



Well-Being: Time, Money and Happiness

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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Recently I wrote an article about retirement and received an email from one of the readers. He stated that I had "missed the point". His critique included the argument that it is not as important what you retire from and what you retire to. I am thankful for his comments and ideas as they have made me think about his perspective.

The writer stated that there are two important things to consider that determine how retirement will be for each of us. He is right. However, those two factors determine how we live our lives no matter what our age:

1. Health - My sister never made it to retirement. In fact, she spent the last twelve years of her life in a wheelchair and bed because Multiple Sclerosis kept her trapped in a body that would not respond. Many individuals suffer from illnesses or the result of accidents and are not able to enjoy quality of life. The rest of us, often neglect proven scientific practices that would facilitate optimal health. We have choices about what we will eat and eat, whether we will exercise and how we will handle stress. Ensuring that we get enough sleep and work with medical, dental and mental health professionals give us a far better chance of staying well then neglecting self-care.

2. Money - Our financial situation determines the number of choices we have throughout our entire life. No matter what age, however, we can be faced with problems when we spend more than we earn. Those who do not plan for retirement will often find themselves giving up dreams that they thought they would realize as a senior. In fact, retirement can be filled with regret and worry if income is insufficient to even pay basic living expenses.

Throughout my career, I have met thousands of people. They described themselves as well off, comfortable, poor or broke. Some were in excellent health while others had poor physical or mental health. Many were able to live and work independently while may needed various levels of care.

The interesting thing that I have found, however, is that being happy was not always dependent upon health and wealth. I have met many people who were struggling in most areas of their life who were very happy and some who appeared to have everything going for them who were miserable.

Happiness is a choice. No matter what one's circumstances, if you can develop an attitude that focuses on blessings, gives thanks and grant forgiveness to self and others, you will be able to enjoy a measure of happiness in your life.