



Slow Down: One Step At A Time

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

March 9th, 2020

A few years ago, I telephoned a mentor and said "I don't know if I want to live in British Columbia". She was surprised and asked for more information. I told her that I had found an advertisement for what seemed to be an interesting job opportunity in BC.

Now mentors are individuals who set a good example for us and offer wise advice. This is exactly what my mentor, Elsie offered me.

She said "First you decide if you want to apply for the job. Then you wait to see if they invite you to an interview. If they do, decide if you want to participate. Write down questions, tour the area and then wait to see if they offer you the job. If they do, then decide if you want to live in British Columbia."

Great advice! She broke the whole process down into a number of small steps, Each lined up in a domino fashion where one had to fall before the next one was in play.

Jethro Bodine from The Beverly Hillbillies was an adult with a grade seven education who always simplified difficult concepts in a humourous manner. If he had been my mentor he likely would have said "Don't commence to swimmin' til you hit the water".

So how do you handle a world that causes anxiety and seems to force decision-making?

1. Quit focusing on what you cannot control - Our twenty-four hour television and internet sites are filled with opinions, drama and crises. Turn them off!
2. Listen to your self-talk - If you find yourself thinking "What if..." that means you are considering things that haven't even happened yet. Don't borrow trouble by letting your mind catastrophize over events that "might" but probably "won't" happen.
3. Distract yourself with positive activities - Play a board game with friends, do some volunteer work, learn a new skill, go for a walk, clean a drawer, sing. Deliberately begin doing things that will busy your mind with interesting thoughts.
4. Wait - My grandmother used to always say "This too shall pass" and she was usually right. The nature of life often uses time to resolve issues or prevent trouble from occurring. Think of how many times you knew exactly how something would turn out only to discover that you were wrong. Just because you think it or plan it doesn't mean that it will happen.

So, before you force yourself to make decisions or lose sleep about things that might happen, consider the wise words of my mentor and Jethro.

"Don't commence to swimmin' til you hit the water".