

In Islam everything is so perfect and everything is well-put together that's what convinced me about Islam

In this recording, she describes how she found Islam when she moved to work in UAE. The following is a partial transcription of this video.

Kind Caring Parents "I think I'm a product of my upbringing. My parents are very open-minded and very kind caring people, and they always taught me not to discriminate against anybody, religion, culture, color, or anything. I think that they provided me with the foundation to research and to become the person I am today. When people see me now as I'm wearing hijab, especially people who knew me before, a lot of people's first impression is that "Oh, look at her! She married a Muslim guy;" and "Oh look at her now! It's a shame, look at what she has to be like, now she is oppressed!" And a lot of people associate me with the way I look like. They think that I am dressed like this is because my husband wants me to. Or, maybe it is something I have been told that I have to do. But it is completely against the religion and the reason I'm doing it. I think you have a unique insight when you wear the hijab knowing why you wear it. It is not for anybody else, it is for yourself and for the sake of Allah, that's the reason we wear it, not because someone else asked us to. It's funny, I went to have my hair cut the other day. I entered the salon wearing my hijab, and took it off, and I sat down, having my hair cut by a lady who said: "I see you are married?" I said: "Yes." Then she said "I assume that you are married to a local?" She assumed because I wear hijab that I'm married to a local and maybe that he told me that I had to wear it. I think this is another example of the people's prejudice towards hijab, people often assume that you've been forced to wear it rather than Islam and that it is your own choice. But I look up to myself; I think we should explain the reason why we wear hijab. I think people shouldn't be dismissive. People want to learn and that's how I started off, and if people have been dismissive with me I wouldn't be where I am today, so, I think as Muslims we need to take it upon ourselves to take time to explain this to people... Basically, when I first moved to UAE I didn't have many expectations, it was more of a career move than any particular reason. I was interested in culture as well, but it was more of a career move with no other expectations attached to that. When I came from

England I came with stereotypes of what Muslims are like and what Islamic countries are going to be like, and then it is completely not what I expected. My impression of Muslims and my impression of Islam weren't as they were before, when I had moved from the UK. Unfortunately, people think that Islam is linked to oppression of women. I believed what I've been told about Islam, starting with the way that women dress and the way Muslim people treat their wives... But meeting Mahmoud was completely the reverse. In the history of Islam there were a lot of very well educated people, business leaders, Khadijah, the first wife of the Prophet, was a business lady, but in the UK the story about Islam and Muslims is completely different. I always believed in something, but I wasn't really sure what. All the religions that I had come across didn't really answer any questions and to a certain extent I thought their answers for simple questions I asked do not actually answer my questions. When I came across Islam and when I moved to work in Dubai, I learned more what I like about Islam. I realized that in Islam it is OK to ask questions; and every question you ask should have an answer, whereas with other religions it is just like you just have to have faith. To me that's OK, but it is not good enough. In Islam everything is so perfect and everything is well-put together that's what convinced me about Islam."