



## One Country

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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I have learned that no matter where we go in the world, Canadians are welcomed. We have a good reputation of being kind, honest, and peace-loving. In fact, there is a silly joke about how Canadians are so nice that we apologize even when it isn't our fault!

Unfortunately, I have noticed that the pandemic has created fear and confusion which frequently threatens our unity. Family members are upset with each other when they don't share the same opinions. People out in the public are being stared at or shouted down by complete strangers. Even our leaders and health officials are at odds regarding how we should or could deal with COVID-19. The result has been even more fear and confusion.

Recently my grandson was thrilled when his province removed all restrictions. This allowed him to send out 150 wedding invitations. The ceremony is to be held in a border city. On one side of the street will be people who are under strict rules and on the other side of the street will be wedding guests with no restrictions! How crazy is that?

The confusing part of the rules is that they just don't seem to make sense! Some professionals state one thing and others state another. The scientists have different or changing opinions and even the politicians have varying ways of assessing and reducing risk.

The saddest thing for me is to see how people become so passionate about their opinions that they allow them to jeopardize their relationships. One group wears masks, respects social distancing, takes the job and is angry when others don't do the same. A second group believes their rights are being stolen and ignore all the "rules". Some publicly protest against the very things that the first group promotes. Then there is a third group that is passionate about following the rules but secretly breaks them by exceeding social interaction limits. They ignore political guidelines because they just want to see friends or family or feel that a vacation is in order.

So many clients and friends have told me about how they feel pressured and stressed by loved ones who want them to adopt the same opinions that they have.

Over the years, I have experienced many occasions when individuals are at odds with others, but I don't think I have ever seen such antagonism and division. People are separating themselves from others and allowing anger to fracture harmony that was previously treasured.

We live in a country that was built through hard work and cooperation. Our goals were similar. We wanted a good future for ourselves and our families.

Unfortunately, we seem to have forgotten the fact that each person has free will and can make personal choices. Shaming others because they do not agree with you does not improve the situation and, in fact, can lead to resentment. Promoting the rules and then breaking them is plain hypocrisy. You can ask good questions and provide information but then you need to let it go!

Once again, we are on the threshold for celebrating another Canada Day. Let's go back to the values on which we built and maintained this country – peace, respect, honesty and

unity. And remember that even in troubled times we had faith that in the future things would work out.

Sorry if I offended you (see I am Canadian who apologizes even if I haven't done anything wrong!)

Happy Canada Day, everyone!