



Walls Can Trap Us

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

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My pedicurist is so wise! At my last appointment she was talking about how people can be imprisoned by unresolved issues.

Roxanne placed her hand at chest level with palm down as she explained that trouble comes and the individual doesn't do anything to resolve it. She then used the other hand and, with palm down, placed it on top stating that the next problem occurs and begins forming a pile. Over time, the pile gets higher and higher and higher until the person is enclosed by a wall. Even though the wall protects him or her, they really hate the wall! At the same time, however, they are dreadfully afraid that the wall might come down because they wouldn't know how to handle that.

This is so true and I see situations like this every day in my office.

The couple who are in a high-conflict divorce have piled up a wall of offenses that they feel justifies their own actions. They are emotionally upset by the hurtful things that the other person has done and are busy pointing fingers. Often they want the other person to suffer because they have suffered. Sometimes they just want it to be "over" hoping that the pain will stop. They don't want the wall to go down because that would mean there would have to be forgiveness and a letting go that they don't know how to navigate.

Individuals involved in addictions also build walls around them. They deny, project or minimize their own behaviours. They have never learned how to live without the wall that they think is protecting them. The wall offers them safety but they also hate the wall because they know that it traps them in the addiction.

Children who have been abused or neglected build walls around them to survive. They don't know how to trust because the one(s) they have trusted have hurt them. As a result, they hide behind the hurts and fantasize about how wonderful it might be to have a safe relationship.

Walls prevent us from building healthy bridges into the world. They stunt our relationships, destroy our confidence and leave us wanting for something that we can only dream about.

There are several things that can help someone who is locked behind a wall:

1. Acknowledge the fact that you are trapped.
2. Find a safe person with whom you can talk about your situation.
3. Learn skills that will help you to problem-solve, confront issues and set goals.
4. Develop the ability to forgive the past so you can live differently in the future.
5. Know that there isn't any situation that is hopeless.

Psychologists are trained to help individuals destroy unhealthy walls that have risen over time while building strong bridges for tomorrow's wonderful adventures. Why not take the first step today and schedule an appointment so you can begin the process?

You don't have to be afraid or live like this anymore!