



"Be fearful at night when you are hopeful (of Allah's mercy), and be hopeful (of Allah's mercy) if you wake up fearful. So often time has brought hardships, and with them, mercies (from Allah)."

Ibn ^Asakir

This year, as you might have noticed, the Olympics are coming to a town near you. London 2012 kicks off this summer and with it the fanfare, faux-nationalism and revelry. Athletes from all over the world, who have dedicated their lives to sport, join together to celebrate their achievements. Why, then, do I already feel a sense of dejection and boredom in the public mood? For all the glossy adverts and expensive campaigns, the whole parade reminds me somewhat of a child being forced to 'smile for the camera' for the purposes of a memento that no one is going to look at.

Ambition, if channelled properly, is something good. To have the drive and the 'get-up-and-go' to bring change for the better is undoubtedly admirable when teamed with a worthwhile cause. Furthermore, for anyone out there needing extra motivation to fulfil their aims in life (be it raising children, starting a business or organising a beneficial project), this can be achieved through a positive mindset, using the following tips:

Du^a` – never forget to supplicate to Allah, both in the happy and sad times. If there is something that you want, then ask Allah for it with a sincere and hopeful heart. A few times in my life I have wanted something so much and I cast aside the voice that said 'You won't get it' and forced myself to rely on Allah and we were granted those things by the Grace and Mercy of Allah, in the most amazing way.

Ramadan – the month where many of us start as we mean to go on, repenting from sins and replacing bad habits with good ones. Many women take this opportunity to start wearing the

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. Men may strive to perform congregational prayers more regularly, and make efforts to visit relatives instead of wasting time with TV or the internet.

Eat well and exercise – throughout the year, make the healthiest choices you can, to benefit your body and mind. This could be by eating less (especially caffeine and sugar), going for a walk every day and staying hydrated.

Aim high - don't underestimate your own potential. Be optimistic and try your hardest even if the goal seems like it's out of reach. If things go wrong, dust yourself off and keep on going. Above all else, realise that Isl am, and the *da^wah* are the path to success, so your efforts are not in vain.

Marriage – if you are not already married and have the need for marriage, then actively seek it or be open to those seeking you if they are good candidates. For many of the practising Muslims I know, it was marriage that helped set them free from their own shortcomings, allowing them to reach their fullest potential. The journey is a lot easier when you have a trusted companion by your side. If you are married, then make that relationship strong and special and fight your challenges together, every day.