



## **Are You Worried?**

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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Over the past months there has been a great deal of fear and confusion associated with the COVID-19 and how legislators are dealing with it. Some parts of the world are completely locked down by government officials while others have had very few restrictions. Mixed messages abound regarding the importance of wearing masks and taking shots. Some medical officials state these are vital while others claim they are experimental and even dangerous

The media is quick to offer statistics and also to threaten consequences for those who do not comply with recommendations. “Talking heads” who dominate twenty-four-hour television often speculate or offer opinions that are not based on fact. These can increase confusion for listeners.

Balancing health and the economy is a teetering endeavor. Many small business owners such as restaurateurs were financially jeopardized by the lockdowns and now, because of government subsidies are finding it difficult to hire employees. Some businesses will not recover.

On the other hand, pockets of the economy have done well. The trades have been busy because many have invested what would have been travel funds into renovations. Increased sales and problems with being able to supply products has resulted in escalating prices. Think about the cost of lumber, for example.

And the way that services are delivered has made a drastic shift. Companies with employees who began working from home have created ways to do that more efficiently. The result of using the internet rather than personal shopping or face-to-face interaction has changed the world. In fact, some industries will likely not go back to the way things were done a couple of years ago as large numbers of employees and customers prefer the new formats.

Things are not the same and most people become upset when they don't feel that they have choice or control. Negative moods are escalated when they hear predictions of gloom and doom. Some lose sleep and others become so anxious that they can't enjoy their day. It's worry, worry, worry – about things that haven't even happened yet.

If you are feeling distraught, consider the following:

1. Don't believe everything you hear – There are so many messages being thrown at you that you need to stop the noise. Turn off the television!
2. Do some research – Take responsibility by gathering information before making decisions. You might be surprised by what you can learn on your own!
3. Avoid arguments – It is not up to you to convince others that you have all the answers or to allow others to force their opinions on you. Change the subject and stick with neutral topics of conversation.
4. Focus on your tasks – Do your job, complete your assignments, volunteer, learn new skills, strive for excellent parenting. Do not get distracted by the chaos.
5. Watch your self-talk – Say what you want and not what you don't want.
6. Practice self-care – Get enough rest, nutritious food, exercise, water, and fun.

7. Slow down – Never act on rumor or impulse. What you are told is necessary today might reverse course in the near future.

Finally consider the wise words of Mark Twain who said: “I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened.”