



Rights and Responsibilities

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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I have never had any desire or intention to hijack or blow up an airplane. Before boarding, however, I remove my jacket, take off my shoes, put my laptop in a tray and submit to other security procedures. You see, I understand that someone else might want to blow up or hijack the plane. It is my right to fly but my responsibility to participate in safety measures.

I have a license that gives me the right to drive but also the responsibility to drive safely.

Each of us has many, many other rights and responsibilities as citizens and individuals but sometimes I have noticed that there seems to be a change in the way that the world perceives these concepts.

During my childhood I was horrified by stories that my mom told me about the sacrifices made during World War II. Many of the young men from her photos went off to fight for freedom and never returned. Those left at home faced shortages, ration coupons and demands to focus everything on the war efforts.

The struggles of the Civil Rights movement are also burned in my memory. It was difficult for me to see how discrimination was acted out in such a mean fashion.

Throughout the years so many people have taken on positions of responsibility in order to secure rights for others.

None of us want to lose our rights and feel threatened when we believe they might be in jeopardy. But are we fighting back responsibly? Have the concepts of rights and responsibilities changed to the detriment of everyone? Does anger give the right to abuse or destroy?

I remember hearing a woman speak several years ago about rights. She stated that if a person wants to spin with arms outstretched, she was good with that but if the person hit her in the face while doing so, it was not acceptable.

We all have the right to protest and speak with freedom but also the responsibility to do so without violence. Destroying a community during a protest prevents others from earning an income and living safely with their families in homes they have created.

Some people refuse to respect laws or public policies because they think they have rights that supersede these

Interestingly, many, who cry out for inclusion and compassion are judgmental and abusive towards those who don't agree with their perspective.

What is even more confusing for me is when people criticize the politicians but don't vote or participate during the election process.

We are living in a world where the population is growing, and opinions are changing. Even our vocabulary is different. When I grew up, for example, the word "wicked" meant bad whereas now it means "good".

What do you think about rights and responsibilities and how to you live out these concepts in your own life?