



## Things to Ponder

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)

### Published

April 27th, 2020

The pandemic can be difficult to navigate and if we aren't careful, we might find that we are developing an anxiety disorder. It is very important that you not only remain physically healthy but also enjoy good mental health so you might find the following to help you.

A little anxiety is a good thing because it can keep us sharp! It encourages us to prepare for a situation so that we won't make mistakes or look stupid and helps us to stay safe.

Anxiety can be experienced by children, adults, seniors and animals.

We learn from others and often we can link our fears with the fears of those who raised us, promoted or who have modelled fear.

Anxiety is usually about the future: When we find ourselves asking "What if... " we are focusing on things that have never and might never happen.

Sometimes anxiety is unrealistic or catastrophic. The media for example, is really good at publishing and broadcasting "the worst". News stories are often about situations in distant locations and/or a few unique situations that only affect us if we let them.

Anxiety can grow and become a major problem if we "feed it". Thinking about what you don't want and rehearsing it can increase the anxiety. There is a theory of "big dog/little dog". The dog you feed is the one that grows.

Anxiety can manifest in many different ways and degrees of severity.

Any anxiety disorder involves excessive fear or worry and unrealistic feelings that can lead to avoidance or compulsive rituals to lessen the anxiety. Relationships, school or work performance, social activities, recreation and general health can be negatively affected in a clinically significant manner.

We definitely cannot control everything or everyone in the world, but we can make good choices that will bring us good health.

In order to enjoy optimal health in this uncertain time consider the following:

1. Control - You cannot control other people or most events that occur in the world. Be clear about the things you can control and let go of the rest.
2. Perspective - You can improve your own life by using proven strategies. Remember, you are not a victim unless you choose this role.
3. Routine - We are like babies: If we don't eat or sleep - we cry! Choose activities that will enhance your health (regular nutritional meals, rest, projects and fun).
4. Focus - The things where you invest your time and energy will dominate your life. Make a written plan that lists the things you want to improve and what you will do to reach the goal.
5. Boundaries - Pleasers become tired and resentful over time. Protect yourself from trouble (turn off the TV, avoid toxic relationships, monitor how you are treating your body).

6. Communication - No one can read your mind! Assertiveness is knowing what you need and knowing how to ask for it in a healthy manner (finances, relationships, employment, parenting).
7. Balance - "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy" (old adage). Give your employer a day's work for a day's pay but also find things in your life that make your soul sing.
8. Resources -- "Asking for help isn't weak, it's a great example of how to take care of yourself" - Charlie Brown.

Be well and stay safe!