



Growing Strong and Beautiful

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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Every year I put a few pots of annuals on my condo's deck. The other day I was disappointed to see that a storm had blown off all the blossoms from my trailing petunias. They were lying on the deck and needed to be swept away. A couple of days later, however, it shocked me to realize that there were even more blossoms on the plants than before the storm!

All this got me to thinking about how our lives can be very much like container gardening. Each of us is a plant that needs the following;

1. Vessel or container – There are likely millions of choices when it comes to where you will grow. Our country of origin usually provides us with values, language and customs. Some of us are from large cities where populations are crowded together while others were raised in wide open spaces where there was lots of room to move. Choosing a container for your plants is similar. You might be unique and plant in an old shoe or jar. Perhaps you are into recycling and will use a plastic bottle. Maybe you will plant in a vertically designed fashion. Our containers provide character.
2. Soil – It is important for our roots to be fed with the right nutrients and fertilizers so that we can gain strength. The people in our lives are our mentors and we are not only students of them but also gain inspiration from their presence. Different plants also require different types of soil and nourishment in order to have the best growing advantage.
3. Protection – Insects, animals, and disease can harm our plants, so we need to ensure that they are safe from damage. Even the weather, which is necessary for growth can cause harm at times. Some plants do better in full sun while others thrive in shade. As parents, we need to ensure that our children are encouraged to grow but not placed in vulnerable settings where they will be stunted. The same applies to our own lives.
4. Routine Care – You can't just plant and water one time in a season and expect good results. Plants need sun, water and weeding on a regular basis. We also need to practice good self-care regularly like eating nutritious meals, getting enough rest and exercising. Like plants, we also need time outdoors with an appropriate amount of sunshine to do well.
5. Transplanting – Often plants grow quickly and need to be moved into a different setting or container because of this. We, as people, can find ourselves in the same situation. Perhaps it is time for a new job, a new home or even a new location. Prepare the move, give the roots a little shake and move forward with hope.

I remember a speech that my dad gave at my cousin's wedding. He said that we are plants in a flowerbed that allows us to grow separately but near each other. There are flowerbeds of different types throughout the whole world. Which one is best for you?

Each of us contributes to the beauty of this world's flower garden. You certainly can't fix all the other plants growing around you, but you can ensure that your bloom is strong and beautiful.

Maybe it is time to apply some of your gardening skills to your personal life.