

Lifestyle

BUCKET LISTS ARE COMMON, UNIQUE

By **Rick Brewer**

January 10, 2008

Record Staff Writer

Dianne Pierce-Repp, a self-employed consultant from Frederick, Md., called on the eve of her lifelong dream voyage.

For 35 years, Pierce-Repp said, her biggest goal was to sail the ocean blue. The next day she flew to Portugal and boarded a five-mast schooner for a three-week sailing across the Atlantic Ocean to Barbados.

So deep was her desire, Pierce-Repp plastered the boat's picture on her computer desktop for a year and wore a bracelet with a two-line inscription from a Walt Whitman poem: "The untold want by life and land ne'er granted/Now voyager, sail thou forth to seek and find."

Pierce-Repp, 50, said the first item that made her dream possible was a life list. She wrote it down with a series of other goals that she intends to complete during her lifetime. She shared it with her husband (who's not on the voyage) and some close friends.

"Writing it down motivated me and committed me to do the things I really thought I never would or could," she said.

Life lists, or the 100 things you want to do before you die, have been around awhile. But the notion of regular Joes developing one is drawing more attention this winter thanks to "The Bucket List," which opens Friday. Directed by Rob Reiner, the film's premise is that two older cancer patients, played by Academy Award-winners Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, decide to perform a series of stunts, such as skydiving and driving a race car, before they kick the bucket.

"Find the joy in your life," Freeman tells Nicholson.

From visiting the great pyramids to appearing on "Jeopardy!" each person's list is unique, say experts in the fields of positive psychology and life coaching. But there seem to be several common themes: more spirituality, better health, friendlier relationships and adventure.

Jotting down "smart" goals - those that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely - is an important way to check things off your list, said Ilona Koti, a Pollock Pines counselor who is completing a course in life coaching from the International Coaching Federation and has clients in San Joaquin County.

"It's important that you see it from time to time because for some reason that makes the goals more concrete," said Koti, who keeps her goal list in the Outlook section of her personal laptop.

"People want to be awed and inspired," said Caroline Miller, a life coach who runs the Web site www.your100things.com. There she reveals her personal life list as well as those of several clients. The ones Miller has personally accomplished are in bold type.

"Happy people have traits including optimism, self confidence and self-efficacy," Miller said. "They feel like if they set goals, they will accomplish them."

Life lists give people an opportunity to dream big, said Rochelle Melander, a Milwaukee-based author and former Lutheran pastor whose current list includes moving her family to San Diego.

"I see people who do life lists connect to a time in life when they were living with passion," she said. "They also help people decide what kind of legacies they want to leave behind."

Celebrities have revealed their lists for some time. Ellen DeGeneres devoted a segment of her talk show to life lists and encouraged audience members to write one. College football coach Lou Holtz wrote a list in the 1970s

and it included winning a national championship, coaching at Notre Dame and appearing on "The Tonight Show." He accomplished all three.

But life lists are not all about completing the goals, Miller and Melander say. Much of the fun in crossing items off a life list comes in the pursuit.

"It's as much about the journey," Melander said. "Planning, taking the little steps on the way to the big goal, they're all important."

Contact reporter Rick Brewer at (209) 546-8294 or rbrewer@recordnet.com.

Resources

www.your100things.com

www.43things.com

www.my50.com