

Opinion

## **GUEST COLUMN: Never too late to start a bucket list**

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Posted Jun 19, 2018 at 1:08 PM

Updated Jun 19, 2018 at 1:08 PM

Travel the world. Learn a new language. Write a memoir. Most of us have ideas about what we'd like to do or achieve in life, and whether or not we formally write the ideas down, our wishes and dreams serve as our own personal bucket list.

In childhood, completing our bucket list seemed like a far-fetched fantasy, and the responsibilities of adulthood often leave little time to follow our dreams. As seniors, however, we're finally granted more free time to pursue our desires.

Having more free time can also lead to feelings of sadness and isolation, but creating and working through a bucket list helps seniors live life to the fullest and achieve a sense of purpose and self-worth. Checking off bucket list items can also help seniors bond with loved ones and even make new friends.

### **Creating a bucket list**

Creating a bucket list is a chance to think about what else you'd like to accomplish in life. While seniors may have ideas about what should go on their bucket lists, writing those ideas down transforms a dream into a tangible, concrete goal. If you're looking for inspiration, start with your passions and interest. What brings you joy? What are you curious to learn more about?

It's important to remember that bucket lists can contain items both big and small — there are no right or wrong answers when it comes to making one. The goal is to simply create a list that is meaningful and personal. Consulting friends and family may be helpful for getting ideas, and working through a bucket list with loved ones can be a rewarding experience.

## **Checking off a bucket list**

Though seniors may face health challenges and mobility issues, completing bucket list items later in life is far from impossible. Whether looking to learn a new language, adopt a new hobby or play a new instrument, seniors can use apps, online tutorials and YouTube videos to get started. Caregivers and loved ones should be willing to lend support and work with a senior using these technologies for the first time — getting the senior a tablet or smartphone is a good idea as it will allow them to pursue their dreams from anywhere they please.

Traveling to certain destinations is on many of our bucket lists, but traveling is not always feasible in our older years. However, through books, television and online resources, seniors can explore foreign countries without stepping foot on an airplane. Virtual reality is also helping seniors travel in new ways. At Wingate at Norton, residents use virtual reality goggles to explore Mexico, Brazil, national parks and world-renowned museums. As more and more senior living communities adopt virtual reality, local seniors are often invited to experience the technology. Check with your local senior center, library or area agency on aging to see if there are any free virtual reality programs in your area.

A bucket list helps seniors pursue their passions and achieve their lifelong goals, and thanks to technology, seniors can now check off their bucket list items easier than ever before. Young or old, it's never too soon to start following your dreams.

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