



**SPEECH BY YAB TUN DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD, PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
OPEN DIALOGUE - YOUTH ASK, TUN ANSWERS
ON 14 APRIL 2019 (SUNDAY) AT 9.30 AM
AT THE PERDANA LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION, PUTRAJAYA**

1. First of all I wish to thank the organisers for inviting me and giving me the opportunity to say a few words to the audience.
2. I would also like to welcome the 100 youth to Perdana Leadership Foundation. I was informed Semai Nilai had selected these youth from all over Malaysia especially for this programme.
3. I hope you will find the programme beneficial and it will give you a lasting and positive impression that can be of some guide for you in your future undertakings.
4. On my part, I've always found meeting youth quite challenging. While I've been able to surmise what most my more mature audience expect of me and to some extent, anticipate their questions and so forth, the youth can be quite unexpected.
5. Nevertheless, I get excited when they share their enthusiasm and idealism in what they believe and want to do. Their youthful vigour does rub into me. But some times, when they do things which are nasty, terrible and inhumane or that they waste their life, I feel that I can't connect and unable to reach out to them. That can be quite frustrating.
6. For any nation to progress and develop, the most logical thing to do is to invest in their youth. They are the ones who are going to be future leaders in all levels and sectors.
7. The challenge is for the current leaders to figure out what would be the best policies and programmes that would prepare the youth for the future.
8. There is a delicate balance in preparing these policies and programmes as adults may think they know what is best for the youth but if the youth do not respond or they find that these programmes do not resonate with them, then the programmes will be a failure and can even end up being counter-productive.
9. That said, the Government will continue to work on formulating policies and programmes for youth and this Government had taken a bold step when it decided to appoint a very young man to be the Minister of Youth and Sports despite some quarters expressing concern over his lack of experience.
10. We believe that where he lacks in experience, he makes it up with his enthusiasm, idealism and determination. And there are enough experienced old men in the cabinet whom he can tap from.
11. Hopefully, he will mature and discover much experience in leadership and hopefully impart them to the youth after him.
12. Since we are here at the Perdana Leadership Foundation, let me share with you some of my thoughts on leadership.
13. Everyone - every adult, students, are a leader at some point or another. You are a leader if you have younger brothers and sisters; you are a leader if you are a class monitor, a school prefect or the captain of your school football team. And when you start working, of course you will start at the very bottom and have many seniors to report to, but you will eventually climb the employment ladder and end up a leader.

14. In other words, leadership is a lifelong learning and experience. The issue is how you fare as a leader. What kind of impact do you make and how much of your leadership had touched the life of others.
15. For our leadership to be effective and meaningful, we must possess some basic qualities and subscribe to certain values. Only then can we espouse leadership by example.
16. It simply means that how can we ask others to do certain things if we ourselves are incapable or not following what we expect others to perform.
17. So for someone to become a leader he or she must possess qualities that other people held in high regards and they would then be inclined to follow.
18. The attributes of a good leader are many and you can get books on leadership in any bookshop. Many writers have made lots of money writing and giving talks on leadership. But to me leadership is not rocket science. It is about everyday values. Let me mention a few of these.
19. First and foremost, it is Integrity and Honesty. If a leader has neither of these values, then you will have a leader who is corrupt and untrustworthy.
20. Secondly, Work Hard and take pride in your Work. These values makes you a person with integrity and honest. Then, Embrace Lifelong Learning meaning you must never stop learning and acquiring knowledge. Knowledge is never static and it is infinite. The more you read the more you realise that there are so much more to read and learn.
21. Another value that I believe is extremely important is Discipline without which, you can have thousand or ideas and ambition but you will never be able to realise them. This includes punctuality, which in essence is about respecting time. Surely you are aware that time and tide waits for no man.
22. One value you can do without is Ego. Some are of the opinion that ego can be positive as it drives you to be competitive. That to me is more likely to be determination. Ego is about self and not those you lead. Ego tends to make us not see our mistakes or the refusal to admit them. Then we will not be able to correct them if we do not acknowledge them. To my mind, a good leader will put aside his ego and rectify his mistakes if it will benefit his those who he leads.
23. These are some of the values and qualities that I feel are important to be a leader. The list is of course endless and you will discover them as you traverse life from youth to adulthood.
24. On that note, I wish to commend Semai Nilai for investing time and money in programmes that are intended to inculcate good values among our youth.

I wish you all the best in your undertakings.

Thank You.