

The Bucket List

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stony Brook, NY, March 2012
Rev. Margie Allen, Rev. Dr. Linda Anderson (Peter Bowden 2008, adapted)

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

Lord, let me know the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. Psalm 39: 4

It is only when we truly know and understand we have limited time on earth and that we have no way of knowing when our time is up that we will begin to live each day to the fullest, as if it were the only one we had. ~Elizabeth Kubler Ross

Check-in

[*Open check-in or this suggested focus: When you were in elementary school, what did you want to be when you grew up? When you were graduating from high school?*]

Contemplation in Silence

[*Facilitators: Please make available to your participants a copy of the graphic “Where Magic Happens,” one half-sheet per person. Provide two full minutes for the group to sit with the image in silence. Then invite each person in the group to share one word or phrase that comes up for them out of the silence. Just one word or phrase.*]

Topic Focus

In the movie *The Bucket List*, billionaire Edward Cole, played by Jack Nicholson, and trivia-wise mechanic Carter Chambers, played by Morgan Freeman, befriend each other in the hospital as they discover they each have only six months to a year to live. After Edward finds a list of things Carter wants to do before he kicks the bucket, his bucket list, Edward offers to finance the adventure of a lifetime. Leaving Carter’s wife and grown children behind, the two head off to tackle a joint bucket list.

We do not know what happens after we die, though there are many theories and theologies that address that question. Despite any differences of opinion we might have about what comes next, there is no question that we are faced with same challenge – making the most of this lifetime.

Activity

[*Facilitators: Provide small pads or paper and pens or pencils for this exercise. About 10 minutes would probably give people enough time to make a useful list. Let participants know that this is a private list. They will be sharing only what they are comfortable sharing.*]

Imagine you have a limited amount of time to live (a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of five years) and that you will be relatively healthy in the meantime. Money is no object; you have an adequate, though not exorbitant, personal fund for your pursuit of your listed aspirations. What would you want to do, see, experience, create, become, try, change, risk before your dying day?

Guiding Questions

1. What kinds of emotions came up for you in creating your list? What thoughts and feelings came up for you about where you are at this point in your life? What was it like for you to imagine you had 6 months to one year left to live?

2. Looking at your complete list, do any of the items point to some underlying unmet needs? (For example, the need to: experience more pleasures or play time; have certain kinds of opportunities for personal growth, have experiences that support one's connection with larger life, or build something in order to leave your mark behind). Does your list in some way reflect some larger or broader longing within, perhaps a particular aspect of your individual spirituality or orientation to life?
3. Given the unlikeliness that a billionaire will fund your "bucket" pursuits, what can you do now to attempt to address your list in real life? What items on your bucket list are doable in the next 3 to 6 months?
4. If a stranger found your list somewhere and read it, how would the stranger describe who you are in terms of your beliefs, values, and priorities? Is the description the stranger might offer consistent with how you would like people to remember you after you have died?
5. Were there items on other people's list that you have added or would like to add to yours?
6. If it were possible to find out what the exact day and time of your death would be, would you want to know?

Likes & Wishes

What was especially wonderful about this Sharing Circle gathering? How well did the group function together in experiencing the session? Are there any aspects of the covenant that need to be reviewed and discussed?

Closing Words and Chalice Extinguishing

My invitation to you is to begin living every moment as though you are miraculous and deserve to live an extraordinary life. Fake it, if you must, and keep faking it until it's real to you. The gift you will be giving yourself is a lifelong journey of discovery, one that is infinite and infinitely rewarding.

Begin the journey.

Today.

This moment.

Now.

~Robert White

Quotes

To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe. ~*Anatole France*

The most wasted of all days is one without laughter. ~*E. E. Cummings*

Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them. ~*Henry David Thoreau*

You know, the ancient Egyptians had a beautiful belief about death. When their souls got to the entrance to heaven, the guards asked two questions. Their answers determined whether they were able to enter or not. ‘Have you found joy in your life?’ ‘Has your life brought joy to others?’ ~*The Bucket List movie*

The purpose of life, after all, is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience. ~*Eleanor Roosevelt*
The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss, but that it is too low and we reach it. ~*Michelangelo*

Everyone who got where he is has had to begin where he was. ~*Robert Louis Stevenson*

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals. ~*Zig Ziglar*

If we did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves. ~*Thomas Edison*

Watch your thoughts, for they become words. Watch your words, for they become actions. Watch your actions, for they become habits. ~*Unkown*

Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending. ~*Unknown*

Do not lose hold of your dreams or aspirations. For if you do, you may still exist but you have ceased to live. ~*Henry David Thoreau*

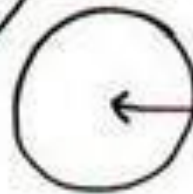
Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment. ~*Jim Rohn*

If you want your life to be a magnificent story, then begin by realizing that you are the author and every day you have the opportunity to write a new page. ~*Mark Houlahan*

If we're growing, we're always going to be out of our comfort zone. ~*Author Unknown*

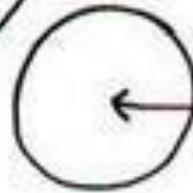
The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one. ~*Elbert Hubbard*

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