



Preparing for Life

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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My eighteen year old grandson graduated from high school this year and was fortunate to be hired by a large cement company. His hitch is fifteen days in Kindersley followed by seven days off. This is the first time that Andrew has been far from home for several days at a time. He states that he likes the job but gets lonely. Salary and benefits are amazing. His daily food allowance, for example, is almost as much as his wage was when he previously worked part-time in the grocery store.

My daughter has committed to helping her son. She is training him to prepare his meals in advance so that he can save money while enjoying the taste of home-cooked favourites. Andrew is learning about shopping for groceries and supplies, following recipes and ensuring that food storage is safe. He is not only gaining practical skills but is also developing awareness of the effort required to prepare two weeks of food at a time. His reward is Shepherd's Pie, Chicken Casseroles, Sloppy Joes, Egg burritos, Meatballs and other delicacies while his co-workers go through drive-throughs every night.

Autumn is an important time of preparation. Gardens are reaped and produce is canned or processed for freezing. Vehicles are winterized and heavier clothing pulled out of storage. Some get ready for Halloween while others begin Christmas baking and shopping.

But there are many other ways of preparing so you can enjoy organization, peace and fun in your life:

1. Get a handle on your financial situation. Do you have a written budget that outlines all your income and expenses for a year? Have you made efforts to reduce your monthly bills? Is your Income Tax filed? Do you have a retirement plan?
2. Right a wrong. Perhaps you owe someone an apology. Have you done something that keeps you awake at night? What are your regrets and how can you eliminate them?
3. Begin a program. Do you need to improve your education? Maybe you want to deal with an addiction that has been causing problems. Weaknesses can be improved or eliminated with some support and commitment.
4. Help someone in need. Invest in causes that will improve the lives of others. Share.
5. Simplify. We all start out in a crib and end up in a crib. In between we tend to surround ourselves with "stuff". What can you get rid of to make your life easier?
6. Write your will. When you haven't made a written plan, those who are left will have problems. Delaying only raises the risk.
7. Set some SMART goals. Make sure you have objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely.
8. Learn a new skill. Perhaps being able to speak a little Spanish will enhance your vacation in Mexico. You can fill what might be lonely hours and create gifts by learning a craft. Skills make life easier and more fulfilling. What would you love to master?
9. Focus on health. Are you eating nutritiously, engaging in exercise and managing stress well? Do you laugh every day? If not, why not?
10. Build your legacy. What do you want others to remember you for? Is there a value or trait that you hold dear? What can you do to inspire and motivate others?

Every day can be a day of preparation!