



## Setting Policy

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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I kind of like the idea that our new Alberta Premier is nicknamed “Honest Ed” and that the new leader of the Liberal Party won because no one had him as an enemy.

We are living in a world where “honest”, “nice” and “good guy” aren’t always associated with political leaders.

When I watch television or read newspaper reports about some of the personal or career decisions of numerous leaders throughout the world, I wonder how on earth they will be able to develop appropriate policies or set a healthy direction for the millions of people who they represent.

We all live within the boundaries of political decisions and frankly, common sense isn’t all that common anymore. Sometimes legislation and policies prevent good practice especially when there is a clash between institutions in a system or society.

Organizational and research psychologists consider the context or environments in which people live and work. Although legislation is enacted at a governmental level and policies at an organizational level, it is often pressure from the public that leads to change in laws or policies.

Years ago, people would put the cat outside and smoke in the house. Now, the tides have turned. We have cat bylaws and smoking legislation that has reversed our practices of the past. Who would have thought that the time would come when smokers were in the minority and restricted to the outdoors? It was only a few years ago that people who couldn’t handle smoke were the ones required to leave the room. It just goes to show that change can happen.

Some people don’t like change. Others embrace it. Still others chase it!

I find it interesting that politicians spend years yelling at each other in the House and criticizing the platform of the opposition, only to stand with flowery tributes when one from the other side retires or leaves a position.

Sometimes the originator of a concept or law is ignored or forgotten. Collaboration or consensus is almost unheard of when party lines are drawn. And when someone crosses the house – emotions and accusations rage.

In fact, it seems rather sad that at times the fight seems to become stronger than the motivation to do what is best for the people.

I guess that’s why I have some hope – not in the political stripes – but in the fact that we in Canada have two newcomers who are known for being “honest” and collegial. Welcome Ed and Stephan. I hope you can transfer your values into good legislation and apply your skills into developing an environment where Canadians learn to work together for the benefit of all.