



Retreat, Regroup, Ready

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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Do you ever get tired of hearing people tell you how busy they are? Often, they declare this along with the idea that they are feeling overwhelmed. Well, busyness and overwhelm can be altered.

I know that I won't be at my best unless I make and follow through with specific plans. When I am feeling too busy, I need to step back and put in boundaries. When I feel overwhelmed, I need to examine my situation and make deliberate changes.

Here are three ways that you can improve your life and enjoy peace rather than chaos:

1. RETREAT - You will never be able to do everything! Admit it. In fact, there are times when you need to retreat into a safe and quiet environment for a period of time.

I often leave the office on a Friday night and go home, never to talk to one person or leave the condo again until Monday morning. My first priority is to sleep because everything looks better when I am rested. I adopt as much silence as possible and limit technological input. My focus is on doing things that are calming - things like enjoying a long, warm bath; a leisurely nutritious lunch and an interesting book.

2. REGROUP - Having a clean and organized environment reduces stress. I know that we are supposed to walk 10,000 steps a day but when I am in retreat mode I try to save steps. For example, when I leave the bathroom, I grab the dirty towels and other items to make a washing machine load. It works while I relax!

Anything in the fridge that is sketchy or starting to grow fuzz gets thrown out as I am gathering items for the next meal. The three minutes that the microwave requires for heating things up allow me just enough time to unload the dishwasher. At least once in the weekend, I stand at the door of each room and pick up what is out of place. Imagine having a home that is presentable when you only have fifteen minutes notice that you are getting company.

3. READY - Don't destroy your retreat by running around town trying to get things done. Instead, put a sticky note on the outside door and enter reminders for things that can be done on your next outing. These might include: fill the car with gas, buy batteries, drop off charity items. Hang a bag on the doorknob for items you will need to take with you and place tied bags of recycling, garbage or donations by the door. If you can't carry them all to the vehicle in one trip, you can spread it out over the next few days.

Keep a grocery shopping list that you can add to each day as you run out of things. I let my calendar keep track of birthdays and purchase all the cards for the following month at one time. I also shop online for ideas and bargains.

Make simple meals that the oven will cook for you in larger quantities than you will consume that day. Then package left-overs in small containers for freezing. Make your lunch for the next day with some of the leftovers.

Choose your clothing in advance and hang tomorrow's outfit on a doorknob. That way you can prevent wardrobe malfunctions and save time.

This formula will help you to reduce stress and give you a healthy feeling of control! It's all about working smart instead of working hard and making sure that you have an opportunity to be your best self.

Enjoy!