

## OPINION &amp; INSIGHTS

# Lessons from King Dezral – Part 1

AS I SEE IT



By Rahym R. Augustin-Joseph

King Dezral's triple crown — Power Soca Monarch, Calypso Monarch and Carnival Road March — stands as a powerful reminder to our Saint Lucian society.

It reminds us that when young people are given the opportunity, space and support to express their creative talents and skillsets, they become a potent force for national development and capable co-creators of society. With the right backing, they can represent their families, communities and Saint Lucia with pride and respect.

It reminds us that young people should not be seen as problems to be solved, but as active participants and solutions to the myriad challenges facing our country.

It also reminds us that, by virtue of their numerical strength and vitality, young people will inherit the future of Saint Lucia. They must therefore be critically embedded in the process of national development — as assets, not liabilities.

Dezral's wins echo the apt, albeit lengthy, words of Mario Michel, first president of the Saint Lucia National Youth Council, former Acting Chief Justice, and Deputy Prime Minister.

He said: "Young people have great capacity and sagacity in solving problems and resolving issues, when entrusted with the responsibility and equipped with the resources to do so... We must never allow the inability and irresponsibility of the few to shape the view of the many young people who are out there addressing not just the problems of youth, but the problems of society — often brought by persons beyond the age of youth."

Michel goes further, noting, perhaps even more relevantly, that: "Young people require opportunity, not charity. Because of crime and violence, where young people are both victims and perpetrators, we often believe they require sympathy or charity. But what they truly need are opportunities for self-development and self-actualisation — opportunities that would help reduce these issues."

Dezral's carnival victories also remind us, as young people, of a few indispensable and non-negotiable values for success. Chief among them is hard work. In an age of clickbait and instant gratification, social media may lead some to believe that success is overnight. But true achievement demands sacrifice and countless hours in the lab of success.

Though we witnessed only minutes of Dezral's stage performance, those moments were built on hours, days and weeks of preparation, largely unseen by fans, yet essential. These behind-the-scenes efforts are often more critical than the final performance itself and should never be overlooked. We must trust the process and remain committed to the work it requires.

Our media must tell and show these behind-the-scenes stories, especially for aspiring young people who may be misled by social media's obsession with 60-second highlights.

## Much of it beats the eye

Another pillar of success is dedication — a relentless commitment despite challenges and roadblocks along the way.

The entertainment and creative industries, by nature, spotlight the "final product", often obscuring the struggles artists like Dezral endure.

His wins remind us that each crown carries a story of perseverance through failure and adversity.

We must also remember the importance of passion — a deep love for our craft that fuels our enjoyment of the process and outcome, and allows us to see its value in inspiring and uplifting society. Passion is what sustains our pursuit of these aspirations, day after day.

Equally vital is a network of support. As Dezral reminded us in his Calypso Monarch song **Legacy**: "This season you will find me, Seon and Pep behind me, spitting lyrics like a snake."

No young person achieves their dreams alone. Family, friends, bandmates and mentors play a crucial role. Dezral's success is a testament to the power of cultivating and appreciating a strong support system.

Beyond this itemised menu of success, Dezral teaches us that siloed thinking — "this or the other", as TC Brown jokingly sang, "his flirting with kuduro" — is unwise. Success, governance, and life need not be confined to one genre or area of expertise. Dezral shows us that one can be both "jack and master" of many trades by using passion, hard work, and skill to contribute meaningfully across disciplines.

He proves that soca and calypso are not mutually exclusive. Like **Queen Shan Lucien**, Dezral demonstrates that his abundant talent can enrich both genres, each with its own aims, expectations and outcomes.

In **Car**, with **Jadel**, Dezral, like many soca artists, reveals the deeper philosophical and ideological layers of soca music. This is especially relevant given the dismissive attitude of some older members of society who reduce the genre to "bacchanal", "jump up", or "crude" entertainment. In truth, soca is liberation music — a release from the year's burdens, a moment to exhale.

But that doesn't mean it lacks meaning or message.

**Car**, with its double entendre and extended metaphors, is not about vehicles. It's about Clovis, the playful archetype of the neglectful Caribbean man, who is warned to care for his "car", a metaphor for a woman. Dezral urges him to wash, oil and lubricate — attend to her emotional and physical needs — or risk losing her to a more competent driver.

He sings: "One who will take the car and will not jar, 238 square miles, he going very far."

The new "owner" will show no remorse to the previous driver. Dezral warns: "Take care and watch your state deh, cause a man go scrap your ride and leave the plate there."

Dezral and Jardell cleverly link automobile maintenance, a source of pride for many men, to the care required in relationships. Though speaking to Clovis, Dezral addresses the wider male demographic, urging them to heed the warning: service your vehicle, fix the leaks and don't assume you're irreplaceable. Because if you ignore the signs, "Someone will jack your car, and you will cry, because you feeling you is top ting



Power Soca Monarch, Calypso Monarch and Carnival Road March King Dezral

and you iron man, but look another man coming to replace the bottom part."

Once the car is gone, it's not coming back. The new driver will give it the love and attention it deserves — all across Saint Lucia, especially in the honeymoon capital, Soufriere.

"Take care, watch your state deh, cause a man go take your ride and leave the plate there."

This layered wordplay, humorous on the surface yet socially critical, showcases the

satirical brilliance of soca. It exposes toxic masculinity and the often-overlooked labour of love and intimacy.

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