To this we can turn to probably the most successful dictionary in the world – the concise Oxford dictionary. This defines success as ‘an accomplishment of an end attained’. To me, it is as simple as that – the attainment of the goal that a person has set for him or herself.

You must set a goal, and then you must work towards that goal. What helps in getting started is a bit of luck, but this is not simply chance. ‘Good Luck is another name for tenacity of purpose.’ This, together with other ingredients of hard work, sincerity, initiative, foresight, and seizing an opportunity when it comes, is important in working towards that goal. Then we can start talking about success, which really is always a measure of whether all that hard work got you to the end you set in the first place.

Without relying too much on fate, I am sure you appreciate that you alone are not the architect of your destiny – Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.

Opportunity, chance and a bit of luck (if you prefer, the involvement of a supreme being) together determine whether you are going to be successful or not. After many years, my staunch belief in this combination I think is proved correct.

Unlike what many people seem to think, there is no secret magic that we all can apply to open Ali Baba’s cave. It is not simply ‘Open Sesame’. No, unfortunately it is always a matter of hard work and opportunity. But before you get disheartened, let me remind you that this is a world full of opportunities. There have been many goals in life that I myself have accomplished and there are still many that I do hope to accomplish. Perhaps if I talk about the factors that have contributed to my own success so far, you will see what I mean.

To be successful in a place one has to identify himself with the place where he has made his home. For example, Hong Kong is my home and although there have been a number of major crises in its history, it is not enough for me to waive my belief in its future. In 1950 China closed her shores across the border and trade almost collapsed. Then again in 1965 the Bank run caused the economy to be upset and panic followed, soon after came the 1967 disturbances. After that we had a confidence crisis in 1997 when sovereignty over Hong Kong reverted back to China, closely followed by the SARS saga in 2003. One can easily be tempted to think because of this that Hong Kong is now cursed, and it is no good to stay here. But this is wrong. For me, each of these crises only strengthened my belief that if I want to make a success of my career, then I must be honest and sincere about establishing myself in a place which has given me shelter, so that I can give back to that place of what I have profited. We have to remember that despite these setbacks, Hong Kong has had many booms. It has also given much to us, and so we should not simply turn our back when it cannot give so much for a while. I know that the present crisis we are facing is much worse than the Great Depression. However, the impact will not be as bad as it was in the 1930s because we now have modern technology and
advanced mode of communication and by working together, we can overcome the problems more quickly and efficiently than back in the 30s. We should always be here to help it along, and I have always considered that the secret of success lies in this sharing.

This philosophy of life has been a tremendous help towards success. A German T.V. Unit visited Hong Kong filming a television series called "V.I.P.s Around the World" that was then shown all over Europe and in Germany. The programme asked me what I attributed my success to. My answer was a simple one — 'sharing'.

This, ladies & gentlemen, means a lot to me. My home that has been built is a family home. I share it with my six brothers and their families. Although I enter my projects alone, I share them with my family when they materialize. When I come across a good article that I read, I feel it does me better if I pass it on to my friends or family that might appreciate reading it. After all, isn't it much more satisfying seeing others 'share' the good things you have when you can use them yourself, rather than wait till it is of no use to you and then pass them on? Just think, how many times have you been itching to share a really good joke, or a comedy you saw on TV?

Another major pace-setter for success is to possess a drive to attain or accomplish. The achiever is one who, despite obstacles, never goes back, but strives harder to succeed. In other words, one must have the firm resolve and determination to achieve the desired objective.

That alone ensures success. Without that firm resolve and commitment no body can succeed. On the other hand, even if one lacks all the other resources, but has the determination, he will achieve what he aspires for.

Today one can draw inspiration from legendary cyclist, Lance Armstrong, who overcame testicular cancer to win six 'Tour de France' titles. Armstrong's determination and single-minded devotion to his sport is worth emulation by our youngsters, who are tomorrow's hope.

With ordinary talent and extra-ordinary perseverance, all things are attainable. To quote the words of great American inventor, Thomas Edison, 'Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration'. I was fortunate in so far as I came from a family who did have a certain amount of wealth, but it was unfortunate that this was lost during the difficult times of the Second World War. As a young boy, I found myself taking on the responsibility of obtaining a livelihood and took the job of a delivery boy just to be able to make ends meet. It was under these difficult circumstances in the days of want and anxiety that the early stamp of principles and character were set — and the first of them being that "Work is not a man's dooms but rather his blessing." Since then it has been very rewarding for me to put in many hours a day of hard work, as I happily do so till today as I consider work as a hobby. 'The business of life is to go forward' and so I say to you whenever you see a job to do, ask yourself two questions — if not by me, by whom? If not now - when?

It naturally follows then, that Time is an important factor in success. When you have got so much to do and so little time to do it, one naturally has to start the day early. No matter how late the previous evening has been I start my day early as the fresh air of the morning lends itself to fresh thoughts and ideas as one starts a new day. Now don't get me wrong, I am not the kind of person who in order to save time orders my 'dinner' first so I can eat it while my main course is being prepared. But, by taking too much time over a deal or dragging things out, you might lose an opportunity. Although opportunity is everywhere, it doesn't often walk right up to your house and knock on your door. With experience the passing years teach you to build up the courage to grab it when it comes. One should be an optimist to do so and see an 'opportunity in a difficulty' as opposed to the pessimist who sees a 'difficulty in an opportunity.'

One must never get swayed by other people's tendencies to be negative or pessimistic. Because, they take your most wonderful dreams and wishes away from you. Always think of the power which words have, because everything you hear and read will affect your actions. When you do something, have full faith that you will succeed. Faith is the foundation on which to build your life.

This courage to act helps one to take an uncomplicated view of doing things, which actually means when you get an idea, you have got to think of a reason for doing it, not of a reason for not doing it. Some men have hundreds of reasons why they cannot do what they want to do, when all they need is one reason why they can. It was George Bernard Shaw who said, "You see things and you say 'why'? But I dream things that never were, and I say 'why not'?"— Is it any wonder he accomplished all he did?

Success comes with knowledge and maturity and by this I do not claim to be knowledgeable. No, on the contrary, I have had no college education but this has not barred me from learning. As I am an avid reader, I find a great wealth in the many books and articles that I read. I have a wonderful collection of books in my library both at home and in my office. I enjoy reading as it keeps my mind alert. Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. Truly good books are more than mines to those who can understand them. They are the breathings of great souls of past times. Genius is not embalmed in them, but lives in them perpetually. So my knowledge is derived from a lot of reading and by exchange of ideas with the many people of the world that I come across in different paths of life.

A thought must be given to the influence exerted by others who have contributed to success, in the community and outside the community by sharing with them and working towards their welfare. It has been very encouraging to have filled many hours out of business life, working through various committees for the progress of the people of Hong Kong, in the small way that I am able to.
Now the life of a successful person need not always be a lonely or power-mad one. I have always been a firm believer in balance, and in many ways, maintaining this balance has helped drive on my success in business.

My wife has been able to take all the difficulties and trials of loneliness and sacrifice that naturally go along with the hard working life of a business man, and also for the confidence and strength I have derived from her in many hours of trial, is very much the core reason behind my success. The domestic field plays an important part in the influencing a man’s role in his business life and it is the truth when it is said that behind every man’s accomplishment is a proud woman.

Hard work calls for many hours of meetings, discussions and decision-making which can easily tire you out. Sport is a great way to undo the tension that builds up. I myself play tennis three times a week, among other things.

The whole idea of working towards a goal should therefore be able to share your ultimate success, as in the words of the great poet Khalil Gibran, "you give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give." To make your life truly worthwhile, Albert Einstein, noted by many to have been the most successful man, said, "only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile." In 1999, Albert Einstein was named Time magazine’s ‘Person of the Century’.

Many years ago at a Rotary District Conference in the Philippines, where I represented the Rotary International President, the Secretary of Agrarian Reform in his simple message called upon the people to "share", share your land while you can. But in addition to this I called upon them all to share as I have shared, in order to be truly useful to society. I share my knowledge, I share my warmth, I share my friendship, my affection, my home, and even my money! My friends, after death, there is no sharing. Share while you are healthy and are able to do so.

Success will naturally follow, as Success is the stamp of approval that other men give to your efforts. It is the recognition that your contribution and your service to society are useful and helpful. Rotary’s motto, “He profits most who serves best” is a recipe for success.

As a Rotarian I am privileged to be able to live by this motto. To quote John D. Hess, “Great men have four things in common – They speak softly, have a capacity for hard work, a deep conviction for their cause, a consuming belief in their ability to do it.”

I started by talking about what a simple definition of success was. I think this holds for those of us who want to do well in a job, or in a career, or, as for many of you will want, to succeed in this great institution. But I want to finish with the more important goal – success as a human being.