

### **MODULE 3**

**Class Title:** Time Management part 1 – Habit 1: Being Proactive

(1<sup>st</sup> part of a 3 lesson series)

**Aims of the Lesson:** To understand the significance of time and habits, To learn to be Proactive

**Categories:** Personal Development

**Lesson format:** Power point presentation with narration

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

*(Ta'awwudh) Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanirRajeem*

*(Tasmiyah) Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

*(Du'a) Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassir li amr iwahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verses 25-28)

Slides 1-4:

Today I would like to start the class by asking you a question. I will describe a scenario and I want you to tell me what you would like to do in such a situation.

I want you to imagine that there is a bank which gives you Rs. 86,400 each morning. And they tell you that by the end of the day, there should be no balance left. In case something is left then that amount will be confiscated. It will be cancelled. You will not be able to carry it forward to the next day. So what will you do now?

Student 1: Go shopping!

Student 2: Take friends out and eat!

Student 3: Do both!

Student 4: Buy all my favourite clothes and books!

Student 5: Make sure that no money is left!

Student 6: I am not sure. I think I might not be interested.

Teacher: Yes, that is possible. But most of you would grab the money and go out and spend. Right?

Students: Yes!

Teacher: So now I want you to apply this analogy to yourselves. Do you realise that there is someone who gives you 86,400 of something every morning?

(students think but don't answer)

Slides 5-6:

Teacher: Well, every morning Allah (swt) gives us 86,400 seconds and He wants to see what we will do with each of them and at the end of the day there is no balance that can be carried forward. You can't save time to use tomorrow. The hours, minutes, seconds lost are gone. There is no turning back. You can't bring back lost time.

Slide 7:

Now, some of you might think, so what? What if I do waste some minutes or seconds in a day? So what's the big deal! After all they are just a few minutes and seconds.

Slides 8-9:

But that is an attitude that you can have with any of the resources that Allah (swt) has given us. We might be unmindful of water and electricity and not care if we waste them. No one can stop us.

But whatever we are unmindful about or waste will be questioned and is everything is getting recorded. Allah (swt) will question us for each and every drop of water, each and every grain, each and every second He has given us. In fact, He will show it to us. He will show us how we utilised the things He gave us.

Allah (swt) says in Surah Az-Zilzal 99: verses 7-8:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ  
وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it.  
And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it.

Slide 10:

And Rasool Allah (pbuh) said:

"There are two blessings which many people lose: (They are) health and free time for doing good." (Bukhari 8/421)

Slide 11:

So we need to realize that it is our choice as to what value we give to our time. We need to make the most of whatever time we have in our hands which is today. As time waits for no one.

Slide 12:

Here, I would like to share something with you:

To realize the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who has failed a grade.  
To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who has given birth to a pre-mature baby.  
To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask an editor of a weekly newspaper.  
To realize the value of ONE DAY, ask a daily wage laborer who has kids to feed.  
To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.  
To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who has missed the train.  
To realize the value of ONE SECOND, ask a person who has avoided an accident.  
To realize the value of ONE MILLI-SECOND, ask the person who has won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Slides 13-14:

So it we, ourselves who decide what value we want to give to our time. We can choose to live in the past or keep thinking about our future but actually the moment we have in our hand is the moment right now. We can only do things in the 'Now'. We can't go in the past or the future.

Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery, today is a gift, that's why it's called the present!

Today is what we have, who knows about tomorrow. It is the here and now that actually matters.

Slide 15:

Having said all of this and having talked about the analogy that we discussed earlier, it would not be wrong to say that time is money. And how much value we give to our time is up to us.

Slide 16:

We need to realize that this time is actually our life. They are both synonyms and can be used interchangeably. So what should be our attitude towards it?

- As Muslims we should be conscious of time. We should realize that it is a resource that Allah (swt) has given us.
- We should remember that life in this world is nothing but temporary. We never know when death has been appointed for us. This will help us to focus on the 'Now'.
- We must value time for the satisfaction of Allah the Almighty. We need to realize that Allah (swt) is my Lord and I need to please Him. That is my aim of life so the life or time that is given to me by Him should be used to please Him.
- For our guidance and success, we must never waste time nor abuse it.

Slide 17:

If we look at ourselves we can see that we are all different. Each and every one of us is a special creation of Allah (swt). We have unique personalities, huge capabilities and wisdom. We are all masterpieces of Allah (swt).

So now it is our responsibility that we make good of these gifts and make ourselves into good human beings. We develop habits that are pleasing and best in mannerism.

Slide 18:

We are what we repeatedly do.

Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.

(Aristotle)

Slide 19:

You must have heard the famous maxim which says:

- Sow a thought, reap an action;
- Sow an action, reap a habit;
- Sow a habit, reap a character;
- Sow a character reap a destiny.

Slide 20:

Habits are a powerful factor of our lives. We have all kinds of habits. Each one of us has some good habits and some bad. The good we need to promote and work on but the bad need to be changed. This realization is very important.

We should get into the habit of constantly evaluating ourselves. We should identify the bad habits we have and then work towards getting rid of them or at least getting a handle on them and not letting them overpower us.

Slides 21-22:

This step can only be taken by each and every one of us independently. Yes, some friend or family, can identify some mistake or weakness but the acceptance to change has to come from within. Each and every one of us has to open that gate of change inside us ourselves. No one else can do it for me or you.

The decision to go for that change has to come from within. It has to be a conviction that I am the one who will bring about the change in me. I am very much capable of opening the gate of change.

Slides 23-24:

At the same time, we need to realize that it will not be easy. I will trip and fall in the process. Maybe there will be many slips before I learn to get a handle on things but the process must start and I should be ready to pick myself up after every fall. I will keep reminding myself that this is a small patch. I need to get over it. And I need to go on. I need to get up and keep working on it.

Slide 25:

So the first habit that we need to develop in ourselves in order to be able to handle our time or life better is “proactivity”.

Have you ever heard this term? Does anyone know what is being proactive?

Student: I think it has something to do with taking initiatives.

Slide 26:

Teacher: Okay, you are close. But let’s go on in order to understand it.

You see in life, something or the other is happening, a stimulus. We’ll call it a “situation”. And every time some situation comes up we normally react to it.

Let’s understand this with an example.

Suppose you are doing water colours in a picture. You are very happy with your work and are almost done. Just then your little 5 year old brother comes running and bumps into you. Because of the impact the water from its container spills on your painting which gets ruined in a second. What would be your reaction?

Student1: Scream at my brother!

Student 2: Slap him!

Slides 27-31:

Teacher: Yes, absolutely. These would be our reactions. But here, we need to learn to exercise some self control. When the situation has happened, i.e. the drawing has been ruined because of my brother bumping into me, now before doing anything, I need to press my pause button. I need to make myself calm. I need to choose my response instead of giving in to my emotions.

We need to learn to press the pause button because it will help us to make use of another very important tool that Allah (swt) has given us and that is Freedom of Choice. It is this freedom of choice that makes you and me *ashraful makhlooqat* (highest of Creation). Otherwise, there will be no difference between us and the animals.

## Slide 32

When we learn to press our pause button only then can we use our freedom of choice. And this freedom of choice has more tools which enable us to choose the best response according to the situation. These tools are:

- Self awareness
- Imagination
- Conscience
- Independent will

Let's talk about them one by one:

## Slide 33:

**Self Awareness:** This is the knowledge about ourselves. Each of us should know what are my strengths and what are my weaknesses. How much can I take and how much can I give. What are my likes and dislikes and how strongly do I feel about them.

## Slide 34:

**Imagination:** Try and look at the stimulus, the situation from all angles. The more information you have the easier will it be for you to choose the best response. Also try and imagine the best way to give the response.

## Slide 35:

**Conscience:** learn to listen to the voice inside you. Let your value structure tell you what is right and what is wrong.

## Slide 36:

**Independent Will:** Be sure that your will is your own. You are the only one responsible for your actions so act accordingly.

## Slide 37:

Be conscious of the fact that I am different from animals. Allah (swt) has programmed the animals and they just react to situations unthinkingly. But I am a human being. I am not programmed. Allah (swt) has given me the ability to program and reprogram myself.

## Slide 38:

This is Proactivity. It teaches us responsibility. It teaches us that I have the ability to choose my response. Proactive people don't react they give well thought out responses.

Slide 39:

So Proactive and reactive are two opposites. One cannot be proactive and reactive at the same time. Let's look at some examples in order to understand the difference between a reactive and a proactive person.

Slides 40-41:

We all know that eating healthy food on time is a good habit. But a reactive person when hungry will not stop to think. She will just eat what she wants to eat and the choice will mostly be made on emotion. She will eat a big mac only because she feels like having it even though she knows that she needs to lose 15 lbs.

Slide 42:

A reactive person also gets affected easily by the weather outside. If they need to go somewhere, but it is raining then they will be in a bad mood. And if it is sunny and they can go they will be happy.

Slides 43-44:

A reactive person is like a boiling pot. Their emotions come out very easily and generally in not a pleasant way. They generally focus on others and get frustrated easily. Whereas, a proactive person is cool and calm and does not show unnecessary emotions.

Slides 45-48:

Proactive people are very focused on what they do. They are very clear about their objectives. Unlike the reactive people they focus on self and keep away from frustrations. They don't focus on things that are not in their control, like the weather. They can't control the rain or the sun. Such things can be termed as 'Circle of Concern''

So whatever happens, they will work around it and focus on finding a solution. If it is raining they will focus on getting a rain coat. If it is sunny, they will get a hat. If they can't go outside, they will work indoors. These things are in their "Circle of Influence".

Slide 49:

Such people are the ones who can bring about a change by changing themselves.

Slide 50:

So a proactive person concentrates on her circle of influence and does not worry about the circle of concern.

Now, since all of us want to become proactive people, I would like each one of you to take 3 minutes and write down 3 bad habits that you want to get a handle on. We will then, *inshaAllah*, brainstorm together and try to come up with a workable plan.

(After 3 minutes)

Teacher: Alright, have you all written something. Okay, let's start with you (teacher addresses a student). What is the bad habit that you would like to change.

Student: I get angry easily.

Teacher: Okay, *mashaAllah*, that is one step in the right direction that you have taken because you have been able to identify a problem in yourself. Okay, does anyone else has that problem?

(Quite a few students raise their hands)

Teacher: Okay, quite a few of you have this weakness so we must try and find a solution to it. Let's see what solutions we can find. Any ideas?

Student 1: First of all when something happens we should keep still and not react.

Student 2: Press our pause button.

Student 3: Drink water.

Student 4: Change our position. Move away from the stimulus.

Student 5: Take control of our emotions.

Teacher: Very good, *mashaAllah*. Let the feeling pass. Don't hold on to it otherwise it will build up. Identify the feeling and let it go.

Student 6: Give a response if required otherwise keep quiet.

Teacher: *MashaAllah*, very good ideas. I hope you are writing them down. Rasool Allah (pbuh) has also taught us that we should say *ta'awwudh* (seek refuge from Satan) when angry because anger is from *shaytan*. And we should drink water, change our position, do *wudu*. Or if you are fuming you can also take a shower. These tips will *inshaAllah* help you to calm down.

Teacher (addressing student): Okay, what bad habit do you want to drop?

Student: I feel I have too much love for this world.

Teacher: *MashaAllah* that is a big realization. May Allah (swt) make things easy for you. So what do you think you should do about this.

Student 1: Read the Qur'an often, especially the parts about heaven and hell.

Student 2: Give charity as often as possible

Student 3: Think of death and the grave

Teacher: *Alhumdulillah*, those are good serious suggestions. May Allah (swt) forgive our mistakes and make doing good deeds easy for us, *aameen*.

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

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