The Ramadan Early Bird Series – Worksheet 2: May 2012 – Focus on unhealthy habits

Diagnosis:

Consider your unhealthy habits and fill out the following table:

Activity	Number of times used per day	Average total usage time per day
Personal email (non-work related)		
Facebook		
Twitter		
LinkedIn		
Other social media		
YouTube		
Blogs		
Discussion forums		
Other websites (e.g. news, sports, entertainment)		
Note: Online activities include use via mobile phone.		
Phonecalls (mobile and landline)		
Text messaging (SMS) / BBM		
Online chatting (G-chat, MSN, MXit, etc)		
Offline reading (newspapers, books, magazines, etc)		
Passive entertainment (TV, radio, music, movies, etc)		
Active entertainment (e.g. Computer / console games – NOT physical sport)		
Totals for the week		

Now for each item on your list, ask yourself the following questions. Write your answers on a separate page.

1. Whose resources (e.g. computer, bandwidth) do I use for this? (e.g. work? school? parents?) And if it's someone else's, am I allowed to be using their resources for this?
2. Why do I do it as often as I do?
3. When I use it, why do I spend this amount of time on it?
4. How does using it make me feel? And how long does that feeling last?
5. Do I neglect loved ones / people that are right in front of me while I do this? Do these things cause me to spend less quality time with them?
6. What time do I switch these things (e.g. mobile phone, computer) off for the day?
7. For the entertainment-related items, what is the main message of the music / movies / games? And is this something admirable or meaningful?
8. What are the benefits of this thing? (Break this up into worldly and Hereafter categories)
9. What are the risks / dangers of this thing? (Break this up into worldly and Hereafter categories)
10. Does this harm my ibadah and relationship with Allah? (For example, do I delay my salaah for these things? And in salaah and other worship, do I think about these things?)

(Initial) Analysis:

After answering the questions from the previous step, use the table below to identify and list the weaknesses or problems you think you have in the abovementioned areas:

Weakness / Problem
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

(Root cause) Analysis:

Copy your weaknesses / problems from the previous table to the table below, and now use this table below to find the root cause of each issue. If you need more space, use a separate page:

For the full post / series, visit productivemuslim.com

Issue	Outward symptoms	Root causes *(Keep asking "Why?" until you come to the most basic cause)*
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Solutions:

Now brainstorm and list practical ways to solve the issues from the root. While doing this, consider the following questions to help you come up with solutions:

1. If I give up / reduce my usage, what benefits could I gain?
2. What would I like to achieve in life that I haven't / haven't tried – because I feel I don't have the time?
3. What small steps could I take towards fulfilling those ambitions, if I were to have more free time?
4. What safety mechanisms and physical steps can I take to cut down on these things? (e.g. when I need to do something important, moving my computer / other distractions to somewhere not so accessible)
5. Can I arrange my time to be more self-disciplined in these habits? (For example, set specific times in the day when you'll check email - and stick to it. Or set times each day where you ban yourself from using the Internet / the medium of distraction.)
6. Can I use any technology applications to block my usage of sites I'd like to leave?
7. Can I set aside a day or two per month to live completely without these things?

Weakness / Problem	Possible solutions
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Planning and implementation:

Now analyse your current life and come up with a realistic plan of how you can implement the solutions for each issue – breaking solutions into baby steps that you'll work on consistently this month (and perhaps in the months that follow). Feel free to make adjustments as needed, if you find you're not coping. Also include ideas on how you can intensify your efforts for Ramadan.

Resources

For resources to help you with this month's challenge, visit productivemuslim.com and check the Ramadan Early Bird series posts.