



## **Personal Choices in a World of Chaos**

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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In the first week of January 2020 I became extremely ill from “something”. My symptoms, which evidenced primarily between my chin and my waist were highly unusual and I didn’t believe that I had ever experienced anything so horrible in my life. It was strange because I had been faithful in taking my vitamins, had my flu shot and made sure that I always followed through with medical checkups for dental, physical and vision.

My first response when I got sick was to follow health practices of the past which I had used for years to fight illness. I went to bed, drank plenty of fluids and took medication for fever. By the sixth day, however, without any relief and concern that I had lost my voice, I went to see the family physician who I have trusted for years. He immediately had me do a lung x-ray to determine if I had pneumonia and provided me with a prescription to reduce the coughing. Two days later he told my son and me that he had never seen me so ill. He stated that this could last for another two weeks and that it might take much longer than that to return to full health. He was right!

Shortly afterwards, the world began receiving warnings about the COVID-19 for global citizens. I definitely fit into the higher risk category due to my age and the fact that I have had pneumonia three times and a pulmonary embolism. I hadn’t been tested for this new virus but highly suspected that it might have been the cause of my January illness.

I got better and now when people ask, “How are you?” I reply “Tickety boo!” while offering my biggest smile.

This has been an extremely unusual year for every country in the world and I am definitely not the only one who has been affected. We have all been inundated with confusing statistics, mixed messages, and no timeline for recovery. I don’t get caught up in the chaos. I know that I need to protect my physical and mental health and doing so begins with turning off the television. You see, twenty-four hours of “opinion” can raise anxiety.

Each day I make sure that I eat nutritiously, get enough rest and continue doing activities that are interesting. I buy the things I need through online and in person shopping. I give thanks for a wise City Council who recognize that the number of individuals infected in our city is low and we therefore do NOT need to have mandatory laws for wearing masks.

My work schedule is filled with helping clients by video conferencing or telephone to deal with issues they are facing. My goal is to help them use common sense and healthy choices to focus on today, reduce fear and stay calm.

Even though I am slightly more diligent than in the past about washing my hands and keeping a wise distance from other people, I do not allow this to prevent me from interacting with friends and family on a regular basis.

I pay my bills on time (fortunately not needing to defer anything), continue trying to improve my French through tutoring and international membership in a group of like-minded individuals. I use the internet for research and entertainment.

As a psychologist I understand the importance of having good mental health know that mind and body affect each other.

I do not have a clear diagnosis for what attacked me in January but that doesn't really matter. I know that this wasn't the first or last time I would be ill. Time and rest led to full recovery despite my risk vulnerability.

Yes, the world has changed and there are so many chaotic changes and situations that we have not previously experienced. We definitely can't change the whole world, but the good news is that we can make some good choices at a personal level to maintain our health.

What are you doing each day to keep your mind and body functioning well?