



# **One Step At a Time - Making Change**

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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Years ago, I attended a seminar where Zig Ziglar was the main speaker. I remember his session on goal setting when he talked about how his doctor told him that he had to lose weight.

Zig stated that the first day he was only able to run to the mailbox. The next day he ran past the mailbox to the nearest telephone pole. And so, his program continued until he was actually running five miles a day. His weight was dropping significantly, and his health was improving.

Many people make the mistake of going to a gym or over-exercising to the point that they are in pain and quickly lose their motivation.

It is the same thing with other issues in life. Success usually is less painful to grasp if we make a plan that involves taking small steps.

When my aunt and uncle were planning to move from their five-bedroom house into a condo, my aunt set a personal goal of getting rid of one thing every time that she left the house. She knew that w a year that would result in having at least 365 less items. One step at a time.

My dad used to say that it is a good idea to take twenty dollars on each payday and put away somewhere that only you know about. Over a year, at two pay cheques a month that would result in a saving of four hundred and eighty dollars.

It took me thirteen years to get my first degree because I had to work while studying. One course at a time, one semester at a time. Now I have four degrees!

You don't need to be a dynamo to make positive change in your life. Just adopt the following formula:

1. Choose an area that you want to improve. Is it your health, your environment, or your financial situation? Perhaps you want to learn a skill, build stronger relationships or save for a holiday.
2. Write down your goal. A goal is a dream with a deadline. Plan to accomplish something that in a realistic timeframe.
3. Develop a plan that will allow you to reach the goal by taking achievable daily steps towards it.
4. Position a calendar in a place where you will view it so that you are reminded of your commitment and can keep yourself accountable.
5. Every day put a checkmark or an X on the calendar to mark your progress.
6. Forgive yourself if you need to draw an X. Tomorrow is a new day and a new start.
7. Share your plan and progress with people who will regularly encourage you.
8. Celebrate your success!

Goal setting is more than just talking about what you wish. It requires strong commitment and action, even when the going gets tough.