

Akbar Gbajabiamila Learned This From His Muslim Dad And Christian Mom | Clips | Dad Saves America

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SUMMARY

The conversation explores the unique upbringing of Akbar Gbajabiamila, who was raised in a household with both Muslim and Christian traditions. He reflects on how his parents navigated their religious differences while fostering a loving environment, ultimately shaping his views on communication and respect for diverse beliefs.

- Akbar's parents had different religious backgrounds: his father was Muslim and his mother was Christian.*
- He identified as Muslim in his youth, influenced by his father's principled approach to faith.*
- The family practiced both religions, attending mosque and church, and engaging in discussions about their beliefs.*
- Akbar emphasizes the importance of respectful dialogue over confrontation, a lesson learned from his parents.*
- He expresses frustration with the current cultural climate that promotes extreme labeling and division.*
- Akbar believes that God created us for community and meaningful connections, which are often hindered by societal labels.*
- He advocates for conversations that bridge differences rather than deepen divides, especially in the context of religious and cultural discussions.*

(logo swooshes) - You talked about God's design. - Yeah. - Tell me about, 'cause one of the things that I know is the case is that your mother and father had different religious traditions. - Yeah, they did. - So that's really something to be together and what you've described as a home that's a difficult marital environment in so far as you've got seven kids in the house. - Yeah, yeah. - You're in, is it technically South Central?

- When I grew up it was South Central, now they're saying it's South LA. I don't know what it is.
- Okay. - South Central, South LA. - Yeah. You're in... - We're talking about the same, the Crenshaw District.
- Yeah. You're in the Crenshaw District. Tough neighborhood, tough times. Your mom struggling with alcohol. And then they don't, they don't share religion. - No. They worked it out.
- So tell me about the faith situation, the faith tradition, your understanding of God from your parents, and what's that done for you?

- So I looked at it as a younger kid, I identified as Muslim because my father, you know, there was just the major respect that we had for my father. And, you know, growing up I didn't see my dad whistling at women. And, you know, "yo check." Like my dad was very much like by the book. A man driven by principles and his faith. And so there's something that I really just, I gleaned on from that.

And I was like, "all right." - It's like a Muslim stoicism. - Yeah. It was just, it was just like, you know what I want to, this is what we're doing. Right? And so we grew up doing Ramadan and, but it was interesting because the love, you know, for all the things that were tough with my mom and dad, there was a love in being able to work through religious differences. I don't know how they did it, to be quite honest with you.

- Because your mother was Christian? - My mother was Christian. But we would go to the mosque, then go to the church. I'd be in Arabic school on Saturday, I'd be in Sunday school on Sunday. You know what I mean? Writing left to right, then writing right to left. You know what I mean? Like, wait, what? I mean it was, it was like, whoa. So for me it was just like, I remember too, I can still remember upstairs and I can see my dad and my mom bringing out the Quran, and bringing out the Bible, and going back and forth and talking about like their you know, their commonalities and their differences.

And sometimes they would be speaking in Yoruba, sometimes they would be speaking in English. They would go in and out broken English, and you're just sitting there trying to understand it all. But you know, as a kid you're just like, "Hey I'm gonna follow, I'm gonna follow the leader." And so, but it wasn't until I got to college where I made a difference. So I appreciated my mom and father being able to raise us, you know, and some will say, "Hey, they weren't equally yote."

Fair. But they were able to show, you know, respect for each other. And for me, you know, when I joined the talk a couple years ago one of the themes that has driven me, because I get so frustrated with a lot of the national conversation being, you know, so confrontational. It's like, we can have conversation without confrontation. So I say conversation over confrontation is my theme. And I wanna be able to

discuss our differences without it being confrontational.

Because that's what my mother and father did. They modeled that, that you can have conversation over confrontation. But now it's just like.. - That's a powerful lesson to play out in real life. - In real life, in real life. Where, you know, and again, this is, you know, we've seen where Islam and Christianity have had some very intense relationship in other countries. And even here, right? And so to see...
- Especially after 9/11. - Especially after 9/11.
- Yeah.

- So to see that happen, and to my mother, for my mother to even go to the mosque, or my dad to sit in church with us for, you know, whether it was Easter or, you know, New Year's Eve, or whenever we were at church, it felt like all the time. You know what I mean? But they had this agreement. It was, maybe it was like, you know, bedroom talk, or maybe it was just like this thing.

But there was never "you can't go to church," or you can't do this. Now, sometimes they would throw a little, you know, I think about they'll throw a little shade here and there. My dad would throw a little shade like, "oh, you know all they want at the churches, all they want is the money. They just always ask for money." You know? I was like, "oh yeah, that's why they, why they always asking for money? Who's gonna give this much for tithing?"

Then who's gonna give?" But I mean, you know, then my mom would, you know, throw a little shade at my dad. But, you know, it was nothing to where you would go (gasp), like you know, like they would try to pull the rug from the other person, you know? And that made me more empathetic towards people who have a different belief than me. And it's why I get so frustrated now when, especially in our culture today in America, if I don't agree with your lifestyle, I'm demonized or labeled, right?

You are this, and you are that, and you are this. - The most extreme labels possible. How can I pick the most extreme thing to call you? - Right. Yeah, I'm gonna give the most because it's a way to control you, right? I need to control you. Right? This is why, whereas I get what, like, again, toxic masculinity, I get the idea of it, but it's such an extreme label that you can just throw on anyone, right?

Or you can say, you know, he's a, whatever these labels are, right? And it's just like, man, these labels are

breaking

down communication. They're breaking down the ability to be able to really connect. 'Cause I believe that God has

created us to have community. It's why social media is so big, because it models God's

ultimate plan for us to be able to have community. For you and I to be able to sit down and have real conversation, and be able to have a greater purpose than to tear each other down.

- If you enjoyed this clip, we've got more where that came from. Be sure to check out my full conversation with Akbar Gbajabiamila. And one of the best ways

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