



## **Christmas Resolutions - No Regrets This Year**

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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After all of the glitter and excitement is over do you ever have regrets? Do you promise yourself that next year will be different? Well, before we get too far into December, let's think about how you can prevent that from happening again:

1. I spent too much - Set up a realistic budget and make a firm commitment to stick with it. Make a list of everyone you will buy gifts for and the amount that you will spend. Keep your emotions at bay. The newborn really doesn't care if you even buy a gift so keep that in mind when you are shopping. You don't have to compete with anyone. It is the thought that counts and if others don't believe this then it is their problem. Homemade gifts are often less expensive and greatly valued but you have to start now if you are planning to go that route!

2. I ate too much - Out of sight and out of mind. It is far easier to be tempted if you have the food in your line of vision. Don't use Christmas as an excuse to be unreasonable or allow others to guilt you into eating. If you are going out to an event, a little snack beforehand will help you to feel more in control. And don't forget to add extra walks to help burn off the extra calories and give you a feeling of well-being.

3. I drank too much - How many drinks until you don't care? That's too many. If you think you shouldn't be driving then you have probably crossed the line. When you can't remember what happened - you blew it! Often those who protest that they don't have a drinking problem will readily admit that they have problems in relationships, with the employer or the legal system and that an alcohol was a factor. If you had an accident how many drinks would you think is acceptable for the attending physician to have had before s/he treated you? Try limiting your alcohol intake to a maximum of three drinks. Enjoy the evening and then leave before your friends are so inebriated that they don't make sense.

4. I didn't give enough - The word 'enough' is subjective. Choose a charity or person who will appreciate the fact that you made an effort. Giving doesn't always involve writing a cheque. Try volunteering and giving some of your time to do a chore for someone who can't do it on their own. Visit with a person who is lonely. Share a smile. Open a door for someone. Also, remember that giving is a year-long opportunity and you don't have to wait for the Christmas season to participate.

5. I was too busy to enjoy it - Well, who were you trying to impress? Perhaps your "to do" list was not realistic. Maybe you have allowed others to take advantage of your kindness. Do you really need to serve three salads and six deserts? Think "team". When someone offers to bring something or help, accept that with gratitude. And if they don't offer, ask! You have control of your calendar so if you are too busy then look in the mirror.

6. I couldn't handle the conflict - Wow! Unless you are living in a war zone it just doesn't make sense to invest time and energy into arguments, attacks or retaliation. Plan your days so that you aren't facilitating, encouraging or negotiating problems. Just because it is Christmas, doesn't mean that all your dreams will come true or that people will suddenly change and get along. Put up your boundaries, plan healthy exits and lower your expectations.

This year and will be different if you are determined to make it better and take the necessary steps to implement positive change.