

Tolerance is the recipe for Mahathir-Siti Hasmah fairy tale relationship

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PUTRAJAYA, Sept 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammad, the oldest elected leader in the world has spilled the beans on his secret to being happily married to his soulmate Tun Dr Siti Hasmah for the past 62 years.

The premier said tolerance, as well as the need to consider the feeling and future of children, was the most important factor and key to their beautiful and sweet relationship that has been admired by most Malaysians.

During an exclusive interview with The Third Age Media Association and Bernama News Channel (BNC) recently at Perdana Leadership Foundation here, Dr Mahathir said that no one would be able to change their partner, hence the need of tolerance as the way to have a healthy and balance relationship.

With a small blush and a smile on his face, he reiterated his younger years being with Dr Siti Hasmah, the backbone to his success.

“Well, my wife always says that behind every successful man, there is a wife, not just a woman. She objects to that,” said the 93-year-old premier.

“At first of course, when we were young, we have differences, tensions and all that. But as you grow older you realise that you cannot change your partner very much and she cannot change me very much and we learn to accept that this is what the person is like,” he said.

He said that as he spent most of his time in politics, Dr Siti Hasmah had accompanied in most occasions even though she was not involved in politics.

“And if I have to leave her because I have some work, she tolerates that. On the other hand I will tolerate her...I think there is a need to be tolerant,” he said.

Dr Mahathir also stressed that there was a need to consider the feelings of children as it would be a disaster for the family when parents break up and re-marry.

“The children will never have a good life. So you need to show concern for your children,” he added.

The couple met at the King Edward VII College of Medicine in Singapore (now part of National University of Singapore) in 1947 and got married in 1956.

Dr Mahathir's first tenure as prime minister was from 1981 to 2003, becoming Malaysia's longest-serving Prime Minister, before making a comeback after the 14th general election in May this year.

The full interview with Dr Mahathir, held in conjunction with the Ageing, Learning and Technology: Enriching Lives Connecting Communities Conference 2018 on October 9, 2018, was aired over BNC yesterday and will be repeated at 11.30pm on Sunday, 5pm (Monday), 12 noon and 5pm (Sept 22), 5pm (Sept 23), 9am (Sept 29) and 5pm (Sept 30).

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