



O Canada

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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Often, I hear Canadians complain about our country and it not only surprises me but also throws me into a more pronounced form of patriotism. Although I have always been proud of my homeland, my feelings in this regard have strengthened over the years

Spending dozens of unscheduled hours in airports because of weather conditions reminds me that we are not constantly facing the havoc which tornadoes or tsunamis have brought to other countries. We do not have to leave our houses because of cyclical problems such as “hurricane season” or unexpected crises including earthquakes. Our country is not threatened by flooding that would destroy all of our material possessions and steal the lives of family members in a matter of hours.

We do not experience civil war or the revolts that arise following unfair elections, assassinations or other political upheavals. Similar conditions in Iraq and Iran are incomprehensible to us. Here we choose who will lead the country and then hold them accountable when they don’t meet our needs – all without fear of reprisal.

Our water systems are pure, and we can, in fact, choose from either drinking from the faucet or from bottles containing any number of domestic or imported flavours. We swim in filtered water for the pleasure of it. There is no danger of us dying from malaria, typhoid fever or other illnesses that thrive in conditions of impurity.

Hunger is a feeling that we seldom experience. It can be reduced or eliminated in moments by opening the door of a packed refrigerator or driving through a chain which produces extensive menus boasting “fast food” options. Rather than scrounging for food – we often throw it away! When there is a shortage of rice in the world, we are not worried like the poor in Africa who only have rice in their diet.

We choose the type of transportation that suits our lifestyles and never hesitate to “trade up” long before our vehicles are not functioning properly. Instead of walking like the majority of the population in India, we have several vehicles, each in its own garage – and then complain about the price of gas.

We do not watch our children die in our arms because there is no medication or health care as they do in Afghanistan. Instead, we are upset when we have to wait in the emergency room for a couple of hours or learn that some medications are not covered by our drug plans.

If the electricity is off – even for a few short hours - we complain to City Hall and write Letters to the Editor.

We become upset with the interest rates for credit cards that allow us to buy things we don’t need (to impress people we don’t like). We attack teachers who demand performance and criticize the Court system for taking too long to try cases.

Although we have the freedom to choose where, and if, we will worship in an organized setting, we trash the pastor and critique the choir. In fact, even when we take the opportunity to access community resources or counselling services, we find fault.

I love the fact that I can own my home, drive a vehicle wherever I choose, plan a vacation, talk with family or friends, enjoy fine cuisine, dress attractively, express my opinions, enjoy a good book, pray or semi-retire when I choose - all in a country that values peace and offers “the good life” to its people.

When someone asks me where I am from, I smile broadly, look them in the eye and proudly state “I’m from Canada”.

Why wouldn’t I be patriotic? We’ve got it made!