

THE GREATEST INFLUENCE YOU WILL EVER HAVE
IS BEFORE THEY STOP LISTENING.

Before They Stop Listening

HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP
YOUR CHILD WILL ALWAYS RETURN TO

“

*O you who believe!
Protect yourselves
and your families
from a Fire...*

— QUR'AN 66:6



PRACTICAL
ISLAMIC WISDOM
FOR PARENTS
AT EVERY STAGE
OF THEIR CHILD'S
LIFE.



BUILD TRUST
THAT LASTS



LISTEN WITH
MERCY



CREATE A HOME
THEY RETURN TO



RAISE BELIEVERS,
NOT JUST FOLLOWERS



MAKE DU'A YOUR
GREATEST TOOL



Before They Stop Listening



*How to Build a Relationship Your Child Will Always
Return To*



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Before They Stop Listening
How to Build a Relationship Your Child Will Always Return To

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Qur'anic meanings and hadith translations are the author's renderings, presented for reflection. Readers are encouraged to return to the original sources and qualified scholars for precise wording and rulings.

This book offers general Islamic guidance and reflection on parenting. It is not a substitute for individualized advice from a qualified scholar, counselor, or medical professional. If your family is in crisis, please seek the appropriate professional support.

First edition.



*For every parent still trying —
and for every child who ever needed one more chance to
be met with mercy.*



*"My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up
when I was small."*

— Qur'an 17:24



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INTRODUCTION

Before They Stop Listening

*The relationship you are building right now, one ordinary
day at a time*



*"Say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought
me up when I was small.'"*

— Qur'an 17:24



There is a moment every parent eventually faces, though none of us ever sees it coming. It doesn't announce itself. It doesn't arrive with warning. One day your child simply stops running to the door when you come home. They close the bedroom door a little more often. Their answers get shorter. "How was school?" becomes "fine." "What's wrong?" becomes "nothing." And somewhere in the space between those short answers, a parent quietly begins to wonder: when did my child stop telling me things?

I remember a mother who came to me in tears, not because her seventeen-year-old son had done anything scandalous or dangerous, but because of something smaller and, in its own way, more painful. She had found out from a photo on his friend's



social media that he had won an award at school three weeks earlier. He hadn't told her. Not out of malice. Not out of rebellion. He simply hadn't thought to. "When did I become someone he doesn't run to anymore?" she asked. "I used to be the first person he wanted to tell everything."

That question sits at the heart of this book.

Every parent reading these pages loves their child. That was never in question. You have stayed up through fevers, budgeted for school shoes, memorized favorite snacks, prayed in the dark for their safety. Your love has never been the problem. But love, on its own, does not guarantee closeness. Love does not automatically produce a child who wants to come to you when life gets hard, who trusts you with the truth, who still calls at twenty-five just to hear your voice. That kind of relationship — the kind that lasts, that survives puberty and independence and distance and disagreement — has to be built. Deliberately. Patiently. And, most importantly, while there is still time.

That is the quiet urgency behind the title of this book. There is a window in every parent-child relationship, a season when a child is still deciding how much of their inner world to hand over to you. It rarely closes with a slam. It closes gradually, the way a door eases shut when no one is holding it open. And there comes a day — we do not get to choose which one — after which it becomes very difficult to open again. Not impossible. Allah's mercy makes almost nothing impossible. But difficult, and often costly, in ways that take years to undo.



This book is not about parenting from fear. It is not a manual for controlling outcomes, because no parent — however devoted, however careful — controls the heart of another human being, not even their own child. Hidayah, guidance, belongs to Allah alone. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself grieved over his beloved uncle Abu Talib, who protected him for decades yet died outside the fold of Islam, and Allah revealed to His Messenger ﷺ: "Indeed, you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills" (Qur'an 28:56). If the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ could not guarantee the heart of a man he loved so deeply, then no parent should carry the illusion that love alone secures an outcome. What we can do — what we are commanded to do — is plant, tend, and remain. We create the conditions in which a soul is most likely to turn toward faith and toward us, and then we surrender the rest to the One who turns hearts.

That surrender, though, is not passivity. It is the opposite. Because Allah has placed enormous weight on what happens inside a home. Consider how the Qur'an frames the responsibility: "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones" (Qur'an 66:6). This is not a suggestion. It is addressed to believers as a command, using the same grammatical form used for prayer and fasting. Protecting our children is not an optional extra layered on top of faith — it is an act of faith itself, one for which we will be asked.

And when the Prophet ﷺ was asked about the rights children have upon their parents, he did not speak only of



provision and protection. He spoke of manners, of teaching, and — repeatedly, throughout his own life — of tenderness. This is a man who kissed his grandsons in public and was told by a Bedouin man that he had ten children and had never kissed a single one. The Prophet ﷺ replied, "What can I do for you if Allah has removed mercy from your heart?" (Bukhari). Mercy was not decoration in his character. It was the operating principle.

Somewhere along the way, many of us absorbed a different model of parenting — one built more on control than on connection, more on the fear of shame than the pull of love, more on being obeyed than on being trusted. Perhaps we inherited it from our own upbringing. Perhaps we adopted it because it looked, on the surface, like discipline and structure — qualities every good parent wants to instill. But there is a difference between raising a child who obeys you because they fear you and raising a child who honors you because they love you and trust your heart. Only one of those relationships survives adolescence. Only one of those relationships still exists when your child is thirty-five, going through their own hardships, deciding whom to call first.

This book will walk through both halves of that equation — the spiritual and the practical, because in a Muslim home they were never meant to be separate. We will look honestly at mercy, because it is the foundation everything else is built on. We will study the Prophet ﷺ not as a distant, saintly figure but as an actual father and grandfather whose everyday interactions with children are recorded in astonishing, tender detail. We will talk



about discipline without confusing it with harshness, about listening as an act of worship in itself, about the words we use without thinking and the damage or healing they carry, about repairing what has already cracked, about raising children who love Salah rather than merely perform it, about the Qur'an as a living companion rather than a chore, about smartphones and the strange new mission field they have created inside our own homes, about the particular ache of a distant teenager, about staying relevant to a child who is becoming an adult, and about the quiet, unseen power of du'a — the one tool available to every parent, in every circumstance, regardless of how the visible relationship currently stands.

If you are reading this because things already feel strained — because your teenager barely speaks to you, because you said something in anger last week that you cannot take back, because you feel like you have already lost ground — please hear this clearly before we go any further: it is not too late. Allah's mercy is not rationed, and neither is a child's capacity to soften toward a parent who sincerely changes. People change. Homes change. Hearts — by Allah's permission — change.

And if you are reading this while things still feel good — while your children still run to greet you, still climb into your lap, still tell you everything before you even ask — then this book is, if anything, even more urgent for you. Because the habits you build now, in these ordinary and often exhausting days, are what will hold when the winds of adolescence and adulthood begin to blow. You are not just managing today. You are laying the foundation for a door that stays open for the rest of your life.