



Give Until It Hurts!

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 get very confused when it comes to money.

We turn on the television and hear about high unemployment, recession and the fact that the global economy is threatening to collapse. We're told that there isn't enough money to fund programs, build schools and hospitals, or feed the poor. It seems really bleak.

But then, something happens that contradicts the negative outlook. Countries send manpower and extremely expensive equipment around the world to save a handful of trapped miners. North America funds wars in far off places that most people will never visit. Political parties invest billions of dollars in election campaigns. Where did all that money come from?

Even at a local level, we hear about how horrible the economy has been. At the same time, however, we witness long line ups for those who want to purchase lottery tickets, a packed hockey arena and enough alcohol and drug use to warrant police checkpoints. Seems like at least some people enjoy affluence.

A few years ago, I stood near Mayor Willie Brown on the San Francisco wharf as he gave a television interview. The eager reporter challenged him about the large numbers of people who had slept on the streets the previous night. Mr. Brown explained "We had 80 empty beds in shelters last night. We do not have a resources problem. We have an allocation problem".

It seems the same thing happened after Hurricane Katrina. Brand new trailers and supplies were sent to New Orleans but never got to the people who needed them.

Years ago, when my uncle was sent by the Canadian government to Ceylon, he asked why there were stacks of boxes filled with rotting food in the streets. He was told that the people would not accept it because each box had a bold stamp on the side indicating that the food was donated by the United States of America. Pride!

Some things just don't make sense!

As a child I remember the hosts of Saskatchewan's Tele miracle who would stand on stage and encourage the viewers to "Give until it hurts". It seemed like a strange expression to use but I guess they meant that sacrifice makes a difference to others who are in need.

Well there certainly are needs throughout the world. Starving children, homelessness, environmental pollution, lack of educational and health facilities, unemployment.

And each year we hear the Christmas message that it is better to give than receive.

Perhaps you can help to solve the allocation, organizational and pride problems that interfere with meeting the needs of others.

Why not do some of the distribution yourself? Take a hamper of food to a family that you know is struggling. Deliver homemade treats to the shut-ins. Offer a kind word to someone who is discouraged. Write a cheque for the homeless shelter. Purchase a toy for a child who might otherwise do without. Thank your employer for the work. Call someone you

haven't spoken to in a while. Carry a smile on your lips, a song in your heart and mistletoe in your pocket! You see, peace, love, joy and hope are all gifts that you can give to others today without having to depend on the government, economy, or an organization. I don't really like the term "random acts of kindness". Instead I prefer "deliberate acts of kindness". Make a commitment to yourself that you are going to be deliberate in your giving from now on! And give until it hurts!