

Speech from Hiew Swee Lan - Ex-Student, ACS Seremban Class of 74.

In coming tonight, I just couldn't let the opportunity to say a few things to one of the pivotal people in my life slip by. Although needless, there is a tad, just a tad bit of pressure to be articulate as he used to be my English teacher. So, to keep him in check and to be sure he refrain from playing the role of teacher tonight, I have a little advice for him. Mr. Madhavan, if you have the urge or feel the need to correct my English, do not, I repeat, do not raise your hand, because you will be ignored.

As far back as I can remember, English was always my favourite subject in school. I never did quite understand my affinity for it, nor can I recall when this affair started. You could say it started off as an infatuation, which very quickly blossomed into love when you burst into the scene. From then on, I was hooked. It is in the lifelong learning of this beautiful language that I find my bliss. I couldn't think, or speak of my love for English, and not have you in the equation, so no need to do the math, sir.

If English is one of the subjects of the day, it was a good day. I've never been one for formulas and calculations, so come English period, I'd be all ears, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. You have the much needed and coveted ability of injecting vim and enthusiasm into your lessons. Add to that an occasional sprinkling of humor as condiment and you had us all enthralled. For 45 min. or so, there was nowhere else I'd rather be. There was one time, just once, when my composition was chosen to be read. Although I can't remember what I wrote of, more importantly, I remembered how I felt. It was of little significance but for me, it was a huge thing. I was so proud of myself. That simple act has left such a profound impression on me that nearly four decades later, it is still etched in my mind.

I was hardly ever distracted during English lessons, but once in a while, my mind goes astray, and the one thing that almost always steer me away were your clothes. How immaculate and well-pressed they were. I thought of the person who ironed them and the love that must have gone into doing it. I wondered how you manage to wear them and not get creases on them. I thought and thought about it. Finally, I put it down to a good, erect posture and a slightly protruding mid-section which fills out the shirt, keeping the creases at bay. If the way you dressed was a yardstick by which we measure how a man should dress, let me tell you, my husband would be sitting in jail right now, serving a life sentence for fashion crimes, with no possibility of parole.

But tonight's not about fashion, tonight's to celebrate a special milestone, your 50th year as a teacher. I envy you, because, one cannot do the same thing for so many years without passion to fuel what you do. Passion takes a teacher from being merely good to great. As we come together this evening to commemorate this special occasion, all of us here, and I've no doubt, countless others, would like to thank you for your dedication and what it has taught us, taught me, at least, to strive to be the best in whatever role I play in life. We are so blessed to have our paths crossed with yours. Every child who attends school should have an exemplary teacher like you during the course of their schooling life. Your devotion as a teacher and mentor will not be easily forgotten, not for a long time. It is said, 'Success isn't what you accomplish in your life, it is about what you inspire others to do. If that's the case, I'd say that you've been exceedingly successful.

Thank you so much, sir. Enjoy the rest of the evening.

Hiew Swee Lan
ACS Class of 74