Compilation of Thought-Of-the-Week Articles : March 2011

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(Vitamin E, Youths & Singapore) (pages 3-6)
Last Sunday (13 March 2011), I was invited as a panellist for an Aljunied GRC & Serangoon SMC PAYM Policy Forum, which was chaired by Minister Lim Hwee Hua. Ms Lina Chong, Chairperson of PAYM Central Youth Council, made up the panel of 3. The topic was "Voices of Singapore's Youth --- Building Singapore's Future".

As many of you know, I usually speak with a 1-slide. If you are interested in what this 1-slide looks like, here it is.


You can also find it on my Writings webpage. http://www.restededge.com.sg/writings

I had 3 main points in the 10 mins shared. They are:

One, it is important to not feel that "your best work cannot be done in your youth. Indeed they can, and many youths have done it. Some youths have done it again & again". Here are some examples. When Paul Simon (of Simon & Garfunkel) wrote "The Sounds of Silence", he was only 23. When he wrote "Bridge Over Troubled Waters", he was but 29. When Bill Gates founded Microsoft in 1975, he was all of 20. When Google was founded in 1998, Larry Page and Sergey Brin were both 25.
Two, youths, because of the way the world is now, and the way they grew up & were brought up, and the lens thru' which they see the world, youths need more "Vitamin E" to thrive. What is "Vitamin E"? It is any and all of the following E words: Environment, Energy, Excitement, Enthusiasm, Empowerment, Engagement, etc. Youths of today are not just looking to "live, work & play" (old paradigm), they are also looking for, working towards, and having dreams to "live their best life, build their best home, and do their best work" (new paradigm). In essence, youths want to thrive, achieve & flourish, in addition to "work, live & play".
Three, >60 percent of the world's problems will be solved by people <30. It is therefore fundamental that youths have (i) high psychological capital (hope, optimism, resiliency, self-efficacy), (ii) passion, and (iii) a different way of thinking and not be locked in to the current modes & paradigms of thinking which exist today (Very much like what Einstein means when he said "The problems of today cannot be solved by the same kind of thinking which created them"). Youths in Singapore need to avoid "learnt helplessness", exhibit a greater sense of "heroic action" and demonstrate & work towards stronger social capital (citizen helping citizen). Youths should think about how they can produce their very best work and assist Singapore to grow, progress & thrive in Craft of State, Art of Society & Science of Economy. Finally they should each nurture & nourish their own version of "Singapore Dreams", work hard & steadily towards achieving them, and if these are "kueh lapis" Singapore Dreams with at least 2 layers --- one for self & loved ones, and another for Singapore & Singaporeans, that will be best!
Best Work

- Albert Einstein, 26, 42
- Michelangelo, 26
- Pablo Picasso, 26
- Paul Simon, 23 & 29
- Eric Clapton, 32 (1977)
- Microsoft, 20 (1975)
- Dr Goh Keng Swee, 41 (1959)
- Lee Kuan Yew, 36 (1959)
- S Rajaratnam, 44 (1959)

Vitamin “E”

- Beyond Experience
  - Environment
  - Energy
  - Excitement
  - Enthusiasm
  - Empowerment
  - Engagement
  - 4 Es in Well-Being
  - The ASPIRE Leader

Youths & Singapore

- Dreams vs Nightmares
- <30... for >60%
- Five Promises / Priceless / Passions / Paratelics
- Avoid “Learnt Helplessness”
- Hope + Memory = HOME
- Heroic Action
  - State, Society, Economy
- Kueh Lapis Singapore Dream
- Raison d’être
- National Accounts
  - Well-Being
  - Time
- What Unites & Uplifts
**Behavioural Economics, Policy Making & Nation Building.** What is the sweet spot between these 3 areas which allows continents, countries, cities, communities, citizens to get along well with each other, build socially cohesive & harmonious societies, improve engaged citizenry at the overall & individual levels, and demonstrate engaged citizenry behaviors which will benefit Economy, Society and State? What are some of the things Singapore can consider doing more of to improve & advance in this regard? What will a Balanced Scorecard of Behavioral Economic measures look like? How best to balance Objective Well-Being with Subjective Well-Being measures and initiatives for Policy-Making, Nation-Building and Future-Making? What will this Nation-wide Balanced Scorecard look like? This is a long-standing interest of mine and continues to occupy much of my passion.

**Singapore as a Learning Nation.** How can Singapore best achieve this and what benefits will it bring us? What are the first steps to take? There are many positive things which happen when a person learns something new every day, gets to do what he does best everyday, and gets to work on something along his/her area of passion. This is *paratelics* (personal path to talents/excellence) at its very best. Learning & growing everyday adds to emotional well-being, innovation, creativity, productivity, ability to deliver sustainable exceptional results, etc at the individual, group and community levels, so learning & growing should not strictly nor solely be linked primarily with an economic purpose. This is a new area of interest for me. Please look for my upcoming writings/talks in this regard.

**Measure of a Leader, Mark of a Man.** When is a leader at his best? Can a leader constantly be “in-the-zone”? Is this “in-the-zone” feeling and level & ease of achievements sustainable? How best to make it so? If Leadership at its best is to consistently deliver on results & impact, to strategically & smoothly influence others, and to build sustainable engaged enterprises and communities with high performance & well-being, then how can this “rested edge” and that “in-the-zone” feeling and ability to deliver constantly at one’s best be authentically sustained and exponentially enhanced? This is an area which continues to interest me and occupies much of my time, energies, emotions and attention.
Peter Ong is a prolific thinker, advisor, author and occasional intellectual.

Here are Select Writings from the desk of Peter Ong.


2005. The Singapore Leader Study. Published by Gallup & SIM.
2005. Musings from the Singapore Leader Study. Published by Gallup & SIM.
2007. “Soul of the City”
2010. Towards a New Decade and a More Cohesive Singapore.
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