



# Christmas Expectations!

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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A few years ago, I travelled to Vancouver to take some voice lessons from Juno nominee, Kate Hammett-Vaughan. The first evening we didn't sign a note. Instead we sat in her living room and drank tea while we talked.

I had a journal with me and wrote down every word that this woman said.

At a later date, I repeated back to her, some of the things she had told me and we were both surprised by the fact that she hadn't remembered saying them.

One of the things that most influenced me, however, was when Mr. Hammett-Vaughan stated "You are never disappointed unless you have expectations". Wow! This is so true.

Christmas is a time when we tend to leave our "normal" routine and move into a time in which our expectations are increased.

We send Hallmark cards that show happy families sitting at a table graced by a perfect turkey dinner. Our children openly express hopes that they will receive gifts that they covet. Everyone looks forward to having all family members join together in a harmonic bond.

Well, reality and fantasy do not usually align. Families experience emotional and geographic distance which often prevents them from sharing the Christmas spirit portrayed in seasonal movies. Financial stress or practicality interferes with children having their "wish list" fulfilled. Serious illness or pain can steal the joy and redirect the focus of those who are victims.

Christmas is not a magical time that lifts us from our problems and elevates us to a place of safety from everyday stress. It is bigger than a school and business holiday but smaller than a spell that brings perfection to every scene.

As we approach Christmas, I believe that we need to keep two things in mind. First of all, we celebrate Christmas because of the birth of Christ. Secondly, we are never disappointed unless we have expectations.

My prayer for you this Christmas is that you move your focus from any expectations for friends, family, gifts or traditions that you might otherwise have. Instead, focus on the fact that Christmas is actually a birthday party for someone who truly loves you.

Have a peaceful and joyful Christmas where the real party is actually in your heart!