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# Rekindle the spirit of unity

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FIFTY-SEVEN years ago, at the time we gained Independence on Aug 31, 1957, we were one people with one purpose.

Judging solely from the things being said all over the place these days, you'd be hard pressed to find any trace of that unity.

Yet we must remind ourselves that this vocal and extreme minority is just that - a minority. When you think about it, how many such people do you really encounter in the course of your day?

Chances are, you will have way more daily interactions with people who are the polar opposite of these hate-spewing, divisive, race-obsessed ignoramuses.

People who reach out a helping hand no matter who you are. People who offer kind or encouraging words, who go out of their way, frequently to come to the aid of total strangers. Unconditional assistance rendered by folks who realise that whatever your name, however you pray, and whoever you voted for, we are all the same. We're all just trying to get by - and if we can somehow have a beneficial effect on those around us at the same time, all the better.

Our burdens are much lighter when they're shared, just as our joys are so much greater. And our achievements, more satisfying.

There is, no doubt, a great deal of healing and repairing needed in the coming months. We have experienced too many tragedies of late, and seen a lot of damage done to the fabric of our society by selfish and narrow-minded people. And to get all that fixing done, we will have to do it together, all Malaysians - all of us - working in unison.

And let no one tell you any different: you are not just Malaysian, you are Malaysia. As much as a country is its geography and culture and economy, the latter two (and even part of the first) are the result of its people.

Ordinary people doing ordinary things, which - when we are united for a common purpose - can become extraordinary.

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#moderateMY



There is no need to emulate "third parties" as we strive for great things, because the best example was set by our very own - our forefathers.

Theirs are the kind of stories we want to share as we approach our 57th National Day and 51st Malaysia Day.

Join us in our *I Am Malaysia* campaign as we bring you stories of such ordinary people and the extraordinary things we've accomplished.

In the first phase, from now until National Day, we will talk about things that recapture, reflect on and build upon that Spirit Of 57. Get in touch with us if you have a story to share about:

- > What life was like during the struggle for Independence, and when the big day finally dawned;
- > How we can recapture this unity of purpose and strive for great things for the country and on the international stage;
- > People who embody the Spirit Of 57; and
- > Those who have made an impact in their community, from their own little niches to state, and national, and international level.

Check out Share your stories via Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TheStarOnline> or e-mail them to [editor@thestar.com.my](mailto:editor@thestar.com.my) with "I Am Malaysia" in the subject line. Read *The Star* and *The Star Online* daily for more.

Let your voice be heard, that the silent majority may drown out the extremists and put them in their place - which, we strongly feel, is forgotten in our history, barely in our present, and certainly nowhere in our future.