



Noticing Positives

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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We are living in a world that can be scary and full of unknowns. Never before has there been anything exactly like the COVID-19 pandemic that has been terrorizing the entire world. Governments have followed recommendations of researchers and health experts in ways that have changed our entire lifestyles. At the same time, however, I have noticed that there are many, many positives that are occurring every day.

Following are some of the things that people tell me they have been enjoying:

1. Time - Being required to respect physical distancing and working from home for those who can, has allowed us much more time to pursue interests. Instead of having to attend meetings or appointments and drive children to events we can pursue other personal interests. Many people are investing the extra hours saved in hobbies, learning a language, reading, or exercising.
2. Money - A large portion of the population have less money coming into the household but those who are on fixed incomes have told me that they are spending less than they did previously. Some of this, of course, is because businesses such as beauty shops and retail outlets are closed but being at home also means that there seems to be less interest in spending money. The government has been trying to fill the gaps with financial programs and we are also watching the stock market with the hope that it will rebound over time. It seems that everything we were used to has shifted.
3. Skills - Being at home provides more opportunities to learn and use skills. Many family members are cooking and baking, renovating, starting seedings, doing their own hair or sewing - practical skills that our ancestors used for everyday survival. Before the pandemic our busy schedules often would encourage us to turn to others to do the things that we are now doing ourselves.
4. Relationships - More time with those who live in your home can be positive - a time to communicate and share activities. Fortunately, we have social media sites and technology that allow us to stay close to loved ones who are living at a distance. Close proximity can also be stressful though and it is therefore important to schedule "alone" time.
5. Reflection - Facing difficulties can led to assessment and realignment of values. When we are in isolated situations, we begin to think about what is really important in life. Most recently the ideas of health and loved ones top the list.

I know that there are many challenges that have been brought on by the pandemic. One of the most serious is that we do not have any clear idea about exactly how it will affect us and when it will end. It is therefore very important to drastically limit the input from television and internet as these can significantly increase stress. Instead focus on the things that you can do that will make today and your future more satisfying.

And remember to laugh as often as possible for laughter is good for the soul!