

Interview with New Zealand Prime Minister John Key - April 2008



Introduction

I interviewed John Key at his government office in Wellington, New Zealand. The interview took place a few months before he was elected Prime Minister.

I found John Key to be friendly and engaging. He answered my questions frankly and honestly. He had a natural charm and good natured manner. He was also happy to allow my nine year old daughter Bleuette to take part in the interview. He went out of his way to make time for us and to show us around.

Before entering politics John Key was Merrill Lynch's global head of foreign exchange, based in London.

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The Interview

Lifestyle Questions

OH: What advice would you give yourself if you could talk to yourself at age 17?

JK: Have a big goal or a big dream.

OH: How can a young person today achieve great things?

JK: You need a combination of skills and education. We live in a complex world and getting educated and skilled are key requirements.

Whatever you do, do well.

OH: What wise words have been important to you in your life?

JK: You get out of life what you put into it, therefore work hard.

Also, believe in yourself.

OH: What is the best advice you have ever received?

JK: To get a decent education, i.e. go to university.

OH: What mistake have you learned the most from?

JK: When I was appointed to Merrill Lynch's global head of trading I was responsible for the interest rate book. I intuitively knew straight away that something was not right. What I learned was that I should have acted on that feeling immediately. I didn't and the problem got worse. I should have acted earlier.

OH: What activity has been the biggest waste of time in your life?

JK: Worrying about things I can't control.

OH: Who are your heroes and role models?

JK: Bill Clinton and Tiger Woods.

OH: What are the reasons you have succeeded while many others who have tried have not succeeded?

JK: One, I am disciplined.

Two, I trust my instincts.

Three, I have a strong sense of what I want to achieve.

OH: If a score of 10 means that you have lived your life to its fullest potential, what score out of 10 would you give yourself on your life to date?

JK: Eight.

OH: What would you have had to do differently to be able to score a 10?

JK: To become Prime Minister!

OH: What does a person need to do if they want to realise their dreams?

JK: One, work hard.

Two, have a sense of what they want to achieve.

Three, recognise their own successes.

OH: If you could start again and dedicate your life to one cause, what would it be?

JK: I wouldn't change anything, except I would do more for charities.

OH: If you could trade all you have achieved and all that you own to be 17 years old again, would you do it?

JK: No. I am happy with life.

You can pre-order Oli Hille's book "Creating the Perfect Lifestyle" by visiting:

http://www.author.co.nz/author_orderabook.html

All interviews will be included in the book.