

What You Can Do to Counter Islamophobia

1. Learn what Muslims actually believe – that way, the hater myths won't fool you. Some good sources:
 - a. Sumbul Ali-Karamali's two accessible, relatable introductions, full of stories and anecdotes in addition to academically reliable information on Islam and Muslims:
 - i. *The Muslim Next Door: The Qur'an, the Media, and that Veil Thing* and
 - ii. *Growing Up Muslim: Understanding the Beliefs and Practices of Islam*. This is appropriate for ages 10 and up, but is really for any age.
 - b. Another excellent read: John Esposito & Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (Gallup, 2006).
 - c. Any of John Esposito's many books, including *Islam: the Straight Path*.
2. Visit reliable sites with information about Muslims. A few good ones:
 - a. Watch a short video on American Muslims at www.americanmuslimfacts.com.
 - b. Read the FAQs at www.ing.org.
 - c. Explore the Bridge Initiative at Georgetown: www.bridge.georgetown.edu.
3. Voice your objections – through email, phone calls, etc. – when public (or private) figures fear-monger or talk in terms of apocalyptic wars on Islam.
4. Listen to mainstream Muslims tell their own stories and be skeptical of anyone else telling their stories.
5. Be critical of the public discourse – if you were to substitute “Christian” or “Jewish” for “Muslim” in a particular news story, would it sound biased and unjust to you? If so, then almost certainly it's biased and unjust with respect to Muslims, too.
6. Attend interfaith events to meet Muslims.

7. Support Muslim writers and speakers by attending their events and buying their books so they can stay in print and continue to educate the public.
8. Tell a friend about the tradition of pluralism in Islamic theology and history. You can read further about this in:
 - a. Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (Back Bay Books/ Little Brown & Co., 2002).
 - b. Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power* (Yale Univ. Press, 2002), with a companion PBS film (same name).
9. Read the reports of media watchdog groups, such as:
 - a. Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (www.fair.org)
 - b. Media Matters (www.mediamatters.org)
 - c. Southern Poverty Law Center (www.splcenter.org)
10. Read news sources that are more trustworthy with respect to Islam and Muslims. Some suggestions:
 - a. Al Jazeera English online (www.Aljazeera.com). Started by BBC executives, it's not as different as you might think, but at least it's much more international and in-depth than most news sites.
 - b. *Middle East Research and Information Project* (www.merip.org), an online academic journal.
 - c. *Jadaliyya*, an ezine reporting on Middle East matters (www.jadaliyya.com)
 - d. *The Nation*, an independent voice in American journalism for 150 years (www.thenation.com).
 - e. Link TV, featuring award-winning news (www.linktv.org).
 - f. *Aramco World* magazine, both in print (free!) and online at www.aramcoworld.com (the mission is to “increase cross-cultural understanding by broadening knowledge of the histories, cultures, and geography of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their global connections”).
 - g. Read Muslim bloggers on the Huffington Post, one of the very few news sites that was tracking hate attacks against Muslims. www.huffingtonpost.com.
 - h.