



Begin With a Plan

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

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There are very few things in life that you cannot learn or do better. Perhaps you always wanted to play a musical instrument or become a good cook. Maybe you wish you had a different career or could speak another language. You might be thinking about developing a hobby or building new friendships. Maybe there is something that you want to stop doing - like hoarding, drinking too much or living in financial recklessness.

Spending years worrying or feeling dissatisfied just doesn't make sense, especially when we live in a world that has so many opportunities available if we just reach out and grab them.

There is the good news! You can achieve your goals. First you have to be willing to invest some time and thought into creating a plan that will help you to reach success.

Here's the formula that will get you on track quickly:

1. Write your goal in one sentence - Putting your ideas to pen and paper make them real. Clearly state what you want to accomplish and make sure that you state a date for completion - otherwise it is merely a wish.
2. List the barriers that might interfere with your progress. Knowing weaknesses will help you to address and overcome them. Perhaps you are lacking in skills, time or support. Remember we all have 24 hours a day and can choose what we will do with them. You can use a portion to develop expertise in the area that you have chosen.
3. Find and access resources - The Internet, public library and College will open up your world by offering you tips, skills and experts. It is surprising how just one book, course or conversation can give you insight and valuable tools.
4. Create a schedule - Good things take time. You will need to be realistic. If you plan to do too much you might feel overwhelmed and give up. On the other hand, doing too little will not push you to move forward and you could lose motivation.
5. Find supports - A mentor or like-minded individuals who will keep you accountable and inspired. I remember years ago when I wanted to learn how to make perogies. Time flew by as an older experienced German lady taught me how to put together over 200 of them in an afternoon.
Mmmmmm
6. Take action - Every day take one step towards your goal. Over the course of a year you will then be 365 steps ahead of where you were. For example, I invest a few minutes daily on Spanish software. I am definitely not fluent but my knowledge is increasing.
7. Rest and Celebrate - Take breaks. Plan fun. Pat yourself on the back. After taking some French night classes a few years ago, I decided to see if I could survive in that language. I booked a trip to Quebec City. I survived! This not only gave me a wonderful way to celebrate my learning but also increased my confidence.

Remember, when you fail to plan you are planning to fail.

It's time to stop thinking about what you can't do and to start planning how you can learn to do them.