



## Focus to Reach Goals

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)

### Published

December 28th, 2017

I have a client who faithfully goes to the gym three times a week. He told me that he is surprised at the lack of focus of others who are "working out" at the same time. Some of them are so busy looking at their phones that their speed is significantly reduced. Others may doddle or use some of their time visiting so they don't use their time wisely.

My client wants to ensure that his workouts are effective for him and has therefore developed a strategy for boosting his productivity. He deliberately wears a sweatshirt with a large hood that he can pull up around his face. Having only a small opening forces him to focus straight ahead in a manner that is similar to a horse that is wearing blinders. By doing this, he is not distracted by things around him so can invest all his attention and energy on his exercise program. By the time his workout is completed, the sweatshirt is dripping wet and he feels both physical and emotional satisfied.

When the client leaves the gym to drive home, he does the opposite. He doesn't wear a hood as he wants to ensure that there is nothing blocking his direct sight and peripheral vision. Safety is the goal.

I have been thinking about the wisdom of this man. He knows what he wants and then makes sure that he has set himself up for success.

So often in life, people state that they want to accomplish a goal but then keep moving the start date because of distractions. They think that procrastination will allow them a more suitable time for their project only to find that another life event interferes. Another delay. And another. Until time has passed and the dream dies.

There is no perfect time to begin. There will always be other things that fight for our time and attention. Time passes and we age. Whether we reach for our goals or put them off will determine whether we will feel regret or success.

Don't get lost in details or think that you need to proceed with break-neck speed. Small steps over time lead to big results. According to a NerdWallet Internet site, a 30-year-old who invests just \$21.00 per day at 6% will have a million dollars by retirement. If you reduced your calorie intake by 500 a week and burned another 500 a week with exercise you could lose two pounds a week or 52 pounds a year! Taking 30 university credits a year (which is usually just five full classes), you will have a degree in four years (with summers and holidays off).

What are the goals that you have been desiring but delaying? Do you want to clean and organize your closet? Would you like to fill the deepfreeze with nutritious meals? Have you been thinking about re-connecting with old friends? Are you wanting to learn a skill or break a habit?

Today is the best time to begin. Write your goal down on paper and set a reasonable date for completion. Do some research and set out small, daily steps that will lead you in the right direction. Then make a strong commitment. Follow the example of my client. Grab an emotional sweatshirt with a hood that you can use to block out the distractions and focus on the task ahead.