



Self-Improvement: No Excuses!

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

Published

April 1st, 2014

I recently had a client who came to see me after having a rather scary medical warning. She was experiencing stress that showed up in headaches, chest pains and fatigue. Her cholesterol and sugar levels were high and she was afraid that if she didn't begin looking after her health she might end up like her mother who had recently had a stroke. She also was experiencing grief resulting from the loss of an aunt and having to put her dog down. The relationship that she was in was not going well.

My client felt that her needs weren't being met even though she was investing more energy and finances than her partner. She described herself as being tired, defeated, struggling with finding happiness and missing the boundaries that she had once had. Worry dominated her life. She worried about family, money, her health and her future.

Well, three months and six appointments later things were completely different. This lady had done absolutely everything that I recommended and then some!

Because she was concerned about money and having a retirement plan she began by getting her FICO score and asking her credit card company to lower the interest rate. She quit smoking and decided to save the money she wasn't spending on cigarettes. After researching options for pension plans, she set up a matching one with her employer as well as a provincial one. By adjusting her source deductions on her TD1 form, she didn't have to wait for an Income Tax refund but instead had a higher pay cheque each month and that made her investment goals even easier to achieve.

There were other ways that she began saving - like learning how to do renovations herself by asking friends in the trades for advice. She also took inventory of the food in her house and began laying out menu plans to use it up. She customized an eating plan using the interactive Canada Food Guide website. Cooking skills were revived and soon she was preparing meals in bulk so that she could take home-cooked items to work for lunch and also come home to a nutritious supper without expending much effort. She joined yoga and as the stress in her life was reduced, she noticed that her confidence increased and sleep patterns improved.

Because my client wanted to learn about herself, I gave her a Myers-Briggs Inventory and we reviewed the results together. She also started thinking about how she could return to hobbies that she had been ignoring for a while because she remembered the pleasure she had from her involvement in the past. As a new project, she started gathering information for her family tree. This helped her to reconnect with some of her relatives and to focus on an interesting activity.

Finally, my client examined the relationship she was in and came to the conclusion that it wasn't healthy. She not only told her partner that it was time for him to leave but also got some boxes and started packing so he knew she was serious.

After only two months and six appointments this woman had made significant changes in all aspects of her life. Her health, finances, relationships, and future all changed for the better. She had learned how to set boundaries and developed assertiveness skills during the process. Now she is happy and healthy and on a good financial path.

We determined that she really hadn't needed motivation but she had needed information and encouragement from me in order to make such progress. At the end of our time together I asked two things of her. First of all, I asked if I could write this article about her so that others could be inspired and she agreed. Then I asked how she had accomplished so much in such a short time and she explained that she had adopted the motto of "No excuses". Every day she would move forward saying "No excuses".

What things would you like to change in your life? Are you really just two months and six appointments away from being happy, healthy and on a good financial path?

You, too, can experience success. Just remember "No excuses".