



Systems: They Make Your Life Easier

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

May 21st, 2017

If you have ever had problems with eating or going to the bathroom you know what I mean when I say your system is messed up! Perhaps you are like my son who recently tried to pay a twenty-five dollar checked luggage fee. The airline hit his credit card forty-eight times! System problems! Maybe you have unsuccessfully tried to access a website and kept getting error messages. Systems!

A system is a planned method of doing something that, when repeated over and over again, gives the same results. Sometimes the system is efficient and healthy whereas other times, it can be chaotic and destructive.

I recently watched a very interesting movie about the creation and development of the McDonald Restaurant chain. In "The Founder" Richard and Maurice McDonald explain the method they used in 1948 to streamline their idea for serving their customers by using a production line concept.

The McDonald brothers began planning their new concept by drawing shapes with chalk on a tennis court. Each shape represented one of the "stations" that was needed for preparing the food they planned to sell. Staff members were instructed to stand at their chalked post while pretending to do their jobs. The brothers watched them and analyzed the first system that was fraught with problems. Staff members would bump into each other and efficiency was lacking. So, the brothers had everyone step away from the tennis court while they erased the chalk marks and drew new shapes.

This process repeated over and over again until the McDonald brothers were convinced that they had devised the most efficient system possible. They then used their plan to build the physical hamburger stand that would be the template for all those that followed.

The only time that McDonald's had problems was when future franchisees thought they knew better and deviated from the original system.

One little hamburger stand and some ingenuity has resulted in over 36,000 outlets in more than 120 countries. Because the system has been replicated so carefully in every outlet, customers are familiar and comfortable with their experience despite the location that they visit.

We can all learn from the McDonald brothers:

1. Target an area of your life or business that you want to improve.
2. Set clear outcome goals that you want to achieve.
3. Identify the steps in the process that are necessary.
4. Examine each step to determine how it might be made more efficient.
5. Practice performing the steps to see if they flow nicely.
6. Tweak the process until you have the best possible system.
7. Congratulate yourself!

There are so many ways that having a good system can improve your life. Could you reorganize your kitchen so that meals can be prepared and clean up done with less effort? Do you have a good system for paying bills and saving money? Is your office in chaos or a model of efficiency? Are you the one who is on time for your commitments or are you always late?

Creating a new system sounds like a lot of work but once you have it set up, it is merely a matter of maintaining or improving it over the years. In the meantime you will save both time and energy.

How do some people make life seem easy? I would bet that they have set up good systems!

Name one area of your life that you are going to work on this week and look forward to the rewards you will enjoy once you have the system in place!