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# FAC NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2006



ISSUE #106

## Fewer Babies, Older Canadians



Compared to past generations, Canadians are having fewer babies and living longer - making for an aging population.

Today, "A woman can be expected to have an average 1.5 children during her childbearing years." This fertility rate has been below the replacement rate of 2.1 (the rate needed to keep the population stable) "for over three decades and is far below the rate of about four during the peak of the baby boom in the late 1950's." Surveys suggest that most women intend to have two children.

Around the time the Vanier Institute of the Family was created, the baby boom was tapering off, but the fertility rate was still as high as 3.1. Interestingly, 3.1 is now the size of the average family in Canada.

Life expectancy - the number of years that people of a given age can, on average, expect to live - increased steadily throughout the twentieth century. Writing in 1964,

Frederick Elkin noted that, "according to a life table for the years 1960-62, a boy at birth could expect to live 68 years and 4 months and a girl, 74 years and 2 months - a gain since 1931 of 8 years and 4 months for boys and over 12 years for girls."

Nowadays the latest Canadian estimate is that "girls can expect to live to 82.1 years, while boys can expect to reach 77 years."

So, how much are we aging as a population? "By the end of the baby boom in the mid-1960's, about one in three Canadians was under the age of 15. This share declined steadily and is now down to less than one in five."

Aging boomers are now swelling the ranks of the 45-64 age group. In a few more years this group will be the largest among all the age groups.

The seniors group has been increasing slowly but will really take off when the first boomers reach 65, beginning in about 2012.

"In 1971, the median age was about 25 years," meaning half of Canadians were younger than 25 and half were older. "This is now up to 38 years and will reach 42 years by 2016."

*Profiling Canada's Families III, VIF (2004)*

*The Vanier Institute Of The Family (Transition, Spring 2005, Volume 35, Number 1)*

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## IS IT TIME TO BREAK UP WITH YOUR JOB?

How do you overcome all the obstacles in the way of resolving career distress?



- Hone in on the real issues. Don't use global language like "I hate this job." Be specific in figuring out what you don't like. Sometimes just articulating a specific issue brings insight for a solution which may actually be a minor adjustment rather than a cataclysmic change.
- **Acknowledge** you have a problem. It doesn't make you weaker. Indeed it takes a strong and optimistic person to say "I am unhappy. I deserve more. I am prepared to identify with what I need to do to be happier." Think about the consequences of not doing anything versus the consequences of trying and failing. There are no guarantees in life. How will you feel if you didn't try?
- Don't expect a magic-button solution. Be prepared to live with uncertainty and confusion while you dig through the issues and possibilities. It also takes time to envision what's next.
- **Make a plan.** It can take a couple of years if you need to get your finances in order, upgrade your education, or develop a network of contacts in a future field.
- Identify what's holding you back. Is it fear of failure, a lack of clear vision, loyalty to others, insufficient confidence in yourself? Whatever it is, face up to it. Write it down or say it out loud. Everyone has these fears. They don't make you foolish. Are your fears and anxieties realistic?
- Give yourself **permission** to dream. Often people feel silly or self-indulgent when they fantasize about a dream job. But it can actually provide important clues about what you feel you're missing and what you need to feel good about your work, whether at the same job or in moving on.
- Don't overestimate the consequences of change. You may fear that your world is going to be turned upside down but once you develop a plan, you will realize, or find ways to ensure that a move will have only a modest impact-- and improve your happiness factor.
- **Get support.** One of the most significant contributors to successful transitions is having a group of people you can go to for cheerleading. Friends and family can provide important emotional support but they are not experts on work and cannot see you objectively. As well, complex psychological issues often underlie career distress. Considering consulting a career counsellor who can act as a neutral sounding board and provide structure to help you identify the problem, overcome inertia, work through critical decisions and develop a realistic course of action. Check the International Association of Career Professionals for a listing of consultants by location.

Source: Barbara Moses (2005). *The Globe and Mail*



## *Learning and Development*

Mirror neurons are a type of brain cell that respond equally when we perform an action and when we witness someone else perform the same action (mimicry). Babies earliest learning is cued by this neuron as they learn by imitating or mirroring what they see. In later years it seems to be integral to the development of empathy, the ability to react at a gut level to other peoples actions and even to their suffering.

***“Babies earliest learning is cued by this neuron as they learn by imitating or mirroring what they see.”***

New research is pointing to the possibility that disorders such as autism, which involves significant behavioural and social deficits, are contributed to by faulty mirror neurons. If this proves true, it may inform behavioural treatments that could re-train the mirror neurons or assist in the development of compensatory systems.

*Source: Monitor on Psychology October 2005*

## *Insomnia*

Studies indicate insomnia may pave the road to and maintain depression. Insomnia is not only a symptom of depression, but is presenting as a significant risk factor for recurrent and new onset major depressive disorder. It can be treated medically and therapeutically, but should not be ignored. For more information go to [www.urmc.rochester.edu](http://www.urmc.rochester.edu).

*Source: Monitor on Psychology October 2005*

## *New Associate*

***We all welcome the newest addition to our firm, Jocelyn L. Monsma!***



Jocelyn has a Masters Degree in social work and has worked as a clinical therapist for over 26 years.

Throughout the past 16 years Jocelyn has conducted chemical dependency assessments for adults, and facilitated aftercare recovery groups for chemically dependent professionals; particularly, medical doctors, nurses, dentists and others.

Jocelyn has taken specialized training in coaching, emotional intelligence, and is a family mediator.

Jocelyn currently serves as a director on several nonprofit boards, and has chaired fundraising efforts for organizations. She also provides clinical counseling support for executive directors for several of these agencies.

Jocelyn is known for her success in working with very difficult cases ranging from families and couples, to chemically dependent adults.

## **NEW ADDRESS**

***We haven't moved....but we did change our address this year.***

Our new address is 115 - 1<sup>st</sup> Street S.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2P 0B3