



When to Let Go Of Trouble

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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I have seen over 8,000 clients. That's a lot of people and a lot of different problems. The other day I was wondering what I would tell every single person if I could only give one piece of advice. I decided that the best wisdom that I could offer is to focus on the right things.

We only have so much time and energy. When we focus on the wrong things, we end up with negative consequences. It is easy to say "Just forgive that person" or "Don't worry about this" but that isn't always easy to do.

It is time to change your focus and let go when the following things are happening:

1. You are becoming ill - When you are losing sleep and spending your waking hours worrying about something, it is time to get help. Worry has never improved any situation and can steal not only your time but also your health. Unfortunately, it is impossible to just stop worrying without having something to replace it. You need to find something else to do and think about that will grab your attention and move you forward.
2. You are neglecting responsibilities - When your time and energy is taken up with things to the point that your house is a mess, your bills aren't being paid and your self-care is jeopardized, you are headed for big trouble! I often judge my emotional well-being by looking at the state of my desk and my condo. Messy environment usually means that I need to re-focus and get things in order again.
3. You think that you can change another person - Good luck with that! No matter how dysfunctional we think people acting, they will not change until life is not working for them anymore. Your efforts to improve their situation might actually be enabling them to continue on their irresponsible path. Sometimes it is hard to have good boundaries but the best thing you can do for someone is empathize and say "That sounds difficult. What are you going to do about it?"
4. The timing is wrong - You can't change the past and you can't always initiate immediate change in the present or future. Sometimes I feel that I have done everything possible for something to happen, but it doesn't happen. Then, when I least expect it, it happens. On other occasions, I wait, get new or more information and actually give thanks that my plan hadn't gelled.
5. There are global issues that you don't have power to change - Weather, economic and political issues and many other things are not worth stewing about because we can't control them. Unfortunately, technology and media often inundate us with situations that are emotionally demanding but out of our reach. Protect your mind by not reading, watching and listening.

Many years ago, Kenny Rogers sang "The Gambler". His lyrics are ones that we can apply to our own lives. "You got to know when to hold 'em. Know when to fold 'em. Know when to walk away. And know when to run". Or in other words, learn to focus on the right things!