

# 10

## self-help tips

FROM 10 AUTHENTIC HADITHS

By Abu Muawiyah Ismail Kamdar

# 10 Self- Help Tips

FROM 10  
AUTHENTIC  
HADITHS

BY ABU MUAWIYAH  
ISMAIL KAMDAR

# Contents

What is Self-Help and what's Hadith got to do with it? .....	3
Keep things Sincere.....	5
Earning Your Own.....	7
Be a Person of Value .....	9
Avoid Harming Others .....	11
Be Consistent .....	13
Give Charity.....	15
Think Win/Win.....	17
Make every minute count .....	19
Learn From Your Mistakes .....	21
The Sabr Factor.....	23
Conclusion .....	26

## What is Self-Help and what's Hadith got to do with it?

*In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

Thank you for downloading this free e-book, and subscribing to [islamicselfhelp.com](http://islamicselfhelp.com). You may be wondering why I chose to write an e-book on the topic of self-help and what Hadith has to do with this topic.

Self-Help is a genre of literature that focuses on giving you the tools to help yourself improve as a person. Books focusing on confidence, stress management, time management, anger management, goal-chasing, focus, concentration, and positive psychology all fall under the category of Self-Help books. Essentially, it is a book that you purchase to assist yourself in improving in a specific area of your life.

Self-Help books are very popular in the twenty first century due to the deficiency in our education system. The current school system is a twelve year process of sapping one's creativity, confidence and optimism, and a system in which important life skills like time management and goal-setting are overlooked, while the syllabus focuses on less important subjects like algebra and biology.

As a result, many young adults enter the adult world with no clue regarding what they want to do with their lives and how to achieve such goals. Algebra, second languages and biology aren't going to help much if we have no idea what we are doing on this earth or what we plan to do with the rest of our time here.

This creates a dilemma for many adults who are wondering aimlessly day to day, just following social norms and suppressing all their unique talents and skills just so that they can fit in. Self-Help books exist to fill this void.

The problem for Muslims, however, is that most Self-Help books are written from a secular perspective leaving many readers puzzled as to

whether the tools and skills taught therein are acceptable in Islam or not.

This is where I decided to step-in. Over the past six years, I have read dozens of Self-Help books and as a graduate in Islamic Studies, I analysed each principle and tool in light of the teachings of Islam. This allowed me to sift out the Halal from the Haram.

I realized there is a great need for books focusing on Personal Development (another name for Self-Help) from an Islamic Perspective, and decided to dedicate the next few years of my life to writing such books and articles. The e-book you are reading is the first of many books in this field, inshaa Allah, and should serve as a taster of what to expect when you purchase my detailed books on these topics.

For this short e-book, I chose to focus on ten Hadiths. This is because many Muslims fail to realize how powerful and deep the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) really are. He was the best of role models and taught us the most practical of guidance. Although, his primary message was one of obedience to Allah, the comprehensive nature of his words and teachings allow us to extract such principles that benefit us in both worlds.

The Hadiths mentioned in this short book are well-known, authentic and their spiritual benefits have already been explained in details by many great scholars. I have chosen to analyse each Hadith from a unique perspective, the perspective of personal development. As a result, you will learn the importance of goal-setting, contribution, positive thinking, time management and self-confidence from the explanation of these amazing statements.

I hope that you find this book beneficial, and that it is the beginning of a long journey towards becoming your best self. We ask Allah to assist us all in becoming the best of creation and maximizing our potential. Ameen.

## Keep things Sincere

*“Every action is judged by its intention, and every man will have that which he intended.”(Bukhari)*

This hadith is arguably the most famous Hadith in the world. It has become the tradition of scholars to begin most of their books with this Hadith and for good reason too. It is very general in its wording and can be applied to almost any topic, which includes Self-Help.

The first thing we need to ask ourselves is why are we interested in Self-Help? What are our motives? Are they noble or are they selfish? Are they strictly worldly goals or do they transcend this world? Who will benefit from improving myself, just me or the ummah in general?

A Muslim is not selfish or driven only by his base desires. A Muslim focuses on the bigger picture and aims to make this world a better place. Any goal that we conceptualize must fulfil certain conditions:

1. It must be Halal.
2. It should be beneficial.
3. It mustn't harm anybody else.

Even better would be to set goals that are rewarding and uplift the ummah, but at the very least, they should be Halal and not harmful.

Goal-setting is the foundation of personal development. The key difference between people who grow towards their full potential and those who don't is that the first have goals that they are working towards, while the rest do not.

A goal can be anything including: becoming a better Muslim, earning better, migrating to a better country, getting a degree, changing

careers, losing weight, and even being a better parent. The key is to make the goal as specific as possible and set a deadline for completion.

The key to effective goal-setting is to keep the goal specific, realistic and attainable, and to set deadlines for the completion of your goals. The common acronym for this is to set S.M.A.R.T. goals.

Specific – be as specific as possible

Measurable – have a means of measuring your results

Attainable – choose something you have the drive and skills to attain

Realistic – set a realistic result that you wish to attain

Timed – give yourself a deadline

An example of a goal that doesn't meet these criterion is the following: I want to lose a lot of weight and be healthy. This goal is not specific (how much weight, what is the definition of healthy), measurable (how much to you current weigh, what weight do you wish to reduce it to), attainable (a vague goal will lead to lack of enthusiasm in chasing the goal), realistic (it's not realistic if there is no definite goal), or timed (are you planning to take one year or ten years to drop down to that weight).

A S.M.A.R.T. goal on the other hand would look something like this: I currently weight 100kg, in three months I want to lose 30kg of body fat by sticking to an effective diet and exercising daily. Someone who sets a detailed goal like this is far more likely to succeed as it is very specific, easy to measure progress on, attainable, realistic and has a time limit.

For a Muslim, our goals also need to be Halal. We cannot make it our goal in life to seek that which is displeasing to Allah, or to do religious acts for show. Our goals must not just be S.M.A.R.T but they must be sincere and ethical too.

## Earning Your Own

*“By Him in Whose Hand my life is, it is better for anyone of you to take a rope and cut the wood (from the forest) and carry it over his back and sell it (as a means of earning his living) rather than to ask a person for something and that person may give him or not.”(Saheeh Bukhari)*

There are many ways to earn money in this world. Some are Halal and some are Haram. As Muslims, it is a given that we should avoid the prohibited means of earning wealth, and stick to that which is permissible.

Yet even within the permitted means of increasing wealth, some forms are greater than others. While it may be true that you can increase your halal wealth through inheriting, receiving gifts, asking for funding and relying on someone else for support, this Hadith emphasizes that the purest and best way to increase wealth is to earn it yourself through hard work.

This Hadith is usually quoted to support the prohibition of begging but it has other dimensions as well. The concept of earning one's own wealth is connected to self-confidence, integrity and independence. Some people sit around dreaming of a day when they will inherit a lot of money or someone will give them what they desire as a gift.

A noble person will work hard to earn that wealth, and purchase what he desires. He will not wait around hoping for someone else to fulfil his needs or the needs of his family. This is really what Self-Help is all about. If you want something, do not sit around waiting for help. Work hard and help yourself to get it.



The end result of this is that you will feel stronger, more confident, nobler, and more fulfilled, as you worked hard and earned whatever it was that you desired.

## Be a Person of Value

*“The people most beloved to Allah are those who are most beneficial to the people. The most beloved deed to Allah is to make a Muslim happy, or to remove one of his troubles, or to forgive his debt, or to feed his hunger.”(Mu’jam Al-Awsat)*

A selfish lifestyle is not befitted a believer. Allah has made us part of this ummah and it is our duty to care for each other. This Hadith highlights a very important aspect of goal-setting, the best goals are those which benefit others.

This can be applied to earning an income as well, as the fastest way to earn Halal wealth is to do something productive that benefits others. If your products and services are beneficial to others, and reasonably priced, they will purchase it. This is because every person is worried about their own benefits and interests.

Capitalism has led many people to abandon this principle. Today, many companies purposely sell things which are harmful (cigarettes being a clear example) because they see it as a means of getting rich quickly. They many even lie about the benefits of what they sell, and they might set up deceptive advertisements to coax people into purchasing it.

The gains made through such business are short-term and lacking any blessing from Allah. In the long run, such people will find their unethical practices coming back to haunt them in a variety of ways, the most common of which is the lack of inner peace.

As Muslims, it is inexcusable to sell harmful products or services for the sake of getting rich quickly. We believe that Allah is the provider

and He will provide what is destined for you, whether you choose to earn it in a manner that is pleasing to Him or not. The different is that if you choose to earn it the wrong way it will lack any blessings, be a cause of harm for you, and you will be held accountable for it in the Afterlife.

We have a collective duty to help each other and benefit each other. We must keep this in mind when setting our life goals, and our business goals. Set up projects and businesses that benefit humanity, and you will experience happiness, increase, blessings and good relations with others too.

## Avoid Harming Others

*“Harm may neither be inflicted nor reciprocated.”(Ibn Majah)*

Just as our goals must be beneficial, we must make sure none of our goals are harmful to ourselves or anybody else. This comprehensive Hadith constitutes one of the five major maxims governing Islamic law.

Islam revolves around the removal of harm, and as a result any action that causes harm to oneself or anybody else is prohibited, unless its benefits outweigh its harms.

It is very important for us to keep this principle in mind when formulating our goals. Our goals should be harmless and beneficial.

In a capitalistic society, it is easy to fall into the trap of only thinking about one's own interests. Many people step on others to get ahead, mistreat their employees, take advantage of kind people, and engage in Haraam transactions for the sake of making a profit.

A Muslim needs to be firm in his principles, and focused on benefitting humanity. In making our goals, we must avoid harming people directly or indirectly. An example of indirect harm is dealing in interest. We do not see the harm our interest-based transactions cause, yet if we study the global economy, its harms become quite clear.

When avoiding harm, this also includes avoiding harming oneself. Sometimes we get so caught up in chasing our goals that we neglect our own needs and push ourselves too hard. This leads to various diseases, burnout and eventually giving up the pursuit of one's goals.

We must strike a balance between chasing goals and fulfilling the rights of others and ourselves. Take out time to rest and have Halal fun,

eat properly, sleep adequately and avoid unhealthy habits like smoking.

A healthy human being is more productive and able to work faster in attaining his/her goals. The golden rule taught in this Hadith is critical for real success in both worlds: Do not cause harm to yourself or anybody else.

## Be Consistent

*“The most beloved of deeds to Allah are those that are most consistent, even if it is small.” (Saheeh Bukhari)*

Once your goals are set and clarified, the real task begins. Working hard at chasing these goals until they become a reality. Many people do not pursue their goals because they look at the goals as too big and beyond their abilities to grasp. They see a large task ahead of them and give up immediately.

This also occurs in our spirituality. We look at practicing Islam as something huge, and tend to have unrealistic expectations of perfection for ourselves and others. As a result, many people give up without even trying.

This hadith provides the perfect solution to this problem. In time-management, we call it chunking. Breaking down a huge task into manageable chunks.

The Hadith is talking primarily about acts of worship. Sometimes, we plunge directly into too many acts of worship in one day, and are too burned out for the rest of the week to do any acts of worship. As per the advice in this Hadith, a better strategy would be to do a moderate amount of worship (beyond what is obligatory) every day with consistency. In this way, we are consistently growing closer to Allah, and closer to our goal of being with Him in Paradise.

For example, instead of praying eight Rakah of Qiyam Al-Layl (Tahajjud) one night, then being too exhausted to pray it for the next week, pray two Rakah of Qiyam every night with concentration and reflection. This will be far more stable in helping you build your Imaan and grow closer to Allah.

We can apply this same principle to other aspects of our lives. For example, if you are studying and have a 300 word assignment to write, instead of leaving the entire assignment for last minute, break it down into manageable chunks and work on it consistently.

In this way, you will break it down into planning, researching, data collection, analysing, writing the first draft, editing, referencing and finalizing it. For each stage, you will give yourself a deadline and a manageable amount of work to do each day. In this manner, you will complete the assignment professionally and ahead of schedule without any stress.

Consistency is key in achieving our goals, and the way to be consistent is to keep things small and manageable. We all want to change the world but Madina wasn't established in one day! It takes years a planned consistent action to achieve major goals.

After setting a goal, consistency is the most important ingredient in turning that goal into a reality.

## Give Charity

*“Some people from amongst the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), ‘O Messenger of Allah, the affluent have made off with the rewards; they pray as we pray, they fast as we fast, and they give [much] in charity by virtue of their wealth.’”*

*(Saheeh Muslim)*

Wealth is the result of consistent effort in chasing one’s financial goals, but with this wealth comes great responsibility as well as great opportunity.

In Islam there is no restriction on how much wealth a person can earn. Allah will not ask us about how much we earned but He will ask us about how we earned it and how we spent it. Setting ethical goals assists us in earning wealth the correct way.

As far as spending is concerned, the poor have a right in our wealth. Zakah is an obligation, Allah has obligated it “so that wealth does not circulate among the rich only.” This is a huge difference between Islam and Capitalism. Islam is concerned with the status of all citizens, everybody deserves a chance and wealth shouldn’t be squandered by the wealthy few.

Being wealthy offers a believer an opportunity to do more good deeds than others. In this Hadith, some of the poorer Sahaba complained that they were unable to do as many good deeds as the wealthy, because they did all the same good deeds but the wealthy could also give charity.



In this, we see the advantage of earning Halal wealth and spending it on the ummah. By building one's income, you put yourself in a position to be the hand that gives, instead of the hand that receives.

You now have the opportunity to do good deeds that you were unable to do before, like assisting orphans and widows, giving charity, helping someone else with start-up cash for a business, paying off people's debts and helping the victims of war. You can become an asset to this ummah.

This is the advantage of being a wealthy Muslim, but one can only have this advantage if one has Taqwa (God-consciousness). To think about Allah and realize your wealth is a test. It is an opportunity to thank Allah and assist His servants. It is a gift that must be used wisely. Investing your wealth wisely in community projects benefits the entire ummah in this world, and yourself in both worlds. It's a win/win situation for all.

## Think Win/Win

*“How wonderful is the situation of the believer, for all his affairs are good. If something good happens to him, he gives thanks for it and that is good for him; if something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience, and that is good for him. This does not apply to anyone other than the believer.”*

*(Saheeh Muslim)*

Thinking Win/Win is the attitude of a successful person. In every area of life, a believer must look for a solution in which everybody benefits. In conflict management, this usually means creative thinking to find a unique solution to problems. In business, it means creating an environment in which nobody feels oppressed and everybody is growing together.

The Hadith above speaks about thinking Win/Win in how to look at life in general. Life is made up of two stages and it keeps flowing from one to the other. These are the good times and the bad times. Our life goes through periods of ease and periods of difficulty. This is the nature of the world and we must accept the world as it is.

The hadith above teaches an optimistic approach to this world. Yes, there will be both good and bad times, but even the bad times are good for us if we approach them positively.

This world is a test, and at all times we are being tested. During times of ease, we are being tested as to whether we will be grateful to Allah and persistent in obeying Him when everything is going our way. This

is actually the harder test to pass, as many people become complacent and neglectful during the easy times.

The difficulties we face in life are also a test, to test our patience, fortitude and ability to rise over our obstacles. These difficulties should not be considered calamities, rather we should reframe them as challenges and opportunities for growth.

As you pursue your life goals. Your life will go through these cycles. Your mission is to keep your eye of the goal and push through each obstacle, never becoming complacent during times of ease or losing hope during times of adversity.

Think Win/Win in every situation. If you remain persistent and grateful during good times, you win in both worlds. If you remain focused and patient during difficult times, you also win in both worlds. Either way, you are on the path to victory so stay focused and no matter what the situation, think Win/Win.

## Make every minute count

*“There are two blessings which many people lose:  
(They are) health and free time for doing good  
deeds.” (Saheeh Bukhari)*

Time Management is crucial for personal development. Unless we learn how to manage our time properly and get every task for the day done on time, we will be unable to complete our current goals, let alone chase greater ones.

This Hadith reminds us that many people take their health and free time for granted until it is too late to do anything constructive with them. Many of us wasted our youth in sins and entertainment utilizing every bit of energy and time to enjoy ourselves with things that won't benefit us later in life at all.

Imagine if that same time and energy was converted into something positive and productive. Imagine if a young person decided to spend some of that time and energy on helping others and chasing some noble goals.

We don't really need to imagine this, because there have been thousands of examples of such young people throughout history. While the many waste away their time and energy until it is too late, the few who recognize these gifts and utilize them productively rise above the rest and accomplish wonders.

Accountability for our time is crucial for success. Keep a log of how you spend an average day and you will realize how much time we generally waste. When you realize that, you can then formulate a plan to use some of that time more productively. Of course, you still need some time to have Halal fun, as it isn't wise to push yourself so much that you burn out and give up.

Time management is simply the realization that time is valuable, and we are accountable for how we use it. It is the realization that time is a great resource and that we are capable of far more on a daily basis than we thought possible. It is the systematic organization of our lives around tasks that help us achieve our goals.

A detailed discussion of the how's of time management is not possible in this short e-book. I have written a separate book dedicated to a detailed discussion on the topic, entitled *Getting the Barakah: An Islamic Guide to Time Management*.



**PURCHASE YOUR COPY OF  
GETTING THE BARAKAH  
TODAY!**

[www.islamicselfhelp.com](http://www.islamicselfhelp.com)

## Learn From Your Mistakes

*“The believer is not bitten from the same hole twice.” (Saheeh Bukhari)*

One of the reasons that many people fail to pursue their goals is fear. Many of us are afraid of being wrong, making mistakes, failing, looking stupid and trying new things. This fear is paralyzing and holds us back from our true potential.

This Hadith teaches us to reframe mistakes as something positive, as learning experiences. We need not fear making mistakes, we just need to learn from them.

As you continue your journey towards your goals, you will make mistakes. It's human nature and there isn't a successful person on earth (or in Paradise) who hasn't made mistakes along the way. We need to accept this as part of life. We are humans and humans make mistakes, so why fear something which is part of human experience?

A mistake does not have to be something bad for you, it's all about perspective. From an ego-driven perspective, every mistake seems devastating and embarrassing; but if you let go of your ego and focus on personal development, you will realize that mistakes are a necessary part of our growth.

As a child, you didn't learn to walk or talk without making many mistakes along the way, but they never deterred you from your goals. You were determined to walk and talk like the bigger human beings and so you pushed through your mistakes, learned from them and eventually mastered the arts of walking and talking.

If you were capable of that as a toddler, what makes you think you are not capable of doing the same as an adult? Often, entering a new field, starting a new career and chasing a new goal can feel like learning to

walk all over again. You will find yourself making many mistakes, but each mistake is good for you if you learn from it.

Every mistake you make on the path towards your life goals is an opportunity to grow, to learn, to mature, to evolve and to rise. It is a challenge that you make you a better person. It is part of being human, and it is a stepping stone on the path to success. Do not fear mistakes, avoid repeating old ones and learn from the ones. This way, we are always growing stronger with each mistake we learn from.

The fear that holds us back from pursuing our goals is a sign of low self-confidence. Self-confidence is crucial for success and this why I have written an entire book dedicated to this topic, entitled *Best of Creation: An Islamic Guide to Self-Confidence*.

Best of Creation will  
be available July  
2015 in both digital  
and print formats.  
Stay tuned to  
[www.islamicselfhelp.com](http://www.islamicselfhelp.com)  
for updates.

## The Sabr Factor

*“Whenever Allah wills good for a person, He subjects him to adversity.” (Saheeh Bukhari)*

There has never been a single great goal throughout history that was accomplished easily. If you have noble goals, expect to face a lot of adversity along the way. These adversities are challenges that build our character and help us grow into even better people, bringing us closer to fulfilling our true potential.

Regardless of the challenges you face, you need to push on towards your goals. This in Arabic is called *Sabr* and it is a key characteristic of the believer, emphasized multiple times in the Qur’an and Sunnah. *Sabr* is usually translated as patience but it is actually a very complex word and includes the meanings of patience, persistence, self-control and consistency. Each of these meanings are important when it comes to personal development.

### *Patience*

Achieving one’s dreams and accomplishing one’s goals is not a short-term project. It requires a life-long commitment to a better lifestyle, and that requires patience. If your dreams are great and your goals are high, you will not accomplish them overnight.

You will have to learn to think long term, and focus on long term results. One way to do this is to visualize your goals. Visualization means to think about it as if it has already come true. We need to visualize paradise and what our home in Paradise will look like. This will motivate us to stay away from anything that can get in the way of us getting to Paradise. This is part of the patience needed to get to paradise. We can transfer the same principle to our worldly lives.



## *Persistence*

Persist in your tasks regardless of obstacles or fatigue. On the long path to accomplishing your goals, you will definitely face obstacles and setbacks. This is the nature of the world, and something we must come to terms with if we wish to live happy and content lives. The world is not perfect, it is a testing ground and so each of us will be tested in a variety of ways.

The key here is to be prepared. Prepare yourself mentally and emotionally for any expected setbacks on the path to accomplishing your goals, prepare to deal with them positively and push on with your goals regardless of what the setback is. Then should such a situation arise, put your plan into action and persist.

There is no goal worth accomplishing which does not face its share of setbacks. If it is a goal worth accomplishing, it is a goal worth struggling for, and no amount of setbacks should stop you from accomplishing it.

## *Self-Control*

Self-Control is another translation for Sabr and usually refers to controlling your urge to sin. Personal Development too requires great self-control. This is something we all need to train ourselves at. We will have days when we want to waste time, when we want to do things that we will regret later. We must resist such urges as best we can, and focus on our goals.

Self-Control is also good for your self-confidence. The more in-control you are of your desires, thoughts and actions, the better you feel about yourself and this in turn increases productivity. Self-Control in time management includes switching off your phone and social media when you need to focus. Working on your projects even when you feel lazy or want to be distracted, and resisting the urge to spend your workday on YouTube and comedy websites.

## *Consistency*

Sabr also carries the meaning of Consistency. Consistency is key to achieving any goal. If you set deadlines, milestones and tasks but don't adhere to them, you will not be able to achieve your goals.

Any long-term or short-term project requires consistent effort. To make small steps daily towards the accomplishment of such goals is the only way forward, but these small steps need to be well-planned and implemented on a consistent basis.

Allah loves us, and part of this love is to send such adversities into our lives that transform us into better people, giving us the skills and tools we need to accomplish our goals and earn His Forgiveness. Do not fear the tests of life, they are a gift from Allah to build us up and they make the achievement of our goals all the more sweeter and satisfying.

## Conclusion

Alhamdulillah, you have completed reading this book. Now comes the real challenge, to put it all this into practice and transform your life into a more productive fulfilling existence.

These few pages were just an introduction to some of the major concepts in personal development. There is much to learn and explore as we continue on our journey to become the best of Creation.

Allah has created humans with almost unlimited potential to grow and succeed in both worlds. When we study the history of this world, we are amazed at the remarkable things that people accomplished.

The truth is that these people are the same as you and I, they were human beings with the same natural born capabilities, yet they never wasted their time and continued working on improving themselves until they became the best they could be. We too have the potential to do the same.

Many of us focus a lot of our resources by investing in property and companies and other financial assets. Yet, one of the best things you can invest in is yourself.

Allocate some of your time, money and resources to developing yourself by learning new skills on a constant basis. In the long run, this will prove to be one of your greatest assets.

As you close this book, I hope you take it as a step on a life long journey of continuous improvement. Imagine you had to read just one important book every month of your life, imagine the changes you will experience over time.

As believers, we must strive for continuous self-improvement as none of us are perfect. It is true that no human can attain perfection, but Allah looks at our effort and rewards accordingly. Now it is up to you

to focus on your journey and keep climbing and growing. It is a beautiful journey that nobody regrets embarking on.

I end by asking Allah to accept this writing from us, use it as a means of guidance for people, and add it to our scales of good deeds on the Last Day. I ask Allah to help each of us utilize our full potential to serve this ummah and make this world a better place.

Jazakallah Khair for your time, and I hope you enjoyed reading this as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Was Salaam

Your Brother

Abu Muawiyah Ismail Kamdar

[www.abumuawiyah.com](http://www.abumuawiyah.com)

[www.islamicselfhelp.com](http://www.islamicselfhelp.com)