



Navigating the Journey

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

Published

July 9th, 2021

One of the things that I was NOT looking forward to during my move to Calgary was driving in the big city. You see, Medicine Hat spoiled me by the fact that I could go pretty well anywhere in ten minutes without facing several lanes of speeding traffic.

So, after a couple of days in my new condo I was invited for an evening at the home of my daughter in Okotoks. Could I manage that? It might seem like a very trivial concern to the seasoned Calgarian but for me, it was a serious adventure.

There were several things that helped me along the way and as I was driving, I started to realize that the same techniques are ones that can help people through most aspects of life:

1. Have a destination – I had been to my daughter’s many times but usually arrived from the south. I did know the streets in Okotoks and therefore had a vision in my head of what the last few miles would be like. In life, we also need to have goals with a vision of where we want to be. Some can be short-term and others long-term but not having a goal means you likely won’t arrive at a place where you want to be.
2. Do some research – Looking at a map helped me to realize that I live in the south end of the city and just needed to go further south. The trick was going to be getting through the city streets and onto the right highway. It is also important in life to know what challenges we will face so that we can plan for them as there will be challenges!
3. Access expertise – Now this was a problem. I have a Cadillac that is seven years old, and the navigation system seems to be outdated. In fact, it doesn’t even recognize the area of Mahogany which is newly developed. Fortunately, I had a MAPS program on my iPhone so played both as I drove. They didn’t agree! You will find that people who call themselves experts might not be an expert of or for you. You need to be able to discern what experts you need.
4. Trust yourself – Somehow, I knew that I was in the wrong place. I parked the car, took a breath and studied the map again. Don’t ignore the “niggles” that you get deep inside at times. They are like warning lights on the dashboard that encourage you to relax and use your intuition. Taking a break can give you time to realize that you do know what to do.
5. Focus on your task – It can be quite disconcerting when you are in the middle of several lanes and traffic is whizzing by on either side. I kept reminding myself that I only needed to be in one lane at a time! I made sure that I followed the speed limit (even though most others didn’t), signaled, shoulder-checked and paid attention to risk. There are many distractions in the world but if you discipline yourself to stay on task, you will make progress.
6. Affirm yourself – During the drive I thought about what I had achieved and not what dangers might ensue. After all, I had driven to Idaho all by myself! I had driven many years without accidents. Confidence comes from remembering what you have already accomplished no matter what you are doing.
7. Stick with the basics – If you can read, you can do almost anything! Most highways have good signage and will direct you accurately. You don’t have to know everything to go on any journey no matter how complex. But you do have to be willing to read in order to learn strategies so you head in the right direction.
8. Celebrate – I made it to Okotoks! Lots of smiles and laughter. (And relief by my family who don’t want to have to chauffeur me everywhere).

Life is a series of journeys that move us forward. When we are afraid, we can become immobilized and miss out on blessings. On the other hand, if we are willing to follow the steps that I outlined, we will not only meet goals but also have wonderful stories to share with others.

Enjoy this week's journey!