

## My lessons from SONA 2015

By Chris Lew 17 Feb 2015

On the 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015 we witnessed a terrible scene in parliament. Cell phones signals were jammed to deny free access of information. Some members disrupted proceeding and asked questions at what was probably an inappropriate time; their justification was that they had not received the answers to these questions when they did ask it at the appropriate time. They were removed by force, and others walked out to protest the unconventional use of force by the police to eject this group. Some seemed to enjoy the side-show; some laughed while others applauded and, some appeared to be embarrassed. This summarised the behaviour of our political leaders chosen to represent our course for advancement, which highlighted an apparent lack of co-operation and respect. I have no doubt that many call this behaviour childish.

The state of the Nation address was finally presented as the president read out his speech, but the actual state of our nation was revealed by the behaviour of our leaders. It made me consider the probability that we are a nation divided largely because our leaders are so divided on the true priorities. I would not be surprised if after many months they are still be at loggerheads on this issue. In the mean time I guess there will be a lot blame shifting and name calling going to and fro, which will divide the nation further.

I wish that leaders the world over, including those who run our homes, schools, businesses and other organisations would realise that it does not matter so much who messed up, it matters more who leads the process of cleaning up. It breaks my heart when I think of all the time, money and energy we could save if our leaders were more focussed on doing what is right instead of trying to prove how right they and, how wrong others may be. I think also of all the suffering that could be eased if we only worked more efficiently, and collectively, at solving our problems.

We have complicated things in this world and we do not need more sophisticated ways to deal with the problems. What we do need is the desire to make things right and the will to keep our egos in check. We need more integrity!

From the great book by Robert Fulgrum '*All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*' we can get a solid perspective on how to enjoy our world together. This is a paraphrased version to stress the basic standards that we must learn from what we teach our children:

1. *Share and don't take things that aren't yours*
2. *Play fair*
3. *Don't hit (or hurt) people*
4. *When you've done wrong, say sorry*
5. *Put things back where you found them and leave things as you would like to find them*
6. *Clean up your own mess and remember to flush*
7. *Wash your hands before you eat – and after you use the toilet*
8. *Live a balanced life: Rest every day. Learn some and think some, draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some*
9. *Look out for one another: When you go out into the world; watch for traffic (and other dangers), and stick together*

10. *Be productive: Plant a seed and watch how the roots go down and the plant goes up. Even though you fail to know why, enjoy it – like you should enjoy the many wonders of our world'*

These are some of the things we teach our children during the foundation phase of life; but sadly we lose the value of applying these simple truths as we get older. There is little doubt that our world would be a much better place if more people practised what they preached, and if they applied the basic standards that they want their children to grow up with - learning as they teach.

We all need each other and we must care more about the world that we share. We must learn to share every good thing that we can and in every good way that we can to uplift one another. We need leaders who promote respect, tolerance and so on. But, who will step up to do this? I think we must each do a little more every day to set the example for the next generation of leaders. We must do this with so much integrity that our children will have the best role-models to follow instead of taking their direction from what they see on the television screens, and from what they get through all other unsubstantiated mediums. Let us help each other to get ahead and let's pray that those who have been getting ahead at the expense of others will see the folly of their ways.