This is the real thing. And she dreaded going to piano lessons because to my daughter, going to piano lessons, she was filled with this sort of dread. Because it was all about not screwing up, right? Because like a lot of piano students, to both my daughter and her teacher, her success in piano was measured by how few mistakes she made. At the same time, I noticed that a lot of Malaysians went into English conversations with the same sort of feeling of dread. This sort of feeling that they were going to be judged by how many mistakes they were going to make, and whether or not they were going to screw up. Now, the second similarity that I noticed was to do with self-image.

My daughter, she knew what good piano sounded like, right? Because we’ve all heard good piano. And she knew what her level was, and she knew how long she’d have to play for to play like that. And a lot of Malaysians, I noticed, had this idea of what good proper English is supposed to sound like, and what their. I see a lot of you nod and what their English sounded like, and how far they would have to go to get there. And they also felt like they were like my daughter, just bad, bad piano player, bad English speaker right? My english not so good. So I could see these similarities, but I still couldn’t figure out, okay, what is it about these people like Faizal, that are so different, that can just do it smoothly, calmly, with confidence?