

"This isn't just a book, it's a guide to making your bucket list a reality!"  
CARL RICHARDS - *New York Times* Sketch Guy columnist



THE  
**EVERYDAY**  
*Bucket List* BOOK

10 Steps to Bring  
More Exciting Experiences  
to Everyday Life



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## Step 1

### Start with a Broader Definition of the Term, “Bucket List”

What exactly qualifies as a bucket list item? Is it doing daredevil activities such as skydiving, parasailing, or zip lining every other week? Is it having a social media feed constantly filled with pricey, exotic, far away vacations? Or, is it something you cram into a phase of life all at once?

Your bucket list will be a list of things you’ve never tried but want to do before you die. In order to clarify expectations right from the start, let’s clearly define what a bucket list is before we create it. In an effort to understand and expand this definition more fully, I put together the acronym B.U.C.K.E.T.

- Be on the lookout
- Understand what you value
- Customize it to your situation
- Keep it simple
- Ever-evolving
- Take time to store information

#### **Be on the lookout**

I once attended a food and wine festival in New York. It was a lively event full of unique people and delicious new cuisine. Afterward, I told my friends about it and they all asked me how I heard about the event. I saw it on Groupon. I just happened to be browsing and I stumbled upon it. I’m always looking for new and exciting things to do and see.

I also ask my friends, who are avid travelers, for recommendations on activities that they’ve done. This cuts back on the time it takes to research and you can ask them any specific questions you might have. By asking questions, I avoid wasting time and money going somewhere that I won’t end up liking.

My friend and hobby blogger George Papadopoulos (not the infamous one in the news) runs the site [TravelBloggerBuzz.com](http://TravelBloggerBuzz.com) and says, “Being friendly with the lounge staff at hotels can go a long way.” He suggests asking them what a first-time visitor should see or do in the area. He recommends finding out the top three things people should do while in town, so you don’t miss out on what the area has to offer.

He says, “We received one of the most outstanding tips this way!” While in Quebec, he and his family were told that Cirque du Soleil had a free outdoor show running in the summer. Papadopoulos explains, “We just happened to be there for the final show, it was spectacular!”

Tap into any resources that are helpful to you. I personally like talking to people to ask questions, but there are many reviews on sites like TripAdvisor.com where people leave detailed information about their experiences. This can help you make a more informed decision.

### **Understand what you value**

When you start to make your list, it’s natural to poke around and see what others are doing. It’s one thing to compare notes and get ideas. It’s another when those comparisons make you feel as if your plans don’t measure up. The comparison trap is real. Don’t get caught up in that. Design your bucket list around your preferences. Think about what’s important to you and let your interests guide the way. Honor your own unique ideas. Though we can do what others are doing if we genuinely want to, my bucket list will look different from yours and that’s the point.

### **Customize it to your situation**

Tailor what you choose around your circumstances and budget. Fun experiences are all around us. Sometimes we take that for granted. Social media and travel magazines can give us a skewed idea of what fun should look like. Unless you’re independently wealthy and have an extremely flexible schedule, your bucket list ideas aren’t going to look like a travel agency’s Instagram.

**I’m writing this book so that people don’t feel their bucket list activities have to be incredibly picturesque or grandiose.** You should still take trips to beautiful places, but you shouldn’t feel “less than” if you’re not able to do so on a regular basis. Sometimes we think we need to go far away for something to “count” as an exciting adventure when really there could be many exciting things to do nearby.

If you’ve been putting off your bucket list because you aren’t currently able to do any of the ideas you listed, then maybe you’ve written down some things that aren’t attainable. Remember that enjoyment is enjoyment. Unrealistic goals might be discouraging you from chipping away at your list. If you live by a “go big or go home” attitude, you might spend every weekend at home. Isn’t it better to do something rather than nothing? Drop some of the out of reach ideas for now and rewrite your bucket list with more tangible goals for where you are.

## **Keep it simple**

Make things easy for yourself. If the weekend is the only free time you have, start there. Organize a day trip here, dinner at a fancy restaurant there, and focus on plans you can make happen on the weekend. Do what's easiest to start and get some plans in motion. It will build momentum and ensure that you'll have a number of activities to do that are within your budget and capabilities.

## **Ever-Evolving**

As you start checking items off your list, unique opportunities may present themselves and new ideas might unfold. One activity can be a springboard for a bunch of other exciting activities to explore. Maybe seeing one musical inspires you to see others. Maybe hiking one area will lead to other hiking adventures. When I visited The Today Show in New York, it sparked interest in seeing all of my other favorite shows. As a result of that experience, I then made it a point to see The Rachel Ray Show, The Chew, The Dr. Oz Show, and others.

The people I would meet in the audience typically frequented other live TV shows, and they often shared details about how to get tickets and what the wait was like outside of the other shows. Talking with others makes it easy to build excitement for the future while also taking some of the work out of cold researching and planning. You'll also have a number of activities to do that are within reach. I live in Connecticut, so a day trip to New York was manageable for me. Think of what works for your situation.

## **Take time to store information**

While you can use any of the ideas mentioned or readily access the search engines when you actively plan, sometimes inspiration strikes at unlikely times. If you have ever seen a place or heard of a destination and thought, "I would like to go there," but have then completely forgotten about it by the next day, think about creating a system to store pertinent details in one spot.

You can gather the information in the moment so you can easily access it later when you need it. A system like this will allow you to glean inspiration from others and make the planning process more efficient. Check out tools like Asana, Trello, Evernote, Panda Planner and others, to keep your bucket list ideas handy.

## **Other Tips to Keep in Mind**

The steps in this book will help you see things to completion. In general, it's easier to follow through when you choose items that you truly want to do from the start.

Along with following the steps, there are some other key ingredients to keep in mind to make this process successful. One of which, is motivation. Choosing something that truly excites you is essential. It will give you the drive to finish what you start. Think about why you are choosing to do something. For example, if you say you want to run a marathon, but a sense of dread comes over you when it comes time to practice, that can clearly be an indicator that it's not a match.

Another key ingredient is commitment. Some bucket list items will take more sacrifice than others. If running a marathon is something you truly want to devote time to doing, you'll need to carve out time to practice. You might have to scale back on something else to make this work. Choose carefully and don't take on more than you can handle. You don't want it to interfere with other priorities. I titled this book *The Everyday Bucket List Book* so that what you choose can be incorporated into everyday life.

No matter if you choose something that is an ongoing commitment or a one-time adventure, in addition to setting aside time to make it happen, consider carving out time regularly just to work on your bucket list goals. Set yourself up for success by devoting a little planning and effort to making things happen. You'll have the structure of the steps to guide you along the way and a "built-in" appointment to get things done. The planning process might even be something to look forward to, in and of itself. In keeping with this broader definition, carrying out your B.U.C.K.E.T. list will allow you to have more fun, more often and fill your calendar with creative bucket list ideas while staying true to yourself and your situation.

## About the Author



As a busy working parent, Karen Cordaway spent years struggling to find free time for herself. That is until she learned how to reclaim her schedule and infuse more exciting bucket list experiences into everyday life. With a little planning, a bit of strategy, and a dash of creativity, she turned her bucket list dreams into reality! *The Everyday Bucket List Book: 10 Steps to Bringing More Exciting Experiences to Everyday Life* is her signature, step-by-step process to help others, just like you, do the same.

As a former Nationally Syndicated Personal Finance Writer, Karen's articles for U.S. News, Clark Howard, and Huffington Post have been seen across the internet. She has also shared her insight in Money Magazine, Yahoo Finance, The Consumerist, Rockstar Finance, Market Watch, and even O Magazine. Karen now serves individuals who are looking to lead a more exciting and fulfilling life.

Her strategies have helped people around the world overcome the 'stuck' feeling by finding ways to creatively use the time and resources they have at their disposal. Inside *The Everyday Bucket List Book*, Karen helps everyday people live extraordinary lives by sharing proven systems that work. Karen's systematic yet simple approach to living a more satisfying life is rooted in the belief that a bucket list shouldn't just contain over-the-top, once-in-a-lifetime activities. An everyday bucket list won't require breaking the bank or quitting your job. Karen is living proof that even the busiest of people can live a happy and rewarding bucket list lifestyle every single day.