

THE ART OF
BLESSED
GATHERINGS

On mercy, empathy,
& being conscious of
how we make people feel

with Diyamah Hadfima

Event Notes



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Assalamualaikum Champs,

Before Diyanah began, she shared that she'd always seen the retreats she hosts through Muslim Travel Club as holding space. But when I called it a Gathering of Hearts, she said it sent her back through years of her own work to look again.

Because a **gathering needs a room**. And a room has to be prepared before anyone arrives - swept out, cleared, made ready to receive. ***What Diyanah returned to all night was that the room is us.*** We cannot offer anyone a space we have not first made inside ourselves.

So these notes are not instructions. They are what we gathered from a beautiful soul reflecting out loud. I pray they help you tend your own room - and receive whomever Allah sends to its door.

Fida

DIYANAH STARTED BY ASKING

“Who is the most intelligent person in the world?”

Every one of us in the call answered the same - Rasulullah ﷺ. Diyanah agreed, but she said that was never the real question. ***The real question is why.***

Most of us carry a definition of intelligence we inherited from school: scoring well, dissecting a complex idea, solving the difficult thing. And if that is what intelligence is, then what do emotions have to do with it?

But Rasulullah ﷺ was not only given the message. ***He ﷺ was the one who delivered it.*** Which means his method deserves as much attention as the words themselves - and his method, overwhelmingly, was how he made people feel.

Compare all
of creation's
intelligence to
the Prophet's ﷺ,
and it is one
grain of sand
against the sand
of the entire earth.

-Wahb Ibn Munabbih



Diyanah gets asked constantly why she doesn't run more retreats. Why only once a month. And she has never known how to answer because it sounds strange out loud: she needs to recover afterwards. Not because it is bad. Not because anything went wrong. She is careful about this - she calls it **a good kind of tiredness**.

But she has spent seven to ten days holding what a room full of people brought with them. People arrive at an airport as strangers and hand her things they have been carrying for years. To hold that, there has to be somewhere to put it. And that somewhere is inside her.

So why should we hold space for others?

TO FOLLOW THE PROPHET ﷺ

1

He ﷺ was sent to perfect good character. How can we say we are from the Ummah of Rasulullah ﷺ if we turn away the people whom Allah SWT sends to us? We need to ask ourselves: How do people feel around us? Do they leave calmer than they arrived?

2

WE CANNOT DO WITHOUT EACH OTHER

No one exists in silos.

When the first revelation came, Rasulullah ﷺ was terrified and ran to Khadijah RA for safety. Connection wasn't incidental to that moment. If the best of creation needed someone to run to, we will not be the exception.

*People who have not
been listened to
find it hard to
listen to others.*

*People who have
never had anyone
hold space for them
cannot hold space
for others.*

*The cycle can
stop with us.*



Listening, in 3 Ways

Listening to Ourselves

A GOOD LISTENER IS ALMOST ALWAYS SOMEONE DEEPLY SELF-AWARE BECAUSE THEY LISTENED TO THEMSELVES FIRST. IF YOU CANNOT HEAR YOUR OWN ANGER, JEALOUSY, UNPROCESSED HURT, YOU WILL MISREAD EVERYONE.

Listening to Others

THERE IS AN INNATE HUMAN NEED TO BE HEARD. SLOWLY, PEOPLE WHO GO UNANSWERED STOP CALLING OUT. BUT DIYANAH WAS FIRM THAT THIS IS NOT A CLOSED DOOR. NEW RELATIONSHIPS CAN STILL BECOME SAFE ONES.

Listening to Allah

ONCE YOU CAN HEAR WHAT STIRS IN YOU, THE QUR'AN BECOMES A CONVERSATION. LISTENING TO ALLAH IS ANSWERING THE QUR'AN, NOT JUST READING IT.

Two Extremes that Empty Us

1) Stinginess

We think of generosity as money, or help, or something physical. Diyanah asked us to consider that time is also something we can be stingy with, and presence more so.

The human being is an intimate being. The person who never gives their presence, never concerns themselves with another's trauma because they have no space for anyone but themselves - this person will be very lonely. The deen teaches that giving is how you receive.



2) Overextended Bandwidth

Some invest so much emotional energy in outer social circles — even strangers online — that by the time they reach their inner circle, they're exhausted. Emotions meant for a spouse get handed to a coworker instead. Our social networks should sit at the outermost part of our attention. We vent outward rather than turning inward toward the people who need us most.

لَهُمْ رَحْمَةٌ أُبْلِغَهَا بِبَلَالِهَا

*The Prophet ﷺ said of his family:
"They have a bond of kinship with
me that I keep damp." (Bukhari)*

Diyanah sat on the word damp and would not let us pass it quickly. Think about what dryness does to a thing. It cracks, breaks, and eventually it dies. Rasulullah ﷺ is not describing the bond — he is describing the work of keeping it alive, and describing it as ongoing and deliberate.

Kinship does not sustain itself. Which is why Diyanah introduced herself to us as a daughter, a caregiver, a sister and an aunt before she mentioned directing the Muslim Travel Club. Not because the work matters less, but because Allah placed that particular set of people in her life and they have a haqq over her.

The Problem:

Our emotional energy is finite. It is not a renewable resource we can draw on indefinitely. By the time we reach the people Allah actually chose for us, all that's left is residue. Diyanah asked: would we want to be handed someone's remnants? Every day? Because that is what we are offering to the people close to us.

The Reset:

When you're depleted, go for Solah in congregation - go to the masjid, pray, sit, collect yourself, even from Asr to Maghrib if that's what it takes. Then return home the way you'd return to work: with intention. Shift your mindset at the door - "I'm coming home to work, emotionally, on being present" for whoever depends on you.

How we receive people:

Level 1: Acknowledge

A simple yes or no – the bare minimum.
Most adults receive only this.

Level 2: Genuine Excitement

Match the emotion being shared. Think how
we treat a child's discovery – extend that
same warmth to adults.

Level 3: Curiosity

Ask more. Don't just respond to the words,
respond to the meaning being communicated.



*“Not everything has
to be about you.”*

You don't need to have lived it to honour it. Diyanah hasn't been through divorce, doesn't have children, hasn't walked most of the roads her retreat guests have — and she said so plainly.

Her question was simply: why does it have to be about me? Understanding isn't the entry fee for holding space. Presence is.

She doesn't go in to solve anyone's trauma. She goes in to let them set it down for a while.

Final Words

The point is not about people.
The point is Allah.

When we are gentle with His creation, something moves - Allah provides for those who give to others, in ways we do not get to trace. So connection to people is not a detour from connection to Him. People are only the means, and nearness to Allah is the ultimate goal.

