



## Your Junk Drawer

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)

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I have decided to reorganize my kitchen. I don't know why it took so long for me to figure out that my junk drawer was actually stealing one-quarter of my available space. You see I live in a condo with a galley kitchen that only has four drawers. Three of them have been difficult to manage because of their limited size.

The other night it suddenly hit me that perhaps I should see what was in my "junk drawer". I was shocked! There were birthday balloons that were kind of stuck together, Easter egg candies from who knows when and a variety of small plastic parts that I couldn't identify. It only took seconds to realize that it was time to go through everything and reclaim the drawer and use it more wisely.

About half of the contents were immediately tossed into a garbage bag. The remaining items were sorted, grouped appropriately and moved into places where I was storing similar things.

Next came cleaning which was easily done with the vacuum. I found some plastic drawer dividers in another place and set up sections for things that I could move from the other three drawers. Done!

The whole project made me think about how we sometimes have areas of our personal life that are similar to our junk drawers. Resentments that are useless are stored up for years at a time. Outdated ideas about how things should be done take up space that could be used for more progressive thoughts. Promises to self and others that were never put into action become embarrassment that we just want to hide somewhere with the hope that no one will remember.

Unfortunately, the junk drawer of life can prevent us from growing, being efficient and organized. But all is not lost.

The first step is to get honest with yourself. What are the things that are holding you back? Take an honest inventory and clearly list what you want to get rid of or change. Do you have a bad habit that you really want to eliminate? Is there a relationship that needs work? Are there things that you are hiding because of embarrassment?

Next, forgive yourself and make a plan. Perhaps you need a professional to help you learn some strategies that will allow you to let go or resolve issues. Maybe you will need to develop a nutritious meal plan, a budget, a resume or a business plan. Maybe you just need to clean up the environment in which you live and work.

Take action. The worst thing to do is to sit and stare at the wall while worrying about your situation. Do something every single day to move you towards your new goal. I remember when my aunt was planning to move from a large five bedroom house into a condo. Every time she left the house, she took one item that she wanted to get rid of. At the end of the month there were thirty less things to deal with!

But don't just think about getting rid of things. Add new and exciting things to improve your life. Perhaps you will find one person who will become a friend. Maybe sorting your closet will reveal an article of clothing that you forgot you had. Taking a course will offer you a skill or skills you can implement.

Do you really need a junk drawer? I figured out that it just doesn't make sense to store things that I think should be labelled as "junk".

Do you really need to give up part of your life to bad habits, problems or inactivity when they can be replaced with health and freedom?

The choice is yours. Time to clean out the junk drawers!