



## **Love Is Not Enough - You Need More**

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)

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Some people live with the idea that it is easier to ask forgiveness than permission. Their impulsive choices bring chaos not only into their own environment but also for others who care about them.

So often I witness sad situations involving the worldview that because you love someone you need to do whatever you can to make that person's life easier - even if they aren't willing to make good choices. The result is that you pay a price and the other person never has opportunity to learn because there just aren't any consequences for them.

A friend of mine who held a management position with the Alberta Justice system often would share nuggets of wisdom with me. I remember the day that he said, "When you are working harder than your client, you are working too hard". This also applies to the times that we work harder on the problems of family or friends than the person who is directly involved.

Have you been involved in:

1. Paying bills for another person when they are either not working or spending their money foolishly?
2. Telling lies or covering up for someone who isn't fulfilling their responsibilities?
3. Allowing another person to physically or verbally abuse you repeatedly?
4. Experiencing neglect when the person doesn't follow through on their promises?
5. Responding to manipulation or demands from someone who thinks you are the "unpaid help"?
6. Believing declarations that things will get better and the problem won't happen again (for the umpteenth time)?
7. Trusting that the other person will begin thinking and acting appropriately even when they have never done this consistently?
8. Cleaning up messy situations for someone else over and over again?
9. Ignoring your long-term needs and wants in sacrifice for someone's short-term crisis?
10. Losing sleep and feeling obsessed about things that you cannot change?

When I ask people why they continue to do things that aren't working with the hope of bringing positive change they frequently respond, "I love them". Well, love is not enough! We can't change other people. They change when life doesn't work for them anymore. Perhaps your actions done in the spirit of love are actually preventing them from facing the situations that will lead them to maturity. You can love them, but you need to know clearly where you stop, and they begin.

If you can identify with any of the things on the above list, you need to consider other options. You can learn how to establish healthy boundaries that will not only help you, but also help the other person to grow up! Meeting with a trained professional will give you the tools you need.

Have a "lovely" Valentine's Day!