

## WORSE THAN MEDIOCRITY!!!

Growing up as a child I could always remember my step father saying “Mediocrity is not the order of the day”. At an early age he was instilling in me the ability to push the envelope and not sit on my laurels. Always striving, always wanting to do better than before – never settling for anything less than your best. Proving to yourself that you can be the best!

Mediocrity 30 years ago was TABOO! Who would ever want to be mediocre? It just seemed that everyone around me growing up did not know the meaning of mediocre – Jamaican’s were so proud, so well read on local, regional and international current events and everyone regardless of their socio economic background carried themselves with a level of pride. You were proud to be a Jamaican, because on any level a Jamaican could hold their own in the musical, athletic, intellectual, business, scientific/medical and the political global arena.

So when did mediocrity creep into the equation and more so when did we become worse than mediocre. **“I don’t know!”** That is the national lingo said with a smug level of pride when asked any question of the average person today (especially your generation Y) - **“I don’t know!!!”**

For me those three words are a personal embarrassment in an enlightened society where the opportunity to be educated at all levels are available coupled with the internet age that not only makes information available, but is transmitted in a matter of seconds, and with the advent of the smart phone (practically an appendage to the palms of many persons) information is literally at your fingertips – so what went wrong?

William (Willie) Lynch slave owner in the 1700’s was made infamous when he stated **“If you want to hide something from a black person put it in a book”**. For centuries there has been a serious outcry of this statement – however in retrospect how have we evolved?

Is the information thrown at us so much that we don’t know how to process it successfully to ensure positive growth. Has the media and the digital age successfully used misdirection to distract so many especially the impressionable young minds.

Have we lost our way so much that **“I don’t know”** truly and honestly befits who we are today? Has our self esteem been so deeply buried and masked in vague generalities and glib commentary that we have truly lost our way?

I found this powerful quote **'A reading nation is a leading nation'**

It aptly went on to say and most befitting of where we are in Jamaica today **'Writers are the engineers of the human soul are, then we cannot downplay the importance of the culture of reading and writing to the national development of this country'**.