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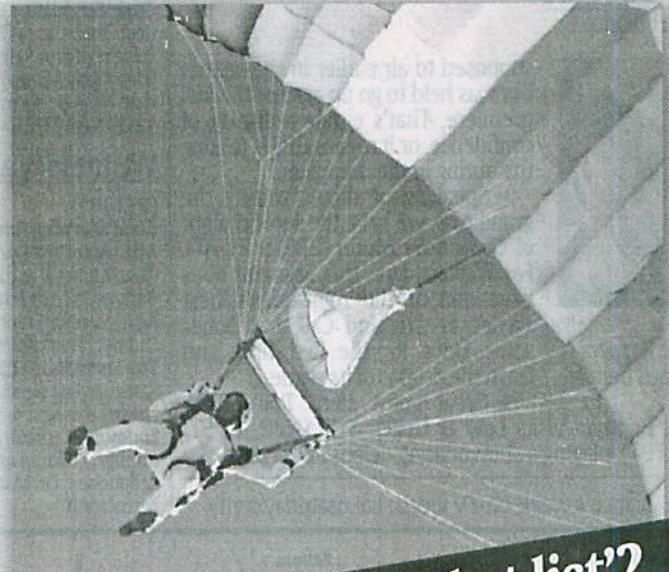
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What's on your 'bucket list'?



Jump on it before you kick

Some seize the day; others sit down first and make a list

By Cathy Lynn Grossman
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USA TODAY

Death bites. But dying while healthy, rich and free enough to drink life to the last drop is getting great press, thanks to a new movie.

Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman star in *The Bucket List*, a buddy flick in which they leap from planes, drive race cars, eat caviar, motorcycle on the Great Wall of China, and trot by other wonders of the world before they "kick the bucket."

The movie's premise resonates. Millions of people have a dream "do" list: all they would do if they could in life.

These lists tend to feature all the highlights on the aspirational horizon — acts of fancy, courage and delight, full of punch and flavor, adrenalin and imagination.

"It's not enough to react to life on a day-by-day basis. People need a road map. Life lists are one of the best ways to plumb the depths of the human psyche," says Caroline Adams Miller, a Bethesda, Md.-based author, motivational speaker and life coach who encourages clients to create a 100-item roster.

Her website, Your100things.com, posts goals and lets users see how their lists stack up. Among other such sites: 43things.com, Superviva.com and Reaperlist.com.

Travel is a common denominator on most life lists, fueled by the 2003 best seller *1,000 Places to See Before You Die* and a raft of successors.

Sasha Cagen, author of *To-Do List: From Buying Milk to Finding a Soul Mate, What Our Lists Reveal About Us*, says making travel goals also can "motivate you to get through the drudgery of a mundane job."

The January issue of *Smithsonian Magazine* features *28 Places to See Before You Die*, from the Pyramids of Giza to the giant stone heads on Easter Island to the Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights.

The Bucket List's exotic backdrops — the Great Pyramids, the Taj Mahal, an African safari — notwithstanding, Miller says that "many people don't have a longing to go to far-flung places. If they're honest, travel goals should reflect inner



Things to do before he dies: Jack Nicholson plays a terminally ill cancer patient with a "bucket list."

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passions and values."

Most accomplishments on people's lists are more personal. On the website 43Things.com, where 1.2 million people have posted their personal lists in the past three years, according to *The New York Times*, the top goal is losing weight.

Freeman says he has movies he still wants to make. Ellen DeGeneres wants to learn Spanish; Beyoncé, a lifelong dancer, crossed ballet off her list (too hard) but added learning Arabic.

When USA TODAY asked readers about their lists, many had destinations, accomplishments and relationships in mind.

Genny Scott, 49, who works at the county jail in Goldendale, Wash., most wants to "learn to scuba dive and see the Great Barrier Reef in person. I've never been any-

where that the ocean is warm enough to stick your toes in."

She also wants to research her family roots, swim with dolphins and become a nature biologist. One item she's already started: working on a novel, she says. "So that's not totally unattainable."

Wayne Palmer's list is a mix of "fantasies, reality (and) duty."

Like the film buddies, Palmer, 46, an engineering technician in West Allis, Wis., wants to sky-dive. "I just have to lose a few pounds first."

His travel list highlights the last five U.S. states he hasn't visited (Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Vermont) and the Holy Land, to see the sunrise from a mountaintop and to look up an old pal.

Interior designer Lisa Echard, 43, of Taylorsville, N.C., has already checked off items, including riding in a hot-air balloon, "which actually landed, accidentally, in a lake," seeing the Grand Canyon, and accompanying her husband on his life-list goal of visiting Australia.

Still on the list: "Make myself a handmade quilt; see Paris and about 20 other places outside the U.S.; live in the Pacific Northwest, even for just a year to try somewhere different; write a book."

Possibly most important, Echard says: "Find a meaningful way to enrich other people's lives — outside

of my own family."

The Rev. Kerry Shook and his wife, Chris, are leading 500 churches nationwide in a program that challenges them to live the next 30 days as if they were their last. They did the challenge at their church, Fellowship of The Woodlands, in a Houston suburb. Their book on the challenge, *One Month to Live: Thirty Days to a No-Regrets Life*, is due in stores Feb. 5. It addresses "the big difference between a full life and a fulfilling life," he says.

In their pilot program, people took the honeymoon they'd foregone for 25 years, lost weight, quit smoking and clocked adventures, but most took it to a higher plane, including a woman who forgave the man who killed her son.

"We are all encouraged to leave a small ecological footprint and a huge spiritual footprint," Kerry Shook says.

The Shooks have four teenagers, and the couple's own list included more time and deeper conversations together. "It's the relational shortcomings that most haunt people in life," he adds.

The Bucket List movie ultimately sends its two wanderers to the people, not the places, who matter.

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