



## **Be Well-Seasoned in Your Life**

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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I've loved food my whole life. I love buying groceries, looking at weekly flyers and taste testing new recipes. I love restaurants and invitations to friends' for dinner and eating at home. I love lunch and dinner but mostly I love snacks. Ice cream cones, cookies, cheese cake, pies, rice pudding, chocolate covered almonds, muffins, O Henry bars... Yes, I love food ... and the Food Channel. The trouble is that every show seems to feature a chef who loads their recipes with everything that my doctors (and common sense) warn me against - like sugar, butter, salt and various types of cream.

One of the things that I have learned about cooking from the Food Channel though is the importance of seasonings. Frequently the host of the program uses home-grown vegetables, spices and herbs to give flavour to their cuisine. Garlic, onions, rosemary, thyme, lemon, or cilantro are added to the bland to bring life and interest for the diner. The term "season" has a number of meanings. We offer "season's greetings" at Christmas, think of the changing seasons and even describe someone who is experienced as being "well-seasoned". My friend, Carla, sent me an electronic birthday card this year that featured jazzy music, flashing graphics and a food theme. It suggested that we should "be well seasoned", "peppery", "salt of the earth" and not bland or lumpy. It even went so far as to recommend that we "Don't turn into comfort food - easily managed and twice as tasteless".

Sometimes people in our lives or our experiences change our true essence through criticism or unrealistic demands. Frequently my clients tell me that they just don't know themselves anymore or are tired of trying to live up to everyone's expectations. They have lost their seasoning and don't seem to think they can recover until they leave home, finalize a divorce, or move to a different job or city. Seasoning has to be done in a way that enhances the result but taste is based on individual preference. You cannot season to please others and always find that life gives a bad taste in your own mouth. Being well seasoned every season of your life requires understanding of yourself, what season you are within and the options that you have to spice it up.

Psychologists help individuals to analyze themselves and problem-solve so that they can make good choices. They don't choose the seasoning or the amount but they definitely help you to create a pleasing and unique flavour for your life. Bon appetit!