

**Speech at the Launch of The 10th University Scholars Leadership Symposium (USLS)
2019**

By : YAB. TUN DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD, PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA

Venue : AT SETIA CITY CONVENTION CENTRE, SETIA ALAM, SELANGOR

Date : 02/08/2019

1. Firstly I would like to welcome you to Malaysia. You'll discover that it is a kind of a melting pot of different cultures and customs. We take pride in our diversity as well as our ability to hold the nation together and turn it from an agrarian nation into an industrialised country.

2. Yes, there have been setbacks and attempts by bigots and zealots to divide and undermine our unity and common objectives but Alhamdulillah, we have prevailed and we are able to stay on course to showcase a nation that is united in its diversity.

3. And as I've pointed out earlier, Malaysia has become a place where different races came and stayed on, and you will discover that our tagline "Malaysia, Truly Asia" is not merely a promotional slogan but is indeed what we offer to visitors' et al.

YOUTH – THE HOPE OF THE NATION

4. It is indeed a pleasure to see the young investing time to learn leadership skills and cultivate awareness on current issues, primarily on social development and humanitarian efforts that are being discussed at this symposium.

5. This programme has been designed for young persons throughout the world who are committed in making the world a much better place for all mankind.

6. Congratulations to the Ministry of Education and Humanitarian Affairs Asia for organising this meaningful event.

7. It is very important that youths, who will inherit the future realise that if they are able to retain their ideals and values, there is then much hope for the somewhat derailed world to get back on track and give humanity a chance.

8. Whatever or however our contributions may be, if we believe that giving our best to the nation is noble and a worthy cause, then our nation is blessed with a responsible and conscientious citizenry.

9. Noble values are important in development. I believe if we possess good values and we inculcate them in our way of life and in turn, they then become a habit, we can be assured that our society is on the right track.

10. Of late, we have been emphasising on the need of our youth to prepare themselves to face disruptions from the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0, from artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things, automation and other technological advancements that we expect and have experienced, changed the way we do things.

11. We have also reminded ourselves and the younger generation that if we do not keep abreast we will be left behind in the global race and that will result in economic backwardness and even poverty.

12. But much as we want our youths to be able to remain competitive and capable to take on the rest of the world, it is not about dollars and cents, profits and losses or bottom lines.

13. If values and noble ideas are cast aside in the rat race, we will end up a nation bereft of all that is humane and impassionate as well as being without humility and sensitivity.

14. All the negative values and counter cultures will be the order of the day and I dread to imagine if that were to happen, what kind of monsters we will be producing in the future.

15. Therefore, to become real leaders, we need to ensure that we stick to the noble values while keeping up to date with the changes that are affecting us.

16. Indeed, being a good leader is not only about being intelligent, but one who needs to know and to have the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, good and evil.

LEADERSHIP AT THE PEAK

17. I have mentioned this before that everyone is a leader at some point of time in their lives.

18. One is a leader if one has younger brothers and sisters; one is a leader if one is a club president or the captain of a football team. And when we start working, of course we will start at the very bottom and have many seniors to report to, but we will eventually climb the employment ladder and end up as leaders.

19. In other words, leadership is a lifelong task of learning and experience. The issue is how we fare as a leader. What kind of impact do we make and how much of our leadership touches the lives of others. These are essential concerns and ideals that a leader should know and address.

20. An effective leader must possess certain basic qualities and subscribes to certain values. He or she must possess qualities that other people hold in high regard and they would then be inclined to follow. A leader should lead not just by words but more effectively by example.

21. The attributes of a good leader are many and numerous books on leadership have been written and are available. Many writers have made lots of money writing and giving talks on leadership.

22. As the matter of fact, we can read about leadership in the internet and find lots of information and articles on how to be a good leader.

23. To me, leadership is not rocket science. It is about everyday values.

24. The following values are what I've always believe define and make a leader.

25. Firstly, a leader must have integrity and honesty as without them, the leader will be corrupt and untrustworthy.

26. Next, the leader must be willing to work hard and to have pride in their work. Apart from that, a leader must have the hunger for knowledge and be aware of the changes around him.

27. This is especially true when facing with technological advancements and the disruptions they cause. If a leader is oblivious to these changes, they will not be able to impress upon the nation on the need to keep abreast and in effect the nation will lag behind and eventually become backward.

28. Knowledge is never static, it is infinite. The more you seek, the more you realise that there is so much more to learn. Be humble and generous in seeking and sharing knowledge.

29. Another value that is probably underrated is humility. Without it, ego is what that drives the leader. Of course there are those that argue that ego can be positive as it makes a leader determined and competitive. But ego as we understand can be equally disruptive as it tends to make a leader unable to accept criticisms and opinions that differ.

30. Being humble does not make a leader weak. Instead it binds him with the people, those who supported him and made him their leader. If a leader loses touch with his people and supporters, he ceases to be a leader.

31. Suffice to say, all the values that have been impressed in our religion, culture and customs will keep a leader's feet firm on the ground.

OUR YOUTH, OUR FUTURE, OUR HOPE

32. I hope the symposium will expose you to the path of leadership in the future. It is also hoped that becoming a leader is not a “be all and end all”.

33. If everyone wants to be a leader, then who would be the follower? That is if we were to look at positions in the corporate, government and political context.

34. As pointed out earlier, everyone is a leader at one point or another in his or her life. Even when you’re a follower to someone, you’re still a leader to others.

35. Hence the need to remind ourselves of why we must always inculcate the noble values that we have defined as important for a leader. Without them we will stay as follower for most of our lives.

36. In that context, all of us possess the capacity and opportunity to be a leader at some time or another. But only those who cultivate it will become truly effective leaders. Therefore, I would like to encourage all of you to develop the leader in you — to become responsive youths in shaping your future and the future of others.

37. On that note, I am pleased to launch the 10th University Scholars Leadership Symposium.

Thank you.

Copyright of the Prime Minister's Office Official Website

Source: <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2019/08/speech-at-the-launch-of-the-10th-university-scholars-leadership-symposium-usls-2019/>