



# Putting Things in Order

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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December is usually a very busy month for me, but this year was probably the craziest yet!

The fact that I have been working from home for nine months meant a lot of changes. My dining room table has become my office center and each chair has specific filing bins with forms that I use. Yes, I am from the days of yore when everything has been and still takes a paper format.

New software allows me to see my clients on a secure platform that has expanded the “reach” for all of us. No more driving, parking or waiting for clients. In fact, many clients have asked if they can continue this even if/when the office is open again. But it meant that I had to develop some skills and patience.

Because I still have paper files, I created a system that works for my staff. The client files for the next two business days are put by them into a suitcase with wheels. Twice a week I go to the office when there isn’t anyone in the building and switch suitcases. I leave the one with the completed appointment information and take home the one for the next two business days.

The pandemic has made me rethink my future practice and I decided that this is a good time to start downsizing. So, every time I arrive at the office, I set my alarm for one hour. Then I “power work”, with a goal of cleaning out one filing drawer at a time. It is kind of like dealing with playing cards as I throw the contents into one of three boxes. One is for keeping, one is for shredding and one is for things my son might use in his practice. It is amazing how this method allows slow but steady progress!

Christmas was another challenge. Gifts were purchased and wrapped, the tree put up and menus planned, while all the time knowing that I might be alone. And I was. But it was wonderful. My daughter and her family decided to send me a Christmas dinner from the Medicine Hat Lodge and it was fantastic. Although it was quiet at my condo, I had lots of conversations with friends and family through technological means. And lots of peace.

Finally, I had to prepare for year end which meant ensuring that all transactions were recorded, and supplies ordered.

And now we stand on the threshold of a new year. The best gift that I believe I can give you is some hints as to how I got everything done.

1. Think reasonably. Break tasks down into small pieces. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.
2. Make a list that is divided into timeframes. I had one big list that had several parts according to when things were to be completed (Today, By Friday, November, December, January).
3. Group things into categories. For example, wrap all the gifts at the same time and limit grocery shopping to a minimal number of trips.
4. Organize your environment so it is more efficient and so you can find the things you need when you need them.

5. Think smart – not hard. Never walk with having something in your hands. You will be amazed at how quickly you can get things done and save steps with a little planning.
6. Use technology as a tool and not as entertainment. It is easy to lose time once you start down the “rabbit holes” that the internet offers.
7. Focus on people and not things, blessings and not losses, progress and not procrastination.

My hope is that these few simple tips will help you to start the year on a positive note.

Happy New Year, everyone!