



Focus So You Save Time and Money

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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I remember a few years ago when a client told me that his garage was a huge mess. When he needed a screwdriver it was easier to just go to the store and buy a new one! His dream was to travel more but he didn't feel that he had the time or money to do so.

I challenged this man to set up a plastic tote with a label that said "Travel". The goal was to get the garage organized with things that he really needed. Every time he came across a duplicate tool or item while cleaning up, he was to throw it into the tote. The task became "fun" for him and the job didn't take nearly as long as he had expected.

The tote filled quickly. Some of the items he found were still in packages and could be returned to the store. Others were sold privately and used to finance trips. The client stated that he gained so many benefits from this exercise. He was more organized, had extra funds and most importantly felt like he was in control of a life that had previously felt overwhelming for him.

The other night I was thinking about this when I looked at my in-basket. We have spent several weeks completing renovations and moving into our new office so things had piled up. I had been losing time during the workday while trying to find certain documents and frankly was just tired of it. So, I made up my mind to stay at the office until everything in the basket was addressed.

I started by sorting everything into piles. I shredded as much as possible during the task and was rewarded by the feeling that I was making progress!

Things that had been dealt with but needed filing also emptied the basket significantly.

Training and upcoming events were put in a pile of their own so that I could enter them on the calendar.

Bills and financial documents that needed attention were put together. There were lots of things that I need to talk with my son about and some that I needed advice or help with. A sticky note for each outlined the topic of concern.

It took almost four hours to get to the bottom of the basket but, by the time I arrived there, I was feeling really good. Seldom do I ever get to a place where I have such an administrative marathon. But as I left the office I was already looking forward to the next business day.

Are there things in your life that need your attention? I think that you would be very surprised about how much you could get rid of if you just invested some time and effort.

What does your office look like? Do you have a closet that is needing organization? What about your car, garage or garden shed?

I remember once hearing someone say that if you have a box in storage and you can't name what is in the box, you probably do need what is inside. If you haven't worn an item for over a year, you likely won't wear it again.

People often keep things because they think that they might need it "someday". Perhaps you could give or sell them to someone who needs them today.

This week think about ways that you can save time and money by simplifying your life.