THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS BEGINS WITH YOU GRABBING HOLD OF YOUR DESTINY

By ROSHAN THIRAN

In late March, the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre hosted the 2017 Global Transformation Forum (GTF), which saw global leaders and iconic figures share a platform to impart stories of their successes and triumphs, and how they overcame obstacles and challenges along the way.

Valuable insights were gained from powerhouse figures such as Jack Ma, Sir Richard Branson, Usain Bolt, and many other leaders who set inspiring examples for the rest of us to learn from and follow. In the years that I have been involved in the GTF, the sense of wonder at the incredible success stories on display during the two-day annual event has never diminished.

This year, however, I was particularly blown away by the unstoppable force that is Chris Gardner – founder of broker-

age firm Gardner MBA & Associates, an inspiring speaker, and international philanthropist.

While there might be some who are unfamiliar with the name, millions became acquainted with his phenomenal life story through the Hollywood movie The Pursuit of Happyness, in which he was played by Will Smith. The movie was so powerful that it grossed over US$300m at the box office.

The effect Gardner has on you – when you hear him speak – is indescribable. You can literally feel the force of his conviction, the hunger in his passion, and the determination in his pursuit to make the world a better place.

Everyone who knows his story will know that his life was fraught with turbulence. For Gardner, the concept of an ‘easy ride’ was something alien to him.

There’s a steely defiance and determination that lies behind the warm humility showed by the man who has worked himself into the ground for everything he has, and remains thankful for the blessings the world has given him along the way. The rest, as they say, is history. As of 2017, he has an estimated net worth of over US$560m. Yet, he still retains that same hunger, passion, drive and commitment that pushed him through all of the problems he encountered, many of which would have driven some people to simply give up, and understandably so.

I am not exaggerating when I say that he’s a man who gives off an aura of something so real, and it would be churlish to say otherwise.

However, no problem has the power to stop us in our tracks: we stop because often, we feel we can’t go on. And yet, there are so many examples of what can be achieved when we stop allowing our problems to rule us over but instead drive us forward with an unyielding refusal to be beaten by life.

In his words: “The world is your oyster. It’s up to you to find the pearls.”

Chris Gardner is a man who looks sharp in a crisp shirt and tailored business suit. But Chris Gardner is also a man who started out with nothing. Chances are, you are now in a better position than he was when he started chasing his dream. You might not become a globally sought-after speaker, and you might not become a multi-millionaire. But if you give everything to your dreams, who knows what might happen?

Who says you can’t change the world with what’s inside you and create the kind of change that makes people sit up and take note?

All you have to do is decide to put yourself out there and Make. It. Happen.