



## **We're Engaged!**

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**

September 17th, 2013

I had a very interesting situation in my office recently.

A couple had booked a series of "pre-engagement" appointments. The fellow's mother had offered to pay for these as a gift because she wanted the couple to put their relationship on the right footing! (A wise woman for sure).

I explained that most relationship problems fall into one of six categories as follows:

1. **Communication** - Everyone can benefit from working on this topic!
2. **Parenting** - This can begin with pre-pregnancy right through the elementary and teen-age stages and into then expand into the years of being the parent of an adult.
3. **Finances** - Often people who are attracted to each other have completely different views about money and this can be a major source of conflict.
4. **Relatives** - Extended family members may mean well but become fodder for arguments. Because our family or origin was the one that we knew best, it is often confusing to think that other families have good ideas.
5. **Division of chores** - Who will empty the garbage? Should one person always do the cooking? Or laundry? How does my definition of "fair" differ from yours? Deciding how things will get done and who will do them can be an ongoing discussion.
6. **Sex** - Couples frequently have different sexual needs and are upset when those of their partner do not match theirs. Unfortunately, other issues are often carried over into the bedroom and couples stop having sex because they are carrying anger or resentment.

Each week, the couple and I worked on a specific relationship topic. They were so diligent in doing their homework tasks and usually came back to the next appointment with interesting tales about their experiences as well as sheets of paper that documented their progress.

The last appointment arrived, and I asked if there was anything further that we hadn't covered yet. The lady and I were both shocked when the male dropped to his knees, produced a box with a beautiful engagement ring and asked the lady if she would marry him. (She accepted with tears and laughter).

I was so honoured to have been included in this lovely (and often private) event! Fortunately, I was able to grab my camera and captured the expressions that each of them displayed in that special moment.

Wow! Wouldn't it be wonderful if all mothers were as thoughtful about how they could help their adult children build a healthy relationship for the future? Or if all couples had a "pre-engagement" period of time in which they could get to know each other well while preparing strategies that would help them prevent running into problems in areas that we all know can be minefields? Or if everyone was interested enough in their own future to actually do the homework that would help them to move forward in a healthy manner?

I have been so very impressed with their couple (as you probably have guessed by now). I am also grateful that they included me in not only laying the foundation for their marriage but also let me enjoy the special moment that moved them into the engagement phase.

There are always so delightful moments in time that you just didn't expect. This was one of them.

All the best for the future!