A midlife crisis typically might lead someone to buy a new sports car, but for writer and actress Susan Cross, turning 36 led to a realization that she immediately needed to start living the life she'd always dreamed of. So she drew up a list of 40 things she wanted to achieve before she turned 40, and she acted on it. Among her goals: “Take someone I admire to lunch.” That led to a meeting with Nancy Alspaugh-Jackson, executive director of Autism Care and Treatment Today.

“I had written ‘Become involved with a cause I believe in’ and ‘Run a 5K’ — both of which I did through ACT Today,” Susan explains to OK!. “It began a domino effect. Once I crossed one goal off, three new opportunities just magically appeared.”

As for Susan, she’s getting more out of life and has written a book about it: 40 by 40: List It, Live It, Love Your Life. “I could not believe how drastically my life changed, how it just opened up the world to me,” Susan explains to OK!. “I hope for other people hearing this, a lightbulb might go off and they give themselves that ticket to living their full best lives.”

Learn more at 40by40.org and secretsofasuburbansoccermom.blogspot.com

Reese Witherspoon at the afterparty for Jason Aldean’s concert in L.A....