



# Creativity - Do You Use It?

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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Many of my clients over the years have expressed concern about finances and wished they could relieve their debt burdens. But compounding interest and late fee penalties make the goal more and more unreachable.

Recently I watched some episodes from a British show entitled "How to Live Mortgage Free". I was amazed at what was accomplished by those who were determined to improve their lives by eliminating their mortgage.

Some of those who were featured wanted to accomplish this in preparation for their retirement. Others were younger. One couple set and reached their debt-free status before they were thirty years of age.

The ideas they used included renovating abandoned structures such as a barn, church or office. One couple didn't want to leave the house where they had raised their children so they sub-divided it into two houses and sold one. A young couple built their first home on the top of two trailer beds in a fashion that allowed them to move the whole thing at a later date if they desired.

A single father gutted and redesigned an Airstream trailer for himself and his daughter. An engineer turned a two-story bus into a home complete with elevator and mobile tracks so that his disabled wife could maneuver easily throughout.

One single mom told about how she reduced her mortgage from thirty years to eight by being thrifty and depositing the equivalent of twenty-five extra dollars at a time against the balance.

A couple who had lived on a boat for twenty-five years built a smaller one that was more affordable and then sold the first to pay off all their debt.

This series reminded me of the things that are needed in order to achieve success:

1. A goal. It must be clear and reasonable. All of the individuals in the show also had a realistic timeline for completion.
2. Sacrifice. It took many, many months and in some cases years of labour to complete the projects. Also, reduced square footage required down-sizing of possessions.
3. Skills. Many learned how to build as they went, but some had carpentry, engineering, or sewing expertise before they started.
4. Money. The people involved needed a place to stay while they were preparing their new homes. The initial costs for purchasing land, structures or materials were paid with savings or at least one continuing to work for income.
5. Research. Many of the homes were built with second-hand fixtures and designed after study of magazines and examples of projects completed by others.
6. Consulting. Asking for advice from people who have expertise was a key element of the projects.
7. Creativity. Small spaces were used wisely to accommodate the residents who were moving in.

If you are struggling with financial issues, perhaps you could adopt the above principles. You don't have to necessarily pay off your mortgage but you could significantly improve your financial situation!