

Reverse Bucket List

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by Rev. Dr. Sonja Tobey

Several years ago, as part of some research I was working on, I looked up what people put on their bucket list. As it turns out, there's a website for that.

(<http://bucketlistjourney.net/my-bucket-list>) I was looking through some of the things that people put on their bucket list, partially as related to the research, and partially for ideas for my own bucket list. Some of the ideas I had no interest in, but others were intriguing.

If you are unfamiliar with the concept of a bucket list, it is a list of things you want to do before you "kick the bucket." What I discovered looking through the ideas people had put forward was that I had already done quite a few of the things listed as ideas for a bucket list. I began to think of how many things I had accomplished and experienced in my life that others were still waiting to do. There were 886 ideas on this list, so I began to count how many of them had already checked off. Of the 886 ideas, I had done 200 of them. Then I began to think of this as a way to count blessings. I came to the realization I have a great life. I may not have everything, but what I have is pretty good.

When you focus on the positives and what you have, you will find you are very rich indeed. When you only focus on what you do not have, the negative things in life, you will always feel as if you do not have enough and that your life is lacking or unhappy, not complete or fulfilled. This applies no matter who you are or what is going on in your life. It is a way of celebrating the good and joyous, and diminishing that which brings sorrow.

Over the years I have found that this applies to people as well. You can focus on everything a person is not and they will always be found lacking. Or, you can focus on all the positives about a person and even they will begin to see what is good in them. It is simply a matter of choice and remembering. Sometimes we would rather complain about what isn't right, than celebrate what is working. Many of the people that focus on all that is wrong with the world often find they have a hard time connecting with God. I believe there is a correlation there.

Are you a person that focuses on the negative? Perhaps you are one that looks for the worst in people, who spreads stories about others, and then from only in the worst possible light? If you find you are guilty of this, I would suggest you look to yourself. Look at all that is good in you. Make a reverse bucket list of all the things in your life you have done, experienced, seen, and accomplished. When you focus on the good that is yours, you will find it easier to see the good in others. Your relationships will blossom around you and you and others will be better for it.

The bible expresses it this way, "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think

about these things.” (Phil. 4:8 NRSV) Look for the good in yourself and others, and you will find God there.

You are glorious beloved children of God,

Rev. Sonja Tobey