

“My Name is Linda Jo and I am Canadian”

I arrived in Toronto on July 15, 1974. I had been hired on three-month employment visa to work for the National Institute on Mental Retardation. I was so excited. I had a really interesting job that paid well and I also had the opportunity to get to know something about the “great white land” that lay north of my birth Nation. The three-month contract extended to 18 months and then I had to make a decision. My work Visa was expiring and if I wanted to stay in my job, I would have to become a landed immigrant. It was a time consuming, stressful and frustrating process but I loved my work so it seemed worth the trouble. Fortunately, I had a supportive and influential employer who was able to wrangle me a “Minister’s Permit” which allowed me to stay in the country while the process dragged on.

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Eventually, I became a landed immigrant (permanent alien) in 1976. We had a knock-out party and then life just continued to happen. I moved across the country, built a successful consulting and speaking

by Linda Tarrant



business and formed many lasting and wonderful relationships. But, after 26 years, I was still a “permanent alien”. When I came to Canada, I had never intended to stay. But I did. My short-term contract had become my life.

Now I have to say that I was lucky to have fallen into this wonderful life and great country. But I also learned some valuable lessons.

1. **The people you hang around with will influence your thoughts, perspectives and actions.**
2. **In the absence of a plan, what you do today will become your future.**
3. **Not deciding is a decision.**

I am thrilled to have had the opportunity to live and work in Canada for all these years. But I also thought it was about time to stand up and acknowledge my commitment and gratitude to the country that has been so good to me. I wanted to be clear that I

was here by choice and not by default. I became a Canadian Citizen on November 22, 2000. Three of my dearest friends attended my swearing in ceremony. It was extremely emotional for all of us. As we sang “Oh, Canada”, I proudly added the words “my home and adopted land!”

I cheered wildly when I first saw the commercial where “Joe” exclaimed “I Am Canadian”. Me, too, Joe! Thanks to everyone who has been through this journey with me and I hope I’ll make you proud to have me as an adopted sister.

Linda Tarrant brings insight, inspiration and humour to people and organizations in transition. She speaks on courage, connectivity and change. Linda can be reached at TOC Consulting, (416) 533-1532, e-mail linda@lindatarrant.com, or via her web site at www.lindatarrant.com

