



New Beginnings in Letting Go!

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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As we approach a new year, we hear numerous promotions by gymnasiums and weight loss programs. Financial planners encourage us to meet with them in order to develop a retirement plan. Retail stores invite us to purchase items at reduced prices. Everyone is after us to do more or accumulate more. I have decided to do less and get rid of things in the next year. I am determined to work fewer hours and simplify my business bookkeeping practices. If I use less paper, I will have less to shred one day. Renovating my office has resulted in three smaller rooms rather than two large ones and this has led me to moments of thoughtfulness in how to simplify the decorating. Fewer items mean less dusting.

Since moving to the condo two years ago, I have been in a process of eliminating excess. Finally, I have finished opening all the boxes! My theory is that when you find things that you forgot you owned; it means that you probably don't need them. Reduce, recycle, reuse. Garage sale enthusiasts claim, "One person's junk is another person's treasure". I usually can't be bothered with selling things but have been blessed to see the smiles on faces of staff at a local charity when I gave them a computer monitor and keyboard that was filling my closet. An "extra" bed and couch I didn't need are now being used in a home for immigrants. My home security system went to a friend whose daughter is a sleep-walker. Over Christmas I vowed NOT to buy any more wrapping paper or cards and used up leftovers from previous years. I've also been looking at jewelry and scarves with "new eyes" and having fun by using a little creativity to spruce up outfits. I'm challenging clients to see how long they can stay away from the grocery store by eating out of their cupboards and freezer. Why do we need to have enough food on hand to feed a small army? Try it and you will be surprised not only by the amount of money you save but also how interesting your menus can be.

Maybe it would make sense to let go of eating out and start packing a nutritious lunch to take with you. Over the last few months, I have been questioning everything I do to determine its value. Do I really need all those magazine subscriptions? How many email newsletters do I really want to receive a month? How are all the bank charges assessed - and do I really need so many services? I was getting six bills for telephone and internet services between the office and home. Now I have consolidated and only receive two - both of which can be received electronically rather than by mail.

One of my friends, George, told me the other night that he and his wife save all the written appeals from charities throughout the year and then review at the end of the year. That way he can identify the duplication and make intelligent decisions about their giving. This next year I am not going to be trapped into doing and getting more. I am focused on getting rid of things. Like photographs of people I don't remember or recipe books that I never use or pillows. Where did I get all the pillows? We all begin in a crib and then spend years surrounding ourselves with material items. Then we end up in a crib. That means that we need to get rid of a lot of things. I don't want to wait for to the last moment. I'm starting now. What do you need to let go of and get rid of? Is it a bad habit, a relationship, a piece of furniture or something else? The next year lies ahead of us. Now is the time to make some good choices about letting go.