Have You Made the List?

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People need to make lists. It's what gives them the delusion of order in a life filled with chaos. As the year ends on an uncertain note, the best way to deal with the coming of yet another 365 days that have goodness-knows-what in store for us, is to make lists of various kinds.

At any given moment there is somebody making a list. A wedding planner will have a list of practically everything – the *byriani* caterer, the decorator, florist, videoman, photographer, faintly familiar adolescents ready to do the dances at the holud, Beautician 1, 2 and 3, wedding shop 1,2,3, master tailor 1, 2, 3, 4...

Many a couple have gone their separate ways because a partner forgot to bring a vital item on the grocery list.

Then there are a whole list of people who just like making lists for the sake of listing - List of things to find while cleaning out your couch, of things to do while getting your teeth cleaned, of curse words in a foreign language, of reasons to start a cult, of reasons to eat the last *chom chom*, of ways to stalk your crush and so on.

On the other extreme side of the spectrum are those who constantly challenge themselves and will have lists of near impossible things to do.



Procrastinators and disorganised folk have lists that tend to get longer than shorter. It's because they have to add on the today's 'to do' list with that of yesterday's, the day before yesterday's and so on. They make lists because it gives them a sense that they are actually *doing* something as opposed to nothing. A list demonstrates an intention, a genuine desire to clean the cake of dust behind the bed and buy the wedding gift of the couple about to celebrate their second anniversary. It means that we are sincere about getting things done, changing our ways. How many things we can cross out at the end of each day, however, is a million dollar question. Sometimes people have lists they have already done, just so they can cross them out and get that feeling of self-satisfaction.

There are lists people are dying to get on - the guest list of the New Year's party given by some dubious character who officially sells grains but moonlights in arms smuggling, the nominees for the year's Oscars, Bookers, Tonys etc; the list of invitees to a party leaders' pre-election or pre-oborodh party, list of nominees of candidates for an unopposed election and list of semi finalists of the Bangladeshi Idol contest.

Others are dying to get out of the list. This includes: hitlists (of assassins and vindictive gang leaders, politicians or serial killers); Bangladesh Bank's list of defaulters, list of criminals to be 'caught in the crossfire' or individuals to be 'goomed', person non grata list at the foreign office, list of OSD (Officials on Special Duty) candidates and list of those in the 'danger zone' in dance competitions.

Thus the urge to make lists seems universal whether it is written on a frayed notebook, a used envelope or in the latest app of the hippest mobile phone. As we know even the sharpest minds can have memory lapses and hence the need for lists.

These are not just those cliff hangers who have a list of summits to climb within the year. It includes politicians too. A highly ambitious politician (is there any other kind?) may have a list like this : 1. Increase wealth by fifty fold within the next 3 years. 2. Get multiple visas for EU, US and Canada for self, family and in-laws for quick exit strategy. 3. Buy a spotted deer for mother-in-law's birthday. 4. Send basket of fruits and cash to forest department. 5. Get prime plot near lake to add to the twenty four other pieces of land acquired during tenure. 6. Take over a school and turn it into a shopping mall. 7. Memorise the official lines of denial before press conference. 8. Make overtures to ruling party, then make a U-turn towards the opposition, basically, keep everyone guessing. 9. Give foreign well wishers and the general public the impression that a dialogue will happen despite obvious indications to the contrary. 10. Make people believe that a one-sided election with no foreign observers is good, beneficial and democratic.