

Latifah Hameen

December 22, 2021 55:12

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Abuse survivors, Amberton University, American Muslim 360, Black Americans, Black Muslims, Community Wide Shuraa Conference, Conversion, Converts, Domestic violence, Educators, Family dynamics, Healthy Positive Choices, Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, Islam, Life coaches, Mental health, Muslims, Milwaukee, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Nonprofits, Poetry, Relationship coaches, Self-love, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Writers

SPEAKERS

Latifah Hameen, Rimsha Syed



Rimsha Syed 00:02

Hi, this is Rimsha Syed with the Institute for Diversity and Civic Life. The date is December 22, 2021, and I'm here on a Zoom call with the Latifah Hameen for the Voices of Change oral history project. Latifah, for starters, can you introduce yourself and tell us where in Texas you're joining the call from today?



Latifah Hameen 00:25

I am Latifah A. Hameen. I am currently living in Sachse, Texas, which is a suburban area of Dallas, Texas.



Rimsha Syed 00:37

Great. Okay, so jumping way back in time, I want to actually start with some life history questions and ask broadly if you can share a bit about your childhood, your upbringing, and any formative experiences that come to mind for you.



Latifah Hameen 00:54

Yes, ma'am. I was born in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. My parents migrated to Milwaukee, Wisconsin when I was about two years old. I grew up. I had ten brothers and sisters. I had a large family. I grew up in a large family, we grew up on, I guess, 17th Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It was kind of in the inner city that I grew up. I attended St. Boniface, I was a Catholic for many years. I grew up as a Catholic and converted to Islam when I was about twenty-one when I was in college. But mainly grew up as a Christian, the majority of my life. I went to college, I was attending Milwaukee Area Technical College there. There were some

young men that had a booth about Islam. And interestingly, I talked with someone that came to pick me up, and within, I guess, a month or so, I accepted Al-Islam at twenty-one years old, and I had been a Muslim ever since, Alhamdulillah, all praise due God.

L

Latifah Hameen 02:21

I attended the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, where I did obtain my Bachelor's. Now, at the Milwaukee Area Technical College, I got an associates, a general education, and then I went to the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and I have a Bachelors of Science in community education, which is the education route that I took. And then when I moved to Dallas, Texas in 1987 or 88, when I moved here, and I've been here ever since, I obtained my Masters Degree at the Amberton University in Garland, Texas, as Human Behavior and Development. I have worked as an educator the majority of my life, over twenty-five years. I'm always going to be an educator, but I worked in proprietary schools, I've worked in private schools. I have not worked in the public sector. But I always worked with youth from grades from K through 12, and then some college courses I've taught. I've done a lot of tutoring. Like I said, I've been an educator, the majority of my life.

L

Latifah Hameen 03:47

Then after that, I moved and lived in a few cities. What happened is I was a victim of domestic abuse for many years, and I broke that cycle in 2016, and I wrote my first book *Suffering in Silence: Breaking the Cycle of Abuse*. After that, the following year, I started an organization: Healthy Positive Choices for domestic violence awareness for youth and young adults, and it's like a preventive because it talks about education on domestic violence awareness. From there after working with that, and I'm still working with Healthy Positive Choices, it's not as active as it was, but we're getting back more active. I am a life and relationship coach. I went from being a victorious survivor of abuse and then carrying it over to healthy relationships, and that's what brought me into being a life coach. I'm an author of eight books, six of them are domestic violence awareness books, my life, my history, and I have a poetry book. Then I have a couple books that are books on relationships. The last book that I have is *When Hearts Connect*, a relationship guide that I had put together. So basically, that's where I am to date is I'm still working in that arena, with the nonprofit, relationship coaching, and also, I'm thinking about writing another book and interested in obtaining my PhD. I'm working on getting enrolled at the University of Dallas in Texas, in the PhD program in Creative Writing. So that's where I am right today.



Rimsha Syed 06:11

Yeah, thank you so much for sharing all of that with me. I obviously have plenty of questions based on all of the information that you gave, but I didn't want to jump back and ask what it was like growing up and living with ten siblings.

L

Latifah Hameen 06:26

Well, it was interesting [laughs]. I have a couple of my - one brother and sister - that was out of the house. Our family ranged from my oldest sister, she's deceased now, but she would have

been close to eighty. She would have been, I think, about seventy-eight now if she was still living. And my youngest sister and brother, they're twins, they're fifty-six. So that's the whole generation that we have. And my mother, she is ninety-eight, and she's still with us. She's in a facility, a nursing facility in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where my sisters and brothers, they go and visit her. But she's there. She's still pretty alert. Of course, she's older now and everything. But it was really interesting. My mother was somewhat strict, and she really raised us to be very strong, and to be very responsible. And I contribute my responsibility as an adult, to my mother, her methods of raising us. She did that with all her children, and so she was a great mom as we were growing up, made us responsible, made us strong individuals, especially the girls.



Rimsha Syed 08:16

Love to hear it. How old were you when your family moved to Dallas? I would love to hear a little bit more about what that transition was like for you, what your initial thoughts were about Dallas as compared to where you lived before and how you navigated that.



Latifah Hameen 08:34

Alright. A lot of my family still lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. When I migrated to Dallas, it was a job opportunity. I wanted to get out of Milwaukee. It was cold, and plus, I was just ready for change. So I moved here alone. I had my two sons, and so I brought my two sons as soon as I got everything together. I brought my two sons here to Dallas, Texas. It was like difference of night and day. The progression that was going on at the time, and it's still pretty progressive, but the progression that was going on was something that I wanted to get involved in. So I came here, it was a job opportunity, I got the job. So then with that, I just kind of started progressing as time went on. Brought my sons here, raised my sons here, and then went to school here, and that was it. I had no family that ever moved to Texas, believe it or not. Then my brother, he lives in Atlanta, and my other son lives in Atlanta, but I have two nephews in the Dallas area. And that was it. No one else. And they just recently moved here within the last five years. But all the time that I was living here, no one actually moved to Dallas, uprooted to Dallas. So I was the only one of my siblings that moved here.



Rimsha Syed 10:12


Right. So you talked a little bit about your university and masters experiences, but I wanted to hear about your primary school experiences as well. Elementary, middle, high school, if there's any formative experiences of that time in your life that jump out at you, I would love to hear.




Latifah Hameen 10:32

Well, I think because I grew up with ten brothers and sisters, I think I had a lot of insecurities with myself, because it was just so much going on. I didn't feel that secure within myself, I had a lot of issues when I was in grade school. I went to Catholic school, and they were very disciplined, disciplinaries, and I was always in trouble. So I was really, I think I can say that it was a troubled time for me growing up, because I was just confused about a lot of what was

going on with me, emotionally, and all that. So that was a trying time. That was grade school. And then middle school, after we got out of the Catholic school, I went to middle school at a public school. A lot of my experiences were kind of, I don't know, I would say troubling, to a certain extent. Because I don't feel like the things that I went through was like, "Oh, okay, I really enjoyed this, I really enjoyed that." I just remember, there were a lot of ups and downs for me, and a lot of troubled things that were going on within myself. Then just trying to get up from there.

 Latifah Hameen 12:05

I've always been a person that was self-motivated. So that's why I think a lot of my motivation to do a lot of the things that I had done was a result of pushing myself, and not just sitting down and being average, and just saying, "Okay, I'm just going to sit here and just wait." No, I always got up. That's what prompted me to write the book. I was in and out of domestic violence relationships, and I think I was just looking for something that I had to find within myself. So that's what I can say at the end of all of this, it was something that I had to look within myself to find. So then, in high school, I was troubled. My childhood was a troubled childhood, and I have to say that. I kept looking and searching, and finally when I found Islam at twenty-one, that was my saving grace. Because I was confused in the Catholic religion, it was just confusing for me.

 Latifah Hameen 13:14

In high school, I left high school. I was in a special program at the college for I think it was some kind of home economic program or something like that if I can remember. And I went through that, and I graduated from high school, but then I was not going to just sit there. So that's when I motivated myself to go to college, to teach, to do all these things that I'm doing now. But I came from that trouble, and then now to where I am today, and it's all contributed to Islam for me, because without finding Islam, without Islam being a part of my life, I don't know where I would be today. It's the saving force for me. So that's when things started to turn around for me is when I became a Muslim at the age of twenty-one. So that's when I really started looking deep into what was going on with me and all of the things that I was involved in with the domestic abuse. And I'm a breast cancer survivor since 1999 as well, so like I said, a lot of turbulence, but I can honestly say that Allah is truly akbar, is truly the great, because he brought me to where I am today, so I'm thankful.

 Rimsha Syed 14:48

Yeah, seems like that period of your life when you converted was very, very important to you.

 Latifah Hameen 14:54

Yes.

 Rimsha Sved 14:55



Rimsha Syed 1:15

Can you share a little bit more about how exactly you found Islam and maybe even how your relationship with the religion has changed over time as you've gotten older.



Latifah Hameen 15:07

Well, when I found Islam, it was just - when a person comes into the religion, and I've seen this, everything is so gung-ho. And I was so gung-ho, and I'm, "Oh yeah, I'm going to convert people. I'm going to tell them about it. I'm in their face." And then I'm realizing as time goes on, that people have to make up their own minds. So as a Muslim, I think I've grown to that point in learning about the religion and learning about who I am first, and then being able to not force. Islam is not a religion that is forced upon someone. That's something that a person has to know within themselves, that they want to become Muslim. So I had to step back. Being a Muslim, I did some studies, did some Arabic studies and things like that. I was on a lot of projects, and I really got involved in the dāʿiyyah and learning the dāʿiyyah, and I was a follower of Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with him. He was a leader, and he passed away in 2008. I was a follower of Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, in terms of just the religion and, and seeing him, and just doing things, and he really helped to guide us into true Islam, and I'm thankful for that.



Latifah Hameen 17:01

So the way that I have lived my life, I always try to put Allah out there first. I try to make my prayers, and I try to study the religion, and I try to do what Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala would want me to do as a Muslim. I try to help people, I try to be a humanitarian, I try to give back. That's my thing that I do now, because I know at the end of the day, it's all about pleasing my Lord. So now I'm even more focused on pleasing Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala, doing what he would want me to do in terms of the gifts that he's blessed me with. So I constantly am moving forward. I also am the CEO of the American Muslim 360 radio broadcast program, so I have my broadcasts on Fridays, from nine to eleven, Central Standard Time. I give back so much, I have so many people that I interview that I have on the program. We do a variety of various things. So I think, to answer your question, I think I become more appreciative, more grateful to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala, and I want to give more, and I want to do what Allah would want me to do in terms of giving back. That's my whole thing in my mind: how can I help? How can I get back some of the things that Allah has blessed me with and work on? Just really work on helping others and continuing on the path of Islam and growth and pleasing Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.



Rimsha Syed 19:07

Right, thank you for sharing. Last time we spoke, you mentioned being passionate about teaching Muslim students. I was wondering what drew you to becoming an educator, and how do you see your role as an educator to the Muslim community.



Latifah Hameen 19:27

I've worked at several Muslim schools. I've worked at a school in Milwaukee. I've worked at

Clara Mohammed School in Milwaukee. I worked in Indianapolis, Indiana School of Knowledge. I worked at Irving, Islamic School of Irving, I worked there. So my thoughts with the education process with the youth has been for, mainly, the Muslims. Now, I've taught a lot of other students besides Muslims, but that was always near and dear to my heart. So I did a lot of tutoring when I worked at Islamic School of Irving. When I left there, parents called me and wanted to know if I would tutor their children on the weekend, however I was going to tutor them. So I started tutoring some of the children, and they were like in fourth and fifth grade. Now I just talked to a couple, one of them is in dental school, one of them is in medical school. So alhamdulillah, and the parents have guided them, but I taught them back when they were in fourth grade, when I taught them, and then I tutored them for about two or three years after that. Then I tutored their brothers and their sisters. It was a really great experience. Most of them are from Asian descent, the Muslims that I mostly tutored, I tutored a variety of them.

L

Latifah Hameen 21:09

I think that I gave all that I could to help them, and I think I was successful in helping a lot of the students to get to where they are today, especially in the English area. That is my area, I would teach them the English because that was their second language. I would teach them all that I could in that particular area. It was always near and dear to my heart, teaching the Muslim students, because we could always relate because we have Islam in common. So it was very, very interesting. Then I've tutored—like I said, since they were fourth grade, so that's over twenty years I've been tutoring in that community. Actually, I just had another young lady that I'll be finishing up at the end of this month with tutoring in English, and she's in ninth grade. But when I was coming around, I tutored her brothers, her two brothers, and she was a little girl, and now she's fourteen. So it's really a rewarding experience. It's an intrinsic feeling to be able to give back like that, and know that I have touched someone's heart. I've touched them in the education arena, and I feel good that the parents trusted me to tutor their children.



Rimsha Syed 22:46


Right. So Latifah, aside from being an educator, you're also an author and run a workshop for domestic violence survivors. What do you hope that people gain from reading your work or attending these workshops?

L


Latifah Hameen 23:03

Well, I hope that if I can help one person, in turn, that person helps another person, and then that person continues to help other people. If I can help one person and help change one person's life for the betterment in terms of walking away from domestic abuse, I feel like I've done my job. And not that I'm stopping at my job, like doing my job, because I'm continuing to do it. Now I've had a couple of people come up to me, and they knew of my book, or they were talking about my book one time, and I was the author of the book. And they said, "Oh, I got that book, and I gave it to somebody. Oh yeah, I remember reading the book." So it felt good to me, because if they can just read my story, and it can deter them from going into a situation such as I had to endure, that's alhamdulillah. I don't want anybody to ever endure what I had to


endure, but that was my journey, and Allah has a journey for all of us. My journey was to go through what I went through, and to come back, and to do what I'm doing now is giving back, giving back to the community. Teaching these young girls and boys.

 Latifah Hameen 24:31


I have a book, it's a teens' book, How to - Not to, for domestic abuse. So it talks about all of the things for the youth, and it's geared toward the teens. *Teens/Young Adults How to - Not to*, and that's the name of that book. And it's a workbook, so they can go through the workbook, answer the questions, and that can really help them in terms of saving them from walking into a relationship or domestic abuse relationship. Because even the young adults - I used to go to the schools, some of the schools I've gone to, and I've taken that book, and I've taught them in that book. Because I've had people come up to me and say, "My boyfriend or my girlfriend, or whatever the case may be, I'm having problems with them. They say they will kill themselves if I leave them," and all of that. We talk about all of those things. So I've had the opportunity to touch some lives of some youths and leave some of my books for them. I feel like I'm touching people's lives. Like I said, if I could just touch one person, that can deter them from walking into a domestic abuse relationship, that will be a win for me, inshallah.

 Rimsha Syed 26:05

Inshallah. I know that the work you do can definitely take a mental toll. What do you find healing?

 Latifah Hameen 26:14

Well, what I like to do "because after you talk about it so much" now, I can talk about the domestic abuse that has happened to me, because I had to come to terms with that. That's part of my life. It's not something that controls my life, but it's part of my life, it's part of my journey. So when I tell it, I tell it as a story, as part of my journey. I don't internalize it, and I know it will always be with me, those experiences, but I don't let it control me to that point where it takes over. Sometimes people will cry, and they'll get "I've sucked all of that out. I will always remember that, it will always be a part of me, but it will not control me. What I do is, when I have things that come up, I talk a lot about shame, because that's some of the things that you have to have when you are in domestic abuse. No one's in domestic abuse without shame. Shame is internal self-loathing, and I have a lot of that. So what I do is I do affirmations. I tell myself, that I am a good person, I am a great person. I do the affirmations. When I talk to people, I talk to them, I try to stay positive, I try to stay upbeat. I do different things, I try to do the exercise. I just try to have a nice time with people and just try to be involved and surround myself with people that are productive, that are positive, that are doing things that make a difference. That's how I cope with things and do things and do nice things and go to different functions and occasions. So I try to have a variety of things that keep me moving.

 Rimsha Syed 28:25

I really appreciate you opening up and sharing all that with me. Are there any organizers or historical figures that you look up to, or even mentors that you've gotten the chance to work

with along the way?

L

Latifah Hameen 28:39

Well, I've met a lot of great Muslim brothers and sisters alike. I haven't any celebrities or anything that I've worked with. I haven't had that opportunity. But I've worked with some really dynamite people. I've met some great people. The names escape me for right now, but I've worked with a lot of great people, and I met some wonderful people on this journey. I've talked to a lot of great people and a lot of people have influenced my life. I think President Obama, being our first African-American president, it was really positive for me to know that this can happen. That was something that was a plus for me. Michelle Obama, they're very great role models for the African-American community, and I'm thankful that they were able to be in the White House for those eight years, and no scandals, and very positive, and everything, there was no negativity. So that was a great influence on me.

L

Latifah Hameen 29:56

Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, rahimahullah, he had an impact on my life in helping me and my growth in Islam. I listened to some of the Sheikh, Sheikh Omar Suleiman. I think he's great and doing some of the things - there's a lot of different - Imam Qasim Ahmed, rahimahullah, he was very instrumental in helping me. Just listening to some of the lectures. And there's so many people. Maya Angelou, her poetry inspired me. I'm a poet as well. So her poetry inspired me to continue writing my poetry and my book. So a few people here and there have really - my mom, very instrumental to me. She's always been my greatest supporter, and I thank her so much for supporting me even when I didn't know what I was doing. But she was always there. So I'm so, so thankful to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala for having her in my life for the years that he's blessed me to have her, that is truly, truly a blessing. Alhamdulillah.



Rimsha Syed 31:20

I wanted to go back a little bit to earlier in this interview, because I totally forgot to ask you. How did your friends and family react to you converting to Islam?

L

Latifah Hameen 31:32

Well, my mom wasâ€”she's always been my supporterâ€”my mom, as soon as I became Muslimâ€”and I grew up Catholic. As soon as I became Muslim, my mother just, she embraced me. I changed my name, she was like, "How do you pronounce it? Tell me now." I mean, and she was so open and so inviting and so loving toward me. It took a while for some of my brothers to catch on with me becoming Muslim, but everybody, for the most part, my family embraced the change. I hear horror stories of some people, they become Muslim, they disown them and all of that. I think it's a selfish act because people have a right to be who they are. But as Muslims, we have to be able to accept other people as well as we want people to accept us. That's what I had to work at is accepting other people, as well as wanting other people to accept me as a Muslim. But I did not have a lot of opposition. When I changed my name, of course, getting people used to calling you by the name you've chosen, that was a task

sometimes. But it was just a transition. Alhamdulillah, it was not that bad at all. Everybody kind of came on board. Some people that you knew were friends, they, "Oh, well, I'm gonna always call you this. Why are you doing this?" But that was far, few, and in between, but the majority I can say, it was a positive experience for me converting to Islam, inshallah.



Rimsha Syed 33:28

So glad to hear that. What are some of the challenges in your personal life of being an educator and an activist?



Latifah Hameen 33:39

Well, sometimes you run across people where they want to challenge what you say, or they want to challenge the religion. They want to tell you something negative. And we say in Qur'an, "To you be your way, and to me mine." I'm learning to accept people for who they are. What I do now, as when I'm around people or when I talk to people, I try not to let people suck me into their stuff. I want to be positive. I want to be upbeat. So I try to bring happiness or flowers to wherever I go. I try to keep that upbeat attitude, even when I'm feeling a little down sometimes, because I know we can't be up all the time. If I'm around someone, I will bring that upbeat attitude because I know how important that is to stay like that, and to rub that off on other people. So sometimes there's challenges, and sometimes in my head when people act a certain way, I want to act, but then I stop, and I think, "Alhamdulillah, what would Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu alayhi wa salaam, what would he do in that situation? How would he act in that situation?" And I think about that sometimes, and I say, "Okay." It's hard sometimes, especially when people just come at you. But by the same token, I have to step back, and I have to think about, I'm doing this vis-À-vis Allah, and I have to keep moving forward. Because I truly believe that Allah has given me a mission to do, and in order to do this mission, I have to be the best version of myself. That's what I work on, being a better version of myself every day.



Rimsha Syed 36:01

Yeah. There's a lot of different things that you're juggling in your professional life, can you tell us about a day in the life of being you, or, alternatively, a story that comes to mind?



Latifah Hameen 36:19

As CEO for American Muslim 360, sometimes there is a struggle with that. Because I ask myself, "Am I gonna really be here to do this? Do I really want to do this?" Because there's a lot of challenges at times. It's a volunteer position, and I volunteer all the time, so that's not a problem. But it gets to be a lot of work sometimes. Sometimes I wrestle with the fact of, do I want to just stay here? Or do I want to pass this and go on to something else? And when I do that, in my day, when I sit down, and I get my guests for my program, I have set up a meeting with my staff once a week, I'm constantly doing something that's going - I'm always thinking about how can I improve AM 360? So when I sit down, majority of my day is put there, among other things that I do. Working part time, I have to a couple part time little jobs. I have to do my other stuff. So it's like juggling all of these things that I do every day.

L

Latifah Hameen 38:01

But when I sit back, and I say, "Oh Allah, what does this look like for me?" In the majority of my life— not the majority, but a lot of my life— when things didn't go, I was out of there. I didn't stay. But then I've been here as a CEO for two years, but I've been with the radio program since 2016 with a year off. So I'd say about five years, four years, I'm going on five years. This is the longest I've stayed with anything with a consistency. Now, don't get me wrong, I stay with consistency. But a lot of times on jobs, I've been antsy and I was moving around, "Oh, I want to do this. I want to do that. I don't want to stay over here. I want to stay over here." But here, Allah has planted my feet. I've unplanted them a couple times and wanted to walk away. But then at the end of the day, I know that I do this vis-À-vis Allah, and Allah blesses me with another day and a better attitude when I set out the next day to work with American Muslim 360. I feel like it's part of my life at this point. So that's my take on AM 360. Yeah, I do have a variety of other things, but that's my baby up there because it's something that I feel I inherited as a Muslim. Doing the work that we do - our motto is, we want to remake this oil into a better place. That's our motto. So when I think about that— and that's what I work at doing, working and making it a better place for all of us to live while I'm here, inshallah.



Rimsha Syed 40:23

Yeah, that answer transitioned perfectly into my next question. So as you know, our archive is Religions Texas, and you did touch upon this a little bit, but I wanted to ask how religion or spirituality guides the work that you do, and if it guides your sense of social justice in your line of work.

L

Latifah Hameen 40:46

Yes, I feel like Islam has to guide my life. Because without Islam, there is no Latifah, because it's interwoven into my life. Sometimes people can have religion and they can do things, and we all have walked some lines, but I always end up coming back. Because Islam is embedded in my life. It's not something that I can take off and put back on. I'm not saying that I've been the best person. But one thing I can say is that I love this dĀn, and I wouldn't be anywhere without Islam. So everything that I do, I think about it, no matter if I'm doing my coaching, if I'm doing my nonprofit, anything that I'm doing, I always try to lead with Allah up front. If I can't do it without saying, "Bismillah," then I have to question, why am I doing it? Or what am I hoping to gain from this by not putting Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala out there. So that's what I lead with, I really, really try to lead with that. Because I know if I do— if I say, "Can I say 'Bismillah' before I do that? Can I say 'Allah will be pleased with me' if I did this?" And if I can't, and I have to step back and re-examine what I'm doing.

L

Latifah Hameen 42:34

Even if I'm doing anything in the public sector, anything that I'm doing. I have to feel comfortable with doing that as a Muslim. I'm not trying to hide my Islam to go and do this, take off clothes, or whatever, and be what this world wants me to be. Because at the end of the day, we all have to return to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. Allah sees everything. So if I don't do it vis-

a-vis Allah, if I don't do it with Allah out front, then that's a problem. That's what guides me every day. When I talk about Islam, I get emotional. Because now, sometimes I don't realize that, when I'm doing things, how much Islam is just so embedded in my life, until I start to talk about it to other people. And now, I'm getting emotional about it, because it's so near and dear to my heart. Sometimes I don't realize that on a day-to-day basis until I actually start thinking about it. Because you're on automatic pilot sometimes, and then when Allah stops you for you to look at that and you realize, "Wow, this is so much a part of who I am."



Rimsha Syed 44:14

Broadly speaking, what is your vision for community, and what are some changes within the community you hope to see?



Latifah Hameen 44:23

Well, I don't work directly in my immediate community right here, but in the Islamic community, every time that I'm on my programs, I reach out to people on all of the social media. I want to bring about that change. I want them to learn about what we do at the Community Wide Shuraa Conference, and AM 360 is a component of that. So then to learn more about what we do, and to learn more about how we are out there in the community, we give back, we give scholarships, we give monies out to agencies, we bring people on for various things, we do the interfaith. We have so many things that we do with the Community Wide Shuraa Conference, and we have so many components under that umbrella, and we do so much to bring about a change in this world, in this Islamic community, and every community. Because this is a worldwide - Islam is universal. So this is a worldwide, universal religion.



Latifah Hameen 45:55

So what my job is, or what I feel a part of, anytime I can make a difference in the community, that's number one for me. Even if it's my immediate community, but I'm mostly involved in this Islamic community online, various people throughout the United States that we talk to, and that we communicate with on AM 360. Constantly, and we're constantly bringing other people in to the fold of Islam, or if they're not Muslim, we have a volunteer pool that we have as well. So we're pulling people from there. We try to do a world thing, sometimes we have world prayer, sometimes we'll go and get other people scholarships, get to children, be involved with them, the local mosque, we try to do things with that. So it's just a variety of things that we do throughout the United States and in our community.



Latifah Hameen 47:07

I don't think that I do a lot, per se, in my immediate community, because I go to various mosques and things like that. But I think that I probably need to start doing more in the local area, as well, and giving back. So I mean, that's the thought for me, now that I'm thinking about it now, to get more involved in the immediate community, as well as the broader community of Islam. Even not being Muslim, people that aren't Muslim, but just being kind to humanity, and giving back. It's something that I'll think about in the immediate community

here in Sachse and even in Dallas. One of the mosques in Dallas, they have a giveaway. They give away food, they give away clothes, and they're always doing something positive. Maybe I need to get more involved in that. I think they do that on Saturday. So it's something that maybe I need to get more involved in now that I'm thinking about it. But anyway, that's some of the things that we do on a broader scale, but a local scale, I think I may get involved more in doing some things, inshallah.



Rimsha Syed 48:47

Right, so one thing we haven't really gotten to talk much about is you being a life and relationship coach. How did that start?



Latifah Hameen 48:56

Well, it was kind of a spinoff from domestic violence awareness. I saw a lot of women that were in domestic violence, but then when they get out of domestic violence, they tried to rebuild their lives, like I rebuilt my life. But what do we do then? Then we go, you have to have that bridge, where you talk about how to have a healthy relationship. I don't want to bring you out of there and then just drop you. Now it's like, how do you have a healthy relationship? So I started building on that and started thinking about some of the things that I did and how I started to rebuild my life and how I start rebuilding relationships. That's what I was doing is working on that. That's how I brought that bridge, and then I wrote that book. I wrote a book and then I have a workbook that talks about domestic abuse and how to rebuild your life after domestic abuse. Then I have another one, like I said, When Hearts Connect, and the one before that, coming from unhealthy relationship to healthy relationships, and building on that. So those couple of books build on relationships. What do we have to do? How can we do that? How can we build on that?



Latifah Hameen 50:28

So that's where the relationship coachingâ€”I thought, "Oh, wow." First I went to life coaching. I'm a certified professional life coach. Then I started working with the relationship coach. I actually have two certifications on relationship coaching. So I started getting more into that, into the relationship coach. So that's what brought me over there to the coaching, because I still do domestic violence awareness, but I advocate healthy relationships, because you have to know how to have a healthy relationship. What does it look like with your partner? What does it look like to you? So that's where we are now, talking about what does it look like.



Latifah Hameen 51:22

Also, I wanted to let you know that I have a play that was written about my life as well, and domestic abuse. I have it, and I don't have a producer. The lady that wrote it helped me. She got information from me, and she actually wrote it with my help of talking to her about it. Wonderful, wonderful. She's out of Virginia. She said she cannot produce it, because she's there, and I just haven't really done a whole lot with it. But that's another project that I'm thinking about working on, in terms of doing a one act play just for myself. That's something

that I'm thinking about, as well. So I got a couple of things that I'm looking at the next year with my relationship coaching and building that up, and getting more clientele. That's been a struggle since 2020, since the pandemic, so I haven't really gotten totally recovered from that. But then that's something that I'm going to work on, inshallah, for next year, also my play. I want to work on that as well.



Rimsha Syed 52:44

The play sounds amazing. Good luck with that. I'd definitely love to check that out sometime.



Latifah Hameen 52:49

Thank you.



Rimsha Syed 52:51

So Latifah, I want to be mindful of your time today. I have one last question before we sign off, and it's a bit more open-ended. Seeing as this interview will be archived, do you have any words of wisdom or advice to impart to people who might be listening to this tomorrow or several years from now?



Latifah Hameen 53:13

Well, I want to say out there is that we teach people how to treat us. It starts with treating yourself well. Once you treat yourself well, then you will not allow other people to treat you less than you treat yourself. So always keep that in mind. I'm going to leave with one of my poems, "Self Love."



Latifah Hameen 53:46

When self love is truly there,
you will feel it through and through.
It will be the Spirit that dwells inside of you.

When self love is truly within,
You'll know happiness
It will be part of your being.
When self love is truly there
It's like a ray of hope in the air.



When you walk in the room,
confidence will shine,
you'll be rare like a fine wine.
No need to say a word
It will be in your smile,
on your face,
and you will glide with such grace.

When self love is truly there
you will have self-respect
which commands
to be treated the best.

When someone does otherwise
you will quickly rise
politely excuse yourself, because
this is treatment you won't accept.

When self love is truly there
Self-esteem will be the best
because you won't settle
for anything less.

Do you have self love?



Latifah Hameen 54:51
Thank you.



Rimsha Syed 54:54
Wow, thank you so much. That was really wonderful. And thank you for this interview and sitting down with me today.



Latifah Hameen 55:02
You're welcome.



Rimsha Syed 55:05
I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording now.



Latifah Hameen 55:08
Okay.