

BOOKS

Bethesda life coach encourages grit and perseverance in new book

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STAFF WRITER

For professional life coach Caroline Miller, talk is cheap. The Bethesda resident is a pro at encouraging people to put excuses aside and pursue their life goals. Her most recent book, "Creating Your Best Life: The Ultimate Life List Guide," has sold 30,000 copies and been translated into five languages since its publication in January 2009. It was released in paperback in January.

Miller holds a master's degree in applied positive psychology from the University of Pennsylvania and is well-versed in the science of happiness. She encourages clients and readers to develop their own "grit" and perseverance. Admitting it's not easy, she says that goal achievement, like most challenging things in life, means no pain, no gain.

"The best goals are those that make you profoundly uncomfortable while doing them," Miller says. "They offer the highest self-confidence and self-esteem at the end of the day."

Miller's fascination with goal-setting stems from her experience as a bulimia survivor. She saved her own life, she says, a long process she documented in her first book, "My Name is Caroline," published in 1988. The book won multiple awards and sold 100,000 copies. She's currently working on a sequel, "I'm Still Caroline," about reaching a landmark 25 years as a bulimia survivor. The book, slated for release in the fall of 2012, addresses the spike in the numbers of women being diagnosed with the eating disorder.

There's a huge upsurge in middle-aged women going to treatment centers for bulimia," Miller says. "Many have been

sub-clinical or weekend bulimic since college. It's not about willpower; it's a disease."

Miller says hailing from a family of overachievers added to the intrigue of writing "Creating Your Best Life."

"I came from a family of Olympic gold medalists," she says. "So I always wondered how you become the best version of yourself, whether it's making it to the Olympics or taking the talents you have and creating your best self."

The first paperback run of 7,500 copies sold out in less than two months and was rushed back into print, Miller says.

"As well as it had been doing, that's still a remarkable sales figure by any estimate," she acknowledges.

Miller attributes the book's success to a unique place in the market.

"I'm the only one in this niche; it's interesting," she says.

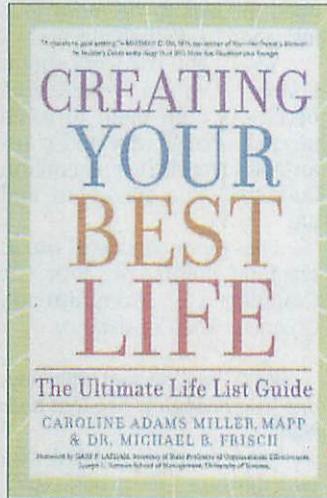
While anyone can benefit from the book's self-help exercises, Miller wants to reach a wider female audience.

"I'm set on women getting this point," she says, noting that many of her clients are women in their mid to late 40s who are mired in regret.

"Women now have only about 41 minutes a day to accomplish their own discretionary goals," she says. "They have taken on more chores, are working more, and [neglecting] friends and friendships. When you put [friends] and exercise at the bottom of the pile, you are not going to flourish."

And while Miller admits that regrets are a natural part of life, it's what you do to reverse them that counts, she says.

In her coaching approach of applied practice and one-on-one interaction, Miller says clients are able to go beyond



talk therapy.

"Somewhere between 40 and 50, they start asking, 'what happened to me? Where did I go?'" she says. "That's when they discover coaching."

Through private coaching sessions, often done via telephone to avoid external distractions, Miller offers clients perspective and encouragement to step out of their comfort zone, she says. She also travels frequently to appear at seminars around the world.

"Fifty-five percent of people do not believe that the lives they are living will make the world a better place," Miller says. "If people come to me and are willing to go for broke in their own lives. ... it's like being on the labor and delivery floor of the hospital."

"Creating Your Best Life: The Ultimate Life List Guide," Sterling, \$14.95, www.caroline-miller.com. Also available for the Nook.