Horace Mann once said that, “A teacher who is attempting to teach without inspiring the pupil with a desire to learn is hammering on cold iron.” Unfortunately, as parents and educators, our emphasis is usually on ensuring that our children gain knowledge, but we seldom concern ourselves with inspiring our children to become lifetime learners. Some even imply that the teaching methodologies generally employed by our educational system are not conducive, insofar as having a generation who is truly conscientious of Allah SWT and understand the true nature of humanity and our purpose thereof.

The love and care that the Prophet expressed for the young sparked a deep desire within these young individuals and inspired them to take him as an example to learn from - and they did. Companions like Abdullah Ibn Abbas, Abdullah Ibn Masoud, and Abdullah Ibn Omar are amongst the many who were inspired through such effective teaching methods employed by the Prophet PBUH. Now we have inherited this task. It is upon us to inspire young men and women; therefore, we are required to replicate the methodology of the Prophet in light of the modern day challenges and a clear and comprehensive understanding of human development and behavior. We are aiming to not only develop the next generation of American Muslims, but a generation of American Muslim Scholars and Leaders. We want a generation that is prepared intellectually, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and physically to succeed as leaders in our country. In order for that to happen, we need to equip our children with a sound understanding of the Quranic principles, academic skills, and train them to have high ethical standards. We want them to integrate all these elements into their daily lives in order to make a positive contribution to the society at large.

When we look at the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, we find that he was always gentle, caring, and loving with the young. For example, Abu Hurraira mentions in Sahih Muslim that on an occasion:

I went along with Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) at a time during the day but he did not talk to me and I did not talk to him until he reached the market of Banu Qainuqa`. He came back to the tent of Fatimah and said, “Is the little chap (meaning Al-Hasan) there?” We were under the impression that his mother had detained him in order to bathe him and dress him and garland him with sweet garland. Not much time had passed that he (Al-Hasan) came running until both of them embraced each other, thereupon Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “O Allah, I love him; love him and love one who loves him.” (Muslim)

We will now examine the following four hadith from the Prophet PBUH and through a discussion (during the workshop) extract lessons related to the topic being discussed.

**Hadith1**

Imam Ahmad recorded Abu Umamah saying that a young man came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Give me permission to commit zina (Fornication)." The people surrounded him and rebuked him, saying, "Stop! Stop!" But the Prophet said, "Come close." The young man came to him, and he said, "Sit down," so he sat down. The Prophet said, "Would you like it (Fornication) for your mother?" He said, "No, by Allah, may I be ransomed for you." The Prophet said, "Would you like it for your daughter?" He said, "No, by Allah, may I be ransomed for you." The Prophet said, "Neither do the people like it for their mothers." The Prophet said, "Would you like it for your daughter?" He said, "No, by Allah, may I be ransomed for you." The Prophet said, "Neither do the people like it for their daughters." The Prophet said, "Would you like it for
your sister?" He said, "No, by Allah, may I be ransomed for you." The Prophet said, "Neither do the people like it for their sisters." The Prophet said, "Would you like it for your paternal aunt?" He said, "No, by Allah, O Allah's Messenger! May I be ransomed for you." The Prophet said, "Neither do the people like it for their paternal aunts." The Prophet said, "Would you like it for your maternal aunt?" He said, "No, by Allah, O Allah's Messenger! May I be ransomed for you." The Prophet said, "Neither do the people like it for their maternal aunts." Then the Prophet put his hand on him and said, "O Allah, forgive his sin, purify his heart, and guard his chastity." After that the young man never paid attention to anything of that nature (Fornication)

Hadith 2

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas: Al-Fadl bin 'Abbas rode behind the Prophet as his companion rider on the back portion of his she camel on the Day of Nahr (slaughtering of sacrifice, 10th Dhul-Hijja) and Al-Fadl was a handsome man. The Prophet stopped to give the people verdicts. In the meantime, a beautiful woman from the tribe of Khath'am came, asking the verdict of Allah's Messenger. Al-Fadl started looking at her as her beauty attracted him (Al-Fadl kept staring at the woman). The Prophet looked behind while Al-Fadl was looking at her; so the Prophet held out his hand backwards and caught the chin of Al-Fadl and turned his face This happened three times and the Prophet PBUH did the same thing. After the fourth time, Prophet PBUH said to Fadl something along the lines: 'Today Allah’s Mercy is for those who guard their modesty, lower their gaze, and maintain their chastity.'

Hadith 3

Anas b. Malik (ra) said the Messenger of Allah (saws) was the well mannered person. I had a young brother whose name was Abu Umair - he would play with a small bird called 'An-Nughair' (Pet Bird). (The Prophet) (p) came to know that Umair’s pet bird died, he went to the house of Umair and inquired as to why he was sad. The Prophet (saws) said to him: 'O father of Umair! What did the Nughair (a kind of bird) do?' while he was playing with it. (He said this to him in the most poetic and beautiful manner, after that he put his hands on his head and made dua for him) (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Hadith 4

Hadith related by Al-Tirmithi and reported by the Prophet's learned cousin, Abdullah ibn Abbas: "One day I was riding behind the Prophet, peace be upon him, and he said to me: Young man, I shall teach you some words of advice. Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allah; if you seek help, seek the help of Allah. Know that if the whole nation was to gather to benefit you with anything, they would benefit you only with something that Allah has already assigned to you and that if they gather to harm you with anything, they will harm you only with something Allah had already determined for you."

From the aforementioned hadith, I have derived a simple concept “RELATE” and have extracted other related elements from it. I believe that the Prophet Muhammad’s PBUH success with the young was premised on him connecting with them and being able to RELATE to them. We will now (during the discussion) break down each one of these elements and discuss them individually.
RELATE

- Respect
- Encourage
- Love
- Accommodate
- Trust
- Educate

Respect
- Show respect for the students no matter what
- Never humiliate the student for their behavior or use humiliation as a consequence
- Separate the behavior from the individual
- Sympathize with the student for misbehavior and consequence there off
- Discipline with dignity

Encourage
- Make every moment an educational opportunity
- Focus on what is right rather than the wrong and use as a tool for attention and praise
- Use attributes of Allah SWT as means to encourage
- Give examples of people, ideas, and events

Love
- The students must know that we genuinely love them
- Love must be expressed through actions
- Harshness is antonymous to love
- Nurture

Accommodate
- Understand the problem before correcting
- Understand the whole situation
- Let the students know that you are there to help them
- Find ways to channel their needs and redirect instead of attempting to suppress
- Allow students to be individuals

Trust
- Never explicitly question honesty i.e., “you are lying”
- Command trust vs. demanding it
- Give excuses and overlook when possible and/or needed

Educate
- Reason with the students
- Show them as opposed to telling
- Use yourself as an example (you already are)
- Think of how to make every situation into a learning moment