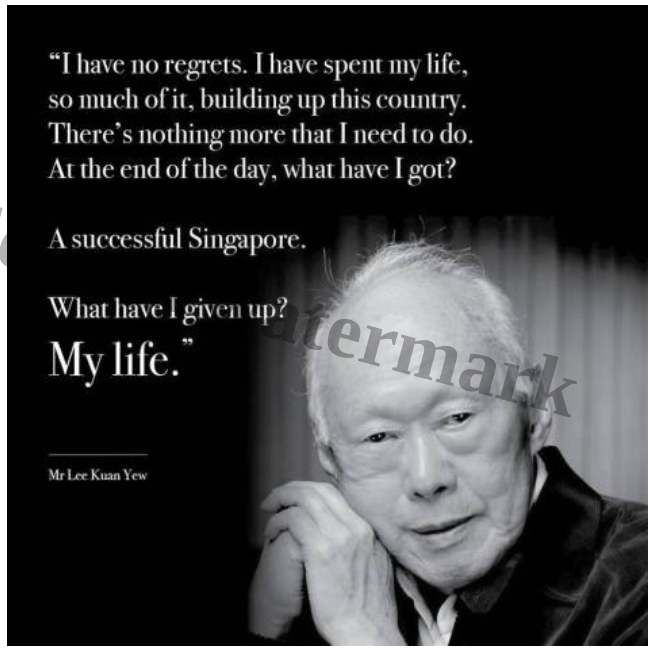
We Are Singapore and We Will Go On. Rest in Peace, Lee Kuan Yew

Description

Iâ??ll never forget last week. I donâ??t think any of us ever would. It was a hard week to get by, as the nation mourned together for the loss of our greatest leader ever.



Funny how Singapore was ranked as the worldâ??s most emotionless society just 3 years ago, yet this past week saw an outpouring of grief never seen before. I donâ??t think the world expected us to react this way. What would the people who conducted the Gallup poll think? People wept buckets for this man. I lost count of the number of times I teared.

But I think for my generation, it was more than just grief.

You see, we didnâ??t grow up in times of hardship and menial labour, unlike our parents. We learnt about Singaporeâ??s history, but for the most part, they were just stories to us. We recited the pledge and sang the national anthem during our schooling years but I donâ??t think any of us quite grasped the full extent of its meaning. To us, they were just words â?? words we needed to recite and sing lest our teachers scolded us for being disrespectful.

But on Sunday, we saw history happen. We were part of a significant event that will be remembered for decades to come. It will be in the stories we tell our children next time:

â??Mama was there when the whole nation grieved over Mr. Lee Kuan Yewâ??s death. Over 100,000 people gathered despite the torrential rain to send him off on his final journey. We shouted his name in

union without any cue or prompt. It was unforgettable.â?•

We stood together in a sombre minute of silence, and when we said our pledge and sang the national anthem, this time it actually meant something.



This was perhaps his greatest gift to us. For bringing together the nation despite our differences, a task which many countries still fail at today.

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We no longer have to be prompted. Mr. Lee and his government used to have to literally force the different races to come together, but today we stand together unified without anyone else telling us to.

Will I miss him? Not really, because I didnâ??t know the man personally. But yet when NDP comes around this August, I know Iâ??ll be among the millions of Singaporeans who will be thinking back to last yearâ??s NDP where he appeared. Old, frail and sickly-looking, but still there nonetheless.



But he will no longer appear at NDP. And that, I will miss.

Tonight I was able to walk home as usual at midnight, noticing the walk through a brightly lit HDB estate for what seemed like the first time, and realizing how lucky I am to be female and be out alone late at night without worrying about getting robbed, molested or raped.

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I recalled having to make my way home by 7pm back when I was studying in the U.S. because anything later would mean having to trouble a friend to give me a ride home. It just wasnâ??t safe.

I looked up at the trees and marvelled how one man pushed for his vision of a garden city despite experts telling him Singaporeâ??s climate was not suitable. Because of him, Iâ??m able to take shelter when I walk to the bus stop in the hot morning heat under the lush greenery, and breathe fresh air which I didnâ??t quite have in China and in Hong Kong.



When I reached home, I poured myself a drink straight from the tap, thinking about how I wasnâ??t able to do so when I was living in the U.S. and China. The water there was often yellow and undrinkable, whereas here my tap water was clear and odorless, and safe for me to swallow.



Earlier over dinner, my friend and I had a conversation about how we get tired after work despite being blessed to be able to knock off on time during most days.

â??How did our parents do it? They worked long hours, came home, did the laundry and still managed to take care of usâ?• we wondered aloud.

Then we recalled the late Mr. Lee once said,

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Itâ??s true. Whereas our parents yearned for and were content to have a stable-paying job, today we want a meaningful job that, ideally one which fulfils our passions or allows us to work from home or with flexible hours. Pay is no longer enough. Some of us in our generation expect more money for easier work, or lesser work hours. Itâ??s true. Even I plead guilty to this sometimes.

The man had foresight. My generation thinks weâ??re smarter, more capable, and know better than our elders, but do we really? In this past week, I realized how little we actually know.

But we will wipe these tears and move on. Where we once doubted if my generation would stay together and continue building Singapore, my doubts have now dissipated, for Iâ??ve seen with my own eyes how this nation can and will stand strong together. Iâ??ve never been more proud to be a Singaporean.

There are people watching to see what will become of Singapore now that weâ??ve lost our greatest leader. But we will not fail.

Mr. Lee, you need not worry about us. We mourned over your passing as a nation, now we will heal as a nation.

We will walk through this with hope, and with your son leading us, Iâ??m certain that our future will be bright.

Thank you, and rest in peace.

Category

1. Family

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