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# El Residente

Adventure by Chicken Bus

## A BORDER RUN TO NICARAGUA



**Also in this issue:**

A Letter from a Landlord

The GOOD News

Great Curassow

Return to the Ocean

La pulpe

Are We Blind?

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This magazine has been published every two months since 1995 as the official communications media of ARCR Administration. Our organization provides service to thousands of foreigners who have chosen Costa Rica to reside for short periods or for permanent residence.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

As the pandemic slowly, with starts and stops, releases its grip on Costa Rica and much of the rest of the world, many of us are considering venturing back out into our environs. If that's you, but you aren't really ready to fully commit to travel, this issue contains some options, such as Janet LeSole's tale of a "border run" to Nicaragua when she and her family went to San Juan del Sur, in *Adventure By Chicken Bus*. If you want to stay closer to home, Mitzi Stark has a suggestion of some places we can go locally to see our neighbors in *Out and About*. If you still aren't ready to venture out for a shopping spree on the economy, and prefer to make your major purchases online, *Across the Board* has some important news about a recent change to Costa Rica's import duty laws. There's more and, all-in-all, there are plenty of good reading options to check out here.

With this issue we open up the *Day in the Life* column to member's contributions. We're looking for personal stories about some of the good things that have happened to us or our friends and neighbors as they enjoy their lives in this wonderful country. We invite – no, encourage – everyone with an upbeat experience to write it up and send it in. To contribute a story, send it to [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr), subject line, El Residente, and we will share it with our readers in future issues.

Now, go enjoy this issue!

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# ACROSS THE BOARD

*Notes and News from the Board of Directors*

## TAX EXEMPTION FOR ONLINE PURCHASES DISCONTINUED

Beginning the first week of May, online purchases of \$500 USD or less will no longer be exempted from import duties; the exemption has been eliminated. (Previously, persons were allowed to make purchases of \$500 or less, total amount, online, once every six months, and have them exempted from import duties.) Now, with the change to the law, the only import duty exemption will be for goods sent by relatives to individuals. However, the change to the law requires that all such shipments to or from family members will require the receiving person to go, in person, to the fiscal warehouse and present supporting documentation to receive the exemption.

If the required supporting documentation is not presented, the General Customs Service is authorized to appraise the value of the merchandise and to collect the taxes before delivering the shipment. All items will be taxed, based on their category, and the tax rates can range from 13 percent to 81 percent of the appraised valuation.

Package forwarding companies, such as Aeropost, have suspended import duty clearing services for their customers.

It is unknown at this time what effect the change to the law will have on purchases made duty-free at Golfito, or for items being transported by individuals returning to Costa Rica by airplane or at border crossings.



### **ARCR Board of Directors:**

*From the left, back row, Earl Tomlinson, Allen Dickinson, Bob Brashears, Terry Renfer, Terry Wise.*

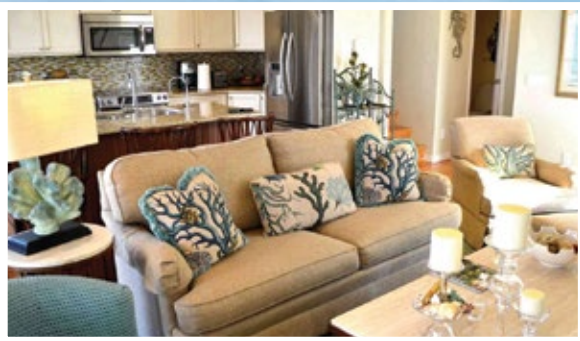
*Front row, Mel Goldberg, Linda Leake, Martha Rollins.*



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# 6 ADVENTURE BY CHICKEN BUS

by Janet LoSole

## Part 4: A Border Run to Nicaragua

*"The following is excerpted from the book, *Adventure by Chicken Bus: An Unschooling Odyssey Through Central America*".*

The trek to Panama City opened a window into the history of the New World, and we knocked ourselves out combing the sites, touring museums, and took advantage of cheaper prices to stock up on a few necessities at the open-air markets and huge air-conditioned grocery stores.

When we began our trip to Costa Rica, it was our plan to supplement our resources by working as teachers. While we were in Panama, my husband, Lloyd, received an email from a private school that expressed interest in interviewing him. Reluctantly, we bundled up our backpacks to prepare for the journey west.

We crossed the border at Paso Canoas, which is located on the Trans-American Highway, a road that (theoretically) runs all the way from North America to the tip of South America. We juddered over the Jekyll and Hyde roads in a bone-jarring chicken bus, leapfrogging past the Osa Peninsula, land of rocky roads and monstrous potholes; here, a stretch of smooth tarmac, there, a length of gravel and dust. Along the way we supplied our girls, Jocelyn, eight, and Natalie, five, with every conceivable novelty to distract them from journey-boredom, while Lloyd and I descended into brain paralysis staring out the windows for hours on end.





At times desperate measures led to silliness. This time, Lloyd opened his mouth and chanted, “Oooommm.” He knew what he was doing; the washboard surface made his mantra sound like a jackhammer, “O...o...o...m...m...m...”

The girls had not yet reached the age where they considered their father lame, so they giggled. I turned my head to look out the window, refusing to dignify the act by laughing. But trying not to laugh just made it harder not to, so I did too, but grudgingly.

At the school in Quebrada Ganado, a small community near Jacó, Lloyd attended the interview and was offered the position on the spot. We were now faced with finding long-term accommodations. We knew that living in a community for a prolonged period was the key to perfecting the language and gaining a better understanding of the culture.

Without much difficulty, we found and rented a cottage in a small village about seven kilometers from the school. “It’s an ideal spot to learn Spanish and it’s only fifteen minutes from the school,” Lloyd said. “Speaking of which, I think we should send the girls to school.” He’d been rambling on about the excellent facilities at the school where he had been hired.

“I don’t know, I...”

“Look, it’s only temporary, and it’s a great way for the girls to learn Spanish. Kids from around the world attend the school, most of them are bilingual. Some classes are taught in Spanish only.” He insisted that the experience wasn’t intended as an academic exercise as much as a cultural one.

The girls were in favor of it, so over the next few days I primed everyone for impending transitions, preparing the girls to attend school for the first time and fussing about needlessly. We explained that their attendance at school was to drive the “field trip” agenda forward and repeated this confusing rhetoric whenever we could. “Remember, you’re only there to learn the language,” I said. They very politely did not roll their eyes.

A few months later it was again time for another border run. This time we decided to go north, to the small resort community called San Juan del Sur, just over the border in Nicaragua. But without Lloyd. We left on a Sunday.

Even though we didn’t know it at the time, Lloyd was compelled to exit the country as well. To live within the parameters of the law, Lloyd and the school had agreed to share the expense associated with getting a legitimate work visa. Therefore, at “exit” day, the girls and I packed up to leave while Lloyd rented a car and drove us the





five-hundred kilometers north to the border town of Peñas Blancas.

A few kilometers from the border, police checks sprang up on the side of the road. Lloyd had not yet received his work visa and I remarked to him, “When you come back to get us, you’ll be past your ninety days. You’d better get a letter from the school stating the work visa is in process.”

“Good idea,” he said.

At the border, money-changers and “helpers” descended upon us. I picked out an eager young man and, after he hoisted all three packs onto his shoulders, we waved goodbye to Lloyd. In three days’ time we were scheduled to return and would rendezvous south of the border at a roadside Burger King. To keep in touch we agreed to check emails frequently. Unknown at the time was the strange set of circumstances Lloyd faced on his return to Quebrada Ganado.

Meanwhile, transports rumbled slowly by us. Pedestrians zigged and zagged across their lanes. “Stay close. Hang on to me. Pay attention!” I barked at the girls. When we entered Imigración on the Nicaraguan side I attempted

to comprehend the instructions on my entry form, all the while attached to two bored kids and trying to block out the noise of loud engines, screeching brakes, and distractions from the vendors. After an hour we cleared passport control and our young man led us through a fence and into Nicaragua.

On Monday, Lloyd drove the rental car to school and queried administration about a letter to appease the border police about overstaying his ninety days. During the discussion Lloyd discovered that the lawyer hired to process the work visa had not even begun to file the papers. The school administrators took Lloyd aside and assured him he would be back in Canada before the papers would be ready, putting his status in Costa Rica in jeopardy. So the school agreed to acknowledge him as a volunteer, allowing him to receive an income for living expenses in exchange for a document attesting to his legitimacy at the school.

Then it dawned on him that he needed to get out of the country to renew his visa. He fired off an email to me, raced back to the villa, packed a bag, jumped back in the car, and sped off to the highway. He was in a race against the clock now; to get to the border before



it closed at 8:00 p.m. In the meantime, the girls and I were expecting to depart Nicaragua and return to Costa Rica the following morning.

At the hostel in San Juan del Sur where we were staying, the three of us hit it off with the owners who had an adorable toddler named Daniela. Then an American family, one of only three traveling families we met in Central America, showed up with their homeschooled eight-year-old boy, Ian, and checked in. The girls hit the jackpot, having two other kids to play with, and didn't notice when I asked the American mother to supervise them so I could check messages. I nipped out to the internet café, loaded my email account, and discovered that Lloyd had crossed the border and was prowling the town looking for us at that very moment.

Lloyd had dropped off the rental car in Liberia and one of the employees had ferried him to the bus station, arriving in the nick of time to catch the last bus to the border. Along the route, passengers disembarked, and when there were only four souls destined for Peñas Blancas remaining on board, the driver refused to go any farther. Lloyd squeezed himself into a taxi with three strangers and sped to the checkpoint. With minutes to spare he had cleared customs and proceeded to San Juan del Sur, rolling in at nightfall. He was panicking now, not knowing where we were. Fearing that we would leave the next day to rendezvous in Costa Rica, he immediately went to an internet café to see if I'd received his earlier message, which I, in my shock, was just reading.

As I stitched together the details of the last few days of Lloyd's life I realized he was in town. I fired off an email, letting him know our whereabouts and guessed that he would turn up at the hostel within the half hour. I revealed nothing to the girls. True to form, he knocked on our dorm door thirty minutes later.

Jocelyn was completely speechless, Natalie sputtered, "Daddy, how did you...?" before both tackled him with hugs.

With Lloyd's "late" arrival we decided to remain a couple of extra days before reentering Costa Rica. We took full advantage of the opportunity, "Like a vacation within a vacation," I said.

Later, as he tipped a mouthful of cold Toña, a Nicaraguan lager, into his mouth, he said. "Oh, by the way, the boss felt so bad about the work visa he told me to save all my trip receipts. He's going to reimburse me when I get back."

At that, I drank a mouthful of cold beer myself and grinned.

Three days later, we slumped down the cobblestone street to the local mercado where we would catch a chicken bus to the border. The route, which spans the narrow strip of land between the Pacific Ocean and the enormous Lago Nicaragua, was a common one and almost all the seats were taken by the time we boarded.

The girls giggled at the driver honking at intervals to alert passengers of his arrival. Loud music, tinged with accordion and trumpet, boomed out of speakers above the driver's seat. Coming down over a rise the driver stopped for a passenger waiting on the side of the desolate road. A neatly dressed, elderly man with pop-bottle glasses climbed the steps, walked slowly down the aisle, and sat in the empty space beside Natalie. When he looked down onto the seat next to him, her paler, smoother face was looking up into his. His wrinkled face broke into a peaceful, friendly grin as he raised his gnarled hand with difficulty and gave her a gentle pat on the head.

The trip to the border was uneventful, though time-consuming: San Juan del Sur to La Virgen (thirty minutes), chicken bus to the border (thirty minutes), customs proceedings at Peñas Blancas (one hour).

After weathering the journey from San Juan del Sur to the border, the crossing went without incident. Back in Costa Rica we waited an hour for the chicken bus to Liberia. From there the rest of the return home was routine; arduous, but routine: one hour on a chicken bus to Liberia, another chicken bus to la Cruz de Barranca (three hours), waiting at soda (thirty minutes) and then a chicken bus to Quebrada Ganado (ninety minutes). It seemed overly complicated, but locals traveled this way and that was the point.

I'd adopted some tricks to keep the girls occupied. In my pack I had some little paper bags, one for each hour in transit. Into these I'd plunked a little bauble. It could be the cheesiest piece of crap from the discount stores, called chunches, but presenting these gifts to the girls transformed them for two reasons. First, the gifts were a novelty, even if it wore off after an hour. Second, we shamelessly exploited the girl's creative minds. All we had to do was hand over the bags and their imaginations took over. They particularly liked the ornaments destined for the tops of wedding cakes; teeny, plastic men in tuxedos and elegant brides. Those bought us two hours.

At dusk, we dragged ourselves through the cumbrous iron gate surrounding the villa. Lloyd returned to his teaching duties the next day.

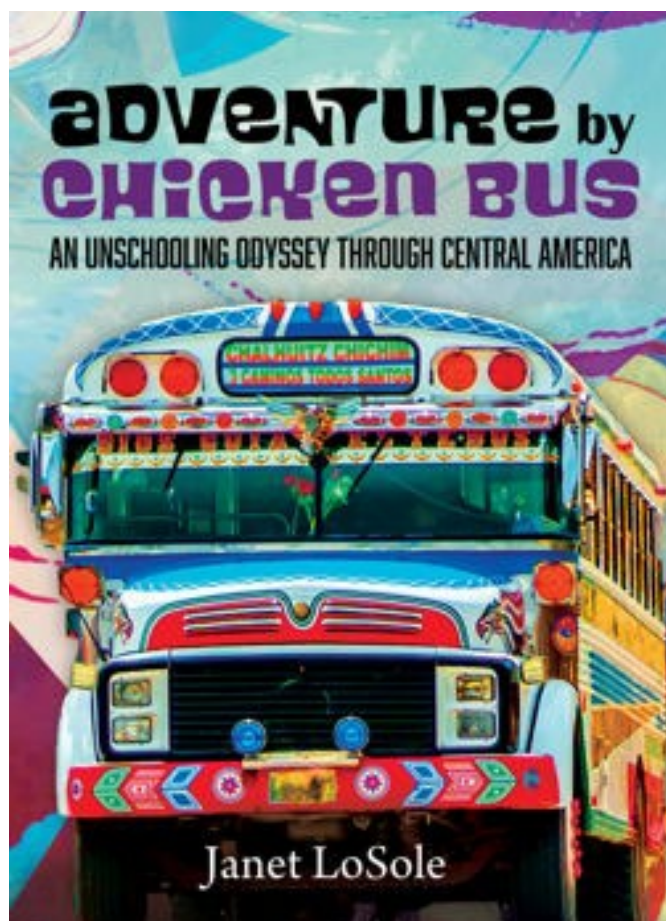
As we fell back into our routine there was a moment when, sitting by the window overlooking the lemon and cashew trees, listening to kiskadees sing and watching scarlet macaws trailing their brilliant plumage as they soared above me, that I became homesick. However, later, as I waited for the bus to take me into Jacó and I waved to dozens of people riding by on their bikes shouting "Hola!" I had an epiphany; our objective for the trip was important, education for our girls, despite the challenges. I wondered how much impact the exposure to another culture and language would have on them. Time would tell.

To be continued.

*Janet LoSole is the author of Adventure by Chicken Bus: An Unschooling Odyssey Through Central America. She holds a Bachelor of Education degree (French) and is a certified TESOL instructor. You can learn more about the book or order the complete book about their travels at:*

<https://www.adventurebychickenbus.com> or contact her at: <https://www.instagram.com/janetlosole/?hl=en>

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by Mitzi Stark



## Shopping at “La Pulpe”

About a year ago, a study by the National Retailers Association showed that 50 percent of all shopping is done at small local stores. The reason? It's faster.

My friend Elsi will agree with that. She told her family she was going to the Maxi super market for shoe polish and would be right back. It took a half hour to find the right aisle, another 30 minutes to decide on liquid, paste, or tube, color, and size, then another long wait at the checkout counter because all eight people ahead of her paid by plastic, which meant checking ID's and signing receipts. When she got home, her family demanded to know where she'd been and what took so long.

There are two small, neighborhood stores, or pulperias, in my area, where I do most of my shopping. It's faster. If I can't find something at a glance, I ask. If I forget my glasses, they read the labels for me.

Although the correct word in Spanish is *abastecedor* (provider), and today they are called Mini Supers, to the local people they are still the *pulperia*, or *La pulpe*. *Pulperias* go back to the colonial era in Latin America where they sold basic food and home products, mostly in the rural areas. There are records of *pulperias* going back to 1580 in Argentina! Nobody knows for sure where the word originated, but the official guess is that it comes from *pulpa* or *pulp*.

Those early *pulperias* were small and run by the family that lived in back or next door, and were easy to start up because they required little capital. Of course, back in the 16th century they didn't worry about licenses, permits, or the 13 percent tax. Some *pulperias* were nothing more than a counter where you asked for what you wanted and the *pulpero* turned around and reached for it. *Pulperias* also gave credit. Customers were neighbors and were





known, and if they were slow to pay, the word got spread around. You may still find these old style pulpes in outlying areas.

An integral part of any pulperia was a bench out front, because La Pulpe was also a meeting place. It was the local hangout in the evenings. It was a place for the school kids to buy candy and delay going home. It was the place to hear local news and catch up on pregnancies and growing kids.

Pulperias today are still small and run by a family, an extended mom and pop operation with everyone helping out. Now they offer more than just the basics:

you can pay your bills, charge up your cell phone, in some you can have photocopies made, and buy a lottery ticket. The bench out front is still a part of the pulperia.

When the pandemic hit Costa Rica in March of 2020, the pulperias were the first to react by stocking up on alcohol, gel, and soap, offering call-in service and getting some friend, neighbor, or relative with a motorcycle to deliver orders for ₡500. Some serve customers through a window in the door, and of course mascarillas or masks are required. One small pulperia in my area allows only one customer at a time inside. If you have to wait, there's the bench.



The neighborhood pulperia is more than just a store; it is a community. The pandemic limits our social lives, so we find human contact in the pulperia. It's where we run into friends and neighbors. Once, when I was with my dog, Esperanza, a neighbor who was leaving offered to take the leash so I could go in and shop. Then we walked home together. And the time I left a package on the counter, someone, clerk or client, called after me. One time a thirteen-year-old, who seems to have a crush on me, offered me a piece of bubble gum. At the pulperia I can pick up empty boxes for my recyclables.

The pulperias know their customers. They know that in the mornings after the bread truck goes by there is a rush for fresh bread. Packaged candy and bottled drinks are always popular, and on Sundays, when hoards of bike riders descend on the countryside, the demand for refreshments zooms.

A lack of speaking Spanish should never deter anyone from shopping at La pulpe. Most Costa Ricans know some English, and one time, when I brought in my shopping list in English, the pulperia crew made a game out of filling my order. They got it all right.

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by Allen Dickinson

## The GOOD News

In these difficult times it is easy to focus on the bad things that happen in our lives. The media adds to our misery by concentrating on the crime, the pandemic, the political and social discord, and the many other negative things that happen to us and our friends and neighbors. So, in this piece I'll turn my attention to a couple of the good things that have happened to me with the hope that a little positivity can brighten your day and remind us of some of the reasons we chose to move to this beautiful country filled with wonderful, friendly people.

\* \* \*

Some years ago I was out with my novia (girlfriend), soon to be my wife, and we had stopped to buy some ice cream from a drive up window. In the confines of my small car, it was difficult to return my wallet to my pocket, so I stuck it between my legs and we drove on to her home.

By the time we had gotten there I had forgotten about the billfold's location, and when we exited the vehicle it fell to the ground, unnoticed; over an hour passed before I realized the wallet was not in my pocket. I was naturally alarmed; it not only contained a significant amount of money, but more importantly, my US and CR driver licenses, some credit cards and, of course, lots of other minor but important items.

I was distraught – my whole life was in that small, leather wallet! In a panic, we all rushed out to the street where the vehicle was parked to look for it. It was, of course, gone. I could stand the loss of the money, but the other things were more difficult to replace. I hoped in vain for their return, but it was a poor neighborhood and I was pretty certain that I would never see any of those things again.

The next day I went about the task of reporting the loss, canceling those items that could be canceled, and worked on getting some of the other things replaced.

Several emails and many phone calls later I had done as much as I could.

That evening I was again at my girlfriend's home when there was a knock on the door – there stood an obviously poor man – holding the wallet and asking if it was mine!

Amazingly, everything was there, intact, even the money. Oh, the contents had all been shuffled about and rearranged, but they were there. In gratitude I tried to give the man a significant reward, but he refused it; he just stood there and smiled. Eventually, after some persistence on my part, he accepted the money I offered.

I never saw the man again. Where he lived, how he had come to find my billfold, and how he had identified my location, I never knew. I am still grateful for his honesty, kindness, and the effort it took for him to locate me.

\* \* \*

It was the first Friday of the month, and a friend and I were headed to the ARCR First Friday Lunch, a monthly informal gathering of expats. The event was held at a restaurant in San José and, being it was a Friday and my car's license plate prohibited it from being driven in the city, we parked at the Walmart in Escazú. From there we would take a taxi the remaining distance. (I always did some shopping at the store when I returned to "pay" for the parking.) My friend and I





walked outside and randomly selected one of the multitude of red cabs waiting there, and continued on our way.

I had just purchased a new smartphone and holster, one that clipped to my belt, and, about an hour into the meal, I realized that it was no longer on my side. A search of the restaurant yielded nothing – it was gone.

After the meal, we quickly found a cab and returned to Walmart in Escazú; it was my hope that the expensive device was somewhere in my car. I went directly to the parking area, but no, an extensive search of the vehicle came up empty. My phone, with the over one-hundred names and numbers of friends and clients, I was sure, was gone forever. With the thousands of red taxis in and around San José, I had no hope the same taxi would be there; in my mind there was no chance of me ever seeing the same taxi again. But I had to check.

With a heavy heart, I stepped onto the sidewalk and, much to my surprise, immediately spotted the same cab sitting at the end of the line of red taxis! And, the driver was grinning while madly waving at me. The driver, who I later learned was named José, lives a long distance away, in Puriscal, and seldom came to Walmart looking for passengers, but that day he had decided to try there.

We rushed to meet each other halfway, where José handed me my phone in its holster – it had fallen off my belt during the ride to the restaurant and he had found it when picking up his next customer. He had tried to figure out who I was by calling a couple of numbers in the phone, but had no luck. He was concerned he'd never see me again.

I don't know who was happier, José or me. He too refused to accept a reward; he was just pleased to have found me and returned the lost phone. Needless to say, for the following years, each time I went to the First Friday Lunch and parked at Walmart, and if José was there, it was his taxi I always used to make the second leg of the trip!

Oh, and after recovering the phone I went into Walmart and purchased a phone holster that had a belt loop, not simply a belt clip!

*Dear Readers: After nearly 15 years of writing this column (and sometimes having nothing new to say) I want to ask for your help. If you have had a good experience and would like others to know about it, let's put it here. Send me an email at: [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr), subject line El Residente, and together we'll share your story with the rest of the world. There's gotta be more good stories out there.*

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by Ivo Henfling

## A Letter from a Landlord

The tenant-landlord relationship can be exceedingly difficult, even if the landlord-tenant law is clear to both parties. Even so, disputes are quite common and, unfortunately, in Costa Rica, it is costly for either party to take the other to court.

Here's how one landlord tried to clarify the relationship between a landlord and their tenants and avoid conflicts:

Dear Tenant,

I know we come from different walks of life. You've taken different turns to get here, but now, by fate or otherwise, our paths have crossed and you are going to be a tenant in one of my properties. You might be experienced at this, or it might be your first time. Whatever your situation is, there are a few things I want you to know so that we can have a mutually beneficial relationship:

### 1. YOU NEED TO DO YOUR DUE DILIGENCE BEFORE, NOT AFTER, YOU RENT THE PROPERTY

If you have any questions about how to get to a certain place, what the transport facilities are like, or what kind of people live in your neighborhood, do your research before you rent the apartment. Don't call me up in the middle of the night asking for taxi directions. Or use Waze to get home.

### 2. AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO INDULGE IN SOCIAL WORK, MY APARTMENT ISN'T FREE

Let's be straight with each other. We are part of a business transaction. You pay me for the living space, and I use the money to provide for my family and my needs. Don't come to me with a sad story about how your startup is going to turn over a million dollars at the end of the year, but you just can't pay me right now. You pay me, I allow you to stay in my apartment. That's the deal.

### 3. I AM NOT A HUSTLER, AND I DON'T WANT TO BE

What do you think it would do to my reputation if you slandered me as a conniving landlord who's always trying to take advantage of you? You probably guessed correctly. This is a business I intend to stay in for the long term and I don't try to take advantage of my tenants, because it hurts my business.

### 4. DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE DROWNING BEFORE YOU CALL ME AND ASK ME TO FIX THE PLUMBING

I understand that wear and tear and maintenance are expected in the due course of owning an apartment. Just make sure that you notify me before a problem gets unmanageable. It is in my interest, as well as yours, to keep the house in a decent condition, so I will help out if something needs fixing.

### 5. BE PATIENT. I AM A HUMAN, NOT A GENIE

Just because you are paying me rent and I am the owner, doesn't mean I have a one-click magic fix for all of your problems. Sometimes, these things take time. The plumber I'm used to calling might be out of town for a wedding. The electrician might have to wait until a certain spare part becomes available. Don't get paranoid and think that I am going to leave you without running water and electricity.

### 6. HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THAT MAYBE YOU ARE THE ANNOYING NEIGHBOR?

Don't complain to me about your neighbor's annoying food habits, loud music, incessant TV volume, and/or thumping on the walls. Some people do have a few quirks, but before you point these flaws out to



me, maybe take a moment to recheck if you aren't doing any of those things yourself.

I think looking at some of the things we've discussed here might give you more of an insight into my situation and help us understand each other better. I'd like to have a good tenant as much as you'd like to have a good landlord. If we don't throw our hands up in the air out of exasperation after every single real or imagined slight, you and I will have a good working relationship.

Respectfully,

**Your Landlord**

Remember, real estate agents are intermediaries and do not get involved in the rental relationship between landlord and tenant. Do as this landlord suggested and stay out of trouble. Not all of our affiliates get involved in rentals, so contact us before renting.

*Ivo Henfling is a Dutch expat who has lived in Costa Rica since 1980. He founded the American-European Real Estate Group, the first functioning MLS with affiliate agents from coast to coast, in 1999.*

*He is the broker/owner of GoDutch Realty and can be reached at (506) 2289-5125 / (506) 8834-4515 or at:*

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by Christine Monteith

## Return to the Ocean



**I**t's been a nine-month drought. Fortunately, my months of yearning, as I saw my husband head out with his surfboard, were over.

After recovering from five surgeries on my right eye, due to complications from retinal detachment, my surgeon had given me permission to “resume my normal activities,” and that included being able to return to the ocean and body-boarding. He added a stern caveat, which I took seriously, that I was to be careful and not “knock my head.”

Hmm! That presented a challenge, as body-boarding requires the rider to glide along the face of a wave that is moving at 20+ miles per hour, and the chance to get banged around a little is always present. That is because the propulsion for board and rider is the energy created by the leading edge of a cresting wave. That “lip” of a wave can apply between 250-6,000 pounds of pressure per square foot, depending on the wave's size;

a typical three-foot high wave can punch a whopping 1,100 pounds of water down on your head. Therefore, it's crucial to match your forward momentum with the speed of the wave as you start out; a few seconds out of synch and the foaming crest crashes over your head and your prone body gets sucked up backwards, resulting in a “heels over head” reverse somersault. In surf lingo, it's called “going over the falls.” And, though it's not a solid force, the experience can be teeth rattling. It was after just such a pounding that I first noticed the black curtain in the lower left quadrant of my right eye, which led to the aforementioned surgeries.

With all that in mind, I am eager to be back in the ocean with water rushing, splashing, and smashing over me again. I want to look back over my shoulder to see the lacy tendrils of white foam forming at the peak as I paddle and kick like a crazed turtle to find that sweet spot where the wave's energy pushes me forward.



If you haven't had a chance to read my earlier story describing why I decided to learn to body-board at the age of 57, you may be wondering why I voluntarily subject myself to this particular potential danger. The answer goes back to my earliest memories; I have always loved floating on the water, or submerging like a fish and undulating forward to feel the water rush past my skin. That didn't change as I grew older. Maybe in a past life I was a sea otter or dolphin.

So, equipped with a new, more sagacious perspective, I didn't rush back to the beach upon returning from my check-up. No, I waited until my favorite surf app predicted an early morning three-foot swell on an incoming tide. On that day, Ben and I loaded up the car and headed to the beach. Just feeling the dense black sand squeeze between my toes as we walked the half-mile along the beach was delightful, until the sand merged with the multitude of ocean smoothed rocks varying in size from grains of rice to footballs, littering our path. Apparently, during my confinement my feet had lost their hardy resistance, so I tenderly picked my way through the stone-strewn stretches.

When we arrived at our favorite entry point, with great anticipation I set my board and fins against an enormous piece of tortured driftwood. Scanning the horizon I could see the blue surface rising and falling as the swells neared the shore. As the corduroy of swell lines passed over the shallowing water, the closest line pulled up tall, and white foam erupted from the southern end of the wave, with the curl of the falling crest rushing northward. As I watched a surfer ride the face, I thought of a foam pillow full of macerated sponge being slowly unzipped, the spongy bits pouring out as the zipper opened.

After years of committing epidermal abuse by rarely applying sunscreen, wearing skimpy bikinis and cheap sunglasses, getting ready to go in the water was like suiting up for a space walk. I donned my surf hat, which looks like Gilligan's (only with ear flaps), wrap-around surf goggles, a long-sleeved rash guard, surf tights, socks under my fins to protect against abrasions, and finally, I adjusted the Velcro on my arm for the board leash. I was ready for action.

But still I didn't make a mad dash for the water, I took my time and watched for the rhythm of the sets, wanting to find a lull in the swells; with a little patience I could paddle to "the outside," beyond the breaking waves, without getting pounded on my way

there. And sure enough, after a long time watching, everything was right and I waded into the shallow water. Feeling the mild warmth surrounding my calves was like coming home.

During the previous months I had vowed to embark on an exercise regimen to increase my upper body strength to be ready for my return to the water. I even watched a few YouTube videos wherein nimble athletes employed stretchy bands and Pilates balls to increase core strength and stability. My vows, however, did not translate into significant action, with the result that my initial burst of enthusiasm soon gave way to breathless exertion. I wished that I hadn't so creatively procrastinated my physical preparation. But I slogged away, determined to get out to where my friends were.

As the morning progressed I floated in the swell, greeting friends, getting the latest gossip, and watching the waves come in. Anxiety, thoughts of what the doctor had told me, and the results if I didn't follow his advice, swirled in my head. I didn't want the fear of "what could happen" to paralyze me, but several times I was offered a wave and I gladly offered it back; making the commitment to catch a wave was intimidating. Then, the perfect wave came my way and I took the "plunge."

My timing and exertion matched the wave's momentum and I quickly found myself gliding along the smooth surface of blue water. The sensation was as I remembered – and it was exhilarating! All my doubts melted away as I navigated my board along the length of the open face. I could hear the rhythmic slapping on the bottom of my board skimming along the water's surface while keeping an awareness of the cresting foam catching up behind me. It was 15 seconds of pure joy with the lasting realization that "I can still do this!" One good wave and I was back where I belonged.

*Christine has had the great fortune to live, work, and travel around the world, and now is happily ensconced in tropical tranquility near the Golfo Dulce with one husband, two dogs, and four hens*



A close-up photograph of a smartphone lying on a wooden surface. The screen displays a contact application with several entries, including names like 'Miguel', 'Ana', 'Ana Luján', 'Claudia Bello', and 'Claudia Colarte'.

# USEFUL NUMBERS

## United States of America Embassy

Phone: (506) 2519 2000

Address: Vía 104, Calle 98, San José

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American Citizens Services: (506) 2519-2590

Fraud prevention Department: (506) 2519-2117

Duty Officer (after business hours): (506) 2519-2000  
(Dial zero and ask for the Duty officer)

## United Kingdom Embassy

Phone: (506) 2258 2025

Address: Edificio Centro Colón, Paseo Colón, Provincia de San José, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Website: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/costa-rica)

Email: [costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk](mailto:costarica.consulate@fco.gov.uk)

## Canadian Embassy

Phone: (506) 2242 4400

Address: Sabana Sur, Edificio Oficentro Ejecutivo, atrás de la Contraloría, San José, 1007, Provincia de San José, San José

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Web site: <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>

Email: [sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca)

Emergency phone: +1 613 996 8885 (call collect where available)

## French Embassy

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Phone: (506) 2222 1933

Address: Calle 32, San José

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Emergency assistance: (506) 6050 9853

## Venezuelan Embassy

Phone: (506) 2220 3704, 2220 3708

Address: San Pedro, Los Yoses, 50 metros antes de finalizar la avenida 10.

Email: [embv.crsjo@mppre.gob.ve](mailto:embv.crsjo@mppre.gob.ve) and  
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Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., 1:30 – 3:30 p.m..

A yellow measuring tape or ruler is positioned horizontally across the top and bottom of the page, framing the central text. It has markings in both inches and centimeters.

## CONFUSED BY THE METRIC SYSTEM?

Need to know how to convert common measurements used in Costa Rica to Customary US Standard measurements? Use the handy conversion chart below!

(These are APPROXIMATE factors, NOT EXACT.)

Milliliters × .034 = Fluid Ounces

Kilograms × 2.205 = Pounds

Millimeters × .039 = Inches

Meters × 3.28 = Feet

Square Meters × 10.764 = Square Feet

Square meters × 10,000 = Hectares

Hectares × 2.47 = Acres

Kilometers × .62 = Miles

Centigrade × 1.8 + 32 = Fahrenheit

Liters × .264 = Gallons

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\* (One hour parking, all others will be towed / Keep an eye on your belongings / Alligators by the estuary / No restaurants nearby)



## (22) FROM THE EMBASSIES



**Q: Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Costa Rica June 1-2. I understand this was his first visit to Central America since becoming Secretary of State. Why did he choose Costa Rica?**

**A:** Secretary of State Blinken traveled to San José to attend a meeting of the Central American Integration System (SICA) countries and Mexico, convened by Costa Rica. In Costa Rica he met with President Carlos Alvarado Quesada and Foreign Minister Rodolfo Solano Quirós to discuss the strong US-Costa Rica partnership, and to advance collaboration on regional and global issues, including migration, counternarcotics, human rights, and climate change. During his visit, the Secretary underscored that the fact that this visit to Costa Rica was his first to the region and was “no accident” as Costa Rica and the United States are joined in partnership based on shared values based on a joint approach to the most pressing issues that our people face today. A full readout of Secretary Blinken’s remarks after his meeting with President Alvarado can be found on the State Department webpage at: <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-costa-rican-president-carlos-alvarado-at-a-joint-press-availability/>

**Q: Can you provide more details regarding the United States’ bilateral relationship with Costa Rica and our partnership on regional initiatives?**

**A:** During the Secretary’s visit, the State Department released the below information highlighting important features of the United States’ strong bilateral relationship with Costa Rica, a relationship based on shared values and commitments. Costa Rica, a strong democracy of more than five-million people with deep ties to the United States, is important to key US goals in the region, and is committed to continued close cooperation with the United States. It has an open trade and investment climate, and recently became the 38th member of the OECD. It is also one of the strongest and most reliable voices in Latin America on human rights and rule of law, and has been a superb partner in the fight against transnational crime and drug trafficking.

- The United States is Costa Rica’s top trading partner, accounting for around 40 percent of both imports and

exports. It is also Costa Rica’s primary source of foreign direct investment, reaching \$1.92 billion in 2019 (70% of total FDI). There are currently more than 200 US companies in Costa Rica which, collectively, employ more than 94,000 people, or nearly 84 percent of all jobs created by multinational companies in Costa Rica.

- Costa Rica is a champion of human rights and democratic norms across the region, including through its active role in the Organization of American States (OAS). It has condemned fraudulent parliamentary elections in Venezuela and supported the OAS resolution calling for electoral reform in Nicaragua. Additionally, Costa Rica hosts more than 450,000 Nicaraguans, including 110,000 people who fled the country after the 2018 political crisis, many of whom are currently seeking refugee status in Costa Rica. Costa Rica also hosts nearly 30,000 Venezuelan migrants and refugees. The Costa Rican government has extended several additional protections, work permits, and travel documentation to some segments of this population, a valuable humanitarian response to Venezuelans and Nicaraguans who cannot return to their country of origin given continued instability.
- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 120,000 private American citizens, including many retirees, resided in Costa Rica, and more than 1.4 million American citizens visited the country annually. Pre-pandemic, more than 1,100 Costa Ricans studied at US institutions of higher education annually. More than 8,000 US students study in Costa Rica every year, and the country is the number one destination in Latin America for US study abroad programs.
- Costa Rica is a valuable counter-narcotics partner. In 2020, Costa Rican security services seized more than 71 metric tons of drugs, including a record 18.6 metric tons found in commercial containers. US donated interceptor vessels, as well as equipment and training provided to the Costa Rican Coast Guard, along with joint operations, led to a record number of maritime seizures in 2020.
- The United States has partnered with Costa Rica in an effort to bring the COVID-19 pandemic to a swift end. US assistance of more than \$4 million to Costa Rica includes personal protective equipment, medical supplies, hygiene supplies to support in-person education, and mobile hospitals.





## THE POWER OF A SCHOLARSHIP

It is increasingly common to hear about Costa Ricans studying abroad. Most people agree that this is an opportunity to enhance your CV, specialise in a field that is not available locally, or improve language skills.

Chevening is one example of an excellent international scholarship programme. The British Government's global scholarship programme allows emerging leaders to study a one-year master's degree at any university in the UK. These scholarships are fully funded and cover flights, subsidies and the course fees.

This programme is very special for different reasons – one is that people from every single field can apply. We have had artists, engineers, doctors, journalists – you name it! There is no discrimination based on gender, age, marital or parental status.

Applicants must be a citizen of one of the 160+ Chevening-eligible countries (Costa Rica is one of them), have completed an undergraduate degree, have at least two years' work experience, and must fulfil the English language requirements for their chosen university.

Honestly, many people can meet these requirements. But what really makes an application stand out are the following four points: leadership skills, networking abilities, a compelling reason to study in the UK, and a clear career plan that aligns with the country's realities and needs.

As you can imagine, the scholarship programme is very competitive, but we would love to be able to support more scholars than we currently do. If you are interested in helping us fund more scholarships through your company or foundation, please get in contact with us.

If you know people who fit the "Chevening profile" don't hesitate to let them know about this opportunity. Applications will be open from 3 August to 2 November this year.

For more information, visit: [www.chevening.org](http://www.chevening.org) or write to: [chevening.cr.nic@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:chevening.cr.nic@fcdo.gov.uk)

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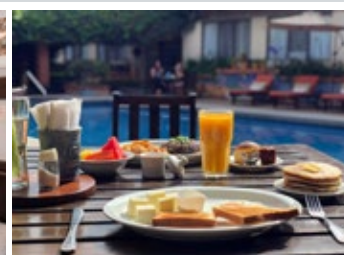


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by **Rómulo Pacheco**

## New Incentives for Pensionados, Rentistas, and Inversionistas

**A** new law designed to encourage the arrival of expats under the residency categories of Inversionistas, Pensionados, and Rentistas, looks like it is finally happening! Many people have been expecting this program to become a reality and, with 40 votes in favor, the congressional procedures have been finalized and the program has been approved. The purpose of the new law is to make Costa Rica a desirable destination for retirement and investment and will, in the process, contribute to the economic reactivation of the Costa Rican economy post COVID-19.

The new law will allow individuals, and his or her dependents subject to it, to:

- Import all their household goods free of taxes. The meaning of “household goods” includes items such as furniture, home electronics, décor, kitchen equipment, silverware, bathroom items and accessories, and clothing, among others, all of which are necessary to provide for the individual’s, and those of his/her family members, needs. It applies to old or new items.
- Re-import new household goods items free of tax in the event theirs are lost or stolen.
- Receive a tax exemption (VAT tax and importation taxes) for importing up to two vehicles (cars, motorbikes, boats) for family or personal use.
- Receive the same provision to import vehicles, in the event they are stolen or lost.
- Receive an exemption from income tax on all monies which expats bring to the country to make investments and purchases of goods here to start their new life. (Profits made from investments will be taxed on the regular basis.)
- Receive a 20 percent discount of the transfer tax when purchasing real estate.





- Reduce the minimum investment to be categorized as an Inversionista to \$150,000 USD (the previous requirement was \$200,000 USD). The category is further extended to those who invest in green infrastructure projects and risk capital funds.

There is a five year period to claim the benefits, which will be active for ten years.

The law must now go to the President's desk for his signature and will be in place a couple of months after that. Once there is a final, signed version of the law, I will elaborate more on the specifics and their applications to the different cases. Many questions will arise and I will try to keep everyone up to date and provide the best information possible to enable persons to make educated decisions.

*Rómulo Pacheco*

*Attorney at Law, Notary Public*

*Pacheco, Marin, and Associates:*

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by Ryan Piercy

## Great Curassow



**L**arge species of birds are much easier to see, but not necessarily easier to locate. While it used to be possible to view the great curassow throughout the lowlands on both slopes of this country, loss of habitat and hunting have reduced their status to scarce, with groups persisting mainly in some of the national parks.

Locally referred to as Pavón Grande, the *Crax rubra* is a pheasant-like species found from Southern Mexico through to Ecuador. They are considered “Vulnerable” on the IUCN Redlist, but fortunately, measures such as Costa Rica’s restrictions on hunting, have helped protect the species. The genus *Crax* consists of eight species of curassows, all declining in population.

In Costa Rica only members of the most massive type of the species, the great curassow, are resident. They prefer forested areas where they can wander on the ground seeking fallen fruit for sustenance, and sometimes scratching for roots or small creatures. The breed is robust and large at a 39-inch wingspread, and around 4 kilos. The males are larger, and are feathered in black with a curly crested head, dusky yellow knobbed bill, and white underbelly. The slightly smaller females come in three morphs, either barred, rufous (reddish brown), or sometimes a dark blackish body.

While preferring the ground, often males (or the pair) will build small nests of leaves up in the lower



branches or crooks of trees, where an average of two eggs will be laid. These eggs and the chicks are at greater risk to a larger quantity of predators than the adults, who will use distraction tactics, feigning injury, to try and protect their young. They are known to be aggressive, even toward humans, fluttering up to scratch at the head and eyes if threatened, so best to keep them at a safe distance while under observation. Their main predators include ocelots and hawk-eagles, along with man.



Prime locations to still observe these large avians include the parks of Corcovado, Santa Rosa, and Rincón de la Vieja. This monogamous species can be found foraging alone or in small groups numbering up to

six specimens. Keep your distance and try not to startle them or they will usually run away screaming in alarm... if they don't decide to attack.



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# PARADISE, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

31

by Tony Johnson

## Are We Blind?

*How Can We Exaggerate Small Flaws in Our Neighbor, and Miss The Larger Flaws in Ourselves?*

*Modernized Matthew 7:3*

Intimate relations often begin with a kind of blindness to the shortcomings of our beloved as we idealize them; fantasizing about the fulfillment we imagine they will provide us. As we spend more time together the “scales fall from our eyes” and we see each other more realistically, surrendering dreams of perfection. It’s been said that “love is blind, but a relationship is an eye-opener”; as our disappointment deepens, we may see only their flaws and none of our own. How can we be so blind to our own shortcomings – and we all have them – and be so fixated on our partners?

The “Matthew” quote above indicates that such selective blindness is not a modern development. It has ancient roots in human reality.

Previous “Paradise” articles have focused on various aspects of intimate relationships and how to improve those connections. This time, I’ll try to explain how our blindness to our own flaws comes about and how it contributes to the numerous problems which can disrupt our relationship.

### BLIND AS A BAT

In the last article I explored the damaging impact that “David,” a fictional abuser, had on his wife, “Lorraine.” The video showed his cruel treatment of his wife, and her agony. In public! If you will recall, David degraded his wife in front of other department store customers. If you want to review the video, it can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKRQgqiFJpo>

In David’s eyes he was the totally innocent victim of his worthless wife and totally deserving of the world’s sympathy and support. He is blind to his cruelty, and unaware of how that world actually sees him; as an ugly overbearing thug, mercilessly bullying the terrified, traumatized woman. They weren’t “on his side,” as he believed. But why couldn’t he see how shocked and appalled the other customers were at witnessing his volcanic attack? Why couldn’t he see how utterly

monstrous and cruel he was being? Because his attacks were defensive.

### BLINDNESS = DEFENSIVENESS

How can such attacks be defensive? It is simple; if we concentrate on the shortcomings of others, we don’t have to recognize our own. But our relationship problems persist, and to solve such problems, we must see and change our part.

What? How could anyone not see how they have insulted another? My point? Everyone is subject to this defensive blindness. We might safely say, as did Matthew in the New Testament, that such blindness is a universal failing.

You surely noted in the video example; the man is blind to his ill treatment of the woman. But don’t be heedless to the reality; there are abusive women too who blindly mistreat men too.

Why are we this way, especially in our intimate relationships? Let’s try to see what David can’t, by reviewing the principles of conflict.

### THE COMMON WAY HUMANS MAKE CONFLICT WORSE

First, conflict must be distinguished from disagreement. We can disagree without being in conflict. You might be disagreeing with my distinction right now, but not feeling upset about it. Disagreements are typically focused on disputed issues, free of strong, negative emotions. Conflicts, however, are disagreements INTENSIFIED BY negative feelings. Which leads us to attack each other and feel angry, hurt, vulnerable, defensive.

Extensive study has been made of the ways we typically approach and worsen conflict.

- We assume we possess the entire TRUTH while our adversary has almost none.
- We assume we know our adversary’s MOTIVES, and they are malevolent.

- We assume our adversary is completely to BLAME for the problems, while we are completely innocent.

Let's look into how David operated under these assumptions.

David was clearly convinced that he and he alone, had all the TRUTH about his relationship with Lorraine and labeled her and treated her like an "idiot." The purpose of his conviction of having the truth is to defend his ego; if he was "right" then he was safe from criticism and defeat in the battle, or so he believed.

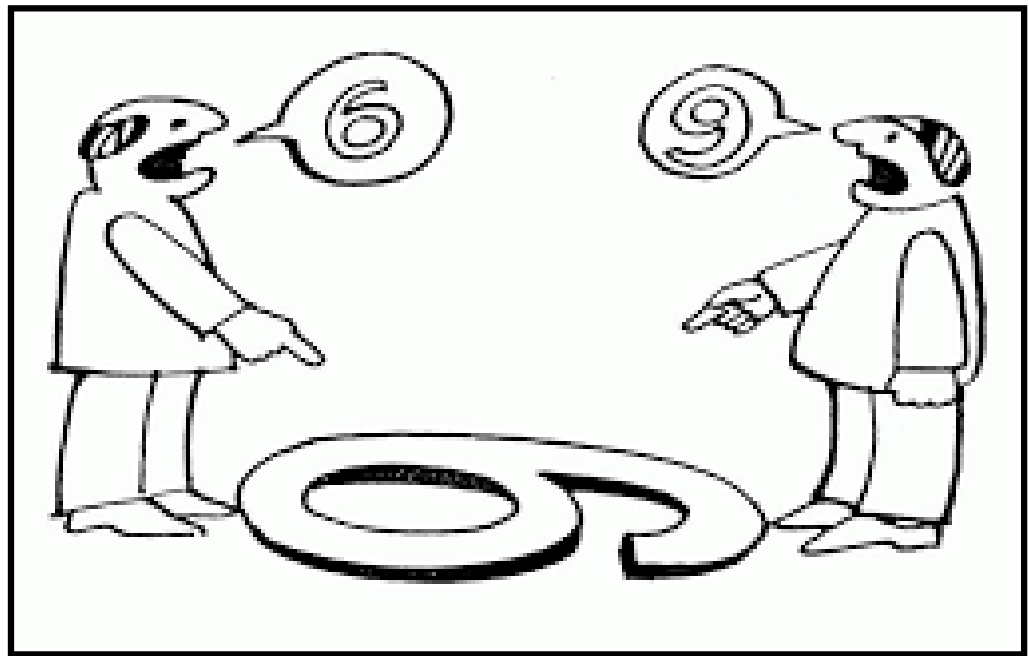
Of course, having the truth, "the whole truth," isn't correct. It never is. But the assumption we make can certainly cost us big time. When we assume we know all we need to, we become blind to our own flaws, vulnerabilities, and contributions to the problem. This explains why we are so shocked when our partner brings up some indisputable truth about us that we have conveniently overlooked. To protect ourselves, we fail to see our part in the problem.

Did the hostile, abusive David look like a guy who'd give Lorraine the benefit of the doubt? Grant her the likelihood of any good intentions? Hahaha. Frustrated that she doesn't meet his expectations, he will not grant that Lorraine's outlook is "different"; he is more likely to believe that she DELIBERATELY frustrates and upsets him. Assuming we know our partner's MOTIVES, justifies his anger and abuse. "She started it. I'm just giving her a taste of her own medicine. I'm the victim here."

So, if we're having any problems, our partner is completely to BLAME. Again, our assumptions are protective, letting us completely off the hook.

One reason we're so blind to how badly we treat others is to protect our ego from OUR reality; we don't want to see how badly we behave sometimes. David doesn't accurately see himself or his behavior, and to avoid feeling bad about what he has done and who he is, he is defensively blind.

The essence of conflict is that we feel attacked by someone who feels we have attacked them. We attack back because we feel further attacked by them. And we get what we give.



Mistreat, insult, abuse, offend our partner and it's a safe bet that unless that partner is Jesus or Mother Theresa, the same will be done to us. So round and round we go. "But I'm just giving them a taste of their own medicine," we blindly tell ourselves. And what might they be telling themselves? You guessed it.

## NAGGING USUALLY LEADS NOWHERE GOOD

This explanation may seem to deny that some people are just plain blind and don't need a conflict to lose their insight; some people are critical, nagging, and truly "difficult people." But they don't see this about themselves because they defensively believe, "I'm just telling the truth. Why are you so upset?" They actually believe their nagging is helping, and don't see the damage being done. Even when someone cries, "Stop!" naggers continue to believe that their helpful motive justifies any pain they've caused; that the other's pain is offset by the "change and growth" that will surely result from their constant criticism.

What they fail to see is that their methodology for improving others itself needs some "change and growth." Nagging typically doesn't work because the person being criticized becomes defensive and deaf to the nagger's message, regardless of how beneficial it might actually be. Being criticized is rarely an incentive to change. It's more often a reason to pretend to change to get the nag off one's back. Or, a reason to become passive/aggressive, hiding resentment behind false gratitude.



## NAGS AND BLIND DEFENDERS DON'T SEE THAT THEY ALSO HURT THEMSELVES

Our blindness does protect us, but it also costs us. How? By preventing us from making the changes necessary to resolve our problems. The persistence of which hurts both us and our partner.

So, how, in our defensive blindness, do we finally see that we are wrong? Where do we go for such insight? Just as we can't directly see our face, we need some sort of "mirror" to see what we have done wrong. And who might that "mirror" be? Could it possibly be the person we've been defending ourselves against? The person telling us things we don't want to hear or see?

When does this recognition typically happen? When one person says, "ENOUGH! I want this to end. Continuing this pointless battle costs me more than saying you're right, I'm wrong."

Making that statement is made easier when we realize that by "wrong" we mean in THIS INSTANCE of our behavior, not ENTIRELY wrong, broken, messed up as a person.

When our partner accuses us of something, and when we accuse them, it's typically done in an over-generalizing way. Saying, "You're so rude, insensitive, inconsiderate, etc." it sounds like they are saying we are ENTIRELY as described. But are we really? Of course not!

To reduce the sting of their accusations, try to see them as true about THIS interaction, nowhere near true as an indictment of our entire character. That makes the truth easier to see and admit.

## THE PAYOFF? IT'S IN THE "R'S"

RESOLUTION of conflicts. RELIEF from the stress of being "at war." REPAIR of our relationship. And RESTORATION of reality.

A pretty good REWARD for seeing what we didn't want to see.

*Tony Johnson is another "R" word, a Retired university mental health center therapist who has had to face many of his own shortcomings, courtesy of his wonderful wife. You can reach him at: [johnson.tony4536@gmail.com](mailto:johnson.tony4536@gmail.com)*

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**Organizations are invited and encouraged to post their group activities, information, meeting schedules, and notices of special events FREE in the ARCR Facebook account. Go to [www.facebook.com/ARCR123](http://www.facebook.com/ARCR123)**

### ► **Alcoholics Anonymous**

Groups meet daily throughout the country; times and places change frequently. Schedules for meetings and their locations can be found at: [www.costaricaaa.com](http://www.costaricaaa.com).

### ► **Al-Anon**

English language meetings open to anyone whose life has been/is affected by someone else's problem with alcohol. Meeting information can be found at: [www.costaricaaa.com](http://www.costaricaaa.com). Family Resources.

### ► **American Legion Post 10-Escazú**

Meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 12 noon at the Tap House, Escazú Village, Escazú. If you wish to attend please call: 4034-0788, or email: [commander@alcr10.org](mailto:commander@alcr10.org) or visit our website at: [www.alcr10.org](http://www.alcr10.org). If you need directions, call Terry Wise at: 8893-4021.

### ► **American Legion Post 12-Golfito**

Information can be obtained from Pat O'Connell, 8303-0950

### ► **American Legion Auxiliary**

The Legion Auxiliary meets the second Saturday of each month, at 1p.m. in Moravia. Contact Doris Murillo at: 2240-2947.

### ► **Amigos of Costa Rica**

A US-based non-profit organization established in 1999. As an advocate for philanthropy in Costa Rica; it contributes to the well-being of Costa Rica by connecting donors resources with vetted non-profit solutions. US Government tax-payers donations are deductible. For more information go to: [www.amigosofcostarica.org](http://www.amigosofcostarica.org) or email to: [emily@amigosofcostarica.org](mailto:emily@amigosofcostarica.org).

### ► **Atenas Bridge Club**

Informal, friendly duplicate games. Classes at 11 a.m., games at 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays. New members welcome. For more information, visit the website at: [www.atenasbridgeclub.com](http://www.atenasbridgeclub.com) or email to: [atenasbridgeclub@gmail.com](mailto:atenasbridgeclub@gmail.com).

### ► **Birding Club Costa Rica**

A private group that travels around Costa Rica to observe and identify the 900+ species of birds found here, learn about different parts of the country, and enjoy the company of like-minded and interested people. For more information, visit the website: [www.birdingclubcr.org](http://www.birdingclubcr.org) or email to: [info@birdingclubcr.org](mailto:info@birdingclubcr.org).

### ► **Canadian Club**

Canadian Club welcomes everyone to join us for our monthly luncheons, and at our special annual events. No passport required. There is no fee or dues to pay, just sign up with your email address and we will keep you informed of Canadian

events. For information go to Facebook: Canadian Club of Costa Rica, or email Pat at: [canadianclubcr@yahoo.com](mailto:canadianclubcr@yahoo.com) to sign up.

### ► **Central Valley Golf Association**

Meets every Tuesday morning between 6-7 a.m. at the Valle Del Sol golf course in Santa Ana. Both individual and two person events with different formats every week. We invite all men and woman with all handicaps to join us and enjoy golf on a picturesque course. No membership required. For more information, contact: Larry Goldman 8933-3333, email to: [nylarryg@yahoo.com](mailto:nylarryg@yahoo.com).

### ► **Costa Ballena Women's Network**

Begun in Ojochal with a handful of expat ladies, our focus is networking, community, business, and social activities as well as offering an opportunity to meet new people. Monthly lunch meetings held the third Saturday of each month through a variety of social activities at various restaurants with guest speakers talking on interesting topics. For more information please email: [cbwn00@gmail.com](mailto:cbwn00@gmail.com).

### ► **Costa Rica Writers Group**

Published authors and writers; newbies, and wanna-bes make up this group. Dedicated to helping and improving all authors' work with resources for publishing, printing, editing, cover design; every aspect of the writing process. Third Thursday, January through November, Henry's Beach Café, Escazú, 11 a.m. Contact: [bbrashears0@gmail.com](mailto:bbrashears0@gmail.com) or visit our Facebook page, Costa Rica Writers Group.

### ► **Democrats Abroad Costa Rica**

Provides information about voting in the US and voting issues of interest to US citizens living in Costa Rica. For more information or to join, email: [democratsabroadcostarica@gmail.com](mailto:democratsabroadcostarica@gmail.com) or visit our website at: [www.democratsabroad.org/cr](http://www.democratsabroad.org/cr). Register to vote absentee at: [votefromabroad.org](http://votefromabroad.org)

### ► **Domestic Animal Welfare Group Costa Ballena**

DAWG is a volunteer run, non-profit organization focused on animal advocacy in the Costa Ballena region of Costa Rica with a goal of eliminating the abuse and abandonment of domestic animals in Costa Ballena. We stress education, spay and neuter. Donations are our lifeline. For information visit the website at: [www.dawgcostarica.org](http://www.dawgcostarica.org) or email to: [dawgcostarica@gmail.com](mailto:dawgcostarica@gmail.com).

### ► **First Friday Lunch**

Each month on the first Friday of the month ARCR sponsors a First Friday Lunch at 12 p.m. All are invited to join ARCR officers and others for an informal lunch and BS session. No RSVP or agenda, just good food and meeting new and old friends.



Attendees are responsible for their own food and drink expenses. Meetings are at the Chinese restaurant, Marisqueria Mariscos Vivo, located behind the Mas x Menos grocery store located across from the Nissan Dealer near Parque Sabana. Call ARCR (2220-0055) for directions.

### ► Little Theater Group

An English Speaking theater group located in Escazu. Website: [littletheatregroup.org](http://littletheatregroup.org) Email: [info@littletheatregroup.org](mailto:info@littletheatregroup.org) Whatsapp: 8708-2607

### ► Marine Corps League

Meets the second Saturday of the month at 11 a.m. at the Tap House in City Place Mall in Santa Ana. We are looking for new members. Former Marines and Navy Corpsmen can be regular members. All other service members are welcome to join as associate members. For information call Andy Pucek at: 8721-6636 or email: [andy@marinecorpsleaguecr.com](mailto:andy@marinecorpsleaguecr.com).

### ► Newcomers Club of Costa Rica

(For Women) The Club, in existence since 1980, promotes friendship and support among members, mostly expats in Costa Rica, through conducting a variety of social and recreational activities. Meetings are held from September to May, interest groups meet year-round. General Meeting at 10:00 a.m. every first Tuesday of the month. For more information go to our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/newcomers.org/> or email to: [newcomersclub.costarica@gmail.com](mailto:newcomersclub.costarica@gmail.com).

### ► Pérez Zeledón International Women's Club

Formed in November 2009 to promote friendship between English speaking women in Pérez Zeledón and, through friendship, to make positive contributions to our local community. The PZIWC meets for lunch on the second Tuesday of each month, hosts Ramblers Day on the third Tuesday of each month, and has a Games Day on the fourth Tuesday of each month. For more information, please send an email to: [pzwomansclub@gmail.com](mailto:pzwomansclub@gmail.com) or visit our web site at: [www.pziwc.org](http://www.pziwc.org).

### ► Professional Women's Network

PWN provides its members with opportunities to network with other professional women with the goal of aiding personal and professional development of entrepreneurs, students, and professionals. PWN sponsors service and outreach programs to "give back" to the community. Meeting schedules vary. For info on the speaker for the month and to register, call Helen at: 2280-4362. Location: Tin Jo Restaurant in San José, Calle 11, Av. 6-8. Or email us at: [pwn.costarica@gmail.com](mailto:pwn.costarica@gmail.com). PWN website is: [www.pwnocr.com](http://www.pwnocr.com).

### ► Quepos-Manuel Antonio Writers Group

The QMAWG is a group of aspiring and accomplished writers living in the Central and South Pacific Coast area who meet

to expand their skills, share resources, and support and socialize with others with an interest in writing. Meetings take place on the second Sunday of each month at 12:00 p.m. at El Avion restaurant in Manuel Antonio, and includes a presentation and Q&A session, followed by a luncheon and social exchange. For more information, email Bob Normand at: [bob@bobnormand.com](mailto:bob@bobnormand.com)

### ► Radio Control Sailing Club

Meets at Sabana Park Lake. For information email Walter Bibb at: [wwbbsurf40@yahoo.com](mailto:wwbbsurf40@yahoo.com).

### ► San Vito Bird Club

A community based birding/nature group centered in the diverse southern zone of Costa Rica. We also facilitate nature education to local elementary schools through Cornell University's Bird Sleuth program. Twice monthly bird walks through the Wilson Botanical Garden and other sites are open to all; binoculars available as needed. Please visit our website: [www.sanvitobirdclub.org](http://www.sanvitobirdclub.org) or email: [eltangaral@gmail.com](mailto:eltangaral@gmail.com) for more information.

### ► Wine Club of Costa Rica

Social group. Monthly Meeting, Mainly Escazú Email: [costaricawineclub2017@gmail.com](mailto:costaricawineclub2017@gmail.com)

### ► Women's Club of Costa Rica

The oldest, continuously operating, philanthropic organization for English-speaking women in Costa Rica. The club is focused on serving community needs, particularly on children's needs. Along with its philanthropic fundraising activities, WCCR also hosts regular lunches, teas, and many special interest groups. Guests are welcome. Information and a calendar of events can be found at: [www.wccr.org](http://www.wccr.org).

### ► Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Open to men too. Meetings in English in Heredia, Spanish in San José, and English/Spanish in San Ramon. We work on peace and human rights issues. Call Mitzi: 2433-7078 or write us at: [mitzstar@gmail.com](mailto:mitzstar@gmail.com).

**Meeting times and dates are subject to change or suspension due to the coronavirus and Health Ministry mandates. Contact the club for further details.**

**NOTICE:** Club officers should review the contact information for their clubs and make sure it is up to date.

Send any changes or corrections to: [service@arcr.cr](mailto:service@arcr.cr) subject line; Club Corner, and post them on the the ARCR Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/ARCR123](https://www.facebook.com/ARCR123).

## (36) BUSINESS DIRECTORY

### Important dates in Costa Rica:

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2 August, Monday  
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15 August\*, Sunday  
Mother's Day  
National Holiday

24 August, Tuesday  
National Parks Day  
Observance

*Dates followed by \* indicate that an official day off will be taken the following Monday and is a paid day for Costa Rican workers.*

**Observance:** *If the date falls on a weekday, it is a paid day off for Costa Rican workers and will be celebrated on the actual date, not moved.*

All ARCR Seminars for Expats have been temporarily suspended due to COVID -19. Dates for future Seminars will be announced at a later time.

### Funniest One Liners

Dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish.

I thought I wanted a career; turns out I just wanted pay checks.

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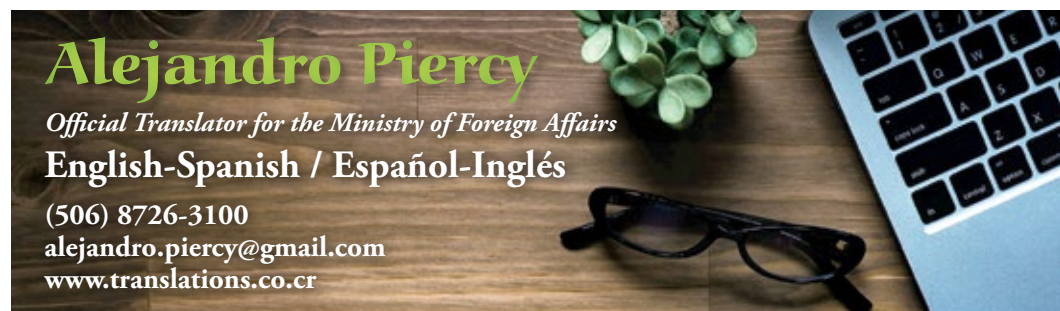


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