Twitter Thread by Farnam Street



Farnam Street
@farnamstreet



Here are 12 things I learned from Lee Kuan Yew about the world and the source of many of our present ills reading Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World.

1. You need a free exchange of ideas. "China will inevitably catch up to the U.S. in absolute GDP. But its creativity may never match America's, because its culture does not permit a free exchange and contest of ideas."

2. Technology will change how governance operates. "Technology is going to make (China's) system of governance obsolete... They are going to be well-informed; they can organize themselves. You cannot govern them the way you are governing them now"

3. Don't try to install a democracy in a country that has never had one. "I do not believe you can impose on other countries standards which are alien and totally disconnected with their past."

4. Welcome the best the world has to offer. "Throughout history, all empires that succeeded have embraced and included in their midst people of other races, languages, religions, and cultures."

5. It's about results, not promises. "Presidents do not get reelected if they give a hard dose of medicine to their people. So, there is a tendency to procrastinate, to postpone unpopular policies in order to win elections."

6. Governments shouldn't have an easy way out. "Governments took the easy way out by borrowing to give higher benefits to the current generation of voters and passing the costs on to the future generations who were not yet voters."

7. What goes into a standard of living? "first, the resources it has... second, its level of technological competence and standards of industrial development; third, its educational and training standards; and fourth, the culture, the discipline and drive in the workforce."

8. The single most important factor to national competitiveness … "The quality of a nation's manpower resources is the single most important factor determining national competitiveness."

9. Earning your place in history … “A nation is great not by its size alone. It is the will, the cohesion, the stamina, the discipline of its people, and the quality of their leaders which ensure it an honorable place in history.”

10. Weak leaders rely on opinion polls. “I have never been overconcerned or obsessed with opinion polls or popularity polls. I think a leader who is, is a weak leader. If you are concerned with whether your rating will go up or down, then you are not a leader.”

11. We are fundamentally competitive. “Human beings are not born equal. They are highly competitive. Systems like Soviet and Chinese communism have failed, because they tried to equalize benefits. Then nobody works hard enough, but everyone wants to get as much ....”

12. The value of history: “If you do not know history, you think short term. If you know history, you think medium and long term.”

Read the entire article here: https://t.co/TxG142XKql