



## **Resolve or Regret**

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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So many people have regrets. They feel sad, guilty or disappointed about the way things turned out and blame themselves for doing or not doing something that would have resulted in a different outcome. Their lives are tainted by thoughts of the past and "what if".

Regrets can be about the choices that they made regarding their career or partner. Others involve losses or missed opportunities. A third group feel badly for words that were said or not said.

The past, of course, cannot be changed but there are things that can be done to resolve issues and/or hurts:

1. Examine your perspective - Sometimes we hold onto things that others have long forgotten or we exaggerate their significance or impact. Holding everything inside without talking things through or seeking out objective advice leads to distorted perceptions. The hurt fester and grows. Think about the thing that is bothering you the most and summarize it in one written sentence. That way you will have clarity. Then consult with someone who can provide wise counsel and help you consider your options.
2. Forgive - The only way to be truly free is to forgive yourself and those who have offended you. This does not mean that you will forget what happened. You need to remember so that you will not end up in a similar situation in the future. When you are able to replace your regret with thanks for the lessons learned, you will know that you have turned corner.
3. Let Go - When another person or event causes you to be emotionally tied, then you have lost control. Do not allow your time, emotions or energy to continue to be trapped by something that has passed. Make a list of the emotions that you feel when you think about what happened and then make a promise to yourself that you will move forward. The opposite of love is not hate - it is apathy and when you are able to view the situation without the emotional upset, you are well on your way!
4. Commit to Change - Develop a plan for the future that will prevent similar problems from occurring. For example, if you feel badly because someone died before you had a chance to visit then forbid procrastination from interfering with other relationships. Be determined to do things before time and opportunities pass.

When you feel like a victim and add anger or pain you end up with resentment or self-pity. These are very negative states that steal your health.

Unfortunately, things can happen in life that do not resolve on their own. It is up to you to make good choices so that you will be able to face each day with hope and laughter!

Is there something that you have been holding onto that needs to be resolved? If so, today is an excellent day to deal with it.