way to school it starts raining; is that in your control? Can you stop the rain? No, that's not in your control. can you do something about getting a red light at the traffic signal? It's in your control whether you stop at the red light or not, but you can't change the red light.

Now I want you to calculate: out of, let's say, a hundred things, approximately how many things are actually in your control? For example, I might feel that fifty percent i.e. fifty things out of a hundred are in my control and fifty are not, whereas someone else might feel that twenty things are in their control and eighty aren't. Another person might think that sixty things are in their control and forty aren't.

I want to know from you guys.... what do you think? How many things are in your control?

(After getting various estimates from the students, the teacher proceeds...)

Slide 3:

According to the 90/10 Principle, ninety percent of everything that happens in your life is in your control and just ten percent of your life, or ten percent of any given day, is not in your control. We will talk about this principle in detail today.

Slides 4 and 5:

How many of you feel that this is possible? You don't have to agree with it, we are still assessing it and still trying to see if this principle works for us or not. How many of you actually think that ten percent is an accurate number; that ninety percent of your day is determined and controlled by you.

Ninety percent. That's a big chunk. Do you feel you have so much control?

You will, *inshaAllah*, once I explain this to you.

Slides 6 and 7:

How do you control that ninety percent? It is your reactions to various events in your day that help you in controlling ninety percent of your day. For example, I just spoke about the red light; you can't change the red light into green no matter how badly you want to, but stopping at the traffic signal is something that is in your control.

Slide 8 and 9:

Let's look at a detailed example: imagine that it's a school day and you are having breakfast with your family in the morning. Imagine that your younger sister comes running to tell you something and she accidentally knocks over your glass of milk. The milk spills all over your

uniform; you were having breakfast and were just about to leave for school. Did you have control over what just happened? Is there anyone who thinks that this is something that they could have controlled? Within a matter of seconds, your sister came running up to you and knocked over a glass of milk, spilling the milk on your uniform. You didn't have any control over what happened, right? However, what takes place next; is that in your control? What do you think would happen if this actually occurred?

Slide 19:

You might scream at your sister, hit her, go and complain to your mom, throw a glass of milk on her uniform etc. There are a lot of possibilities. You might scold her or scold the maid for keeping the glass too close to the edge of the table. We're not talking about right or wrong, we are just talking about possible reactions. And most of our reactions are wrong. Let's suppose you scold the maid and hit and scream at your sister (please don't think that I'm suggesting or advocating this, I'm just telling you what we might do, and the repercussions of doing this). What happens next? What do you think your sister will do? She'll cry! She'll be upset because she didn't do it deliberately.

Slides 11-14:

Obviously you'll need to quickly change your uniform because you're getting late for school. When you come back to the dining table, you see that your little sister is still crying and hasn't finished her breakfast. And she gets late and misses her school bus. You might then realize that she missed the bus because of you. Since you go to school in your car, you take her with you and you ask the driver to drive fast. You have to ask the driver to drive fast because you are getting late and you have to drop your sister to her school as well. Then you encounter a red light. You have a test in class that you might miss if you're late so, out of desperation, you ask the driver to break the signal and are seen by the traffic police while doing so. You are stopped and are charged a fine. After a fifteen minute delay you drop your sister to school and she tearfully runs inside without saying goodbye to you. Was it because she was in a hurry? Can you think of any other reasons? She was upset with you! And why shouldn't she be, after what you did to her in the morning? You scolded her, hit her, screamed at her and complained about her.

Anyways, you arrive at school twenty minutes late and just as you enter the class you realize that you forgot an important notebook at home because you were in a hurry and weren't thinking clearly because you were angry at your sister. To top it off, during break time you and your friend have a disagreement and you realize you're heading for an argument. Since you are already heated up from the events of the morning and are in a bad mood, you actually **do** have a fight with her. And then you regret it and just want to go home, feeling very tired and drained.

You think, "When will this day finish? I'm having a horrible day."

Slide 15:

But what happens when you get home? Is everyone waiting for you to come home, to hug you and kiss you and say, “Oh you’re back, we missed you!”, and will the maid go running and get you a glass of juice and make you feel comfortable after your long day? Remember, you scolded the maid in the morning as well. Any guesses what will happen?

That’s right, nobody will want to talk to you, and you will be treated coldly by your sister and perhaps your maid as well. Then your mom calls you in her room and reprimands you. She tells you that, since you are so much younger than her, you shouldn’t be rude to your maid, scolding and screaming at her. She also reminds you that your sister is very young and didn’t spill the milk deliberately. What do you think you’ll say? Will you apologize? No! You will try to justify what you did. And how will your mom respond? She’ll just get angrier with you and may even punish you. I hope this doesn’t happen, but you weren’t behaving well with her; you were arguing.

Slides 16-19

Now why did all of this happen? It all happened because of the way you reacted in those two or three seconds after your sister spilled the milk on you; your reaction determined the rest of the day. Am I right? Did the milk cause your bad day? Did your sister cause it? Did the maid cause it? Or did **you** cause it? Who’s to blame here? If you blame your sister, her spilling the milk was not in your control. There was only one thing in your control and that was your reaction.

Slide 20:

Let’s see what could have happened if you had reacted in a different way. Let’s see how ninety percent of the day was in your control.

Milk splashes over you, your sister is about to cry because you are glaring at her, and she knows what you’re going to do. She knows you are going to get mad at her and scream at her. But then you think about the 90/10 principle and say, “Okay, I have control over how I react,” and you decide not to scream at her. What do you do? You tell her it’s okay and that she just needs to be more careful next time. And then you go to your room, change your uniform and see your sister off, smiling and waving good bye to you. Why is she waving and saying good bye? Because you were nice to her and she appreciated that. Even though she caused a lot of hassle for you, you didn’t get upset with her. You remember to keep your exercise book, smile and greet your teacher when you get to school and during break, when it seems as if you and your friend are headed for a fight, you decide that, since you’re in a good mood, you can ignore the subject and change the topic. This is because you can think clearly. Then you go home and everyone is happy to see you.

Slides 22 and 23:

Now in both the cases, the day started off the same, but ended differently. Why was that? It was because of the way you reacted. So you really didn't have control over ten percent of the day but the rest of the ninety percent was pretty much in your control because of how you reacted.

Now do you understand this principle? How ninety percent of our lives are in our control and how, when we get upset and react in a negative way, we can ruin our whole day.

Now we are going to learn how to apply the 90/10 Principle.

It is very easy to say, "don't react," but how can one not react?

Slides 24-26:

By not becoming a sponge. When something goes wrong in your life, don't absorb it. Don't act like a sponge. Act like glass. Does glass absorb water? No; water just trickles down the surface of glass. So the things that you don't like in your life should just trickle down, not get absorbed into you. Ignore them and try to respond positively.

Slides 27 and 28:

How do you usually react when somebody cuts you off in school? What is your first reaction? You get angry. What's the big deal if somebody has pushed you or cut you off? You'll probably reach your class 10 seconds late, that's it. So do you think it's something you can or should ignore and overlook?

Slides 29 and 30:

Let's say you were told, God forbid, that you flunked or got a C grade on a paper, even though you studied for it and thought that you'd done well. What is your first reaction? You're shocked, disappointed, dismayed, very sad. However, do you think getting very sad or feeling gloomy or crying will improve your grades? If you have tears going down your cheeks will your grades start going up? Why cry? So what should you do? You should focus on how to not let something like this happen again, rather than on being sad.

Slides 31 and 32:

Now let's say that it's late evening, you're in the middle of doing your homework and the electricity goes off. What is a normal reaction to this situation? We complain and get angry and lose our temper. Will this attitude help? What will help you finish your assignment? A candle, a torch or an emergency light - so you can work. You need to focus on things that will take you towards what you want to achieve. Use your time to study under a candle! Why get stressed out? It will just make things worse.

Slides 33 – 38:

Now very few people apply this principle to their lives.

Millions of people are suffering from undeserved stress, trials, problems and heartache. They never seem to be a success in life. Bad days follow bad days. Terrible things seem to be constantly happening. There is constant stress, lack of joy and broken relationships. Worrying consumes all of their time.

Anger breaks friendships and life seems dreary and is not enjoyed to the fullest. Friends are lost. Life is a bore and often seems cruel. Does this describe you? If so, do not be discouraged.

You can be different. You can break out of this vicious cycle. We all must understand and apply the 90/10 principle. It will change our life!

Slide 39:

The Prophet (pbuh) once said, “If someone curses or insults you in this month of Ramadan, don’t react, but politely tell him that you are fasting.” [Bukhari]

Have you heard this *hadith*? There is a lot of wisdom in it and it’s not applicable just for Ramadan. This is how you should react to people who are unkind to you. Just ignore them, never confront them.

Slide 40:

You need to work on the PPP principle; ‘Plan in advance’, ‘Prepare to put your plan in action’ and ‘Pray to Allah (swt)’.

‘Plan in advance’: What are you supposed to plan? How you are going to react, what are the things that tick you off and what kind of reaction you are going to have. Think about it, what are the things that generally upset you?

‘Prepare to put your plan in action’: Then you think about how you are going to react differently. This is how you are going to behave, and you will focus on making sure that whatever reaction comes out of you will help you in achieving what you want in your day.

‘Pray to Allah (swt)’. Obviously, without His help, we can achieve absolutely nothing.

Slides 41 – 45:

There is a very interesting story that I would like to share with you: One day a man hopped into a taxi, in a rush to get to the airport. The taxi driver was driving in the right lane when suddenly a car pulled out of a parking space and zoomed in front of the taxi. The taxi driver slammed his breaks and almost skidded and missed the other car by inches. The driver of that car whipped his head around and started screaming at the taxi driver, who in turn just looked at the man, smiled

at him and waved. The passenger was surprised and said, “listen, this guy almost wrecked your taxi and nearly sent us to the hospital, why were you smiling at him and waving to him?”

The taxi driver told the passenger the law of the garbage truck; according to this law, some people are like garbage trucks and they run around full of garbage, i.e. frustration, anger and disappointment. As the garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it and sometimes they will just dump it on us. We must not take it personally; they just need a place to dump their garbage. We need to just smile, wave at them and move on.

Don't take their garbage and don't spread it to others at school or home etc. That's the law of garbage. What are you supposed to do when people are mean to you? Smile, wave and move on. The bottom line is that successful people don't let garbage trucks take over their day. There is a very nice saying, love the people who treat you well and forgive the ones who don't.

Slide 46:

The bottom line is that successful people don't let garbage trucks take over their day. Life's too short to wake up in the morning with regrets, so... 'Love the people who treat you right. Forgive the ones who don't.'

Slides 47 and 48:

Life is ten percent what you make it and ninety percent how you take it!

So it is best to let go of the blame game.

I would like to quote another example. The reason I'm going to tell you this particular example is because the moment something goes wrong in our lives, we start blaming the people around us. If there is no electricity, you'll blame others. If someone pushes you, you'll blame that person; if your sister spills milk, you'll blame her and the maid.

Slides 49 – 55:

Here's the example; a boy was born to a couple after 11 years. He was a very cute baby and they were a very loving couple. When this boy was two years old and his father was leaving for work one day, he saw a bottle of medicine open on the side table. He was in a rush and told his wife who was working in the kitchen, to cap the bottle. He couldn't do it because he was in a rush. The wife was very busy in the kitchen and she totally forgot.

The boy playfully went to the bottle and got fascinated by the color of the medicine and drank it all. Now this was a poisonous medicine meant for adults in small dosages. So what do you think it did to the baby? The child collapsed and even though the mother took the baby to the hospital, the baby died. The mother was stunned and was terrified to face her husband because he had told her to cap the bottle before leaving.

When the distraught father came to the hospital and saw the dead child and the wife weeping, he only uttered five words. What do you think he said? He said, "I am with you darling." That's all he said.

The husband's totally unexpected reaction was a proactive one. What would normal people do? Yes, blame the wife. But the child was dead and he couldn't be brought back to life so by saying "I told you so." Blaming the wife wouldn't bring back the child. There was no point in finding fault with the mother, because if he had taken the time and actually capped the bottle, all of this wouldn't have happened. The wife could've blamed the husband as well. But that blaming wouldn't have helped.

What helped were the five words. And what she needed at that time was consolation and sympathy and that is exactly what the husband gave her.

So what is the moral of the story? Sometimes we feel that if we blame others we take care of the damage. But that doesn't happen. We have to keep reminding ourselves that this won't help.

Slides 56 - 59:

How much of this iceberg can you see?

Half of it? No, you can just see 10 % of it. You can't see the remaining iceberg.

Likewise, if something goes wrong in our lives, we focus on the 10% that goes wrong and the rest of the 90% gets overlooked by us. We can't see that it is coming from us. We are responsible for it. Only 10% is what happens around us and 90% is how we react or respond to what happens and that's our attitude.

Slides 60 – 63:

Similarly, only 10% is our knowledge and skills. And remaining 90% is our Attitude. In other words, our Attitude (values, standards, judgments, motives, ethics and beliefs) impact our Behavior. Hence, our life is a reflection of our attitudes.

Skills, Knowledge and Hard Work will get you close to success

Attitude will get you there

It's the LOVE OF GOD that will put you over the top!

Therefore, one can conclude with mathematical certainty that: It's your attitude and not your aptitude that determines your altitude. A positive attitude is like a magnet for positive results. Positive attitudes create a chain reaction of positive thoughts.

So from today *insha Allah* what are we going to do when something goes wrong in our lives? What are we going to remind ourselves? We will remind ourselves not to react negatively and we will remind ourselves of this 90/10 principle. We will remind ourselves that what just



happened was just a small part of our day and that if we react negatively; we'll ruin our whole day. We need to be like a glass and let the water roll off.

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

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**Reference for Teacher:**

- 90/10 Principles by Stephen Covey