

'I owe it to my late mum' - Mahathir

10/07/2019

KUALA LUMPUR, July 10 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who turned 94 today, has described his late mother, Wan Tempawan Wan Hanapi, as the most influential individual in his life.

“She brought me up, she taught me the way I should behave, the things I should do,” the Prime Minister told Bernama Radio in a special interview to mark the happy occasion.

Queried on the secret of his vitality, Dr Mahathir said he now does everything in moderation, including when it comes to eating, and remains active.

“I watch my weight, meaning I am careful about what I eat. I also feel that we will become weak, in mind and body, if we are not active. When we are active, then everything functions well,” he said.

He said that if he has the time, he likes to read and write and do some exercise.

Recalling his younger years, Dr Mahathir said the world was much simpler then as his life merely revolved around school, his home and Alor Setar town as he grew up in a multi-racial neighbourhood.

He remembers that besides a shop selling *songket* material and bronzeware, there were no other shops run by the Malays at that time.

“I wanted to be proud of the achievement of the Malays but I couldn't find anything to be proud of as far as the position of the Malays was concerned under British rule,” he said.

However, he considered his biggest failure as his inability to change the character of the Malays and their value system.

Dr Mahathir told Bernama Radio that he had tried to change them so that they were more compatible with progress but the majority opted to stick to their established ways.

Asked which world leaders inspired him the most, Dr Mahathir named Nelson Mandela who fought against apartheid in South Africa and said he was also inspired by Peter the Great of Russia because “he changed a disorganised Russia into a world power” .

Asked about the characteristics of a leader, Dr Mahathir said the individual should know about the situation in the country as well as developments in the region and the world.

“We cannot isolate ourselves as though we are living alone, without any contact with neighbours and other countries of the world,” he said.

On a lighter note, Dr Mahathir said his favourite local singer is Datuk Seri Siti Nurhaliza, that he prefers coffee over tea and counts Japan as his favourite among the countries he has visited.

-- BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/en/general/news.php?id=1744442>

© 2019 BERNAMA