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What's on your Bucket List?

Simply put, *a life of purpose.*

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January is always a time for reflection, but this year's presidential inauguration brings especially earnest thought and contemplation.

For me, 2009 is not only framed by our country's recent events, but milestones both personally and professionally.

My dream company, Ellipse, begins its tenth year of business springboarding from a record 2008 where we surpassed \$3.5M in revenue. And, I went to the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena.

Yes, *I went to the Rose Bowl Parade.* Since early childhood I was determined to go to Southern California on New Year's Day following in the footsteps of my great uncle. In 1954, immigrant Ragnar Benson, "Uncle Jim," flew to the parade and it became a legendary trip within family folklore. Throughout my life I grew only more determined to go.

Seems most everyone in Southern California shared my excitement. I have since realized this journey was on my "Bucket List," a phrase coined by a recent movie of the same name starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. I see irony in all this as I head toward my 46th birthday, as well; exactly half of my maternal grandmother's life span. I guess I am entering my own second term of life. Oh my.

Nobody ever thinks about their "second term." Well, maybe George W. did a bit

during the recent ceremonies. But really, have you ever heard it stated that way? It causes one to dig deep for some type of meaning, explanation and a personal discussion that often requires gazing into the eyes of a loved one.

Those remembering our 26-year-old employee, Steve Swan, murdered last year, certainly saw his future full of reward only to have it end abruptly. It makes me want to cry every time I think of him, but then again, it pushes me to make the most of life and live a life of purpose.

When asked over the holidays, "What do you want for Christmas?" I easily responded, "Gosh, I really don't want anything but continued good health, and the financial wherewithal to make a difference in people's lives. But I guess, if pressed, a Chili's gift card would be great." Anyone who knows me, knows I love Chili's.

If someone asked you to account for your bucket list, what say you? Interestingly enough, in my recent survey-by-Lisa, answers were diverse. Many presented well-considered ideals with meaningful and targeted expectations. In contrast, others shrugged and proclaimed they needed to think about it.

Let's put this in perspective: A goal is an immediate or obtainable objective toward which a person places sincere effort, focus and energy. A bucket list item can take a lifetime to reach, and if obtained, it's the person's responsibility to reset that mark, increase its impact and start again. It is available to everyone. I'm just lucky enough to have done mine.

Come to think of it, all I wanted was to see the Rose Parade. Now look.



Lisa Benson is the CEO and Co-Founder of Ellipse Communications, Inc.; the largest provider of custom applications and website development for the Multifamily Industry.