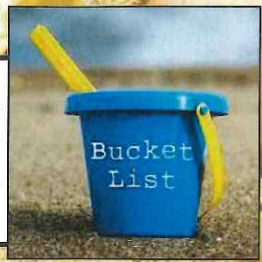


TO YOUR HEALTH



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Before I Die I Want To...

By Marcia Feldman,
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What is on your Bucket List? Do you have unmet goals, incomplete dreams, longings, unfulfilled wishes? Are there places you've always wanted to travel and experience but never got to see? If you were told you only had a limited amount of time left on this earth, what would be your heart's desire? With whom would you choose to be? Where would you go and what would you do?

One person started a movement to explore some of these questions in an interactive public art installation. After Candy Chang, an artist in New Orleans, experienced the death of someone close to her, she had an idea for her community. From her sadness and grief she created an interactive wall on the side of an abandoned house in her neighborhood in New Orleans. Her idea grew out of her desire to know her neighbors better and not feel so alone. She got permission and painted the side of the empty house with a grid and the sentence, "Before I Die I Want To"...

She left colored chalk with the hopes that people would share their personal aspirations and dreams in this public space. She didn't know what to expect, but by the next day the wall was full of comments. The responses gave her a new and deeper understanding of her neighbors. It reminded her that we are all trying to make sense of this life and that she was not alone.

Some responses were poignant, some were funny. Chang got to know her neighbors in a new way that would have never been apparent had she not created the space for them to express themselves anonymously. Had the anonymity been different, they may have held back on their aspirations. But people let themselves dream big knowing that they were safe to express their heart's desire.

Some of the responses were:

- Before I Die I want to ...*travel the world*
- Before I Die I want to ...*be someone's cavalry*
- Before I Die I want to *hold her one more time*
- Before I Die I want to ...*plant a tree*
- Before I Die I want to ...*fall in love*
- Before I Die I want to ...*name a star*
- Before I Die I want to ...*sing for millions*
- Before I Die I want to ...*increase the peace*

Chang posted pictures of the wall online and the idea spread. Hundreds of people from all over the world contacted her wanting to make a wall in their community. So she created a website, <http://beforeidie.cc/> and gave instructions on how to build the wall.

The concept of the wall caught on and now, according to her website, there are "over 1,000 Before I Die walls in over 35 languages and over 70 countries, including Kazakhstan, Iraq, Haiti, China, Ukraine, Portugal, Japan, Denmark, Argentina, and



South Africa.” Chang was featured discussing her project in a TED talk at <https://www.ted.com>. She published photos of the walls in a book called, “Before I Die”.

The fact that this idea was adopted worldwide shows that we all share a common desire to experience goals we have not yet met. In a time of such heightened global turmoil when our differences are accentuated by terrorism, wars and fear, it is comforting to know that humans also share many similar aspirations and hopes.

What would be on your wall? Are there steps we can each take to actualize our heart’s desire?

Longevity and Happiness

By Susan Cusson

National Geographic explorer Dan Buettner identified places in the world where higher percentages of people enjoy remarkably long, full lives. He calls these “*Blue Zones*”. After identifying 5 of the world’s Blue Zones, Sardinia (Italy), Okinawa (Japan), Loma Linda (California), Nicoya Peninsula (Costa Rica) and Icaria (Greece), teams of scientists studied each location to identify lifestyle characteristics that might explain longevity.

In his book ***The Blue Zones***, he describes nine specific characteristics shared by Blue Zone residents:

- 1) Moderate, regular physical activity
- 2) Life purpose
- 3) Stress reduction
- 4) Moderate caloric intake
- 5) Plant-based diet
- 6) Moderate alcohol intake, especially wine
- 7) Engagement in spirituality or religion
- 8) Engagement in family life
- 9) Engagement in social life

According to the 2016 World Happiness Report, the top three happiest countries in the World are Denmark, Switzerland and Iceland. The U.S. doesn’t appear until farther down the list, in the no. 13 spot. What are the secrets to bliss in those top-ranked nations?

“None of these happy places do just one thing, it’s really about their everyday mindset and activities”, Buettner says. He points to four joy-inducing habits we can steal from the Danes, Swiss and Icelanders.

- 1) **Focus on staying active.** Incorporate more movement into your everyday life
- 2) **Appreciate the beauty of nature.** Green spaces and happiness are strongly linked
- 3) **Stay in touch** with your friends and neighbors and spend time with loved ones
- 4) **Turn off the TV.** The study showed that those who report feeling the most joy watch just 45 minutes of TV a day

More information about this five year global study on the keys to personal happiness can be found in his book ***Thrive***.

