

IN CONVERSATION WITH

THE RIGHT
HONOURABLE
DAME
JACINDA ARDERN

NOVEMBER 2023



CEO FOREWORD

It is difficult for leaders to stamp their mark in the complex and fragmented world we live in today. A series of major shocks and uncertainty have made guiding companies and economies through unprecedented change a challenge.

I have long admired former New Zealand Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Dame Jacinda Arden.

It would not be possible to look upon this island nation at the southern tip of our world without thinking of the values of kindness, empathy and solidarity Dame Jacinda espoused as she steered the country through five challenging years marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Christchurch Mosque shootings, and the Whakaari volcanic eruption, just to name a few.

It was my pleasure and privilege to host Dame Jacinda on 8 November 2023 at a Bank of Singapore and Singapore Management University (SMU) event where she took to the stage with Founding Chairman of the Board of Trustees of SMU, Mr. Ho Kwon Ping.

I was struck by her views on leadership, her strong beliefs on what the next generation requires in order to succeed, and her mindset when it comes to managing sustainability and growth.

Leadership means different things to different people. To me, it is about taking responsibility, and setting an example for future generations.

To address the issues we face today, we need the active engagement and education of our youth because they are the ones who will bear the brunt of the decisions we make today.

“It is through education that our youth will learn about the world and its complexities and develop the skills to think critically and innovate. It is their **job to dream of a better world** and **our responsibility to equip them with the tools** to build it.”

What follows are key takeaways from Dame Jacinda’s candid sharing with us.

We hope you will find them inspiring, as much as I do.

I look forward to seeing you at our next event. Thank you again for your continued support of Bank of Singapore.

Regards
Jason Moo
Chief Executive Officer





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MODERATED BY HO KWON PING



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“In Conversation with The Right Honourable Dame Jacinda Ardern”, is an exclusive event organised in partnership with Singapore Management University (SMU) to advocate the development of young talent and leadership for future generations.

The former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern shares her views on leadership, environmental sustainability, gender equality, youth engagement and education in a dialogue hosted by Founding Chairman of the Board of Trustees of SMU, Mr. Ho Kwon Ping.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A “TEMPLATE LEADER”

Dame Jacinda described how we often have notions of what good leaders look like. For politics, so often there is a very particular set of characteristics such as being confident, brash, and tough – just like a ‘template’.

Instead of trying to follow such notions, she was driven by her own values – such as kindness, empathy, and humility – traditionally seen as weaknesses in leadership.

“I had a choice to either mold myself into the **template** and change who I was as a person or hold on to those **values** that were important to me and the **traits** I already had.
I chose the latter.”

Through this lens, she was able to see policies from someone else’s perspective. In a trauma or crisis, she would think of the needs of the victim in a way that made her job feel harder, but she felt this gave her the strength to perform better.

In fact, she inspired the world with compassionate leadership, which did not dampen her commitment to progress. In doing so, she demonstrated that being a good leader is about being a good human.

“My hope is that traits often painted as weaknesses will come to be valued as human beings.
Kindness, curiosity, generosity, empathy – those traits of good humans will become the **traits of good leaders** as well.”



**CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT,
AND IT IS UP TO EACH OF US TO TAKE OWNERSHIP
AND RESPONSIBILITY TO DRIVE CHANGE**

Dame Jacinda was a different type of leader, and so it was no surprise that she was vocal about sustainability during her time in office.

Her strong stance and belief on the need to prioritise climate action and a sustainable world continues today.

“The need for **speed** is obvious. We don't need anyone to tell us that it (climate change) is an **existential threat** in this part of the world. We know it already. We're seeing it.”

“We have to start thinking about the role that we can all play in spite of what the instruments around us are doing. I've seen what individuals can do when we **band together**. We as private individuals need to now **take the lead**.”



A MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION: NEVER STOP BEING CURIOUS AND BRAVE

The challenges we face today include some of the most fundamental structural shifts in history such as Asia and ASEAN's rising prominence, the geopolitical contest between the US and China and the transition to a much more multipolar world.

We all know that it falls on the next generation to tackle the growing list of issues the world already faces:- from rising inequality to food insecurity, access to healthcare, and the climate crisis.

What gives Dame Jacinda hope is our next generation who has shown incredible drive and desire to build a sustainable and liveable world.

She concluded the dialogue with this last piece of advice:

“Never stop being curious and never stop being brave.
We need both those qualities in equal measure.”



SPECIAL THANKS

Bank of Singapore would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Dame Jacinda for graciously accepting our invitation to speak at the dialogue.

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to our event partner, Singapore Management University, for their collaboration and support which has been instrumental in bringing this event to fruition.

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Market Team - Thailand



These industry accolades not only recognise our commitment to helping our clients manage wealth, but also validate our efforts and progress in building a more sustainable world for our future generations.

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