



I'm Addicted!

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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Okay, I admit it. I have an addiction!

People have told me that I need help. I know that my time, energy and money are affected. My thoughts are focussed on getting my next “hit”. It doesn’t make sense to anyone – but me. Friends and family are worried. We have less and less to talk about outside of the enticing substance that has become my “first love” in the past few weeks.

I quickly drive home after work and as I put my key in the door, I race, with my takeout dinner in tow, to the bedroom. It is only minutes until I have the television blaring CNN announcements and the laptop booted up for the latest statistics.

I know you won’t believe it, but I’m addicted to the United States Presidential election

Now I know that I’m a Canadian and it shouldn’t matter to me, but I find myself sending emails to bloggers who haven’t got the facts quite right. My sister can’t believe it when I send her links to the music videos for “Obama Girl” and “Yes, We Can”. I can explain the differences between caucuses and primaries in detail or tell you exactly how the role of superdelegates might determine not only the person who will be the next President but also the future of the Democratic Party.

Sometimes I wake up in the night and just have to take a peek at the editorials that will run in the morning newspapers before returning to sleep. I can outline the various perspectives on white/brown/black issues or voting patterns based on gender.

The other night I even found myself thinking about taking holidays to travel to Washington DC for the January 20, 2009 inauguration ceremony.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language Fourth Edition defines addiction as: “*The condition of being habitually or compulsively occupied with or involved in something.*”

If this is true, then I am truly addicted!

I don’t know if this has anything to do with the fact that my uncle was a Member of Legislative Assembly for the Liberals while my grandfather was what was termed a “staunch Conservative” and my mother was campaigning for the New Democratic Party. Even though I had to be what is now called “politically correct” there is no doubt that I got the “bug”.

As a Certified Substance Abuse Expert, I regularly deal with individuals who have addictions to drugs or alcohol. Two of the criteria that help with assessment involve tolerance (where you need more for the same effect) and withdrawal (where you experience physical and psychological symptoms after usage is reduced or stopped).

The general election in the United States is scheduled for November. I therefore won’t be able to judge the effect that its end will have on me until then.

Like any addict, I have tried to keep this a secret but, after reading about the award-winning author John Grisham’s similar dilemma, I gained the confidence to disclose.

Well, this week our Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach announced a provincial election for March 4th. In my mind flashed a vision of sports fanatics who have two televisions going at the same time in order to watch games being played in different locations

Am I really going to go that far? Probably not. The system in Canada is much less complex and, after all, the Alberta contest will be over within a few days.

If you think that addiction is about drugs and alcohol, think again. There may be things you do that would cause others to think that you also have an addiction.

They claim that the first step to healing begins with awareness.