Talk by Tan Sri Tony Fernandes

1. The importance of parents
2. Students correct path of passion
3. Mother’s role in my life
4. Strong mentality + taking opportunity
5. Current doing

A very good morning to the vice-chancellors, lecturers, parents and the undergraduates of the Management and Science University (MSU). First and foremost, I would like to thank the Star Media Group and the responsible authorities of MSU for inviting me to give a talk for the august edition of Power Talks series. I’m feeling glad and very excited to share my thoughts with you’ll here and I would like to lend your attention throughout my speech.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my opinion, students’ stage is a very important and the turning point for each of our life. The decisions we take now will determine our life path for the next thirty years. So, parents should play their role to ensure their child is on the right path and do not just live your dreams on them. Every student has his/her own potential and personal interest in various fields. Parents should take efforts to discover their child’s interest from the early stage and assist them to achieve their dreams. In general, every Malaysian parent wants their kid to be a lawyer or a doctor which eventually reducing the amount of students who are excelling in other professional careers. This situation also occurred in my life when my father who was a doctor wanted me to study medicine and become a doctor.

Children, on the other hand, must have a deep knowledge about various field of careers that are wide open for them all around the world. Students should not be like the frogs underneath coconut shell but must have the passion, courage, drive and energy to pursue their dreams. However, students should first find out their potentials and interest then explore the choices that are available for them. It must be what is right and students must grab the opportunity when they arrive. When I was 15 years old, I hated studying science subjects such as chemistry, biology and physics instead, I loved music, history and economics and felt those are part of my life. When I delivered my opinion to both my parents that I have least interest in science subjects, they declined heavily on my opinion. For the two years of higher secondary studies I did not concentrate, just played. As I expected, I failed my examination and my father abandoned me then.

Then, my interest on music roses back through my enthusiastic mother, who was an incredible woman in my life. She was an entrepreneur selling Tupperware and Pyrex. So, I used to follow her to the kampong to sell the home wares. I was fascinated by her ability to gather people of all races together and motivate them as part of her sales. She was the biggest influence and always inspire me to "fly high” as I dreamt of owning aircrafts. This idea trigger me when I used to fly all over the country with my mother for her business. I learnt a lot from my mother which broaden my knowledge of involving in business and the importance of making a good public relation (PR). Follow your heart, don’t worry about the people around and the failures. We do always have a choice to improve our deficit and try once again. Bear in your mind that if you do not or afraid to try, you cannot, use the rewind button at 60 years old. I see many parents and young people here and I would like to remind you’ll that we have only one life and use it till the maximum to upgrade your lifestyle.

My dear students,

We are all lucky enough to be the citizens of this fantastic country, Malaysia. This country provided me the chance of what I am now. It was my sharp-witting characteristic which help me to grab the opportunity to purchase Air Asia for just RM 1 from the former Prime Minister of Malaysia Datuk Seri Mahathir Muhammad who was facing various problems handling this airline company. It was determination and passion, accompanied with a skilled and committed workforce who were the air Asia crews, that lead me and my fellow partner Datuk Kamaruddin Meranun to lift up this airline from a two-aircraft company to one that has 180 planes of Boeing and aircraft variants operating from five countries and carrying over 55 million passengers across Asia.

Air Asia Airlines will give opportunities to those who are eager and passionate to be the best without bothering about race, sex, creed, colour or religious affiliations. The evidence is Air Asia has Malay, Chinese and Indian employees who are all working together under the same roof. People are given the most important asset in Air Asia where they are given the chance to excel without considering whether you went to Oxford, Cambridge, MSU or you are a school dropout. Furthermore, companies who wants to thrive should have to come up with the right product that suits the consumers’ need. Then, brand and promote it, make sure a reliable distribution network of the product. The basic requirement for creating a god image of the brand is by continuous improvements, public feedback, marketing and fidelity. That’s all I would like to share with you’ll today and I will end the talk with my inspiring quote “Believe the unbelievable. Dream the impossible. Never take no for an answer”. Thank You.