




NEW MUSLIM
ACADEMY

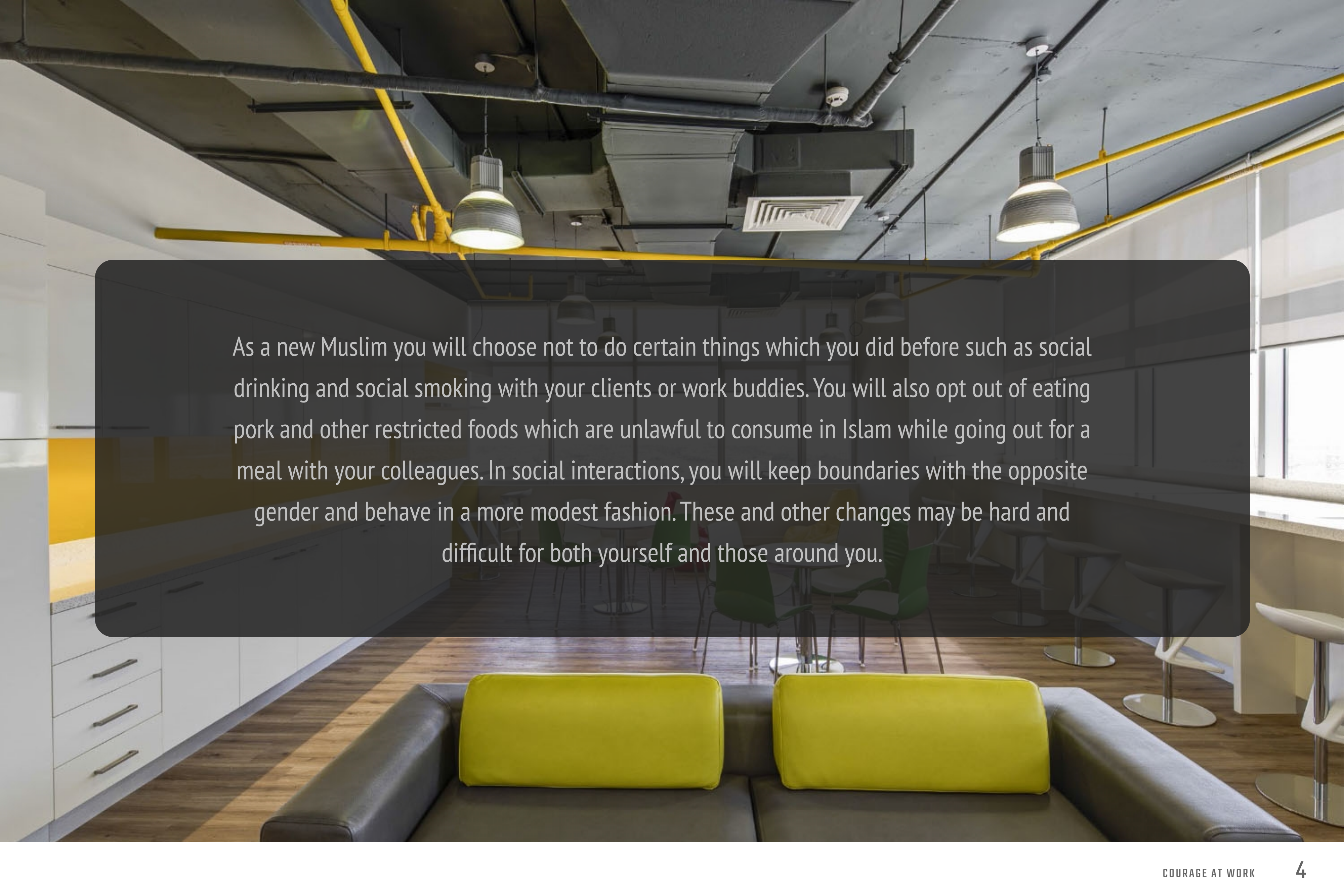
COURAGE AT WORK

A top-down view of a wooden desk. At the top is a large, dark computer monitor on a silver stand. To its right is a small, colorful, spiral-bound cup. Below the monitor are a pair of black-rimmed glasses. In the center of the desk is a dark grey rectangular box containing white text. Below the box is a white Apple keyboard and a white Apple mouse.

Working is part of life for many of us. Those of us who work, spend much of our life in the workplace. The Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) spoke to the importance of working when he informed us that the best wealth is that which is earned by one's own labour. He would encourage his companions to work even if all they could do was gather firewood and then sell it onto others. Many of his companions worked and some were prosperous business people. Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself worked before being commissioned as the final Messenger of God (peace be upon him). He was a shepherd and he also worked in business and commerce and traveled for trade as did his people in Makkan society.

Despite the necessity of work, the workplace environment can be challenging. We may sometimes find ourselves in uncomfortable situations in which our religious morals and ethics are tested. Sometimes these situations require quick decisions from us and at other times, we can take longer to think and assess things before making a decision. The regulations of Islam are never impossible to implement. Out of God's grace and kindness our personal abilities, circumstances and conditions are taken into consideration. There are concessions in Islam to difficult scenarios we may face but we have to ask and learn.





As a new Muslim you will choose not to do certain things which you did before such as social drinking and social smoking with your clients or work buddies. You will also opt out of eating pork and other restricted foods which are unlawful to consume in Islam while going out for a meal with your colleagues. In social interactions, you will keep boundaries with the opposite gender and behave in a more modest fashion. These and other changes may be hard and difficult for both yourself and those around you.

As we slowly and gradually increase in our faith in God, over time and with practice and prayer we will develop the inner pride and strength needed to have the conviction to deal with these situations. We should consider that Islam weaves through every part of our lives, as it is a complete way of life. Therefore, our five daily prescribed rituals will come into play as we are going about our daily routines. Prescribed ritual timings may come upon us whilst we're working, shopping or out with family or friends. The month of fasting, Ramadan, will dominate 30 days of our lives each and every year, despite our other jobs and responsibilities.

These acts of devotion being mixed with our everyday life gives us strength and courage. It helps us to try to do what is right and stand up for what is correct. This is not always easy. At times, we feel the pressure of what others may say or think when we need to offer our prescribed rituals at work, or when we cannot eat whilst others enjoy their lunch or when we refuse to go to a pub or bar with our friends after work. Yet at all of these times and in all of these situations, we remind ourselves about our duty to God first and foremost. This courage and resolve is itself worthy of great reward and is pleasing to God. Sometimes we will falter or make mistakes, and this is natural, yet we should always intend to do things to the best of our ability. This is what God wants from us and anything beyond this is not required of us.

There are a number of things we can do to help build the inner strength needed for such situations:

1

Firstly, developing this inner strength is a work in progress and is a fluctuating process full of peaks and lows. However, as much as possible we must try to remember God's rights on us and mention God and pray to Him seeking His aid and assistance. Then when faced in making decisions or deciding how we are going to react to a particular situation, one of the factors in our thinking process is asking God for help and guidance and knowing what God would want from us by inquiring and learning about His commandments. Working for God's pleasure is something that will bring about God's blessings and grace. Worshiping God and obeying Him should not make us feel embarrassed or ashamed. Rather, it should make us feel proud of our faith and strengthen our inner resolve.

Islam means submission to the commands of God and as Muslims we are constantly trying to submit ourselves to God wholeheartedly. Therefore, at times we will stay away from things which we desire, or want to do, or be expected to do by others because we know it is displeasing to God. This submission before God is one of the most rewarding good deeds that we can perform. Moreover, by submitting to God, we receive His grace and blessings and we come closer to Him by virtue of our devotion and humility before Him.



2

Secondly, we need to exercise patience. Some people will react negatively when they see us openly worshiping God. They may make a rude comment or laugh at us. They may make fun of the idea of fasting for so many hours each day for a month or even be worried about our health and well being. However, none of this should deter us.

We should remember our greater goal of pleasing God and earning favor with Him and how these actions are not for the pleasure of others. The Messengers of God (peace be upon them) were often made fun of by their people, but that never made them weaken their devotion to God or be neglectful of their religious duties. The negative reactions of others can sometimes influence us and make us feel discouraged or dampen our resolve. This is normal which is why the next point is very important.

3

Thirdly, speak to people in a wise and polite way to help them understand and be educated. Clear communication can remove misunderstanding and misinformation. People are often more accepting of things they understand. Sometimes people won't understand or accept but that's ok too. Not everyone has to be happy or accepting of what we do. People may have their own views and it's not our job to force them to see ours. However, we should still maintain good conduct and the desire to please God.

Often people's negative reactions are because of certain perceptions and preconceived notions they have.

When it comes to offering the prescribed rituals during work time, speak to your manager about offering them at work and finding a suitable time and place to do so. Make sure to utilize your lunch break or other breaks so your devotion does not affect your work and is not a detriment to your performance. God doesn't ask us to be negligent of our responsibilities. People take comfort breaks for a wide variety of reasons from going to the bathroom to smoking. We can and should use some of ours for our religious duties.

4

Lastly, God's mercy is complete and plentiful. There is always an answer in God's laws for every circumstance. Islam is a practical religion, which is firmly grounded in the reality of what we need to do in order to live productive and purpose driven lives. God doesn't burden us with more commands than we can bear, which means that there is a solution to our needs, we just need to ask the right people and find it.

If you find something is not possible in your workplace for one reason or another, speak to a qualified Islamic scholar and consult with your NMA instructors and counselors and they will counsel you as to how to deal with your particular situation. God's laws are such that they allow you to perform your religious duties and succeed in the work environment.



Here are three things you can do to put the above points into action:

- ① Remind yourself of what pleases God.
- ② Be resilient and patient with others and think of the greater goal
- ③ Speak to others and help them understand your requirements.

May God's protection be with you.