

A Covid Bucket List 2021

When the movie, *The Bucket List*, came out over a decade ago, people embraced the concept. Their lists were in Christmas cards, on their social media feeds, tacked up to their refrigerators with little checkmarks against ones they were lucky enough to accomplish:

- *I want to see the Pyramids at night.*
- *I want hike the Pacific Crest Trail.*
- *I want to learn how to scuba dive and explore the shipwrecks from World War II in the Truk Lagoon.*



The phrase, *the bucket list* is, of course, so last decade. But, since Covid March 2020, our yearnings seem to have gone underground, or at least become more modest, even sweet:



- *I want to go out to dinner with friends, barefaced, and call across the table and laugh and sing Happy Birthday.*
- *I want a haircut.*
- *I want to hug my grandchild.*

Now that the vaccine is slowly being rolled out and there is a gleam of light at the end of this dark tunnel, we're reconsidering our options again. Those trips, those lessons, those skills are wiggling back to our frontal lobes. The health officials tell us to be patient, but you can already see it happening. We're eyeing those cheap flights and visiting vacation websites. They

even have a name for it now: vaxications. Our fingers are itching to set pen to paper and put it all down to be checked off one day. Back to normal!

Recently, though, I visited my daughter and her family and we stood outside, masks on, six feet apart, with some of their friends and children. I stood with the adults but was eavesdropping on the group of nine-year-olds, my grandson and his buddies draped across spaced-apart patio chairs; their tired and bored eyes showing above their masks.

I'm reminded of a movie scene of young but war-weary soldiers during a cease-fire at Christmas. They're leaning back against the hard soil of a bullet-blasted trench, their rifles propped up alongside them, wishfully talking about what they will do when they get back home.

But instead of punctuating their longing with, "When the war over, I'm going to...", these young boys sitting at my daughter's house start their sentences with, "When Covid is over, I'm going to..." Play soccer. Go to a movie. Even go back to school.

When it comes to the last boy, he exhales a world-weary sigh and says, "When Covid is over, I just want to be able to walk into my friends' houses."

The other boys don't say anything, barely even nod, but I watch their eyes. There's grim agreement there.

Yes, we'll get back to normal someday, but a large part of me hopes these boys will remember, as they're jetting off to surf the big waves on Maui's north shore or being rocketed into space on a commercial flight, a time when the most they wanted out of life was to be invited into people's homes.