

Fasting to Gain Clarity & Discipline

Ramadan is the Islamic month of fasting for Muslims around the world and is one of the five pillars of Islam. Muslims fast for up to 30 days, from sunrise to sunset & abstain from food, water, sexual activity, gossiping, profanity, entertainment and use this time to draw themselves closer to God and purification.

What does fasting mean for me?

Being born & raised a Muslim, I kept my first fast when I was just five years old. Its one of my favourite months in the year and I use this time as a way to purify and cleanse the mind, body & spirit from worldly materials, connect with my faith on a deeper level and spiritually ascend. I look forward to it each year for many reasons other than my faith. Observing this month in the Western world comes with its challenges, but also feels more rewarding because of the added challenge of continuing with each day as "normal" as possible.

30
days of

:Ascension



During fasting, as you practice letting go of worldly matters that you normally hold so close to your daily life and routine, you begin to realise how much you're consumed by the media, social pressures, politics, other peoples opinions, your relationships, your job and more. Removing yourself from the centre of these things & letting go, allows you to gain perspective and show you just how menial these things are in the grand purpose & journey of life. We are so much more when we're not confined to the boxes we slot ourselves into.

:Purification



We may not realise, but every day we carry with us different forms of emotions like envy, greed, hatred, annoyance, expectation & more. Things that don't make us feel good, nor do any good for our soul. During Ramadan, I work on purification of my mind, heart & spirit by cleansing my thoughts and practising detachment from materialism & worldly expectations. This is what fascinates me about the mind, when we show up & commit to something we care about, we are capable of achieving so much.

:Detoxification



On any normal day, it's automated behaviour to just stop off for a coffee & indulge in luxury foods from brownies to sushi. There's moments where I plan for the next lunch out, or dinner with friends, but when I'm fasting my willpower astounds me. I can sit at a lunch meeting with all my favourite foods in front of me and not even need to control my impulses or urges because I have a bigger mission & I've trained my mind to prepare for this month of fasting.



How do I develop myself & apply these learnings?

There's nothing more enticing than the smell and sight of food when you're fasting. If you can coach your mind into looking at someone eat your favourite food right in front of you & you resist the urge to join them, that is discipline.

5 Key Learnings —

01

Delayed Gratification — there's nothing more enticing than the smell and sight of food when you're fasting. If you can coach your mind to watch someone eat your favourite food right in front of you & not be influenced, you've begun to master control using your mind and have gained the ability to overcome temptation and impulsive feelings.

02

Resilience — fasting is not about achieving perfection. It's about 'practising' and as the word itself suggests, it's about doing your best and acknowledging you're on a journey to self improvement and self-mastery and making mistakes is a part of progression, so long as you can bounce back.

03

Building Better Habits — train your mind into working through momentary and temporary feelings, emotions & thoughts. Having a mission & focus to work towards supports the discipline building & keeps you accountable, even when you're faced with an impulse or a temptation.

04

Learning Detachment — the idea that "nothing even matters" is one I feel deeply during fasting. Choosing to surrender and trusting the moment you're in, allows you to feel free and light - releasing worries, anxieties, the past, the future and anything that can pull you down.

05

Building Patience — when fasting, you are going to be tested and challenged every moment of each day and this is how you'll be able to build the patience for accepting situations for what they are. Patience is not just about waiting, it's about our behaviour whilst we're waiting that really matters.

Final thoughts —

If you've never tried fasting before, I highly recommend that you do. I've tried and tested it for decades and the feeling you get is unmatched. You truly learn so much about yourself, your traits, behaviours, impulses and it's a really great way to challenge yourself and build better habits for a more conscious lifestyle.