What Can Singapore Learn From the Orlando Shootings?

Description



I still remember the 2007 Virginia Tech shootings like it happened yesterday (mainly because I previously did an in-depth paper on it), but what I also remember amidst the shock and terror were the stories of bravery and protection that emerged from the aftermath.

Before we even got a chance to recover from the shocking shooting of singer Christina Grimmie (I was a huge fan), yesterday, the Orlando shootings took the lives of another 50 innocent people. It isnâ??t the first terror attack, and neither will it be the last. In the pages of human history mankind has pretty much established the fact that we will always be fighting our own kind over our differences, no matter what era or beliefs we stand by.

Life and death is a mystery. Some say it is pre-destined, others say it is determined by our own actions (karma?). No one really knows. My friend **Sulaiman Daud** thinks we should just make our time on this planet (and this island) a little more pleasant while we can, and I wanted to share the wisdom of his message with every one of you here today.

Note: I own no credits â?? all rightful credits go to Sulaiman Daud. His message below has been reproduced with permission.

Below is his message in full (edited to remove vulglarities):



1. GET YOUR INFORMATION FROM MORE THAN ONE SOURCE.

No single source can tell you all you need to know about life, the universe and everything in it. Religious texts donâ??t tell you how to deal with climate change. Physics textbooks donâ??t tell you how to be a good husband and father. Business man in a suit doesnâ??t know how to run a country. Guru on a mountain top doesnâ??t know how to get rid of the damn U2 songs that violated your iPhone.

The minute you live your life according to ONE set of rules, thatâ??s it. Youâ??re shackled, youâ??re chained, youâ??re boxed in. Open your mind and accept the possibility that you can learn something new from anyone you meet or anything you read. If you can do that, youâ??ll be better equipped to sift through the mountain of rubbish and become a more informed person.

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2. PUT WHAT YOU LEARNED INTO CONTEXT.

Put things in context before you freak out.

Without historical context, you wonâ??t know that the mess in the Middle East has little to do with religion, oil or America (although they are contributing factors, but rather mostly due to petty rivalries among humans being humans.

Without political context, you wonâ??t know that the reason why so many people support Donald Trump is because of the success of the Tea Party in 2010, increased globalisation and advances in tech led to a loss of manufacturing and fossil fuel mining jobs, and the growing prominence of minorities and LGBT people scare those who are used to a certain view of the world. When people get scared and mad as hell they rally around an inspiring figure, no matter how racist he is. Check out Germany in the 1930s.

Without social context, you wonâ??t know that committing a faux pas is actually the least of your worries, and people quickly forget your embarrassing moments by the next day.

Without scientific context, you wonâ??t know that our addiction to cars and fossil fuels is killing the planet, and Elon Musk might save the world.

With context, you begin to understand why the world is the way it is. You realise that the poor and violent countries are poor and violent because God might just be punishing them. You realise that itâ??s far more complex than that.



3. EMPATHISE.

Put yourself in the other personâ??s shoes. Really, do it no matter what end of the spectrum you happen to be in. Accept that the gay guy is born gay and wants to fall in love and marry and have kids the way you do. Also accept that the religious guy sincerely believes in Godâ??s love, disagrees with the way you live your life but intends you no harm personally.

Donâ??t divide yourself into camps and scream slogans at each other. Talk. Communicate, empathise. It doesnâ??t mean youâ??ll end up agreeing. It does mean youâ??ll understand why the other person thinks differently from you.

Donâ??t bury yourself in Internet forums and chat groups and echo chambers where everyone blindly agrees with you. Accept the possibility that you may be wrong, and you will discover something new.

4. I DONâ??T CARE WHAT YOU DO, BUT DO SOMETHING. WHINING WITHOUT ACTION IS FOR LOSERS.

Fact is, what we have here in SG is about the best weâ??re gonna get. You can pitch in and help to change things for the better. Or you can whine endlessly, incessantly, ceaselessly about how shit your life is on your $1500 laptop made by sweatshop labour in China. Whining solves nothing if you donâ??t act. Ask Bernie Sanders how many kids turned up at his rallies and didnâ??t turn up at the ballot box. Whining literally solves nothing. Your FB post on how pathetic it is that civil servants canâ??t access the Internet achieves literally nothing. How many people complained actually took the time to give some feedback on the Smart Nation initiative? Iâ??m willing to bet zero. The people who show up get to decide. Thatâ??s the hardest lesson Iâ??ve ever had to learn. THE PEOPLE WHO SHOW UP GET TO DECIDE. It doesnâ??t matter if itâ??s a meeting for an R-an-R committee or the floor of the United Nations. The principle remains the same. If you donâ??t participate, you donâ??t get to complain when things turn out the way you didnâ??t like.

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5. BE HUMBLE.

We have a very long way to go, as a nation and as a people. We need to be more accepting of those different from us.

Some guy is deaf and dumb and cleans your plate, doesnâ??t mean you have to explode. Itâ??s just one plate of food, you could stand to skip a meal. Yeah that migrant workerâ??s napping under your block. He sweated blood to build the house you and your spoiled kids are growing up in, leave him alone. The maid and her friends are talking too loudly on the train, they get only one day off per week from doing literally every household chore imaginable, you whine and moan if you have to work overtime for two hours. That immigrant family doesnâ??t know your customs, thatâ??s cos theyâ??ve been here for like a couple of months. Teach them what they need to know. Share your

festivals and your celebrations with them. If they still refuse, then screw them, they wonâ??t survive long. But Iâ??m willing to bet that someone is here cos they want to be part of our community, so letâ??s help them to get along with us. Everybody wins.

So your kid wants to go into the arts. Let him try. If he fails, itâ??s not the end of the world. Itâ??s not! Heâ??ll have learned something. If he makes a pretty good living, then heâ??ll have succeeded. If he goes on to become a star, then youâ??ve raised a star. Congrats. Youâ??ll never know if he hadnâ??t taken that chance.

We need to acknowledge that not everyone in this country has benefited equally from our success. Not everyone has enjoyed the benefits you may have. We need to keep working to make things better for all, because if not for the grace of God, your life could have turned out to be so very different.

6. BE PROUD.

There are people who like nothing better than to tear our country down. Every little slip up is a rallying cry for bringing down the government. Every PR gaffe is evidence that our politicians â??donâ??t get itâ??. Every mistake is a reason to get rid of the system that we have now and to start over.

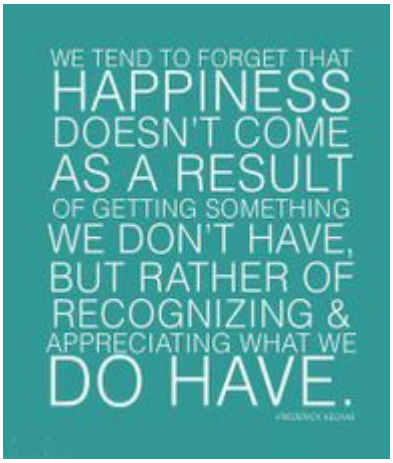
Well screw that. I am so sick of your whining. Yâ??all want a more religious government? Fine, go migrate to Pakistan or El Salvador. Yâ??all want no government interference in your lives? Fine, go migrate to Somalia. Yâ??all want freedom of speech and more freedom? Fine, go migrate to the US. Donâ??t come back crying when people call you a Ching Chong Chinaman for fun, burn down your house cos youâ??re just another dirty immigrant or shoot your children dead in their schools because hmm Second Amendment.

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I have been to more countries than I could have ever imagined, and I am pretty damn grateful for a number of things I have taken for granted here in this hot and sticky island. I can walk the streets at 3am. I can be sure that the policeman wonâ??t ask for a bribe without helping me out. I donâ??t have to worry that my water has lead in it or that I canâ??t get halal food. I can post on Facebook that Iâ??m voting for this party or that party and no one will give a damn (except on cooling off day). I have welcomed foreigners to Singapore, from countries with ancient histories and immense wealth, who are all eager to learn what they can from us because of our reputation of doing things better.

Weâ??re not perfect. BUT NO ONE IS. NO WHERE IS. Perfection is a lie, itâ??s a myth, itâ??s the goal we strive towards. Because if you think youâ??ve achieved perfection, then youâ??ve succumbed to stagnation.

We deal with the world as it is, WHILE we look to change it to how it should be, AT THE SAME TIME. Bobby Kennedy dreamed of things that should be and asked why not. Lee Kuan Yew believed to his dying day that we needed to make the hard choices for the country to survive. Remember rule one? Theyâ??re BOTH right. We canâ??t blindly, mindlessly follow one doctrine for the rest of our lives. We need to take the best of both.



7. BE GRATEFUL.

Ten years ago I thought I knew everything. Five years ago I was sure I knew some things. Today I realise thereâ??s still a long road to go. But Iâ??m grateful for so many things I never would have thought possible. Iâ??ve seen the chaos of Tehran. Iâ??ve seen the regality of Riyadh. Iâ??ve seen the glittering spires of Dubai. Iâ??ve seen the waters of the Persian Gulf in Kuwait City. Iâ??ve seen ships cross the West Bay of Doha. Iâ??ve hiked the trails outside Kathmandu. Iâ??ve walked the streets of London and Dublin and Liverpool. I fell in love with the grandeur of Tokyo. And thereâ??s so much more out there that I wanna see.

Iâ??ve shaken hands with princes and royals. Iâ??ve greeted President El Sisi of Egypt and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India. Iâ??ve interviewed President Jimmy Carter and taken a photo with Senator John McCain of the United States. And thereâ??s so many more people I would like to meet and get to know, because Iâ??ve never met anyone, from a former POTUS to my baby cousin Wesley, who wasnâ??t interesting in their own way.

And none of that, absolutely none of that, would not have been possible without the help, support and love of my friends, my colleagues and my family. Thank you for helping to make the world a better place.
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Now go and be the change you want to see.
With love,
Budget Babe

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Category

1. Family