



## **A Good Book**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Often I am surprised when I hear someone say that they can't stand to be alone. I love to be alone. You see, I follow my aunt's theory. She used to say "A book is a good friend".

When I arrive at an airport, I head straight for the bookstore. Usually I know exactly what I am looking for because I have kept a list of topics or authors that have been recommended to me or been promoted on television programs. My "Wish list" on Amazon also holds the items that will form part of my next order.

I have hundreds of books - at my office, in the living room and on the bed. Some of them are manuals that lead me into the wonders of how I can enjoy features for new technology. As my own tutor, I can learn to set up "favourites" on my big-screen TV, download pictures from my camera or set up speed dial on my telephone.

Some books bring understanding of topics that help me with my career. I read about treatments for disorders, business ideas or leadership traits.

My health is improved by books that promote good lifestyle and nutritious eating.

I learn about other cultures and countries through books. Preparation for trips is easy and reminiscing enhanced through reading.

Sometimes I choose a novel as an escape and am transported into fascinating stories involving crime, romance or integral plots.

My favourite books, however, are the biographies that tell the tale of individuals who have overcome life's problems and strived to improve our world.

I always learn something from the experiences of others and frequently write to the authors to thank them or discuss a specific topic. This week I received an email reply from Dee Dee Myers who wrote "Why Women Should Rule the World". Last night I accepted Lee Iacocca's invitation to contact him about his latest best seller entitled "Where Have All the Leaders Gone?" Authors want to hear from their audience and usually reply to those who make contact.

There is an old expression that claims "Use it or lose it". This is definitely true. After convocating with my doctoral degree, I found it difficult to read a book from the beginning to the end. I was so used to treating books like reference manuals which were consulted for specific chapters or even paragraphs in search of quotes. I had to re-train myself to read from page one right through to the end and that took patience.

I strongly believe that if you can read - you can do anything. Universities base their programs on the theory that if you spend 10,000 hours on a topic you become an expert. Imagine what would happen if you read about any topic for 10,000 hours. There is no doubt you would become an expert in that area.

A few years ago, my daughter-in-law told me a story that impressed me. My grandson's teacher told the class that she would give them a party once every person in the class had completed reading a specific number of books. The furthest thing from Justin's mind or desire was to read. He was a boy's boy who much preferred to play trucks in the dirt.

Well, time was running out and Justin was the second from the bottom when it came to completing the reading task. His mother was worried because she couldn't seem to motivate him.

Then something interesting happened. His classmates began pressuring him. Justin starting bringing books home from school. He stated, with mixed urgency and frustration, that he HAD to read the books so that the class could be rewarded with the party.

With each book, Justin's reading skills improved and as they improved he began to enjoy reading. It didn't take long until he had completed his reading assignment and the class all celebrated at the promised party!

I marvel at the wisdom that Justin's teacher applied. She set up a goal with specific tasks and offered an incentive for her students. The result was that each one of them increased their skills and began to realize that the world was open for them to learn about anything they wanted to learn. All they had to do was open a book and begin reading!

My aunt was right. A book is a good friend. And the added bonus is that if you can read - you can learn anything!