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**F O R T L I F E**

MONTHLY MAGAZINE | FEBRUARY 2024 | VOL. 25



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EDITORIAL

# LOVE/ EMOTIONS/ SEX

## Is Your Love Life or Lack Thereof Affecting Your Personal and Professional Development?



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FORT International

Another February. Another Valentine's Day. Another Holiday filled with endless possibilities for romance, hope, and of course... utter disappointment.

Feb 14th is a day globally recognized as a celebration of intimacy and love, and as of the past few decades, we've attached the word friendship to it, all in efforts of softening the blow of solitude for those who at any given time may not have a romantic partner, while also assuring that businesses do not miss out on the plows of cash generated by the first consumer based holiday of the calendar year... A toast to "friendship love". 🍷🍷

But... is the cocktail of romance, emotions and perhaps sex or lack thereof propelling or derailing you from Personal and financial success?

In 18th century Europe, Giacomo Casanova, the quintessential Lothario and ultimate womanizer, had some of the most controversial affairs and escapades with a plethora of women, and both his charm and intellect were tools he employed to surround himself and socialize with members of the elite in order to build wealth and prestige. This was also a double edge sword, as it got him into plenty of trouble and eventually expelled from some of the highest courts and houses he served, and on various occasions found himself fleeing for his life as the “**entanglements**” (Shout out to Jada) were often with married women, and at times even sisters of the church.

Casanova by all accounts was not a “stud”. It is well documented that his nose did not compliment his face and that he was of average build. So... what was it about the man that got his nose to enjoy many of the most impressive decolletages in Italy, France, England, The Netherlands, and Bohemia? It was nothing more than his intellect and emotional intelligence. He knew what people wanted; Attention. He knew what people needed; to be felt and heard. He knew how to sell himself; he invested heavily in his own development. Casanova was a sharp mind, so much so that he attended the University of Padua at the age of 12. It is here where we begin to set the foundation for a life of both extreme success but also hardship. People were fascinated by him, his audacity, his charm, his attention to detail, his views of the world, and he left us a memoir to not only dissect his triumphs but also his defeats, “The Story of My Life”, A true lesson in ink!

I write of this man as I too was fascinated by the female form since an early age. At 4 years of age I had my first kiss. At 7 all I could think about was girls. At 9 and having finished elementary school acquired my first girlfriend; a few months later my first heartbreak, and from there a life filled with experiences which have molded me into the man I am today, one who will forever live in love of life and will die entangled in its sheets, regardless of their color.



*Giacomo Casanova*

I remember first hearing of Casanova in my childhood days, and by my teenage years began studying all I could about the man. His methods of speech, allure, which was extremely discrete, as well as his views on politics, religion, and how he dalliated about the world freely but with intricate purpose.

As I grew older, I studied other prominent figures... From Cleopatra to Queen Nzinga, JFK, Julio Iglesias, Lola Montez, as well as Pedro Infante, and Andres Garcia to name a few. I soon realized that as highly successful as these individuals were professionally, their lives were driven by an extreme desire of passion and love which translated to all the things they did, whether they were cinematic works or battles in the political arena.



### The 3 Pillars of Emotions;

Love, anger, and pain are the 3 primary colors in the rainbow of emotions - Hate is a derivative of anger, just like happiness is a derivative of Love, and sadness a subsequent emotion of pain. Where love lives, hate does not dwell - Yet having the ability to manage and understand these 3 sentiments is crucial to our psychological well being.

Everything is connected. Who we are outside of our professional dwellings is a reflection of who we are when entrenched inside of them, and our approach and views on love will significantly impact and occupy space in both our hearts and minds. It will also 100% affect the way you treat others in a business environment, and most importantly the way you treat yourself! Overall, happy people are known to live more fulfilling lives, regardless of financial archetypes.

Although Casanova's methods of courtship seem long removed due to the digital age, the principles of courtship remain the same, yet the technological transition and transformation at the turn of the century has drastically affected our approach in the quest for Love.

It has shifted society into a landscape of unrealistic expectations and has placed these principles in the back barn of the dating field. I have experienced this first hand; From literally writing love letters to my heart's interests as a teen, to sending emails as a young adult, the digitized world has completely overhauled the dating paradigm. Social media, a tool which was meant to connect us, has truly disconnected us from reality, and this I believe plays a significant role in the astounding number of professional singles now walking the streets of our world, changing jobs at the first signs of adversity, leading to internal isolation and confusion, consequently affecting professional performance, development or both. "The way you do one thing is the way you do all things"... Familiar with the phrase?

Now, being effective, efficient and a high performer is not 1 dimensional. I know many great performers and high earners who are miserable and utterly disliked by their peers (2nd dimension), or are not happy with themselves and have no life outside of work (3rd dimension), however they are tolerated by leadership because they yield financial results; but is this sustainable and adequate to the mental well being of all involved?



This current genre of romantic communication (swipe left, right, like, don't like) is superficial, fast, and on the go, and it allows for a false sense of security which translates to an accumulation of disappointments when the true faces come out, the ones with no substance, digital filters or emotional make up, which later on translate to emotional and professional defeats, as employers certainly look at Social Media profiles during the hiring process, eventually engulfing all aspects of our psyche, and ultimately insidiously affecting our personal and professional development.

Just imagine how much more interesting people would be if they spent as much time reading and working on themselves as opposed to editing images and videos in efforts to gain likes and followers.

I ran a small poll this month consisting of 25 professional participants, in which 3 questions were asked;

The answers were extremely interesting and the results were as follows.

**1- Do you think the early stages of Romantic Love interfere with Professional Productivity?**

90% responded yes.

**2- Do you think Lack of Romantic Love affects Personal growth in relation to all other interpersonal relationships?**

55% said no... However one response stood out stating that Love overall, not just Romantic love, makes the difference.

**3- Do you agree with the following statement: Love and its derivatives ( Happiness, Sadness and Anger) play an integral part in my professional performances whether it's north with extreme productivity or South With failure to launch.**

80% responded yes.

## SEX and Mental Well being:

Nothing beats a pure and healthy sexual relationship. I will leave the definition of "Pure" for you to define, as this creates its own rabbit hole, but one thing is certain; It does the body and mind tremendous good when under "pure and healthy" circumstances. Is it necessary for better professional performance? Once you've bitten the apple, I believe so. If you haven't experienced it, there is nothing to miss.

Human beings, we are creatures who need both approval and connection, but defining our own frontiers to maintain our worth, as well as our physical and emotional well being in check, is solely determined by the strictness of our selection process. If a connection is toxic, all its derivatives will have adverse consequences, not the intended ones, and these too will translate into our professional lives affecting one of the 3 dimensions mentioned previously.

Working on the Self is the most important component to personal and professional development. Happiness lives and comes from within... and adequate, pure and healthy companionship is nothing more than a compliment to it.

Success in all fields leaves footprints and clues. Yet for some reason, we allow societal and technological

changes to remove us from historical principles which created actual genuine connections.

- We can now see people on the other side of the world at the push of a button yet we schedule conference calls at the workplace and everyone's video is off.
- We have in depth conversations via text instead of picking up the phone.
- We check in via email, bc a) we don't want to intrude or b) don't want to actually check in.

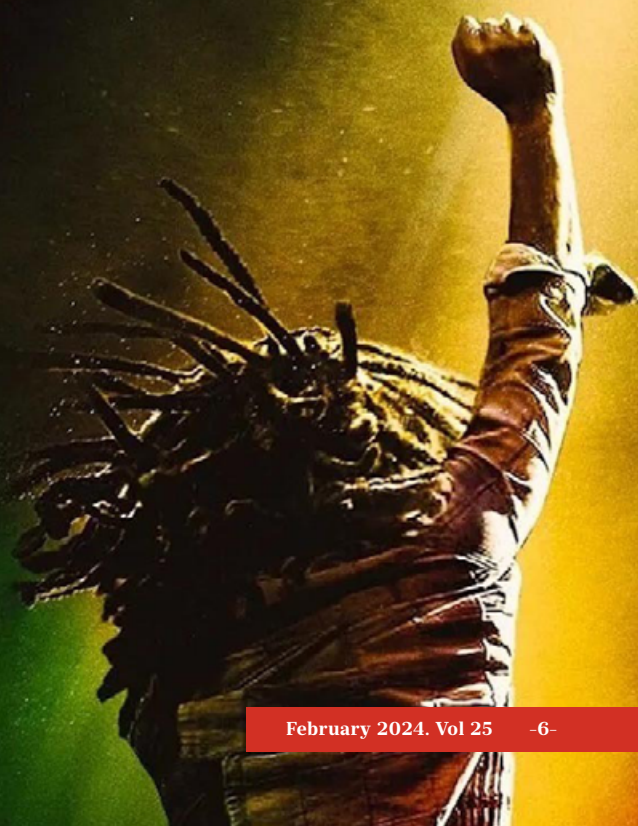
Love is hard, it is not easy, just like nothing else worthwhile is. It takes work, dedication, patience, and more patience, as life is meant to be experienced with it as part of our DNA for ultimate results. So open your heart to all its components, this is the only way to savor it, and if someone takes advantage of it, remember... it is their loss not yours.

Build connections that matter, guard your heart, mind and body, for this is your essence and no one not worthy of your standards should intrude in them.

This will transform you into an exceptional human being, one who sees the big picture and excels in all endeavors for empathy, compassion, discipline and understanding will be the building blocks of both your personal and professional lives.

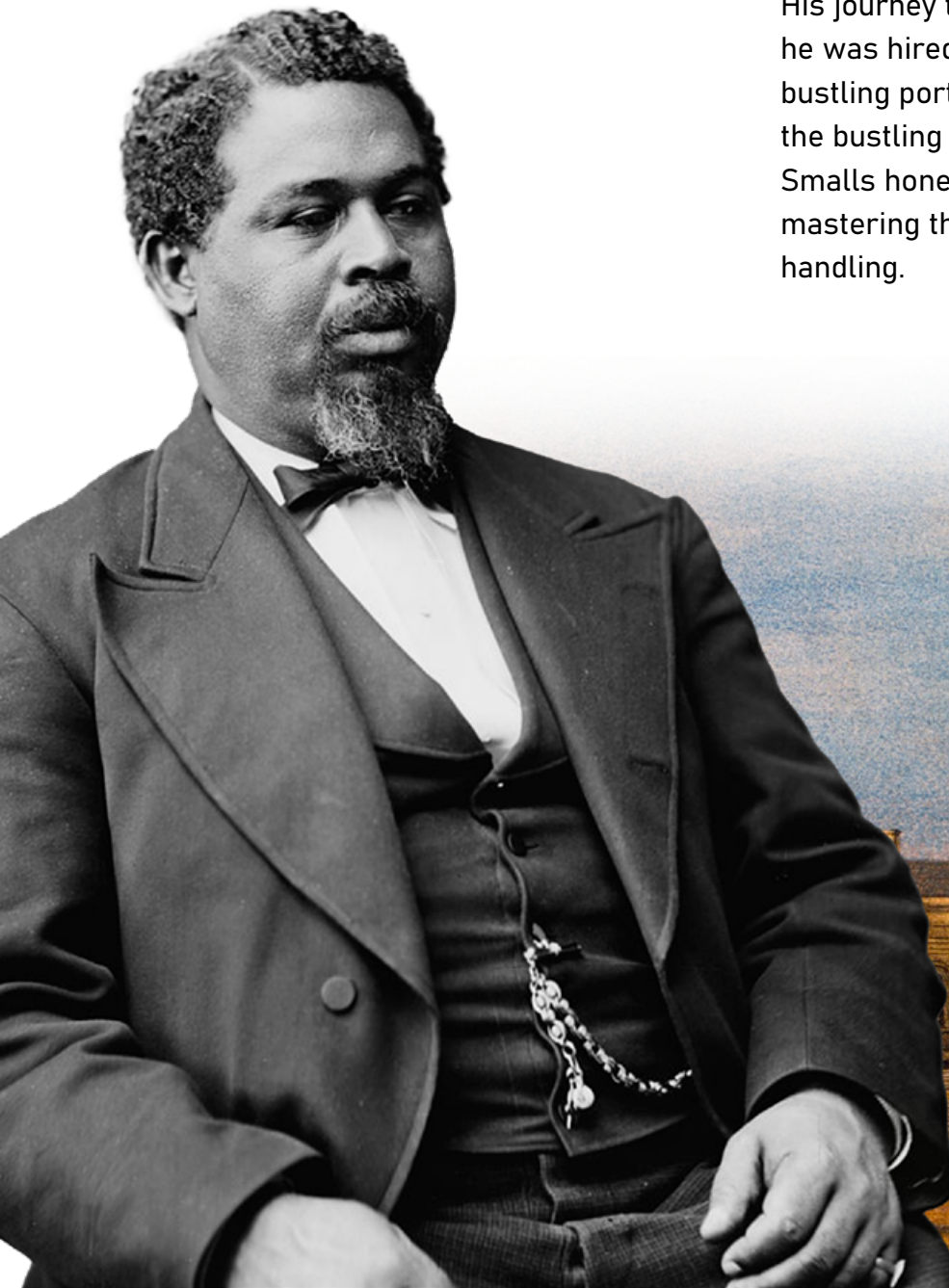
## ONE LOVE!

**BOB  
MARLEY  
ONE  
LOVE**



**Courage; Do You  
Know This Man?**

# Robert Smalls;



In the annals of American history, amidst the tumult of the Civil War, lay a story of unparalleled bravery and resilience – the saga of Robert Smalls. Born into the bonds of slavery, Smalls defied the odds, transcended the shackles of oppression, and etched his name in the chronicles of freedom.

Robert Smalls was born on April 5, 1839, in Beaufort, South Carolina, a state entrenched in the brutal throes of slavery. From his earliest days, Smalls bore witness to the indignities and cruelties inflicted upon those of his kin. But within him burned a fierce determination, a yearning for liberty that could not be extinguished.

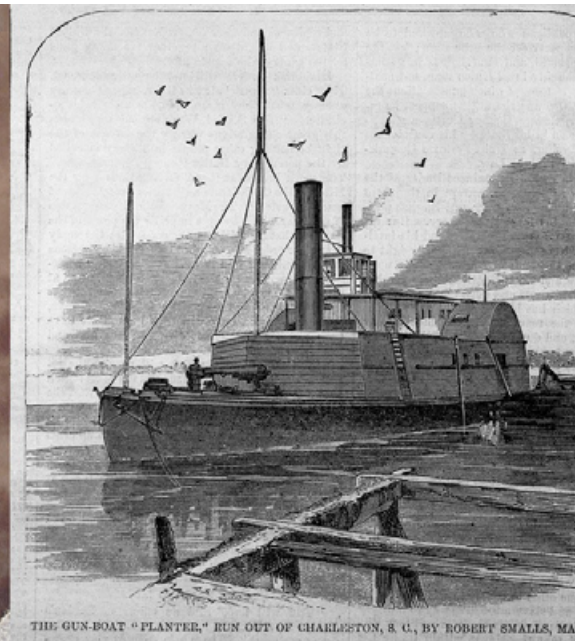
His journey to freedom began in earnest when he was hired out as a teenager to work in the bustling port city of Charleston. There, amidst the bustling commerce of the waterfront, Smalls honed his skills as a seafarer, mastering the intricacies of navigation and ship handling.



The opportunity of freedom showed up on the night of May 12. Once the white officers were on the shore, Smalls confided his plan to the other slaves on board. It was aboard the CSS Planter, a Confederate transport ship, that Smalls would orchestrate his audacious bid for freedom. On the fateful night of May 12, 1862, seizing a moment of opportunity, Smalls



★ REBELS OF ★  
BLACK HISTORY



embarked on a daring escape. According to the Naval Committee report, two chose to stay behind. "The design was hazardous in the extreme," it stated, and Smalls and his men had no intention of being taken alive; either they would escape or use whatever guns and ammunition they had to fight and, if necessary, sink their ship. "Failure and detection would have been certain death," the Navy report made plain. "Fearful was the venture, but it was made."

At 2:00 a.m. on May 13, Smalls donned Capt. Rylea's straw hat and ordered the Planter's skeleton crew to put up the boiler and hoist the South Carolina and Confederate flags as decoys. Easing out of the dock, in view of Gen. Ripley's headquarters, they paused at the West Atlantic Wharf to pick up Smalls' wife and children, along with four other women, three men, and another child.

At 3:25 a.m., the Planter accelerated "her perilous adventure," the Navy report continued (it read more like a Robert Louis Stevenson novel).

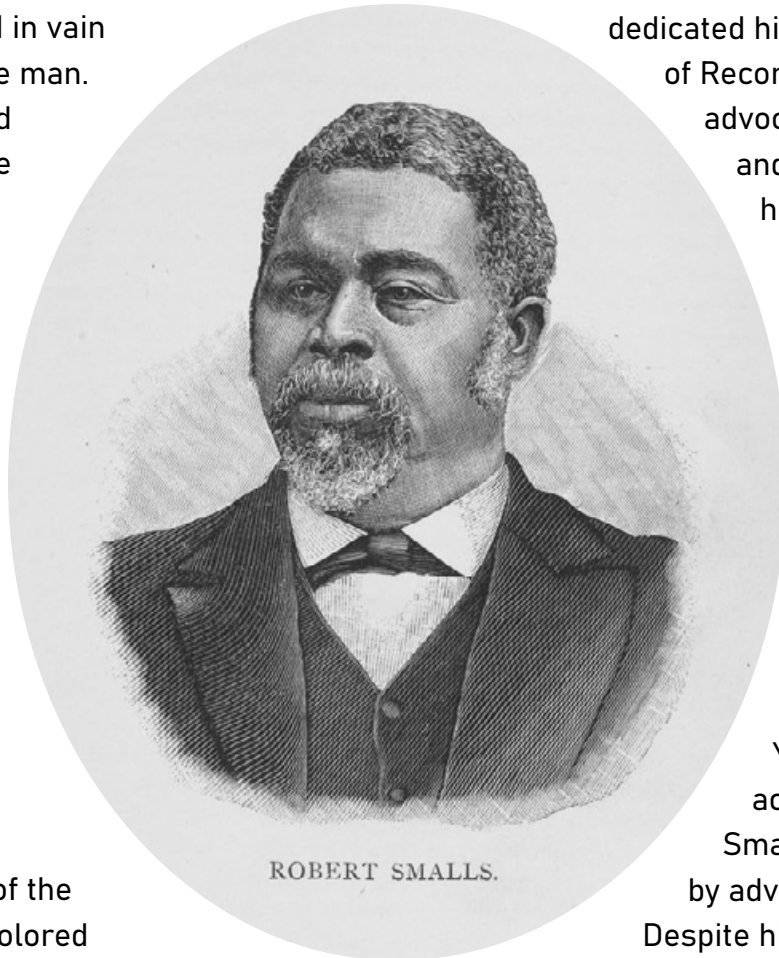
From the pilot house, Smalls blew the ship's whistle while passing Confederate Forts Johnson and, at 4:15 a.m., Fort Sumter, "as coolly as if General Ripley was on board." Smalls not only knew all the right Navy signals to flash; he even folded his arms like Capt. Rylea, so that in the shadows of dawn, he passed convincingly for a white man.

"She was supposed to be the guard boat and allowed to pass without interruption," Confederate Aide-de-Campe F.G. Ravenel explained defensively in a letter to his commander hours later. It was only when the Planter passed out of Rebel gun range that the alarm was sounded — the Planter was heading for the Union blockade. Approaching it, Smalls ordered his crew to replace the Palmetto and Rebel flags with a white bed sheet his wife brought on board. Not seeing it, Acting Volunteer Lt. J. Frederick Nickels of the U.S.S. Onward ordered his sailors to "open her ports." It was "sunrise," Nickels wrote in a letter the same day, an illuminating fact that may have changed the course of history, at least on board the Planter — for now Nickels could see.



In The Negro's Civil War, the dean of Civil War studies James McPherson quoted the following eyewitness account: "Just as No. 3 port gun was being elevated, someone cried out, 'I see something that looks like a white flag'; and true enough there was something flying on the steamer that would have been white by application of soap and water. As she neared us, we looked in vain for the face of a white man. When they discovered that we would not fire on them, there was a rush of contrabands out on her deck, some dancing, some singing, whistling, jumping; and others stood looking towards Fort Sumter, and muttering all sorts of maledictions against it, and 'de heart of de Souf,' generally. As the steamer came near, and under the stern of the Onward, one of the Colored men stepped forward, and taking off his hat, shouted, 'Good morning, sir! I've brought you some of the old United States guns, sir!' ' That man was Robert Smalls, and he and his family and the entire slave crew of the Planter were now free.

Under the cover of darkness, he commandeered the vessel, navigating past Confederate checkpoints and delivering himself and his fellow enslaved comrades into the welcoming arms of the Union blockade.



He was 23 years old at the time! The audacity of Smalls' feat captured the imagination of a nation gripped by the throes of war. His heroism earned him renown far and wide, and he soon became a symbol of hope for those yearning for emancipation. But Smalls' struggle did not end with his daring escape.

In the aftermath of the war, he dedicated himself to the cause of Reconstruction, tirelessly advocating for the rights and freedoms of his fellow African Americans.

He served in the South Carolina State Legislature and later in the United States Congress, becoming a vocal champion for civil rights and equality.

Yet, for all his accomplishments, Smalls' life was marked by adversity and struggle.

Despite his efforts, the specter of racism and discrimination loomed large, casting a long shadow over the promise of freedom and equality for which he had so valiantly fought.

Nevertheless, Robert Smalls' legacy endures as a testament to the power of the human spirit to overcome even the most insurmountable of obstacles. His courage, resilience, and unwavering commitment to justice serve as an inspiration to all who dare to dream of a better world.

As we reflect on the life and legacy of Robert Smalls, let us not only honor his memory but also recommit ourselves to the timeless pursuit of liberty and justice for all. In the words of Smalls himself, "My race needs no special defense, for the past history of them in this country proves them to be the equal of any people anywhere".

### Accomplishments:

- Smalls was the founder of the South Carolina Republican Party and the state's first school for black students. He also co-founded the Enterprise Railroad and established a local newspaper, the Beaufort Southern Standard.
- Due to his audacious and daring escape, piloting a ship, and seafaring expertise he retired as a Captain and eventually received a pension reflecting his title.
- During World War II, Camp Robert Smalls was established as a sub-facility of the Great Lakes Naval Training Center to train black sailors (the Navy was segregated at that time).
- In 1864, Smalls was seated in a streetcar in Philadelphia and was ordered to give his seat to a white passenger. Rather than ride on the open overflow platform, Smalls left the car. This incident of humiliating a heroic veteran was cited in the debate that resulted in the Pennsylvania legislature passing a bill to integrate public transportation in Pennsylvania in 1867.
- He was "the leading colored delegate" to the 1895 South Carolina constitutional convention.





# Want to live abroad?

## Consider Costa Rica

For those contemplating a life abroad, Costa Rica stands as an enticing option brimming with natural beauty, cultural richness, and a laid-back lifestyle. Nestled in the heart of Central America, this small but mighty nation is renowned for its commitment to environmental conservation, boasting lush rainforests, pristine beaches, and breathtaking biodiversity. For nature lovers and adventure seekers alike, Costa Rica offers a playground of outdoor activities, from surfing along the Pacific coast to hiking through verdant cloud forests and zip-lining over jungle canopies.



*San Jose view, capital of Costa Rica.*

Beyond its natural splendor, Costa Rica also boasts a high quality of life and a welcoming community that embraces the “Pura Vida” lifestyle—a philosophy of living life to the fullest and embracing simplicity and happiness. The country consistently ranks highly in global happiness indexes, with its friendly locals, excellent healthcare system, and affordable cost of living contributing to its appeal as a destination for expatriates.

Moreover, Costa Rica's stable political environment and strong economy make it an attractive option for those seeking a new place to call home. With a well-established infrastructure, modern amenities, and a

growing expat community, settling into life in Costa Rica is relatively seamless.

Whether you're drawn to the vibrant cultural scene of San José, the tranquil shores of the Nicoya Peninsula, or the laid-back vibe of the Caribbean coast, there's a corner of Costa Rica to suit every taste and lifestyle.

In essence, Costa Rica offers a unique blend of natural beauty, cultural richness, and quality of life that makes it an ideal destination for those seeking a fresh start abroad. Whether you're looking to retire in paradise, start a new career path, or simply embrace a more relaxed way of life, Costa Rica beckons with open arms, ready to welcome you into its warm embrace.



# Is DEI really serving a purpose?

Statically, how its really not doing anything



The concept of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) has gained significant traction in recent years, with organizations across various sectors striving to promote diversity and create more inclusive environments. However, the effectiveness of DEI initiatives in truly serving their intended purpose is subject to debate and scrutiny. While the intentions behind DEI efforts are commendable, there are valid concerns about whether they are achieving meaningful and sustainable change or merely serving as superficial gestures to appease public perception.

One of the key challenges with DEI initiatives is the tendency for organizations to focus solely on surface-level diversity metrics, such as race, gender, and ethnicity, without addressing deeper systemic issues of equity and inclusion. True diversity goes beyond mere representation; it involves creating environments where individuals from all backgrounds feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives. Without addressing underlying power dynamics, biases, and structural barriers, efforts to promote diversity may fall short of fostering genuine inclusion and belonging.

Furthermore, despite the proliferation of DEI programs and initiatives, there is limited evidence to suggest significant progress in closing the gaps in representation and opportunity for marginalized groups. Studies and surveys continue to reveal persistent disparities in hiring, promotion, pay, and access to resources based on race, gender, and other factors. Stagnant or even worsening diversity statistics in certain sectors indicate that current approaches to DEI may not be effectively dismantling systemic barriers or challenging entrenched biases.

In conclusion, while DEI initiatives have sparked important conversations and raised awareness about issues of diversity and inclusion, their effectiveness in driving meaningful change remains questionable. To truly serve their purpose, DEI efforts must move beyond symbolic gestures and tokenism to address systemic inequities, foster genuine inclusivity, and promote structural changes that dismantle barriers to opportunity for all individuals. Only then can we begin to realize the full potential of diversity as a catalyst for innovation, creativity, and organizational success.



# King Solomon Award

The King Solomon Award Scholarship, stands as a beacon of academic excellence and opportunity. Rooted in a rich history of commitment to education and intellectual advancement, this prestigious scholarship has been a catalyst for empowering talented individuals to pursue higher education both domestically and internationally. Established with the vision of King Solomon himself, a renowned symbol of wisdom and enlightenment, the scholarship embodies a dedication to nurturing the next generation of leaders and innovators.

An integral aspect of the scholarship's legacy is its annual nature, providing aspiring scholars with the chance to apply for funding towards their educational endeavors each academic year.





As the 2024 academic year approaches, the scholarship committee is actively seeking applications from qualified candidates who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership potential, and a commitment to making a positive impact in their communities. With a firm deadline set for March 1st at 11:59 PM, applicants are encouraged to submit their materials promptly to be considered for this esteemed award.

The King Solomon Award Scholarship is more than just a financial aid opportunity; it represents a transformative journey towards personal and professional growth. Recipients of the scholarship not only receive financial support for their studies but also gain access to a network of mentors, resources, and opportunities that empower them to thrive academically and beyond.

Through mentorship programs, networking events, and community engagement initiatives, scholars are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and connections needed to succeed in their chosen fields and contribute meaningfully to society.

Moreover, the impact of the King Solomon Award Scholarship extends far beyond the individual recipients; it serves as a catalyst for positive change and societal advancement. By investing in the education of talented individuals, the scholarship program contributes to the development of a well-educated workforce, fosters innovation and entrepreneurship, and promotes social mobility and economic growth. As the scholarship continues its journey towards supporting aspiring scholars, it remains a cornerstone of the commitment to education, excellence, and progress.



# World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day, observed globally on February 4th each year, serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing battle against cancer and the collective effort needed to reduce its burden worldwide. While cancer knows no boundaries and affects individuals of all ages, genders, and backgrounds, recent trends have highlighted a concerning shift in the landscape of cancer diagnoses among younger adults, particularly between the ages of 35 and 50. Colon and breast cancers, two of the most prevalent forms of cancer, have emerged as significant concerns within this age group, with colon cancer recently taking the lead as a prominent cause of cancer-related morbidity and mortality.



Statistics reveal a stark reality: while breast cancer has long been recognized as a primary concern for women in their 30s and 40s, the incidence of colon cancer among individuals aged 35 to 50 has been steadily rising. Recent studies indicate that the rate of colon cancer diagnoses in this younger demographic has increased by approximately 2% annually over the past two decades, a concerning trend that has garnered widespread attention within the medical community. In contrast, the incidence of breast cancer among women in the same age range has remained relatively stable, underscoring the urgency of addressing the emerging crisis of colon cancer in younger adults.

**Sedentary lifestyles, poor dietary habits, obesity, and a lack of routine screening may all play significant roles in the development of colon cancer at a younger age.**





The reasons behind the surge in colon cancer among individuals aged 35 to 50 are complex and multifaceted, with a combination of lifestyle factors, genetic predispositions, and environmental influences contributing to its onset. Sedentary lifestyles, poor dietary habits, obesity, and a lack of routine screening may all play significant roles in the development of colon cancer at a younger age. Additionally, delays in diagnosis and misinterpretation of symptoms, often attributed to the misconception that colon cancer primarily affects older adults, further exacerbate the problem and lead to poorer outcomes for affected individuals.

World Cancer Day serves as a crucial platform to raise awareness about the evolving landscape of cancer diagnoses and the importance of early detection, prevention, and intervention strategies, particularly among younger populations. By shining a spotlight on the rising incidence of colon cancer in individuals aged 35 to 50, this global initiative aims to inspire action, foster dialogue, and drive meaningful change in the fight against cancer. Through education, advocacy, and community engagement, we can work together to address the underlying factors contributing to the rise of colon cancer and ensure better outcomes for all individuals affected by this disease, regardless of age.

# Linen & Terry

## Why are you spending so much on linen?

Clean and well-presented linens are crucial for leaving a positive impression on guests, as they convey a sense of luxury, comfort, and meticulous attention to detail. Beyond mere aesthetics, these linens significantly contribute to a business's reputation and brand image, meeting the expectations of discerning guests and distinguishing establishments from competitors. By investing in top-notch linens, hospitality businesses can enhance the overall guest experience, foster customer loyalty, and solidify their position in the market.

Given the rigorous demands of commercial laundering and heavy usage, linens must withstand constant wear and tear to maintain their appearance and performance over time. Not only is our Linen quality superior to many known brands, our costs are easily 10-20% less than industry standards. The fabric's resilience translates to long-term cost savings, as businesses can minimize the need for frequent replacements. Ultimately, by prioritizing quality and durability in their linen investments, hospitality establishments can ensure consistent standards of excellence, attract and retain customers, and bolster their competitive edge in the industry. **GIVE US A CALL AND SEE HOW WE CAN REDUCE YOUR BUDGET!**



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# Word Search

Entertain yourself for a while and solve this word search as quickly as possible. If you prefer you can click on the link below and solve the challenge from your cell phone or computer.

## Love

V	E	N	O	T	F	R	L	S	U	C	F	L	F
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 FEEL  
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 SOUL  
 TRUTH  
 HEART  
 TRUE  
 CHERISH  
 LOVE  
 BODY  
 FAITHFUL  
 PURE  
 LOYAL  
 PASSION  
 PROMISE

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## TEAM FORT



Damian



Ely



Danny



Sebas



Goretty



Helina



Brian

## The Social FORT

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