

“A classic in goal setting.” –MEHMET C. OZ, MD,
author of the bestselling series *YOU: The Owner’s Manual*

CREATING YOUR

THE ULTIMATE LIFE LIST GUIDE

BEST LIFE

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Foreword by GARY P. LATHAM, *Secretary of State Professor of
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INTRODUCTION

In 2008, **Creating Your Best Life** hit the bookshelves and made history. For the first time, a goal-setting book based on research and evidence, and which focused on helping readers achieve success with their goals, was available to a general audience. The book was also the first to connect the burgeoning science of positive psychology with academic theories on motivation, personality traits, and hard-wired behavior, thus pioneering an entirely new and unique approach to goal accomplishment.

Creating Your Best Life was conceived in October 2005, when I was one of 34 lucky men and women to be accepted into the first-ever Master's degree program of Applied Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. For an amazing year I was schooled by the best researchers and thinkers in this new field, spearheaded by Marty Seligman the "Father of Positive Psychology." As one of my main mentors, Marty encouraged me to use my Capstone project to write a book connecting the science of happiness with potential healthcare interventions. "You've written lots of books, and this could really help the world," he cajoled.

By this time, though, I'd already been exposed to some of the newest research that connected wellbeing and success, and it was challenging me in profound ways. I told him that I believed I'd make more of a positive difference if I wrote a guide to goal setting based on the research that was inspiring me to work in new and better ways with my executive coaching clients. As we traded ideas back and forth in the living room of Marty's suburban Philadelphia home, I insisted that my best bet would be to write a book that connected and tied together everything I'd learned about goal setting theory, self-determination theory, self-efficacy theory, social contagion, and related research. I'd never read or heard about anything that connected the findings of those academic subjects with happiness, and my gut told me that this was what I was destined to do. Marty and I had a friendly disagreement about whether I should follow his advice or do the book that was swirling around in my head. Ultimately he supported my decision. "You're going to write it no matter what I say," Marty chuckled, "so go write it."

I did, and its impact has surpassed everything I could have hoped for. When **Creating Your Best Life** was published, newspapers, magazines, radio shows, and television hosts opined that the book was not only a departure from previous publications in the genre, but was also outstanding for other merits. For example, in its review of **Creating Your Best Life** *Publisher's*

Weekly noted that my chapter on priming was worth the price of admission and gave the book its coveted red star. Business schools have used **Creating Your Best Life** as a textbook for emerging leaders, and coaching programs have designed educational modules around its principles. Several well-known sports managers and coaches have told me that they use the book's worksheets and exercises to help educate and train their players. And countless men and women all over the world have written to tell me that the book has helped them turn their bucket list goals into proud accomplishments. They have also said that understanding one of the newer pieces of research in the book—evidence that success is preceded by being happy first, and not vice versa—has given them a better understanding of how to approach each day with more purpose and positivity.

Although **Creating Your Best Life** was cutting-edge when it was published, research on wellbeing, motivation, character strengths, purpose, and resilience has continued to evolve. For example, twelve years ago, Dr. Angela Duckworth's research on grit—which she called “the secret to success” —was so new that **Creating Your Best Life** was the first book to share her findings. Now “grit” is a well-known buzzword in schools and businesses around the world. My own fascination with the significant role that grit plays in the accomplishment of hard goals continued after the publication of **Creating Your Best Life**. After several years of thinking, research, and interviews, I published **Getting Grit: The Evidence-Based Approach to Cultivating Passion, Perseverance, and Purpose** (SoundsTrue, 2017).

It's rare that a book has the type of longevity **Creating Your Best Life** has enjoyed, particularly in a fast-changing field like psychology, but I've been humbled by the plaudits it continues to earn. Not only has it recently been named one of the best goal-setting books on the market, but Marty Seligman, who had been so good-naturedly skeptical about the book when I first discussed writing it, surprised me by praising **Creating Your Best Life** in his 2011 bestseller, *Flourish*. He wrote, “[Caroline] has added a major missing piece to the world of coaching.” (More comments and reviews, articles, interviews, and videos about the book, etc., can be found at www.carolinemiller.com.)

In a world where it's easy to feel overwhelmed by all of the roles we play, the goals we wish to accomplish, and the ceaseless flow of news that can make one feel helpless, a straightforward and evidence-based book like **Creating Your Best Life** can be your best friend. The exercises and worksheets in the book were designed to be used immediately, and every

chapter provides summaries of key points and takeaways to ponder. The endnotes will give you a jumping off point to dig deeper into the research, along with the confidence that the knowledge you are absorbing is the real thing—not snake oil. And the stories of men and women who have successfully tackled bucket list goals, amplified their wellbeing, built resilience, and created the right circle of supporters to help them achieve their goals, will give you the hope and inspiration necessary to create meaningful changes in your own life.

I would like to thank everyone who has believed in this book from its inception, passed it on to friends, translated it into foreign languages, recommended it to academic institutions, quoted it in the media, and shared stories about its impact on social media. My gratitude is deep because these and other gestures tell me that people are optimistic about our collective future and believe that with the right tools, we can all do more, be better, and live without regret. If that observation is true, I will take deep pleasure in knowing that returning to graduate school in midlife to create my own best life wasn't just a gift to myself, it turned into the most powerful way I could contribute to the betterment of the world.

Carli Claus Miller
March 2020

PART I

Why Life Lists Matter

Chapter 1

The Royal Road to Happiness and Success

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

If you've tuned in to any popular media, glanced at advertisements on billboards, or even attended a mainstream church service in recent years, you have probably heard or seen something about the power of goal setting, and more specifically about the importance of having a "life list" or "bucket list." You've also undoubtedly heard about the science of happiness and the usefulness of living each day as if it were your last if you want to inject your goals with passion.

Sometimes these concepts are packaged as encouragement to travel to a list of must-see marvels before it's too late, and even financial-planning companies want you to have a life list to ensure that you have the funds to pay for your goals. At least one major credit card company has touted itself as the plastic of choice to pay for the realization of all these globe-trotting and acquisition goals, while a department store chain advertises itself with a to-do list, reminding you to check your daily goals off your list by spending your money there.

Life Lists Come to the Silver Screen

Hollywood brought heightened attention to the topic of life lists, producing two movies in the early 2000s that focus on the intersection of life lists with the regrets that can occur when you fail to make progress toward the accomplishment of those goals while you still have time.

In *Last Holiday*, Queen Latifah stars as an ordinary working-class woman who is galvanized into action by an inaccurate diagnosis of a medical condition that leaves her with just a few weeks to live. She takes her “Book of Possibilities”—a scrapbook filled with pictures of places she would visit and meals she would eat “someday”—and turns it into her “Book of Realities” by emptying her savings accounts and doing everything she has ever wanted to do. Queen Latifah giddily sleeps on satin sheets, wears beautiful clothes, travels first-class, eats desserts without guilt, and skis down some of Europe’s finest black-diamond slopes before she wistfully sums up her new life philosophy near the end of the film.

“I wish I’d known that happiness comes from going after your goals while you are alive—not from waiting for that day to occur at some point in the future,” she notes in a toast to a group of fellow diners. Luckily, she discovers that she’s not on death’s doorstep, which frees her up to return home to marry the man of her dreams and become the chef at her own restaurant—the goals she had only dreamed about while marking time as a department store housewares rep.

Another popular film, *The Bucket List*, featuring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, tells a similar story of how the prospect of death made friends of two strangers, who went from sharing a hospital room to traveling around the world to see the pyramids, skydive, and even heal fractured family relationships before they “kicked the bucket.” The theme of both films is that it isn’t enough to just have a list; you must go after the goals on your list with gusto and the companionship of others while life is there for the taking. By pushing the envelope on life, taking risks, articulating your deepest desires, gathering support, and being fearless, you will not only become happier; you’ll die without regrets.

Life Lists Inspired by Near-Death Experiences

Although we can’t all finance trips to Egypt or stays in five-star hotels—and those goals may not even be on our life lists—it is accurate to say that brushes with death can prompt a reevaluation of one’s purpose and can result in the creation, or refinement, of one’s life goals, thus leading to a happier, more meaningful existence. Ted Leonsis, a billionaire businessman who has made a name for himself through his leadership at America Online, his ownership of several Washington, D.C.–area sports teams, and his burgeoning career as a film producer, likes to talk

about his life list, which came about as a result of thinking he would die when a plane he was riding in developed engine trouble.

It was 1983, and at the age of twenty-five, Leonsis had just sold his first company for a cool fifteen million dollars, vaulting him into the heady stratosphere of self-made millionaires. On a routine business trip, his plane encountered trouble, prompting the young mogul to grab an envelope and quickly scribble everything he wanted to do with his life if God would allow him a second chance. Instead of just wanting to pile up more money, Leonsis wrote things like “Take care of in-laws” and “Support someone who makes a great breakthrough in science or art.” Fortunately, the plane landed safely, but Leonsis alighted from the plane a changed man who decided to use the hastily created list as his guide for a reinvigorated life.

Twenty years later, this list has become his calling card at fund-raisers, during corporate speeches, and at charity events, where he encourages everyone to create their own life lists. “If you write it down, you have a road map,” he told one interviewer in 2001. “It makes it seem more bite-sized, and there’s nothing more fulfilling than getting that check mark off.”

Phil Keoghan, the TV host of *The Amazing Race*, tells a similar story of running into trouble while scuba diving in an underwater wreck in New Zealand at the age of nineteen. Rattled by his youthful brush with mortality, Keoghan surfaced and reconsidered his carefree and aimless existence. Now he has a mission of leaving no opportunity wasted and works professionally and personally to help others do the same. Like Leonsis, he has made his life goals public, adding that extra oomph of accountability for staying on track.

High Performers

A person should set his goals as early as he can and devote all his energy and talent to getting there. With enough effort, he may achieve it. Or he may find something that is even more rewarding. But in the end, no matter what the outcome, he will know he has been alive.

—Walt Disney

Edwin Locke, the co-developer of goal-setting theory, studied the traits of what he called “prime movers”—people he termed “great wealth creators,” who had “moved the world” with their passion, vision, energy, and perseverance. Over many years, Locke refined his list of “prime mover” traits down to the essential seven, two of which are “vision” and “action.” Because of their abundant vision and action, the men and women Locke profiled were all renowned goal setters; the items on their lists ranged from “very difficult” to “impossible.”

Locke paid special tribute to well-known business icons such as General Electric’s former CEO Jack Welch, who encouraged “stretch” goals, and Mary Kay Ash, the founder and president of Mary Kay Cosmetics, who started every day with a list of prioritized goals that were tied in with longer-term goals. She typically started each day by tackling the hardest goal first, and encouraged everyone in her company to do the same. Her methods were so successful that major corporations copied her goal-setting strategies, just one of the reasons why Ash was named one of the most successful businesspeople of the entire twentieth century by Harvard Business School.

Permission to Live More Fully

Watching a loved one die before he or she even has a life list can open the door for an individual to become more proactive. Chris Duffy lost his life when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, where he perished along with sixty-seven of his investment bank colleagues at Keefe, Bruyette and Woods. Duffy’s father, John, also a member of the firm, was late getting to work that day, along with colleagues Andrew Cullen and Will DeRiso. All three men told a reporter six years later that they’d been transformed by the tragedy in terms of how they now view risk taking and the necessity of a *carpe diem* outlook.

Cullen noted, “I think I have accelerated things in life that I have wanted. Whether it is going out to the Grand Tetons and hiking through Cascade Canyon, or going to Albuquerque to watch the mass ascension of the balloons, or climbing Mount Washington, instead of saying, ‘I will get to those things in the future,’ I say, ‘These are things I want to do, and I will do them now.’”

Duffy elaborated on the impact of losing his son and how it had caused him to have a profound respect for approaching each day as if it were his last. “It has made me more decisive in terms of doing things. You have a different appreciation of time and how much time you have. . . . If there is stuff I want to do or a decision I have to make, I just make it now. Why wait? You may not be around tomorrow.”

Many were also inspired to live with courage by the phone call made by Tom Burnett to his wife, Deena, as he sat on United Flight 93, which was the only hijacked flight on 9/11 that did not crash into a building. He told his wife that his flight had been hijacked, a man had already been knifed to death, and that he thought the plane was on a “suicide mission.” Deena responded that planes had already crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, to which Tom said: “They’re talking about crashing this plane into the ground. We have to do something. I’m putting a plan together. “ In his next and final phone call to his wife, he said, “We’re going to take back the airplane . . . Don’t worry, we’re going to do something.” Then he hung up.

The Pursuit of Happiness

We are all of us resigned to death; it's life we aren't resigned to.

—Graham Greene

It was a remarkable sight. On September 18, 2007, a handsome, dark-haired man stepped to the microphone to give his “last lecture” at Carnegie Mellon University. The tradition of a “last lecture” is usually reserved for tenured professors who are at the end of their teaching days, when they impart their final words of wisdom in a farewell address to their students. Some American schools, such as Stanford University, have leaped on this idea and featured a Last Lecture series, in which they ask esteemed colleagues to give a hypothetical last lecture on a topic that is meaningful to them. The philosophy behind these talks is “If I had just one more chance to tell the world what matters most to me, what would I say?”

For Randy Pausch, the married father of three young children, his last lecture was not hypothetical. He had been diagnosed with late-stage pancreatic cancer, which was no longer responding to treatment, so this was, indeed, one of his last opportunities to make any kind of

speech, and its impact was so profound that within weeks of its posting on the Internet, more than six million people visited his home page to watch his speech.

What did Pausch talk about in this emotional and riveting last lecture? He called it “Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams,” and in it he paid homage to the power of not only having a life list, but pursuing it with vigor and allowing its energy to drive you forward as you live your life with gusto and gratitude.

The audience watched a slide show packed with photographs from his life, as Pausch illustrated how he’d pursued and accomplished most, if not all, of his childhood dreams, from experiencing zero gravity to winning huge stuffed animals at amusement parks. He made the audience laugh heartily, but also drove home the point that going after your dreams and never losing your childhood sense of wonder is crucial to your well-being. He encouraged his listeners to know and assist others with their goals. “As you get older,” he noted, “you may find that enabling the dreams of others is even more fun.” Pausch finally succumbed the following summer to the cancer, but not without impacting countless lives with his brave speech, which also was the inspiration for a book that came out in the months before his death.

Fearless Forties and Nifty Fifties

Life list goals have also become more fashionable among adults who have accumulated the money and time to pursue their childhood dreams. A survey released by the Adventure Travel Trade Association in March 2007 noted that the typical adventure traveler is “female and fortyish,” with South America being her most popular destination. Many travel organizations cater to this group, assembling “girlfriend getaways” that whisk travelers to dude ranches, yoga retreats, and other exciting destinations that stimulate the imagination.

The British government has even identified a new subset of British adults called the “Nifty Fifties,” who are going after their goals with renewed gusto. Their most common aspirations are to travel to Nepal, drive a convertible, write a novel, experience true love, skydive, and go white-water rafting, according to Tesco Life Insurance, which conducted the survey. Tesco’s report explained, “They’ve decided to take the five-star version of the student gap year, encompassing

all of the adventure with none of the discomforts. Neither burgeoning waistlines nor graying hair is going to hold them back.”

Life lists are also proliferating in these age-groups because we are living longer and healthier lives, which has changed the midlife crisis into the midlife opportunity. Experts who have studied this trend call it “creative aging,” and they say that any depression or sadness noted in this group is often transformed into initiatives that lay the groundwork for substantive, long-term growth. “People are aware that they have more years in front of them, and they feel really creative about it, and so for them, it’s more what the Chinese call a crisis of opportunity,” says Judith Sherven, a clinical psychologist in New York. “They want to do something different.”

Why the Best Athletes Have Lists

Elite athletes have a lot at stake. They often have the eyes of the world upon them, and many have financial incentives in the form of sponsorships, salaries, and bonuses that are tied to their performance. With a compressed time span in which to enjoy their physical prowess, they have to be more goal focused, diligent, and resilient than the rest of us if they are going to succeed. Many also work with sports psychologists to ensure that they benefit from the latest developments in visualization, peak performance, and nutrition.

It’s no surprise, then, to learn that one of the world’s all-time finest swimmers, American Michael Phelps, keeps his list of life goals on his nightstand so that it’s the first thing he sees when he wakes up in the morning to begin the first of several grueling daily practices. Kate Ziegler, another internationally ranked American swimmer, keeps her goals posted on her bedroom walls, frequently checking them to gauge her progress and create a new set of challenging missions. Both swimmers work with coaches who weigh in on these short-term and long-term goals, providing them with feedback, tools, and the motivation to keep going when the list feels daunting, or when short-term obstacles arise.

In fact, sports coaches are often renowned for their own personal goal setting, and not just how they work with their athletes. Lawrence Frank, coach of the New Jersey Nets basketball team, made a life list when he was in his early teens that included the goal of being the youngest coach in NBA history, which he actually was at the time he earned the post at the age of 33. Eric

Mangini, the youngest coach in the National Football League in 2006, had a goal of running his own team for years before the opportunity actually arose. His partner in running the New York Jets, Mike Tannenbaum, was no different in terms of long-term goals and a ferocious belief in himself. As a college student, he'd researched and written a paper on how he planned to run a football team one day, which he was doing just ten short years later.

The iconic Lou Holtz, coach of the legendary Notre Dame University football team, made his own life list in his twenties when his wife persuaded him to do so to counteract his depression about losing his job at the time. Holtz took her challenge to heart and wrote down 107 goals, including seeing his children graduate from college, becoming the coach of a national championship football team, and dining at the White House. Of these 107 goals, at least 93 have been accomplished, according to Holtz, who says, "An unwavering commitment to your goals will turn today's tragedies into tomorrow's triumphs."

Not a New Phenomenon

Life lists aren't restricted to the current generation, however. Leonardo da Vinci, who has often been called the most exceptional genius and inventor of all time, was a renowned goal setter who was never without his famous notebooks, in which he jotted down ideas for inventions, questions he wanted to learn the answers to, and elaborate mind maps of solutions to problems. As he got older and became more aware of his mortality, da Vinci often spoke of the importance of having clear personal goals that were followed through to completion.

"Think well to the end" and "Consider first the end" were pieces of advice that he gave to his students about crafting their own goals, which he also felt ought to be represented visually. That being said, da Vinci was bereft on his deathbed about the goals he failed to accomplish, apologizing to "God and man for leaving so much undone."

It's No "Secret"

It appears obvious that accomplishing goals leads to greater joy. After all, who wouldn't want to win Olympic gold, dine at the White House, marry the love of one's life, or see one's children graduate from college?

The real reason why a life list can bring you more joy, however, is a bit more complex, even though it's not a "secret." This is where our book is revolutionary and different from every other book that has ever been published on the topic of goal pursuit and how it is connected with life satisfaction. Our theory doesn't involve any magical thinking, chanted affirmations, or the visualization of fancy red sports cars and lavish homes. We also do not pass along unproven anecdotes that don't offer empirical evidence to support our step-by-step guide to creating, and then accomplishing, the goals that matter most to you.

Proven, Time-Tested, and Simple

Findings from thirty years of research on life satisfaction show that happiness requires having clear-cut goals in life that give us a sense of purpose and direction. When we make progress toward satisfying our most cherished needs, goals, and wishes in the sixteen areas of life that contribute to contentment, we create well-being. Our research also shows that when we make progress toward attaining goals in one area of life, we raise our overall life satisfaction in other areas because of the potent "spillover" effect.

Our approach includes some of the most recent findings in the emerging science of positive psychology, a rapidly growing movement comprised of scholars, academics, and clinicians who are finding that we can become happier through such practices as gratitude, using our strengths effectively, and accomplishing goals that are tied to our values. We also bring decades of our own experience of working with clients all over the world to the table, and we share many of their stories here with you.

If you follow our step-by-step method, you will learn what areas of life matter most to you, what types of goals will bring you the greatest satisfaction, how to pursue them to completion, and how to flexibly disengage from goal pursuit that no longer suits your day-to-day reality. You will also learn happiness-boosting strategies that will increase your persistence and zest, as well how to cope with the inevitable disappointments and setbacks that can threaten to undermine all goal pursuit. In short, we give you a complete step-by-step guide to understanding how to set and achieve goals, and we show you how and why this pursuit has the impact of making you happier, too.

A Fun Enterprise

Too often, we resist setting goals because of failed attempts at New Year's resolutions, or because we equate goals with tasks, which can feel more like a burden than anything else. With Americans spending less and less time on leisure pursuits and more time juggling job demands, parenthood, aging parents, and other challenging situations, having one more thing to do can be overwhelming.

The purpose of this book is to show you how creating a life list can be effective as well as fun. Identifying goals that involve creative pursuits, and that put you into a state of "flow," can be fun, and it's also fun to have travel goals that give you something to plan for and anticipate. Sharing your goals with other proactive people, and finding ways to brainstorm about them so that you wake up with a contagious feeling that life is filled with opportunities is also a lot of fun!.

Goals should never be designed to punish us, and they should never be goals that we adopt because someone else feels they would be good for us. Rather, our work with clients has shown that clearly chosen goals that are anchored in our own values and the areas of life that matter to us give us an exciting feeling that others will recognize as zest and a can-do attitude, and by the end of this book, we believe you will feel this way, too.

A Hopeful Outlook

What keeps me going is goals.

—Muhammad Ali

A good life list is one that makes you feel hopeful about yourself, your future, and the manifold opportunities that will arise as a result of your endeavors. Rick Snyder, the founder of hope theory, said that when a person has goals, he or she begins to think more creatively about how to achieve them, and that this "pathways thinking" results in a more hopeful outlook on life. People who are hopeful are happier, and they work much more persistently and flexibly toward goal completion. Not only will our life list theory show you how to be more hopeful, but you'll discover for yourself why it pays off handsomely in goal accomplishment.

Positively Contagious

Groundbreaking work at Harvard Medical School by Dr. Nicholas Christakis has shown that one's likelihood of becoming obese is more closely correlated with who your friends are than with what you eat. He has also discovered that smokers don't quit smoking alone; they quit in clusters. We also see this "social contagion" factor in our work with clients, who find that becoming more focused about setting and attaining goals in the domains of life that are important to them has the result of making those around them more proactive, too. They also find themselves drawn to spending more time with people who share their upbeat outlook.

Consider the case of Bob Perini, the founder of DrinkMoreWater, a company in Maryland. Bob decided that he wanted to break into the list of the five hundred fastest-growing companies charted in *Inc.* magazine, so he posted that goal—along with a number of other personal and professional goals—on a list outside his office. Everyone who came to speak to him had to pause and look at Bob's goals before they met with him.

The results astounded Bob, even though he already believed in the power of life lists. Not only did his company vault into *Inc.* magazine's lists, rising steadily for several years in a row, but goal lists became commonplace at DrinkMoreWater.

"I put a dry erase board in a common area in the company headquarters," Bob recounted later. "People wrote down their goals on this huge board, and I got a huge kick out of knowing that people could see me standing in front of the board, looking at their goals."

It's no wonder that the company has become so successful that Bob has gone into semiretirement and now lives on a multi-acre spread in the bucolic suburbs of Washington, D.C., and that he has time to pursue other goals on his life list, such as traveling extensively with his wife and children and mountain biking with friends throughout the American Southwest.

Every List Is Unique

We are often asked whether life lists should be studded with exotic trips that drain our bank accounts, particularly after *The Bucket List* depicted daring and expensive escapades that most of us can only dream about. The emphatic answer is no. Your life list is unique, and if you follow

our step-by-step approach, it will not replicate anyone else's list, nor should it. Just as we are all distinct individuals with different chromosomes, backgrounds, and family situations, we all have our own passions, longings, strengths to tap, and goals that reflect where we want to go and what we wish to leave behind as our legacy.

Even after years of working with clients, we are always fascinated by the extraordinary variety of meaningful goals we see on their life lists, from "Tell my father I love him before he dies" to "Make people laugh or feel hopeful if they encounter me during the day." Others we've seen include taking trips to far-flung locations that have peppered the imagination for decades to donating blood regularly because of possessing a rare blood type. Let your imagination, your heart, and your soul be your guides as you go through this process, but don't be afraid to peek at someone else's list from time to time, because you never know what it might trigger inside of you!

Where Your Life List Is Now

At the moment, your personal goals are probably swirling through your head in a mad rush of pictures and words, and your pulse might be slightly quicker because you're beginning to dream about your immediate and long-term future. Decide right now if you'd like to dedicate a special journal to the process of creating your life list, or if you'd like to scribble notes in the margins of this book as you read and fill in the exercises at the end of the book. Of course, you can do both. There is no right or wrong way to go through this process, but we do encourage you to give this book a workout, regardless of your approach. This guide has been designed to provide you with all the tools and checklists you need to understand and refine the process of goal accomplishment, but we expect that you may want to add a notebook or binder to this process, and we encourage you to use whatever tools make creating your own life list fun and easy. Before we get to the actual making of the lists, however, we will provide a bit more background on just how important they are in the creation of one's happiness, and why understanding and applying the findings from the new science of positive psychology can make or break your efforts to accomplish your goals. By the time we get to Chapter Five, where you will read about a variety of new ways to create your own list, you will have a solid grounding in the research about how and why this all fits together.

WORKSHEETS

This book has a number of worksheets that I created for readers to use as they come across different ideas and practices that they want to try. People who have purchased the book can get free downloads of these worksheets by emailing proof of book purchase to caroline@carolinemiller.com. One of the original worksheets from the 2008 book is included here, but to be kept abreast of newer worksheets that I've developed over the years for use with clients in organizations and workshops, it's best to subscribe to my regular newsletter at www.carolinemiller.com.

Enjoy this worksheet on how to identify and change the “black holes and bright lights” you encounter every day. In order to succeed in our goals, knowing who is in our corner and who is not can be determined in a number of ways, including through a sheet that designates who energizes us and who does not. And please let me hear from you about what else you want to learn around goal-setting, and what has helped you, so that my next book – also about the best evidence-based practices of goal pursuit – can include your thoughts and questions.

We are also collecting pictures of people holding up “Creating Your Best Life” and sharing a story about something they learned or accomplished after reading the book to use in our publicity campaign for the book's reissue in 2020. Please share those pictures with us via email or on Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn with #CYBL. Thank you for now bringing your support for my evidence-based work to the world through a social media format that didn't exist when the book was originally published. And, as always, enthusiastic reviews on Amazon, GoodReads and similar sites are an author's best friend, and doing them in video can make a big difference, too!



Bright Lights & Black Holes

Date: _____

circle one

6:00 am	1 2 3 4 5
8:00 am	1 2 3 4 5
10:00 am	1 2 3 4 5
12:00 pm	1 2 3 4 5
2:00 pm	1 2 3 4 5
4:00 pm	1 2 3 4 5
6:00 pm	1 2 3 4 5
8:00 pm	1 2 3 4 5
10:00 pm	1 2 3 4 5
12:00 am	1 2 3 4 5

Copy this form and use it for a week to track how you feel at various times during the day. Write down who you are with at the times on this sheet, or who you are talking to on the phone or engaging in another way, such as email. Then rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 on your well-being, with one being the worst you can feel and five being the best. At the end of one week, you will have a good idea of which situations and which people constitute the “black holes” and “bright lights” in your life.

Creating Your Best Life – The Ultimate Life List Guide

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\$22.95 CAN.

Creating Your Best Life broke new ground with this comprehensive and evidence-based guide to accomplishing any goal on your life list. In these pages, the science of positive psychology meets the science of goal accomplishment for the first time, to give readers an understanding of how happiness is connected to success and why you must understand both if you want to make all of your dreams come true. Unique tests and worksheets are provided to make this a fun and interactive experience.

Caroline Adams Miller, MAPP, is an internationally known speaker, professional coach, and author on the topics of goal-setting, happiness, and grit. Miller is a graduate of Harvard University and was one of the first to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania with a coveted Master's degree in Applied Positive Psychology. Miller teaches at the Wharton School of Executive Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

“Caroline Miller brings together positive psychology research and hands-on exercises into a unique mix, a manual for defining one’s life goals and making strides toward achieving them.”—

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