



## **Perspective Helps to Turn Trouble into Good Choices**

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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Recently there have been a number of tragedies and horrible events that have traumatized individuals at national and international levels. September 11th is burned into the minds of all those old enough to have comprehended the implications. The hurricanes in Louisiana last year shocked us. Deaths of world icons such as Princess Diana and the Pope threw citizens around the world into the grief. Medicine Hat has recently experienced a triple murder that has become a media focus throughout North America. I have been asked to do radio talk shows, newspaper and television interviews as well as presentations because of this. My goal is to help people who are trying to make sense out of the situation and deal with the personal impact on their own lives.

The first thing that I remind people is to not make assumptions about any situation. No one knows all of the details from any tragedy and it is very important that speculation not occur as it can easily lead to gossip that exacerbates the situation further. Secondly, it is important to remember that even at the same time as tragedies are happening there are positive activities and achievements throughout the world. In fact, even those who are involved in the rescue and recovery process can be symbolized as bearers of hope. Thirdly, allow yourself and your loved ones to grieve in whatever healthy way possible. Grief involves experiencing strong emotions including fear, anger and sadness.

Many worry that a similar tragedy may happen to them. This can lead to examination of one's own mortality. Some people may try to protect those who they love but frequently with exaggerated behaviors. Shock and denial may force others into a form of immobilization. Look after yourself and your family as you experience thoughts, feelings and behaviours associated with grief. Fourthly, seek out resources to help you. Tragedy allows us to examine our lives, identify our weaknesses and then learn to deal with them.

We tend, in Canada, to think of our communities as small, friendly and safe places. Usually, they are but when a tragedy occurs we can lose sight of that. Keeping things in perspective allows us to replace fear with faith and weakness with strength. We can adopt unhealthy living patterns or experience growth - the choice is ours.