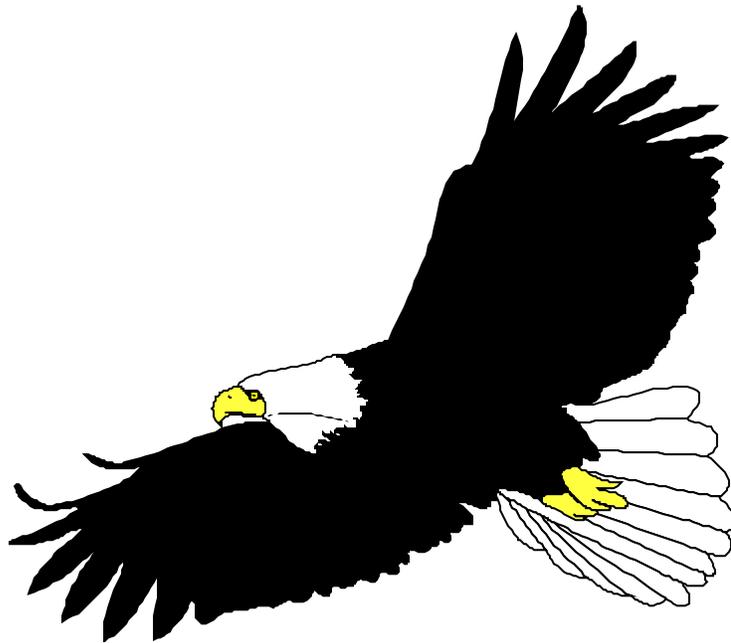


Life, Freedom & SURVIVAL

Observations On The Psychological and Philosophical
Aspects Of Survival and Self Reliance
For the 21st Century



By James C. Jones

**Life, Freedom
&
SURVIVAL**

James C. Jones

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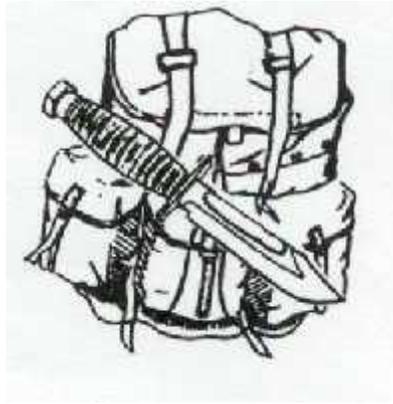
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About the Author

James C. Jones has been teaching and advocating civilian preparedness and self-reliance for over 40 years. He is a Certified Hazard Control Manager, a Certified Training Manager, and an Emergency Medical Technician. He currently is the Safety and Security Manager for a Midwestern chemical facility. Mr. Jones founded Live Free, USA in the 1960's. That organizations mission is, "To promote and support self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-protection, and freedom for responsible people of all races, religions, and nationalities." He has written many published articles on survival and self-reliance related subjects and has been interviewed for dozens of newspaper articles, television, and radio programs since the 1980s.



Dedicated to the survival and self-reliance practitioners of the past, without whom we would not exist, and the survival and self-reliance practitioners of the future without whom there is no hope.

Life Freedom & Survival

Observations On the Psychological and Philosophical Aspects of Survival and Self-Reliance

By: Jim Jones

PREFACE

One of the reasons that true survival and self-reliance philosophy is often misunderstood and even feared is that it does not attempt to tell anyone what to think or what to do. Instead, it dares to suggest that people can and should look at reality and think for themselves. Such ideas are inclined to challenge cherished myths and vested interests. Doing this kind of thinking can lead to making hard choices and doing hard things. Better to avoid them and take comfort in false security and fading freedoms. So it is unlikely that such ideas will generate a popular movement. In fact, the very nature of individualistic, self-reliance opposes centralized actions and ideological dogmas. What is presented in this book is a collection of ideas and observations related to emergency preparedness, safety, survival, self-reliance, self-protection and freedom preservation that the reader may chose to use or reject. It is intended as a collection of tools to use as needed to understand, explain, and pursue your own individual quest for greater survival capability, self-reliance potential, and freedoms of choice. It is my hope that those pursuing these goals in their thousands of variations will continue to be the strong core of society that can stand when others fall, hold on to values when others weaken, and give help when others have none to give.

Introduction

We are all a product of our own particular experiences and environment. We all are (or should be) continuously learning from the experiences in our lives and the lives of those around us. We all come to view the world through a lens that we create unless we have been foolish enough to let others create that lens for us. Having been born at the start of World War Two, grown up during the Cold War with alcoholic parents it is not surprising that I am psychologically and philosophically committed to self-reliance and preparedness. While I lived in Chicago there were, at that time enough undeveloped woodlands and marshes for escape and exploration in the natural environment. Later there were the experiences of Chicago south side high schools and industrial jobs to survive. I used my strengths in preparedness and organization to build a career in safety management while indulging in hobbies such as rock climbing, caving, and target shooting. I get to observe a lot of human nature as it relates to safety and survival and I have periodically written articles about my observations. I have been distressed when various writers and speakers have attempted to weld the values of self-reliance and preparedness to some negative political, racial, or religious agenda. This, in my view is misleading, destructive, and divisive. I assert that the values of self-reliance, preparedness, and personal independence stand-alone and are not confined to any group. Furthermore, the self-reliance and independence of one person or group should not and need not impede that of another.

The vast majority of “survival” literature focuses on the practical applications of survival and self-reliance skills. There is some attention given to survival psychology and very little to philosophy. Unfortunately the media often mistakenly assumes that an individual or group that practices some survival/self-reliance skills also must represent survival/self-reliance philosophy. This is seldom the case and does great harm to a truly constructive and important cause. There are some who would deny that there is such a thing as a survival/self-reliance philosophy. However there are values and ideas that I have found common to most responsible advocates of emergency preparedness and self-reliance. Having over 40 years to teach, practice, study, advocate, and analyze this mindset I have discovered a number of patterns and affects that are the foundation of the philosophy as I see it.

After some 40 years of studying, teaching, learning, observing and experiencing the concepts of responsible self-reliance, emergency preparedness, safety and self-defense I have identified a number of common ideas, values and concepts that I have put down in the following pages. Be aware that the ideas of survival and self-reliance are quite inseparable from the practices of responsible citizenship and smart living. It is also difficult to establish where the psychological aspect of an idea ends and the philosophical position begins. So in most cases you will find a psychological attitude supporting a philosophical idea that applies to both survival emergencies and life in general. Throughout these explorations, I found the word “choices” reoccurring as a key in human survival and individual freedoms. May your choices be many and good.

- **SURVIVAL depends on not being in the wrong place at the wrong time or doing the wrong thing with the wrong equipment and skills**

- **SUCCESS** depends on being in the right place at the right time doing the right things with the right equipment and skills.
- **FREEDOM** depends on being able to choose places to be, times to be there, things to be doing, skills to acquire and equipment to have.



What Is “Survival”?

For the purposes of this publication we will be defining survival as the preservation of the physical, psychological, and spiritual state of existence. While physical survival must be a high priority, true “survival” must be more. Survival is not just existence. Rocks exists. The continuation of the spiritual and beneficial effects of one’s existence is true survival. Humans survive. Therefore true survival depends on true freedom. Freedoms from internal (mental) and external (social) limitations of survival and self-reliance choices. Life without freedoms is mealy existence.

Three Point Concepts For Survival

Quite often when I examine a concept or situation I find that there are three key values or entities involved. I have concluded that this is a natural development. It is not a fluke that we have three (not two or four) branches of government that has created a relatively stable state. When there are two dominating elements there is almost always conflict until or unless a third element is found or is created. Christianity is founded on the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I do not intend to establish any philosophy based on this observation. But I will present a few examples of this concept that I have found important to understanding what I call “survival philosophy.”

Practical, Psychological, Philosophical

Everything we do consists of three elements. Without all three nothing happens. Your psychology causes you to adopt a compatible philosophy that generates practical applications. These elements must be compatible and balanced. For example, a religious philosophy would not survive without people accepting the psychological comforts and practical applications. Knowing the practical skills of sailing will bring little satisfaction unless you have the psychological attitude and philosophical outlook to enjoy it. You cannot believe (what you think) in something and lack the psychological will (why you think it) to do something (how you act) about it. Okay, you could but it would be pointless.

But having the elements in balance is not enough. The Nazis and Communists certainly had the what, why, and how in some sort of balance but their philosophies (based in their leaders psychologies) were terribly flawed. For a person, a family, or any kind of organization to survive, its philosophy must be logical, constructive and positive. Its psychology must be strong and yet flexible. Its practical application must be well considered and skillful.

As applied to survival/self-reliance; can one imagine having a full stocked survival kit if you philosophically believe that others are responsible for taking care of you or you lack the psychological will to use the items in the kit to deal with various emergencies? Of course not! Could you philosophically believe in the principles of responsibility, self-reliance and personal freedoms and then fail to acquire skills and equipment to protect those principles? I would hope not!

Preparedness based on fear or hate will fail those who practice it. The philosophy of self-reliance and the psychological will to survive and thrive are core values of a free people and the foundation of hope for the next generations.

- **The philosophical** reason that we adopt a lifestyle or support a cause is based on our experiences, culture, and values. Our philosophical positions may be clearly defined or seldom thought about. Followers tend to accept ready-made philosophies (political, religious, moral) established by others, but it is a choice. This is what you think. When you keep making the same mistakes, you need to reexamine your philosophy. You have choices. Think about what you think.

- **The psychological** element refers to persons, attitudes, reactions, and prejudices. It is based on a combination of genetics, experiences and

environment. This is how we are wired to look at each situation. It affects everything in our lives. Are you self-confident or self-doubting? Do you think before you act or just jump in? Is your life about you or is it about others? Are you defined by whom you hate or whom you love? Obviously how you think directly affects your survival. This is how you think. When you consistently get in trouble (fights, accidents, etc.) you need to examine your own psychology. You have choices. Think about how you think

- **The practical** aspect is what we actually do based on our psychological attitude and philosophical position. This is the how, what, when that happens because of our choices. Unfortunately it is not always based on sound philosophical and psychological foundations. When this happens in life or in survival your action or failure to act may result in exactly the results (injury, death, destruction) you wanted to avoid. Lots of people are so focused on climbing the ladder of achievements that they fail to notice that it is on the wrong wall. You have choices. Think before you think. Think again before you act.

It would not be expected that any two people would have exactly the same philosophy, or psychology, or practice survival/self-reliance in the same way. It is not a dogma. It is a set of common values supporting a variety of approaches and activities.

Rights, Respect, Responsibility

Rights, respect and responsibility are the three most important values in a stable and free society. When these values become twisted or are allowed to degenerate, that society will inevitably drift towards chaos or tyranny. It is the survival of people who have these values that is important to me. These are inseparable values. Any person or organization that seeks one or two of them without the third is at best incompetent and more often evil.

- **Rights** are earned. I will say it again, “rights are earned” only by those who respect the rights and property of others and take responsibility for their own choices and actions. While the law may technically grant some rights to the disrespectful and the irresponsible, they are not entitled to them.

- **Respect** for one self and others are the hallmarks of a responsible citizen. Respect for life, respect for freedom, respect for property, respect for the ideas and opinions of others is essential to the survival of a family, an organization and a nation. Respect, like freedom, must be earned. Respect cannot be gained through fear or intimidation. True self-respect is not pride or vanity. It is not possible to have true self-respect without having earned the willing respect of others.

- **Responsibility** for one’s own choices is what earns respect and freedom. If you hide from responsibilities or surrender choices to others you deserve little respect and will have little freedom. No matter what your situation

may be you will have some responsibilities. The amount of respect you earn for yourself and receive from others is directly proportionate to the amount and difficulty of the responsibilities you assume. Responsibility in your hands is the foundation of your freedom. Responsibility in the hands of others is the foundation of their power.

As you can see it is virtually impossible to talk about one of these concepts without the other two. In an emergency situation these concepts are magnified and become even more important. If you have not taken the responsibility to achieve some level of self-reliance, you have disrespected yourself and your society and have surrendered rights and choices that may cost you your life and your freedom.

The People, the State, the Criminal

The people created the state to combat internal and external threats to their life, liberty, and property. In doing so, they created a new threat to life, liberty, and property. Thus creating a constant three-way struggle that continues today. At the root of this struggle is the potential of deadly force. While it is seldom used, it is always the bottom line. The state will use deadly force if you don't pay your taxes. The criminals will use deadly force if resisted. The people can use deadly force to defend their lives against criminals and could potentially resist governmental abuse of power. Take the deadly force potential away from any one of these elements and the other two would overwhelm it. The maintenance of the life survival potential of the good and responsible people is essential to balance power and thus to the survival of freedom.

- **The People** in this case refers to the great majority of responsible people regardless of race, religion, education, nationality, or economic status who generally respect the rights and property of others and do their best to contribute to society. Because of their positive and industrious nature they are often too trusting and fail to realize that their life, liberty, and property are coveted by the other two elements. Every product, service and idea of value is created by this group. They are the positive force of humanity.

- **The Criminal** here refers to a small but unfortunately significant group of humans that have chosen to steal, intimidate, enslave, corrupt, destroy, and kill. They may be individuals, gangs, international cartels, or terrorists. They may act out of simple greed and lust or they may have created some false social, political, or religious justification. They create nothing and destroy much. If they ceased to exist there would be no loss and much less need for the state. They are the negative force of humanity.

- **The State** can be any level of local or national government. It is a creation of the people and is arguably composed of the same proportions of positive and negative people as the society it represents. It is responsible to the people and empowered by them, but it has a vested interest in the criminals that justify its

power. This is an unintentional but real symbiotic relationship. Prohibition laws in the 1920s increased the wealth and power of gangs and government. Drug laws today actually increase drug use and gang power while justifying more police powers. Terrorism's first major blow was to the civilian freedoms. If there were no crimes or threats of terror, etc. more laws, taxes and bureaucracies would be hard to justify. By nature, the state tends to oppose individualism and self-reliance and promote dependency and regulation. It will take whatever wealth and power the people will give it. The great majority of politicians and government employees (fire, police, etc.) are also good people but it is the nature of the entity to grow, tax, and pass laws. Since the state can sometimes serve the people and sometimes be the criminal it is a neutral force that can go either way.

For Example:

In many South American countries the balance has shifted greatly in favor of the criminals and drug cartels so that the state is their tool and the people can be victimized without hope of relief.

In Germany in the 1930's the state became all-powerful and was able to crush all individual rights and commit unlimited crimes. The same was true of communist Russia

In short, where ever the people were misled or intimidated into abdicating their capacity for self-reliance and self-protection, evil dominated.

In many places today where the people are disarmed and dependent, the two forces left are the state and the criminals. One must either join the states entities (the military, the party, etc.) or the criminal entities (the gangs, warlords, etc.) to survive at all. Such is the fate of a weakened people.

It is by no means my intention here to be antigovernment or in any way diminish the honor and accomplishments of responsible law enforcement agencies and individuals. My point is that it is important to maintain the people as a potential balancing force.

Will, Knowledge, Equipment

In a survival situation there are three key things you must have. In fact, these are key things in almost every aspect of life. You must have the will and determination to do what you need to do. You must have the knowledge and skills to do what you need to do. And you must have the required equipment. These are in order of priority (1: Will, 2: Knowledge, 3: Equipment) and the more you have of one, the less you may need of the other two.

- **Will:** The will to survive is not equally strong in every person. It can become stronger or weaker depending on a person's current psychological state and situation. When life is safe and comfortable, most people choose to survive and enjoy it. As life gets more stressful and painful, a larger percent of the population

will consider giving up or even actively ending their lives. I have heard people proclaim that they did not want to live if a war or catastrophe throws us back to 18th century life styles. Obviously people in the 18th century did not feel that way. Alcoholics, smokers, and drug addicts will have weakened wills to survive if deprived of these substances. Tragically young people often commit suicide for reasons that mature adults would shrug off as one of life's challenges. Those who found their existences on false values such as wealth, pride, ego, vanity, and comfort, tend to lose their will to survive when confronted with situations where these values have no meaning. People with these kinds of false values are also the ones who will readily give up their freedoms and even betray their fellow citizen in order to maintain their own comforts and advantages. Those whose values lie outside themselves tend to have stronger survival wills. People who had deep faiths, commitments and loyalties, tell most of history's great survival tales. Deep religious faith played a part in many stories of survival through incredible hazards and hardships. Many survivors had a strong sense of responsibility to get through it for their families. Soldiers in hopeless situations fought on out of loyalty to each other. Dedication to a mission or goal helped others keep going. Faith and loyalty combined with even the thinnest shred of hope for rescue, escape, recovery, or victory was evident in almost every great survival story. To have the will to survive, you must have a *why* to survive. There must be someone or something that is worth the pain, the hunger, the cold, the fear, and the effort to hang on and keep trying. A vision of victory that leads you to one more step, one more push, one more breath. In a survival situation you must care about yourself because your life means something to a bigger idea (god, family, mission, etc.).

- **Knowledge:** The old saying that only the strong survive is not entirely accurate. Certainly the physically strong have advantages, but being smart and well trained is often more important. In a survival situation being strong and smart will beat just being strong every time. We all have mental and physical limitations, but why not push them? Stay as healthy as you can and gather skills and knowledge that increase your capabilities to survive, stay free, and be more self-reliant. The fact is that almost all knowledge has some survival and self-reliance value. Knowledge and skills take up no room and have no weight. The more of them you have the less dependent you are on equipment and outside support. At the one end of the scale we have citizens that are sheep-like and completely helpless, compliant and dependent on "the system" and at the other end we have the virtual "Rambo" who can go naked into the wilderness. The great majority of the people lie somewhere in between. While I do not advocate a society of Rambos, the more people move in that direction the better. The truth alone will not set you free or save you. It is applied knowledge and wisdom that will give you freedom and security.

- **Equipment:** The first thing people think about when they do think about emergency preparedness and self-reliance is equipment, better known as "stuff." Stuff oriented people put their faith in stuff. Obviously you are better off with lots of stuff to go with your knowledge and your strong will to survive than you are without stuff. But stuff (survival equipment and supplies) is the least

important. If you are just accumulating equipment (e.g. food, gasmasks, weapons, etc. etc.) and you lack the will and the skill to use them, then you may be stocking up these supplies for someone else to take away and use.

Air, Shelter, Defense

The three things you need for immediate survival of an emergency are breathable air, shelter from hostile elements and defense against assault by people and conditions. These are the things that will get you through the first seconds and minutes of an emergency. If you're will, skill and equipment is inadequate to assure these three things, you will not need to worry about other needs.

1. **Air** is the first priority of survival. In many situations the availability of adequate breathing air is not in jeopardy and one can move on to the next need. But in fires, chemical, biological and nuclear incidents, the air may be inadequate or contaminated. Without air you will die in just a few minutes. Breathing air contaminated with poisons (carbon monoxide, radioactive dust, chemical agents, and biological agents) will result in serious illness or death. When planning and equipping for these situations, you must have a way to assure safe (filtered or replaced) air long enough to get to a safe air environment

2. **Shelter** is right after air in survival priorities. Exposure to cold, rain, snow, wind for a few hours can lead to hypothermia and death. Exposure to heat and sun can take a little longer to kill you. Skin contact by chemical agents and radioactive particles can cause illness and death in a few days or weeks. Shelter from tornadoes, bomb blasts, and falling debris from earthquakes is an immediate priority. If you are not adequately and quickly sheltered, you will not survive to worry about such things as hunger and thirst. Always have fast, effective shelter in your plans and gear.

3. **Defense** is often overlooked and replaced by water in survival priority lists. But while the lack of water cannot kill you in a few seconds, the lack of defense sure can. Defenses may be passive (e.g. fences, armor, camouflage, etc.) or active (e.g. weapons, fighting, etc.). The defensive element of a survival system should fit the situation, but minimize the danger to innocent people.

4. **Water, Food, Medical Care** Once you have air, shelter and defenses, your survival is a matter of days or weeks, your priorities are obtaining drinkable water, safe food and any needed medical care

The Survival Rule of Three

It is a well-established outdoor survival rule that you can survive three hours without shelter (in a cold wet environment), three days without water, three weeks without

food. I have expanded this idea a bit to encompass all types of survival situations.

- **Three seconds without the will and means to defend yourself.** If you are shot, stabbed, crushed or blown to pieces, you will never get to worry about air, water and food. You have to have a 24/7-survival state of mind and the will to act and do whatever it takes to survive an unexpected assault by man or nature. Weapons and tools can greatly improve your chances. In some cases instant response (run, fight, duck, etc.) is all that matters.

- **Three minutes without adequate and safe breathing air.** We take air for granted and in many survival situations it is not an issue. But in a fire, chemical, biological attack or nuclear incident one must have ready access to filtered air. If someone has stopped breathing or is in an oxygen deficient atmosphere (less than 19% oxygen) CPR and/or oxygen must be administered in no less than 5-minutes

- **Three hours without shelter from a hostile environment.** In ideal conditions, shelter is not an immediate concern, but ideal conditions are rare and seldom last. Exposure to cold, heat, rain, chemical contamination, biological agents, nuclear fallout, flying debris, bullets, etc. can injure and kill. Some kinds of shelters (storm, fallout) can be prepared while others have to be found or improvised. As they say, "Seek shelter immediately." Know what, how, and where shelter is.

- **Three days without adequate and safe drinking water.** If you're still breathing and have not died from cold or heat in the first three hours of a survival situation your chances are good. You may be hungry but thirst will kill you first and eating without water will make things worse. Maybe you stored enough water. Maybe there is safe water in the area. Maybe you had better be sure you know how to find and purify water before you are in a survival situation.

- **Three weeks without adequate food.** Food is usually the first thing folks think about for survival but it is not the top priority. People have survived three weeks and longer with no food but it's not a good idea. You can survive for a long time on much less than the FDA recommended 2000 calories per day. When the body starts burning fat in large quantities to supply energy it can make you sick. Inadequate food affects mental and physical performance and weakens the immune system. Children, the elderly, and those weakened by other injuries or illnesses will certainly not last three weeks without food. More food is required for survival in cold weather. Stored or carried food backed-up by knowledge in foraging, hunting, fishing, and trapping are an absolute necessity for any situation beyond a few days

Enablers of Evil

There is an element within the mass of the people that is certainly well meaning and productive, but at the same time contributes greatly to the power of the criminals and the

growth of the state. These folks are naive and unable to see the true nature of things. They assign blame for all evils on things: guns cause crime, arms cause war, wealth causes poverty, etc. They previously argued that our civil defense preparedness would cause a nuclear war. Many of them believe that somehow America caused the terrorist attacks. They apologize for and justify all manner of crime and terror. They are willing to give unearned rights to the criminal element and grant dangerous powers to the state. They seek to use the force of the state to make others comply with their social agendas. They will vigorously defend some rights they value while advocating restrictions and taxes on others. They often have an elitist idea that they are the champions of peace and harmony. But they are truly the great enablers of evil and tyranny. When unarmed citizens are victimized by armed or unarmed thugs you can thank the enablers. When foreign terrorists are emboldened to kill in the thousands you can thank the enablers. When more and more taxes lead to less and less freedom, less and less prosperity and less and less security, you can thank the enablers. When they advocate, demonstrate and legislate to weaken the people then the criminal class and the would-be dictators cheer. The very idea of survival training, emergency preparedness, self-defense, and self-reliance runs against their view of society. They are blind to the unintended consequences of their actions. They are convinced that *nice* ideas must lead to good outcomes. One might call them accidental fascists.

There Is Evil!

While it is probably true that most people that do evil things acted in the belief that they had a right to do so, it does not require our sympathy or understanding. Wrong for any reason is wrong. One cannot defend one's self against evil if one is not convinced it exists. Those who commit acts that are harmful to others because they are lazy, greedy, on drugs, mean, angry etc. are evil. Those who commit such acts because of some social, racial, religious or personal agenda are evil. Those who justify their acts because of some perceived childhood trauma, deprivation or social injustices are still evil. Doing harm is a free choice. There are truly evil people in this world and truly evil organizations. Failure to accept this unfortunate reality leads to weakness and unpreparedness and ultimately to catastrophes.

The Difference Between Good and Nice

It is important to understand that good and nice are two different things and may not necessarily be connected. Nice things can often result in bad outcomes while not nice things can result in good outcomes. Those who enable evil and oppose self-reliance cannot or will not make this distinction. To them everything nice is good. And anything that does not seem nice must be bad. The media has great difficulty making this distinction. They frequently support ideas that sound nice but are not good. Gun control sounds nice but has consistently resulted in bad (crime, gangs, and home invasions) things happening. But the media and the lawmakers cannot bring themselves to admit their errors. Armed citizens are not nice, but they are good. The very act of emergency preparedness and self-reliance is an admission that there are bad people and that bad things can happen. Doing it on the

individual level is an admission that we cannot always trust or rely on others. These are not nice ideas, but they are very good ideas. If you can be nice and good at the same time, that's easy. The true test of responsibility is when you must do the hard, unpopular and dislikable thing because it is good.

Doing the Next Correct Thing

In his book *Deep Survival*, Laurence Gonzalez presents some gripping examples of people who found themselves in seemingly hopeless situations faced with impossible tasks in order to survive, who made a choice to ignore the magnitude of the situation and focus on doing just one thing that would improve the situation just a little. Just one more step, just one more push, one more deep breath, etc. Doing something that would not make things worse and would buy a little time, move a few inches in the right direction repeated over and over saved their lives from a "hopeless" situation. In some cases these folks even gave up and then somehow gave it one more try and reached salvation. While wide scope, awareness is good to identify all hazards and to identify what the best thing to do is, it should never be allowed to overwhelm one into inaction. You have a choice as to how to focus your mind. Your action focus need only be directed at doing that one right thing one more time. As they say, "A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step" if it's a "step in the right direction." In the movies James Bond escaped some ridiculous survival situations with highly unlikely scenarios, but even so the scripts had some survival lessons. First he (Bond) was always prepared. Thanks to good old "Q" he had some equipment specifically designed for the anticipated situations. When the villains had him in their grasp he did the following:

1. He did things to buy that most important survival commodity—time.
2. He made no critical errors that further limited his time or options.
3. He evaluated the situations, his resources and his choices.
4. He kept a wide view for both physical and psychological opportunities.
5. He kept struggling and thinking until an opportunity to use his best advantages against the weakest aspect of the situation to effect an escape.

Of course, in real-life survival situations, even doing all the right things may not be enough, but giving up short of dead is unacceptable and when you are sure you have given all you had, you probably have a lot more left in you. Even in a seemingly hopeless situation, hanging on and keeping on a bit longer may put you in the right place at the right time to be saved. Keep in mind that if the unexpected can get you into a situation it could also get you out, if you live long enough

Near Miss Incidents and Survival

There is a safety theory that there are about 300 near-miss incidents for every 30 minor injuries and 1 serious injury or fatality. That means that there may be several hundred *opportunities* to recognize and prevent a hazard *before* it causes harm. On the survival level there are two kinds of near miss incidents.

Personal near misses are those in which you are directly involved but by chance alone did not result in harm to your life, liberty or property. Examples of these are:

- Almost getting lost in the woods while hunting.
- Almost hitting another car because you forgot to check you blind spot.
- Almost starting a kitchen fire because the flame was too high.
- Almost being caught in a storm because you didn't check the weather.
- Almost being a crime victim because of poor awareness.
- Almost hurt on the job because of not wearing protective equipment.

These are things that almost happened to you or those near you because of things you did or failed to do. Learning from the near misses of others is free. Learning from our own near miss incidents may have some costs. Not learning from them is dangerous. Don't make excuses. Give yourself choices and chances.

General near misses are natural or man-made events that *almost* caused a disaster but had minimal impact and little or no impact on you. Examples of these could be:

- An epidemic that was prevented or quickly controlled
- A hurricane that missed your area.
- A serious crime in your neighborhood that didn't happen to you.
- A terrorist attack on the train you take to work that was prevented.
- Job layoffs that did not get to you.

Almost anything that you read about or see on television that happens to other people could happen to you and can be considered a general near miss.

If near misses are not recognized as warning and opportunities for preventive or

preparatory action, they will keep happening until one of them doesn't miss.

Take personal near misses personally. Ninety percent of injuries and deaths are caused by the unsafe actions of the victim or the actions of those near the victim. Be willing to accept responsibility for your own safety and survival. In most cases being in the wrong place at the wrong time and doing the wrong thing is the result of choices you make. Be ready to choose to change your habits, behaviors, and improve your safety and survival skills in order to eliminate those personal near miss incidents before they get you. Even if others were involved in near miss incidents, you have to take the position that it's your responsibility to prevent or avoid the repeated occurrences. Accepting that responsibility is the first step to personal safety and survival. You should not just say, "Wow, that was close," you should be asking yourself:

- What could or should I have done to avoid or prevent that incident?
- What can or will I do to avoid or prevent that kind of incident in the future?
- How can I improve my own habits, behaviors, awareness levels, etc.?
- What can I learn from this incident to reduce this and other risks?
- What can I do to avoid and defend against the deliberate or accidental dangerous actions of others?

In the case of general near misses you probably have little control of or responsibility for the causes. That which has happened, will happen again. That which has happened to others can happen to you. Where you live, how you live, and what you do will determine what kinds of general near misses require your concern. An earthquake in California is a near miss for people in Kentucky's New Madrid earthquake zone. A hurricane in Texas is a near miss for the folks in North Carolina. Terror attacks in New York are near misses for those living in Chicago or Washington D. C., but not for someone on a farm in Iowa. Gang crime, terrorist activities, economic instability and epidemics anywhere are near misses for almost everyone today.

While you probably cannot prevent such events. You may be able to avoid some hazards by changes in your location, habits, routes, etc., but this may only lead to new hazards. Your major responsibility here is awareness and preparedness. Consider the worst-case effects of the hazards evident in the near miss. Plan to reduce the negative effects (injury, losses) of the event through the acquisition of knowledge and equipment. Life preservation comes first so consider how to avoid injuries, treat injuries, defend yourself, ensure you have safe air, drinkable water, and adequate shelter (falling debris, flying bullets, cold, wet, chemicals, etc.) from the hazard. I didn't forget food, but it comes after all of the above.

Personal near miss incidents *do* happen to you and general near misses *can* happen to you. Near miss incidents are warnings and opportunities to act. Failure to acknowledge

your responsibility to act is choosing to be at risk for a direct hit instead of a near miss.

Root Cause of Problems

The theory of “root cause” and root cause analysis has been around for some time. As the name would indicate, root cause is a procedure for digging deep and finding the true source of a problem. While every survival threat or event will have one or more “primary” causes that are immediately evident, each primary cause will be the result of a deeper cause and that will be the result of a deeper cause, etc. etc. When we encounter a survival problem now or anticipated, we generally are able to identify the primary cause and act to address it. For example: if you lose your job or have gotten into an auto accident. Thinking about why you lost your job or had that accident is generally avoided or is directed at blaming someone else. It’s just easier to fix and forget than to make a “big deal” out of it. Of course you may keep losing jobs or having accidents, but that’s just bad luck. Right? When you just solve the primary cause you do nothing to reduce the probability of a repeat of the undesirable situation. Folks who fail to search for a root cause say things like, “Trouble follows me,” or “My luck is always bad.” They may even say, “Why me?” but they seldom look for the root cause. The difference between fixing the primary cause and correcting the root cause is like the difference between swatting flies and fixing the screens. So, why do people and organizations (i.e. businesses and governments) avoid doing root cause analysis for major hazards and catastrophes? The answer is that the root cause of most hazardous conditions and catastrophic situations will be found in the culture, attitudes, perceptions, and actions of those involved. It is never a person (or persons) or a thing (or things) that is to blame. The sources of most of the threats to life and freedom are rooted in the hearts and minds of the potential victims and the way they view and react to life and the environment.

The principles of root cause analysis are important in everyday life and in survival preparedness. Many unfortunate incidents and hazardous situations can be eliminated or reduced by addressing the root cause. For example: sending people to driving school for traffic violations tries to address the primary cause of a dangerous behavior, but will fail because it does not address the root cause of why the drivers made a choice not to obey the rules. Root cause always lies in the culture, attitudes, management, and systems that caused the person and/or thing to act in a dangerous or destructive manner. If something keeps happening over and over again there is an uncorrected root cause. Politicians avoid root cause analysis because it can take them to very unpopular conclusions, but individuals can use it to improve their safety and survival potentials. When you recognize a safety hazard or a potential threat to life, liberty and property, don’t jump to a conclusion, look for blame or act prematurely. Ask yourself *why* that situation exists, then why that is, then why that is, etc. Ask why at least 5 times. For example:

Question: Why does my car break down so often? Answer: it’s an old car.

Question: Why do I drive an old car? Answer: I can’t afford a newer one.

Question: Why can’t I afford a new one? Answer: My job doesn’t pay enough.

Question: Why don't I get paid enough? Answer: I don't have enough training.

Question: Why don't I have the training? Answer: Well???

I didn't say this would take you to a place you wanted to go! But most of the time it will make you look at choices you make based on your psychology and philosophy.

If your house is on fire the primary survival problem is the burning house and smoke. The primary survival action is to get out of the house and/or put out the fire. But why was the house on fire? Was it a child with matches, a space heater, exposed wires or trash accumulated? Was the potential root cause recognizable? Who could have corrected the cause *before* it resulted in the fire? Was it just bad luck? Was it rooted in the homeowner's attitudes and actions? Of course the root causes of terrorist attacks, natural disasters and other events may be beyond the capacity of individuals to correct, but the root causes of how they affect us are within our control.

1. We can reduce the probability of personal catastrophes like fires, income loss, illness, accidents, etc. if we are prepared to find and correct the root causes within our own habits, fears, and attitudes. Putting our health, safety, and security first will greatly reduce the chances of being a "victim"

2. We can do our best to prevent or avoid some kinds of catastrophes through political and social action. Resisting legislation that costs jobs, increases debt, weakens personal freedom, self-reliance, and preparedness or encourages dependency and weakness may help. *

3. Most importantly, we can be better able to survive future natural and manmade catastrophic situations by finding the root causes for our own vulnerabilities. Procrastination in basic preparedness, fear of change, self-doubt, a tendency to depend on others and a "wait and see" attitude can be root causes for being a future victim instead of a future survivor.

** Politicians could use root cause analysis to find the causes of economic and social catastrophes such as gangs, drugs, crime, debt, etc., but it would always lead to the very political establishments, special interests and ideas that they are supported by. They focus on correcting the primary causes with laws (gun laws, drug laws, taxes, regulations) that fail and often make the problem worse. Root cause is virtually impossible and often suicidal for politicians. Of course the root cause of the politicians is the people who, in most cases don't want to hear the root causes or face the realities. It may be said that the root cause of most catastrophes (war, revolution, crime, hunger, terror, etc.) is that no one wants to face the root causes.*

The Human Element in Survival

This article first appeared in the February 1979 (mimeographed!) issue of "Directions" survival newsletter. It includes some of the ideas expressed elsewhere in this book and once again is based on three elements.

A survival situation can be a wilderness mishap involving three or four people, a plane crash involving hundreds or a nation-sized natural or man-made calamity involving millions of victims. Regardless of the origins or nature of a disaster, there will be three distinctly identifiable human elements involved.

The first element consists of a person or persons groups, states, etc., who through aggression, greed, carelessness, or ignorance has allowed the event to happen to themselves and/or others. This applies to some degree even to natural disasters. People choose or are lead into building towns and cities in flood plains, earthquake zones, etc. People chose or are misled into building vulnerable dwellings and having no preparedness plan. The most frequent small-scale disasters (fires, accidents, loss, crime, etc.) and the most destructive large-scale (war, economic collapse, nuclear, chemical, biological, etc.) disasters are "man-made." The causes range from a teacher who fails to teach safety and causes an accident to a political leader that weakens a nation and causes a war or economic disaster. So the first element necessary for true disaster is people who deliberately or unintentionally create the conditions for bad things to happen to people.

The second element is composed of people who through their own apathy, laziness, ignorance, foolishness, and lack of preparedness let themselves become helpless victims (so called "innocent bystanders") of unfortunate events. An example of this would be getting into a car with a drunk driver, not bothering to learn basic first aid until you're bleeding to death, or closing your eyes to developing local conditions or world events that could result in a threat to your life, liberty and property. These folks may not be part of the cause but they do little to prevent or avoid any of the potential disasters. A disaster is a disaster because people are hurt, property is destroyed and freedoms (political, economic, or social) are lost. Therefore, these folks (victims) are a necessary human element in creation and magnification of any "disaster."

The third and final human element seen in any disaster are those individuals who through some degree of foresight, education, preparation and judgment are able to avoid, prevent, and survive. They thereby mitigate the disaster and aid recovery. A survival trained outdoorsmen, a first aid trained neighbor, an armed urban dweller, the emergency prepared home owner, are examples of this element.

The first human elements may not be on hand to be victims of their own creations. They may have acted deliberately or at least been aware enough to avoid the consequences of their actions or inactions. The second element of self-designated victims has voluntarily stacked the deck against themselves. Of course luck (mathematical probability) will save some of the undeserving and take down some of the best prepared. The third element folks obviously have a better than average chance of survival and recovery. Still, in the big picture the impact of any unfortunate developments on the survival and freedom of mankind will depend on the actions and the growth of the third human element. There always seems to be a good supply of criminals, tyrants and fools in the world waiting to victimize, mislead, exploit, and occasionally slaughter humanity. The survival/preparedness element by whatever names it goes by is seen throughout history as a counter-force and recovery factor. Simply put: the more of elements one and two the more

dangerous our world is. The more of element three, the safer it is.

The objective must be to increase and strengthen this human element by all means. In the description of elements one and two, the terms “ignorance”, “foolishness”, “apathy”, were used to describe human failings. The terms “aggression”, “greed”, and “carelessness” describe more deliberate and amoral actions. While it would seem obvious that these are all negative and dangerous concepts it should be obvious that they are not uncommon. These are attitudes based on established values supported by vested interests. While maintaining self-reliance, self-defense, emergency preparedness and family self-sufficiency may seem to be unassailably good ideas, in practice they often run against political, economic, religious, and social interests. There are many people who will be a little of all three elements in one. Those who are strongly determined to create disasters and those who freely chose to be victims will always be with us. Those who are at least interested in trying to be even a little more prepared, a little more self-reliant, a little more free deserve respect and support.

Doing the Best With What You Have and What You Are

We are not all born equals, nor are we *entitled* to be equal. While we have, or should have equality before the law and in things related to government, the rest is up to us. No one can be equal, much less superior in all ways and at all times. Equality is relative, transitory and subjective. We all start out with a given physical and mental capacity in a given social and economic environment. A genius is born in a slum of East Africa while someone of less than average intelligence is born into a wealthy home in the USA. They have been dealt their opening hand. No use complaining. As the game of life plays out you will gain (experiences, opportunities, relationships, education) and lose (trauma, accidents, fears, debts, addictions) according to your fortunes and more often according to your own choices. So that where you are in life is always in part a product of what you started with and what you did with it. There is little use complaining about fate and the rest is up to you. In hard times and survival situations you need to know (admit) what your weaknesses are and recognize what your strengths are. You will want to seek out and manipulate situations that maximize the advantages of your strengths while avoiding tactics and actions that depend on areas where you have physical, mental or psychological weaknesses. Select tactics and goals based on a realistic assessment of what you are best at. Be aware that sometimes what we like to do is not what we are good at. Know how to avoid or minimize the impact of your weaknesses on your critical survival and freedom situations. At the same time, you should not be afraid to expose weakness to educational, training, and testing challenges that can correct them. In short “play your strength, cover your weaknesses.” Examples of important survival and life traits that you may be weak or strong at could include:

- Mental agility (fast thinking under pressure)
- Physical strength and endurance
- Detail mindedness

- Patience
- Attention and focusing ability
- Organizing ability
- Analytical mindedness
- Short-term memory
- Long-term memory

A person with a poor memory, but an analytical mind would need to think ahead and make notes for an emergency situation, while a person with a good memory and mental agility might be able to memorize survival information and react as needed. A physically weaker person may need to “dig in” and hide, where a stronger person may be better off to run and fight in a given emergency. No two people can have exactly the same survival strategy. Your ability to thrive in everyday life and survive in an emergency depends on how well you use the cards you are dealt. The weakest person doing their best may often do far better than the strongest person who is apathetic or over confident. We are all capable of surviving

Analysis and Control of Fear

“We have nothing to fear but fear itself” *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

“I have had a lot of trouble in my life. Most of it never happened” *Mark Twain*

Fear and anxiety are unavoidable elements in any survival situation. Scientists have found that a “fear gene” may control how we respond to fear. Fear is a psychological and biological reaction to real or perceived threats to life and to those things we consider important. Of course we will fear bodily injury and death, but we may also fear for others or fear for the loss of property or freedoms. Fear can manifest itself in many ways. The knot in the stomach, the inability to concentrate, the urge to run, headaches, loss of sleep, nausea, and loss of fine motor skills are some manifestations of fear. Fear is normal and must be expected and accepted. Fear can save you or doom you depending on how you manage it. Sometimes fear is an indicator of what you should avoid. At other times the thing you fear is the very thing you must do to survive. If the object of fear didn’t matter it would not be feared, therefore it requires action and management by you. Fear should stop you from taking unnecessary and foolish risks. Fear should not misdirect you into harm’s way such as backing off a cliff to avoid snakebite. Fear should not be allowed to get between you and an objective of worthy value.

Fear starts with our physical and psychological environment. Each person has his or her own list of potential threats. The nature of these threats depends on many factors

including the immediate situation (lost in woods, being shot at, chest pain), age, knowledge, health, financial situation, vocation, life style, location, etc. You may be afraid of the smoke coming in under your bedroom door or of losing your job. It's still "fear." So we start with the threat/no threat analysis. Now there are three states of threat response. They are ignorance, preparedness and awareness

Ignorance may be deliberate or accidental. There are folks who simply avoid any sources of enlightenment. They may be lazy or illiterate or just can't handle any kind of challenging information. They don't even know that they don't know. Accidental ignorance can happen to even the most educated and responsible person. Let's face it; no one can anticipate everything that could happen. That "bolt out of the blue" can catch anyone by surprise. Ignorance may be bliss but it can also be deadly. You do not really want to be ignorant! There is no fear here because there is no awareness.

Preparedness is the state where a fear has been recognized and managed or neutralized in advance. Preparedness requires that the psychological, physical, and material requirements of threat response have been addressed. The psychological aspects are addressed through training and mental conditioning. Building self-confidence in the required abilities, having faith, developing a personal mission, and having a plan are effective ways to psychologically prepare for fear generating situations. How one addresses the physical aspects of a hazard will depend on age, sex, physical condition, and health but regardless of these factors there are steps that can be taken to improve physical preparedness. A healthy lifestyle including weight control, exercise, and medical checkups is always a good idea. Stocking medications and having devices that compensate for any physical limitations is important. You must ask yourself, "If this happens, do I have the strength and endurance to survive?" If the answer is no, then improve your condition, plan ways to compensate for your problems, or do what you can to avoid that situation. Material preparedness is simply having the necessary items to avoid, neutralize, or survive a hazard. Survival kits and home preparedness is addressed in many, many publications and need not be covered here. It can be said that the possession of survival stuff can compensate for some physical limitations and impart some level of psychological comfort but stuff alone can give false confidence. At this stage fear is managed if not eliminated.

So now we come to the **state of awareness** where fear is recognized as a threat for which we are inadequately prepared. This is true fear and it comes in two varieties. There is "chronic fear" of bad things that are anticipated in the coming weeks, months or years. Examples would be fear of economic collapse, fear of declining health, fear of being a street crime victim, fear of an epidemic or a terrorist attack. Symptoms of chronic fear include loss of sleep, inability to concentrate, anger, and depression, use of drugs or alcohol, poor decision-making, headaches and loss of appetite. Chronic fear must be recognized and corrected before it leads to even more real and immediate threats to your life and freedom. Truly, the fear is a bigger danger than what is feared. Then there is "acute fear" that is an immediate threat to your existence or freedom such as smoke coming under your door, a gun aimed at your head, freezing in the wilderness or on a sinking boat. Symptoms of acute fear include: nausea, shaking, loose bowels, psychological paralysis (freezing), and loss of fine motor skills, tunnel vision, and fight-or-flight reactions. The boosted adrenaline and other fear generated physiological reactions can help save you if

controlled. Here you have to act fast but also act right. Even the best trained have been known to panic, but training and mental conditioning are your best defense.

Both acute and chronic fear can be divided into three categories. These are fear of the unknown, fear of pain (physical and mental), and fear of one's own inadequacies. While these can never be completely removed from our minds, they can be anticipated, prepared for, managed, and reduced.

Fear of the Unknown

In the movies, it's always the monster you don't see that is the scariest. Fear of the dark, fear of the future, fear of what a stranger may do are forms of this fear. Fearing to go to the doctor because we don't know what he will find. Fear of going someplace or doing something for the first time is common. In its chronic manifestation, it is a source of constant worry that wears us down and holds us back from going places and doing things. It is that big "what if?" that keeps us awake at night. In its acute form it is better known as "the unexpected." The unexpected situation that jumps up and forces us to make fast choices without knowing much about the situation. For example we wake up to the sound of the smoke alarm (you do have one?), you don't know if it's an alarm malfunction or you left food on the stove or the whole house is on fire. Fear initially seizes you. You may suddenly realize that you do not know where you are and panic can make you do things that make your situation much worse. While it is easy to say, "expect the unexpected" it is by definition impossible to do. There are things you can do to reduce the potential dangers of fear and panic generated by the unknown and unexpected. While some events are truly unpredictable, others are unexpected because we just don't want to think about them. These fears can be substantially reduced by a process known as "what-if analysis." As the name implies, "what-if analysis" is the process of mentally considering what if an undesirable and hazardous situation occurs and mentally dealing with it in advance. What if I am bitten by a snake out here? What if that guy approaching me intends to assault me? What if I can't get home in this blizzard? What if that smoke is from a big fire? You can use this process as soon as you recognize a potential hazard. You do not have to wait until you smell the smoke or hear the snake's rattle. A fear of something unknown can also be reduced by deliberately going at that fear through education and experience. Learn more about the things you fear and if possible gain experience with them in a safe manner. Planning is an especially effective way to reduce chronic fear. Convert the fear of an undesirable event into a plan to cope with it. Instead of "Oh God, what if I lose my job?" its then I will cut spending and go back to school for a while. Instead of, "Those people are going to kill me," it can be "I can avoid or counter them if they attack." By applying "what-if-analysis" to potential acute fears and planning for things you chronically fear they can be greatly reduced. Doing these things does not make you paranoid. On the contrary, these techniques reduce anxiety and contribute to a calmer and more confident psyche.

Fear of Pain

While masochists actually like pain, most folks find it unpleasant. By pain I am including the physical pain we experience from injuries and illnesses, the more subtle pain of heat, cold, hunger, and thirst and the psychological pain we may experience from shock and grief at losses. We may put off going to the dentist when we know we should or delay putting a pet down because it will be psychologically painful to us. It is normal to avoid

pain and in most cases it is wise, but fear of pain can work against our best interests. Those who live a less sheltered life have experienced more pain and are better at managing it. How you react to pain is also affected by your experiences and culture. I have seen children in America screaming from a minor bump and I have seen films of African children sitting calmly in the clinic with horrible wounds and amputations. In the acute situation where the wound has just occurred the fear reaction actually releases powerful analgesics that temporarily reduce or completely eliminate pain. This is nature's way of providing the opportunity to finish the fight or flight before the pain overwhelms you. The absence of pain should not mislead you into thinking "It's just a scratch," and doing something to make things worse. Trust me, the pain will come. Knowing this, you can plan for the pain by treating the injury, seeking shelter, taking pain relievers, etc. before it hits you. Here again, planning and preparation can reduce fear. Knowing first aid, carrying pain relievers, having experienced cold, hunger, etc. in training can greatly reduce the fear of pain. You must not let pain break your will. Say, "Okay pain, I can handle you." As long as it hurts you are alive, and as long as you are alive you have a chance to beat it.

Fear of Personal Inadequacy

Unless you are a complete idiot you know you have some inadequacies. The "great ones" are great because they deal with their shortcomings, not because they are perfect. We all have mental and physical limitations that make us fear situations. We fear the social implications of admitting that we don't know or that we can't do it. We fear the real hazards of being unable to shoot straight, climb a cliff, stop bleeding, or know the way out. We are afraid of not knowing what to do, or not doing the right thing or not being able to do the right thing. We fear our own shame and the disapproval of others. This fear most often manifests itself in a failure to act. We see a danger, but we don't want to say or do anything that would make us look silly. We go along with the group while we have a feeling this is not good. Maybe the whole group is going one way, while each person in it is afraid to say that they think it's a mistake. You may not take a class or try a skill because you fear failure. Those things you fear are often the exact things that will provide the greatest rewards and best chances for future survival. There are two things you can do that will help to deal with this fear. First you must accept that inadequacies are normal and that everyone has them. Success and survival just depends on not letting them stop you. Failure is better than failure to try. The second is obvious. Adopt a life mission of continuous mental and physical self-improvement to reduce those things you are inadequate at and prove to yourself how good you can be.

Fear is a very powerful force that can doom those who should survive and save those who should perish. It allows the weak to subdue the mighty and the few to intimidate the many. It is why small forces can send whole armies into retreat and why whole populations can be enslaved by a brutal few. Being able to manage and overcome fear in yourself and your friends is a vital element in staying alive and staying free.

Thoughts about Fear

- Courage is not being unafraid. Courage is being afraid and doing the right thing anyway.

- Fear (founded on deadly force) is the root of all power While they say money is the root of all-evil, it is actualy fear. Self-reliance and preparedness reduces fear and dependence on money. Therefore self-reliance and survival abilities can be called the roots of freedom.

Survival is about Choices

The foundation of survival is having choices and having choices is the very definition of freedom. So the concepts of human survival are inevitably linked to human freedoms. A Jewish survivor of the concentration camps described how his captors controlled where he could go, what he ate, what he drank, how he dressed, but he still had one freedom. He had choices as to how he endured and reacted (mentally) to the situation. There are those who chose to work and those who chose not to. Those who chose to learn and those who chose to be ignorant. Those you chose to save and those who chose to spend. Those who chose to prepare and those who chose not to. In all cases we are responsible for and entitled to the benefits or the consequences of our choices. By choosing to retain the capacity to defend myself and to provide essential survival needs I have given myself choices (freedoms). Those who chose not to prepare and chose to depend on others (i.e. system, bureaucrats, etc.) have chosen to surrender freedoms. The greater your potential for self-reliance, the greater is your true freedom. You may never need to actually use that potential, but its existence provides a sense of security and freedom that is founded on reality. When others cry “What will I do?” or “Where is FEMA?” you would have choices as to what to do and would not be surrendering your freedom to others, in order to survive. You would also have the wonderful choices of helping other while less responsible people turned to begging, looting, or dying.

These survival freedom choices are things you can give to yourself. They are:

- Choices you give yourself through preparation and education
- Choices you give yourself through being able to control your own mind and emotions
- Choices you give yourself by putting aside negative fears and prejudices
- Choices you give yourself by accepting a situation and using your imagination and determination to solve problems
- Choices you give yourself by not depending on others
- Choices you give yourself in every situation because there are always choices

Remember “YAHOO.” You Always Have Other Options.

The Survival and Freedom Connection

In reality the person(s), organizations, and systems from which you obtain the necessities for physical and emotional survival (food, water, fuel, shelter, defense, etc.) take away some of your freedom in exchange. You obey laws, pay taxes, give up your time, and follow instructions. You provide your time, energy, and skills (part of your life) in exchange for things you need or want. As long as this is a voluntary and beneficial exchange (some freedoms for some benefits) there is no problem. This is how the world works. If we are not very self-reliant and the balance of trade (freedoms for survival) is acceptable, everything is fine. But this is the illusion of freedom because you have few choices (i.e. obey or perish). If, however the source of your survival becomes unable to continue to do so or elects to impose conditions that are unacceptable, only the prepared and self-reliant still have choices. I am not saying that every time our bosses add a little work or the government raises taxes a bit we should all drop out of the system or stage a revolution. What I am saying is that the more potential self-reliance people have the more potential and real freedom they have. If things get too tough, or too restrictive, or too dangerous these people have choices. Maybe hard choices, but choices others do not have. You may not be able to tell the difference between the unprepared and the prepared person under normal conditions, but the former thinks he is free while the latter knows he is free.

Survival Self-Reliance is for the Future

The critics of survival and self-reliance often paint an image of paranoid and regressive people wanting to go back to the old days and hide in a bunker someplace. This is a completely erroneous view of the philosophy. While we certainly do seek to preserve proven values and freedom friendly technologies, we are dedicated to the assurance of progress and exploration for the coming generations. What could possibly inhibit progress more than unmitigated disasters, uncontrolled criminal establishments and uninhibited regulation and taxation? All of these things are counteracted by the practices of emergency preparedness, survival education, self-defense, and self-reliance technology.

We recognize that every technological advance since the invention of man-made fire has the potential to harm and the potential to expand human survival and freedom. Knowing this, we are likely to oppose anything that has the effect of inhibiting self-reliance and encouraging dependency. We can look forward to longer lives, space colonization, and new frontiers not yet dreamed of, only if self-reliance and these individual freedoms are preserved for the children of that future.

Survival, Self-reliance and Technology

There seems to be an element of survival/self-reliance practitioners and advocates

that pride themselves on their lack of technological adaptation. They state with pride that they don't even own a computer or, "Who needs that high tech stuff." They are quick to point out that they will be doing just fine when the "big one" puts the lights out. There is no argument with the idea that low-tech skills and equipment will always be a valuable asset in many emergencies and survival situations. But what about now? By rejecting or avoiding learning how to use technology (computers, GPS, night vision gear, etc.) today, they are seriously damaging their survival and self-reliance capabilities.

1. They are unable to access immense stores of information and supply sources only available on the internet.
2. They are cut off from networking ideas and information with other people and groups.
3. They may well be limiting their access to educational and income options, thereby reducing the funds they have for survival and self-reliance activities.
4. They are unable to access key geographic and technical data that could be vital to survival planning, health, self-reliance, and financial decisions.
5. They are less able to support survival and self-reliance education and advocacy groups against the technologically sophisticated advocates of weakness and dependency.

Survival and self-reliance is as much about surviving a thriving today, as it is about being ready for some future disaster. How well you know and use all the resources today will greatly affect your ability (and that of your family) to survive and remain free in the future. What if the disaster is not a collapse of technology, but the runaway expansion and misuse of technology? Survival might well depend more on technological skills than on building a fire or camouflage. Survival and self-reliance depend on the ability to adapt to and take advantage of change, not resisting or avoiding it.

The Root Value of Survival Training

As a professional industrial safety trainer and experienced survival/self-reliance educator, I feel somewhat qualified to address the subject of training and its value. More importantly, I have had the opportunity to observe the long-term effects of training on individuals and groups over several decades. I even know a number of people who were exposed to survival/self-reliance training from childhood and are now old friends with families of their own.

People often make the mistake of thinking that having a lot of "stuff" and reading some books is a substitute for real hands-on training. It is not. Equipment and information alone does not necessarily assure capability. Some folks feel that having survived in their particular environment (e.g. "a country boy can survive", "I did good in the hood") means

they can handle anything. Having successfully adapted to one environment does not necessarily confer survival in a new environment or situation. While the most obvious goal of training is to learn the skill being taught, it is not always the most valuable benefit. I know only a few people who have actually had to start a fire with flint and steel, engage in armed combat, live off the land, or decontaminate themselves from a chemical or biological exposure in a real life or death situation. In fact, it is somewhat paradoxical that the very people who are most inclined to learn survival and self-reliance skills are the best at recognizing and avoiding those situations where they would need to use them. Of course as the NRA says, “Better to have it and not need it, than need it and not have it.”

From my observation, the major benefits of real survival training are psychological and philosophical. While the trainee may or may not ever use the specific skills acquired, they gain and reinforce their self-confidence, self-respect, and “can-do” attitude that enhances their lives in and out of survival situations. They seem to handle stress better and be less controlled by outside events and conditions. They learn that they can look within themselves for strength and make good choices based on responsible life and freedom imperatives. They are better, stronger, and freer individuals from the training experience. This applies to all manner of training from wilderness treks and combat courses through medical drills and hard-core tests. You do not have to be a “gung-ho” would-be “Rambo” type to benefit. You don’t even have to be good at everything to benefit. Though, obviously harder training and good performance is desirable. Any level of survival/self-reliance training in any related subject will put the participant ahead of most people in important ways. It is not so much what you learn as the fact *that* you learn and seek to learn self/reliance that pays off in the future.

Survival/Self-Reliance is a Natural Human Right

The right to survival capacity and basic self-reliance is the most fundamental and natural human right of all. Survival/self-reliance and the freedoms that go with it are human rights with inherent responsibilities. Every person has the right and responsibility to seek and secure the highest level of survival and freedom while respecting the lives and freedoms of others. You have the natural and human right to maintain all of the skills, knowledge and equipment necessary for the independent preservation of your life, liberty, and property. You have the natural and human right to possess modern and effective means for the protection of your life, liberty and property. This means that the people naturally have the right to access and maintain defensive capacities equal to the criminal’s capacities to intimidate and the state’s potential to oppress. There is no implication in the US constitution or in common sense to indicate that “the right to bear arms” referred to only muzzle loading muskets or implied any limitation or strict definitions. Remember that it is established that all of the rights in the Bill of Rights were intended simply to reaffirm existing right’s not grant them. These rights exist regardless of any document or proclamation.

Helping Others is a Moral Obligation

It is important to reaffirm the responsible citizen's moral duty to show compassion, respect and support for those of our fellow citizens that are in danger or in need. Only a prepared, self-reliant and free citizen is in a position to "do the right thing." You have the right to determine whom you will help

- You should help those who are doing their best to help themselves (legally and responsibly) but are still in difficulties and dangers. This can be direct support or guidance and education.
- You have a moral duty to help those who because of circumstances beyond their control (illness, age, etc.) are unable to help themselves.
- You need not help those who can help themselves but have chosen not to. Those who have by choice not prepared, not acted responsibly, and failed to contribute to society do not deserve your help. They will only endanger your own capacity to survive and help others while doing nothing in return.
- Avoid those who can but will not help others who need and deserve it. They may be self-reliant but they lack responsible compassion and may well be dangerous to would-be friends.

The above applies to life in general as well as emergency conditions.

Things Happen

I have a few associates that are rather unmotivated. They take what comes, have no goals and make no effort to improve themselves. That's okay. That's a choice they make. But they are always in need of help and never able to help others. They claim that trouble follows them. I tell them, "If you do not happen to life, life will happen to you." By nature things will degenerate, bad things will happen, and evil acts will occur. The constant actions of good people in the world are the difference between hope and disaster.

Thugs Don't Need Guns

Laws that "infringe" or prohibit the most basic human right to a modern and effective means of self-defense are both immoral and counterproductive. Advocates of such laws take the ridiculous position that somehow disarming the responsible citizens will disarm the criminals. Criminals are criminals so they will obviously not worry about such laws. We have thousands of illegal aliens entering the country every year and thousands of tons of drugs are either smuggled into the country or manufactured here. To think that gun laws would have the slightest effect on criminal access to firearms is absurd. In fact the knowledge that citizens will be unarmed encourages crimes. Home invasions increased dramatically in disarmed societies. Many of the nations where the general population is unarmed through laws or poverty, armed gangs and warlords rule. But let's assume that

somehow we disarmed everyone. Would violent crime decrease? Would people be safer? The answer is no! Once the equalizing effects of armed citizens is removed all power goes to the most brutal, the strongest and the most numerous. A gang of young thugs armed or unarmed would tend to avoid invading a home of an old couple that might take a few of them out with a gun, but remove that possibility and in they come. The potential for violent resistance is the only thing that this kind of person respects. Remove that potential and they own the streets and the homes of a nation. Thugs don't need firearms to dominate society; they just need them taken away from the responsible citizens.

Survival Lessons from History

*“The further backward you look, the further forward you can see.”
Winston Churchill”*

Many of the philosophical, psychological, and practical concepts of survival and self/reliance originated in historic experiences or are reinforced by the lessons of history. Some lessons come from individuals and small groups; some lessons come from the experiences of whole nations or armies. We who consider surviving and retaining basic freedoms in the future can only marvel at what these people survived.

- Alvar Nunez Cabeza De Vaca was marooned in Florida in 1528. He, along with a small number of survivors started a 6,000-mile, 8-year odyssey from Florida to Spanish colonies in Mexico. Their number dwindled as they moved through uncharted swamps, forests and deserts. Brutalized and enslaved by Indians. Eventually naked and subsisting on nuts and leaves for months at a time. He reached civilization alone in 1536

- Olauda Equiano was born in Africa and kidnapped by another tribe. He was enslaved by them and then sold to traders. He endured the horrors of the slave ships and emerged from a cruel and foreign environment to become an educated and free man.

- Sir John Ross and his companions were stranded in the arctic for years with just what they had salvaged from their sinking ship. Through careful planning and teamwork the managed to reach rescue in August of 1833.

- Sima Roten was a fighter and survivor of the 1944 Warsaw Ghetto uprising that pitted desperate civilians armed with improvised weapons against Nazi tanks and guns. He tells tales of horror and heroes, death and survival.

- The Robertson Family, whose sailing boat was sunk by whales and drifted for over a month on a small raft, constantly managing and improvising in order to save their children.

- John McCain and all the other Vietnam POW's, who adapted,

resisted, improvised and held on under horrific conditions to live to see freedom once again.

These are just a few of the stories we can learn from. There is no racial, religious, national, or class distinction or advantage in a survival situation. Great survival stories are equally common among aristocrats, slaves, soldiers, common citizens, and poor frontier farmers. Many stories come from explorers, adventurers, and pioneers because they put themselves in harm's way and because they tended to write about them, but there are millions of such stories in the streets of war torn cities, disaster ravaged towns, and primitive backcountries. The major lesson to be learned from them is simply that people, including you can survive almost unimaginable pain and deprivation to emerge alive and free again. These men and women were no stronger, smarter, or tougher than any one of us can be.

History also can give us perspective on an individual level. In my youth I read the biographies of men like Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Thomas Edison and Daniel Boone. These men made foolish mistakes, got into trouble, experienced self-doubt, and failed often. So when I encountered these experiences (and I screwed up often) I didn't magnify them or give up. If those guys could get past these events and challenges, I could too. I did learn to recognize and admit my mistakes and weakness and never repeat the same errors. I did learn not to make mistakes today that will cost you choices tomorrow. I also noted that while we document and glorify the actions for the so-called "greats", it is often the actions of lesser-known or totally unknown people that made the life or death, freedom or slavery differences. Some person who was at the right place at the right time to do the right thing. What about the parents and teachers, the "heroes" of history? What about the individual soldiers who fought just a little harder? What about the citizens who worked harder or came to the rescue or refused to give in or give up? The small individual acts of bravery, kindness, and responsibility that have more effect than all the kings, presidents, generals, and religious leaders. For better or worse, through action or inaction, everyone counts.

They say that "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it" and while a combination of natural events and human folly guarantees the repetition of a variety of unpleasant development (e.g. wars, storms, plagues, etc.), we have a moral obligation to learn how to survive them and keep the values of humanity intact.

Some of the specific lessons found in survival history are

1. Survivors almost always had a strong faith. This faith was usually of a religious nature, but in some cases it was faith in a cause or an institution or other people.
2. Survivors often found spiritual hope in small things such as a few hours of sunshine after weeks of arctic blizzards or the sight of a growing shrub in an endless desert.
3. Survivors made the most of small things that they did have, such as a single orange when one has no water or a daily ration of half a cup of milk.

4. Survivors were resourceful. They made the most of every man-made and natural resource they had. A scrap of cloth or a small piece of metal could make a big difference.

5. Survivors were adaptable to changing conditions and changed their goals and methods accordingly.

6. Survivors were quick to recognize and seize any opportunity to improve their situation even a little.

7. Survivors learned quickly from any mistakes they made.

8. Survivor remained mentally in control of how they reacted to the environment even if they controlled nothing else.

9. Survivors stayed in the game. They were “here now.” They quickly shifted from missing what they had, to doing with what they have now.

10. Survivors established a goal-oriented routine to step-by-step move towards improvement. If that’s all I can do, then do it.

11. A “Survivor,” of course, does not give up.

While technical manuals can aid in one’s quest for survival/self-reliance equipment and skills, the study of history’s survivors and history in general can aid greatly in acquiring the will, wisdom, and perspective needed to withstand the challenges of future threats to one’s life, liberty, and property.

A Few Lessons from General Grant

I find it of interest that such an unlikely personage as Ulysses S. Grant rose from obscurity without official backing to win battle after battle until he had won the Civil War. Of course he had greater resources than his adversaries and yet no other Union generals were able to consistently achieve military goals. While his accomplishments were military, the psychological foundations of his tactics apply well to survival situations. As one writer put it, he had a “peculiar genius” for seeing opportunities to win where others saw potential defeat. Here are a few things we can learn from him.

1. He focused on the immediate problems, but sought answers that improved the big picture and future situations. Act tactically, think strategically.

2. He did not let outside influences (politics) effect his actions if he could help it, but he played the hand he was given if necessary.

3. He used all available resources simultaneously directed at a goal. No half-hearted measures or divided priorities.

4. He did not hesitate to make sacrifices if the long-term objective could be reached sooner and with less long-term cost.

5. He kept his eye on the objective and would not be distracted or diverted by minor threats or problems.

6. He kept trying new tactics until he found one that worked. Abandoning the objective never seemed to occur to him.

7. He simply refused to recognize defeat. Where others retreated after losing a battle; he simply changed the direction and method of attack.

These habits would serve us well in any situation.

Civilian Wars

A war where one group of civilians wages war against the general civilian population can only be called a “civilian war” and certainly the most un- “civil” kind of war.

The events at the outset of the twenty-first century should have been a wake-up call for grass roots civilian preparedness and family self-reliance. Governmental agencies have consistently failed to prevent or adequately mitigate natural disaster and deliberate attacks. The Cold-War era “Civil Defense” programs have been completely dismantled and the American population was unprepared for any kind of deliberate and hostile attack. Unlike the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor that hit primarily military targets, this time the main attacks and the major casualties were civilians. The enemy did not come from a well-defined foreign nation. This enemy dwelt among the people and knew no borders and was civilian in nature. During World War Two civilians were major targets of bombings and there were often more civilian casualties than military. All through the Cold War, it was civilians that were the primary targets for thousands of nuclear warheads. Don’t forget that there are still thousands of those missiles out there ready to come our way. In these cases civilians were and are the target of military forces. Today unarmed and unprepared civilians are also the prime targets of armed and trained civilian combatants. These forces infiltrate our borders and deploy in our towns and communities. They may be born here or elsewhere but their ideas are foreign and violent. They operate in our towns, but their support and networks are international. They are the religion-motivated terrorists and the money motivated drug and slave gangs. Together they form a worldwide web that preys on civilians, destroys the lives of our youth, sucks billions from our pockets, and brings fear and violence to our cities and streets.

While lip service is given to governmental support for civilian preparedness, support community based and family based preparedness is not a politically popular

concept. Much of the money for “Homeland Security” has been spent to buy expensive equipment where it will never be used. “Homeland Security” as with all government programs has become about big orders for corporations and extra funds for political supporters. Meanwhile the gangs and the terrorists continue building their organizations and conducting their deadly trades. We are less safe now than before 9/11. That’s a fact.

Our military and police forces are true heroes that deserve our great respect and support, but they cannot defend every home and secure every street. The people must do more than just put out the flag and watch TV. Civilians must face the fact that a large part of their safety and freedom depends on their ability to defend and sustain their lives and property against a variety of dangers including crime, gangs, biological weapons, chemical weapons, bombs, losses of income, failure of utilities, and medical aid all generated by other hostile civilians. I do not advocate violence, only vigilance and preparedness. The worst thing we can do is be divided along racial or, religious lines. This is exactly what gangs, terrorists, and unscrupulous politicians would like. The great majority of *legal* immigrants are good citizens and victims of these very forces. It is said that, “All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men (and women) to do nothing.” Will the twenty-first century be the start of the new “dark ages”? Will life as we know it end? Will the machines take over? Only responsible, prepared and active citizens, house-by-house, block-by-block, community-by-community and action-by-action can maintain security and hope without sacrificing freedom. The good and productive people must be ready to win these civilian wars.

NOTE:

A 40-page Pentagon report titled “Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support” called for a greater military role in domestic security. The report raises the likelihood of US combat troops taking action if civilian (e.g. police) forces are overwhelmed. The fact is that the military and police cannot protect a civilian population against a large-scale civilian (terrorists, gangs) attack without the creation of a police state and the end of life with freedom as we know it.

One gang known as “MS-13” rooted in Central America with links to Al Qaeda is known to have from 8,000 to 10,000 members in 31 US states. This gang moves drugs and is involved in murders, arson, and other violent crimes. MS-13 has put a bounty of \$30,000 to \$50,000 for the killing Border Patrol Agents and \$15,000 for killing any of the civilian volunteer border watchers.

It is estimated that there are roughly 465,000 fugitive aliens in the United States of whom 80,000 are wanted for additional crimes. This is just a small part of the growing international gang matrix. In Great Britain there are estimated to be 3,000 Al Qaeda camp trained Muslim extremists ready to kill more civilians. Can one imagine 3,000 SS troops among the English population in 1941! How many trained enemy combatants are in the US? Probably several thousand. More likely over 10,000.

Who Are You?

A person who is not self-defined and self-motivated is unlikely to do well in life

and highly unlikely to survive under survival emergencies. You must acknowledge that you and everyone else are only the sum of the choices made and actions taken. Recognize and expect nothing else.

- You are not who your ancestors were. You are not entitled to brag on their achievements or suffer from their mistakes.
- You are not how others view you. Do not let your self-image be defined by others. Doing so will surrender your freedom and lead you to ruin. Many critical errors made by individuals and groups were motivated by concerns about what others would think or how it would look. Yes, it is good to let people know who you are, but do not try to be who they think you are or who they want you to be. In an emergency, it's going to be the real you and you need to know who that is.
- You are not entitled to take the blame or the credit for the great achievements or the manifested evils of anyone else past or present. You are entitled to credit or blame for what *you* did or did not do in *your* life. That's all.
- You are how you handle your responsibilities and what you contribute to your community.

If you have accepted the responsibility for defining yourself, no one else will be able to tell you what to think or what to do. You will not look to others for directions and confidence. You will not feel sorry for yourself and blame others (people, groups, conspiracies) for your situation. You will constantly be defining yourself in relation to situations and the environment and make life and survival choices based on who *you* are.

It All Comes Down to Choices

The more I analyze the foundations of survival, life, and freedom, the more I encounter the importance of choices. Choices you make or fail to make. Choices you make in everyday life. Choices you make to face or avoid reality. Choices made well in advance and choices made in haste when trouble is at hand. The rich have more choices than the poor. The educated have more choices than the uneducated. The healthy have more choices than the sick. The wise give themselves more choices than the foolish. Your ability to survive and thrive is based on your available choices and your ability to recognize them. Freedom is defined by choices.

One must resist every action and avoid every personnel decision that will limit one's future choices, unless that decision opens other more desirable choices. For example: going back to school or getting married will certainly reduce your choices in a number of ways but will offer a wide range of new choices. In an emergency, evacuation (packing out) will exchange choices, while not being prepared will severely limit your choices. Decisions like starting to smoke, trying recreational drugs or dropping out of school or letting others take care of you are choices that can only lead to fewer and fewer future choices and therefore less and less freedom and survival options.

I used to do a bit of rock climbing, caving, and river rafting. These activities are clearly survival situations in which (1) your range of choices is affected by your skill and physical condition, (2) you cannot avoid or escape making a series of choices and (3) each choice has both immediate and longer-term consequences. In other words “just like life.” The more practical (not junk info.) knowledge you have, the more choices you have. Time keeps moving along (just like the rapids) so choices (not choosing is still a choice!) must be made or life will make them for you. You must stay afloat now and get to open water, without going on to the rocks down-river. The trick is to make the best choice now that will lead to additional good choices later. In a survival situation your training and preparations give you a much wider range of choices than if you had wasted your time on frivolous pursuits but it will not save your life or preserve your freedoms if you still make poor choices in tactics, priorities, and routes. Choices must be made on sound values not silly ones. When your long or short term survival and freedom is at stake it is no time to make choices based on ego, pride, anger, greed, or fear. There are many, many cases of disasters where there were people who didn’t want to look silly, didn’t want to start trouble, wanted to be “cool,” figured it wasn’t their problem, were too proud, etc. etc. and enabled a disaster. Hey! Why aren’t there more lifeboats on the Titanic? Hey! Why don’t these guys want to know how to land a plane? If the world around you seems to be making some bad choices that does not mean you can’t make some good ones.

Meet, Eat and Retreat

In my early years I used to attend what we came to call “meet, eat and retreat” meetings. Various groups would have meetings at which speakers would rant and rave about the latest threats to life and freedom. Participants would exchange mounds of literature about miracle cures, great conspiracies and the end of the world. Some sort of internal plots always seemed to be hatching and various members and leaders were seen as spies, provocateurs, or even agents of the devil. Participants tended to believe everything they were told inside no matter how unlikely or poorly documented. Lots of time was spent lamenting historic injustices and finding blame for current hazards. On a rare occasion some useful information might be available, but it was usually buried in the avalanche of junk information. After the meeting folks would drop some money in the box, drink some coffee, eat a few doughnuts and go home feeling all warm and fuzzy, while having had absolutely no effect on the preservation of their own life and liberty. Their philosophical paranoia and negative messages resulted in their inability to relate and recruit from the general public, and lead to internal stagnation and eventual disintegration. So these groups actually had a negative effect on the causes they were allegedly supporting. While such groups still exist they have been joined by the Internet. Websites, blogs and e-mail. These are great tools for communicating and organizing in the emergency preparedness and self-reliance movement, but they can also have the same effect as those old “meet, eat and retreat” meetings. There are a lot of people expending a great deal of time and resources exchanging a tremendous amount of information and opinions of questionable value and reliability with no actual effect on anything. In fact, the obsessive (perhaps addictive) manufacture, accumulation, distribution, and examination of information at the expense of any hands-on, face-to-face, blood-and-sweat, goal oriented physical activity is a serious

threat to life, liberty, and prosperity today. Participation in organizations and networking communications is certainly essential to getting anything done but unless it leads to constructive, responsible, and goal oriented action there is no point to it.

Avoid groups and websites that engage in hand wringing, hate spewing, panic promoting, elixir selling, doom saying, conspiracy telling, back stabbing, blame finding,, history lamenting, fear peddling, self-aggrandizing, and tale telling. Instead join and support groups and websites that are unity building, common sense advocating, responsibility supporting, answer seeking, solution proposing, help providing, action planning, skill building, goal setting and people helping.

Selecting Information and Ideas

Over the years I have been told about so many conspiracies, miracle cures, doomsday dates, and secret activities that I have developed a healthy tendency to avoid them all. Had I acted on most of these stories I would have wasted a great deal of time and money and be much worse off than I am. The fact is that anyone can generate photographs, statistics, reports, and testimonials to support anything. Just because something is happening that benefits some and hurts others, does not prove a conspiracy. Yes families, religion, nationalities, and economic classes tend to take care of their own and network. That's called human nature. Society and nature are far too complex for conspiracies to work very well. Just because someone did something and survived a disease does not prove a link. Even scientific studies of thousands often misidentify a cause for a disease or a cure. Some folks just get better (even from cancer) regardless of treatments. Just because someone has photos of tanks or statistics about a big meteor does not mean the Chinese are in Canada or a big rock is headed for your backyard. Anecdotes are not evidence, much less proof of anything. Just because what you hear supports what you want to hear, does not automatically make it true. Just because an action is aimed at a problem, does not necessarily mean it will actually help.

People have a hard time dealing with the unknown or unpredictable. We are vulnerable to anyone who offers an answer, a prediction, or a cure. There are many who use this tendency to gain power, money (contributions), and attention. Some sell hate. Some sell conspiracies, some sell books; some sell medicine, some sell laws and taxes. None sell truly scientific analysis and constructive action. None sell the unpopular idea that we don't have all the answers and we have to expect the unexpected. Non sell the concept that you and I are responsible for and capable of dealing with life as it comes at us.

If there is a group of people that are faced with a natural or man-made calamity and each person says, "I have no idea why this is happening to us" and one person says, "I know" (God's punishment, magnetic conspiracy, aliens, etc.) then he is "the man." Most people would rather follow a nonsensical idea than struggle with an unpleasant reality. Hitler, Communism, drugs—I rest my case. This tends to inhibit continued investigation and constructive action. In many cases the cause is outside the scope of control or much less important than how you chose (there is choices again) to react and be affected by it.

Of course there are real threats and real and valuable ideas that can increase your survival and self-reliance potential but you must dig deeper and avoid taking things at face value. Ask yourself. Is this idea or claim supported by logic, human nature, historic

patterns and personnel experiences? Is there evidence to support this idea, outside of the advocating source? Is the source gaining money, followers, prestige, or political advantage by this claim or position? Is all this really important to who I am and what I am doing or is it just useless junk history and panic news? Beware of your natural tendency to accept information that support your ideas and attitudes, while rejecting equally supported data that is less acceptable. This tendency can lead you to disastrous conclusions. While there is no doubt that the truth can help to set you free, it is equally true that lies and disinformation can lead you to disastrous choices.

Changes and Survival

It can be said that a “disaster” is just a change you were not prepared for. Of course you can’t be adequately “prepared” for everything at all times and some “changes” such as storms and earthquakes are mainly destructive in human terms. But other disasters such as technological, social, and economic changes are only disasters to those who failed to prepare and adapt to them. Hanging on rigidly to some old values or old methods while the natural, social, or economic environment is constantly changing is exactly how people, groups, and even nations find themselves in struggles to survive. Things like pride, tradition, and vested interest often interfere with flexible responses to danger. It may be difficult to accept that a skill you acquired at great effort is no longer of use or something you made or bought with pride now has little value. A position you held for many years may no longer be relevant. You being the expert or the leader may have to be set aside. One good (or bad) change deserves (requires) another. A coming storm may require a change in camping plans vs. risking hypothermia. Economic decline may dictate a more conservative lifestyle vs. debt and disaster. High crime in your area may indicate a change in your attitude towards self-defense. Flexibility and adaptation are the keys to almost every short-term and long-term survival situation. One may attach great value to things like comfort, style, dignity, cleanliness, nonviolence, being “cool”, social status, etc., but any or all of these values may need to be abandoned (at least temporarily) if they inhibit your continued survival and freedom. Yes, there may be people (family, etc.) and values (what’s right) you are willing to die for and you should know who and what those are. Then you should be ready and able to change in every other respect so you can adapt, survive and thrive for those same people and values.

What’s It All About?

Hint: if you think life is about you, you are in for a very frustrating and disastrous journey. Life is about everything and everyone else. If you realize this, your existence may actually have some meaning. You can and should be internally motivated and self-reliant first, in order to freely choose how to make your voluntary contribution to the betterment of your environment and society. It’s not “rocket science”!

Survival and Freedom Vs Human Nature

I was once reading my copy of “Every Man His Own Doctor” a medical book published in 1736. The cures advocated in the book are mainly ineffective and even counter to the patient’s survival. “Why?” I asked, would anyone think that such things would cure anything? There was no logical or scientific reason presented for why a condition existed or why doing this or that would cure it. So in those times we had people suffering and dying while paying for irrelevant “cures” and refusing to look for real answers. This tragic circumstance and most of today’s threats to life and freedom are attributable to human nature.

When faced with a threat or a crisis beyond their immediate understanding or control people absolutely must find a reason. If no logical (data supported, sensible) answer is available, they will accept the first illogical and nonsensical answer that is presented. If we have a group of people with a problem such as: why are we poor?, why are we sick?, why do we have wars?, and there is no factual answer or one they want to hear (e.g. it’s our own fault or we will never really know) they will accept the first made up answer that comes along. Since people don’t like to think they are the victims of chance, nature, or their own foolishness they are quick to blame someone, anyone, or any group (etc. race, religion, class, etc.) for their situation. Finally, desperate and discontented people (diseased, hungry, poor, frightened, etc.) will readily accept almost any proposed solution (e.g. miracle cure, financial scam, law, cult) regardless of the source or logic. I can offer fascism, communism, state lotteries, welfare, and gun laws as just a few examples of false cures for real problems eagerly swallowed by a population looking for scapegoats and easy answers. Once a so-called solution or cure is established, anyone who challenges it with logic or the idea that there are other options will be persecuted. So in a long-term survival challenge (social unrest, war, economic decline) or an acute threat situation (injury, attack, lost, cold, etc.) we can see the inclination of people and groups to assign unsubstantiated causes or causers while grasping ineffective and even dangerous solutions. Being that we are all human, one must guard against this trap in any context. Resist the “do something!” syndrome that leads to expedient, but counterproductive actions. You may need to accept that why something is the way it is or who (if anyone) may be to blame is much less important when what is the most responsible and effective way to make things better. When things get tough and people get frightened, with the crowd is not where you want to be.

Boats and Anchors

Some people are boats, some people are anchors. In other words, some people stay afloat in calm and storm while others do nothing but wait to sink. Your survival and freedom may well depend on whether you are associated with some boats or have attached yourself to some anchors. Regrettably, some “nice” people and even relatives may be serious threats to your survival and freedom. A friend who does drugs or has an alcohol problem and refuses to get help may bring violence into your home. A relative that continually sponges off of you rather than find a job is whittling away your financial security and emergency preparedness funds. Members of groups who always want something, but who rarely do anything only weaken the mission. You have choices; blood,

race, religion, etc. alone does not necessarily earn your loyalty. Only the reciprocal and responsible support manifested by constructive actions deserve your loyalty. Of course we all want to try to help those who have made some bad decisions or are in difficulty through no fault of their own. But there are those who are simply lazy, irresponsible, greedy, and dangerous. Dump them overboard before they take you and the people that really count down with them. If you do not, the harm and sorrow they cause to you and your family must be on your hands.

Facing the Survival Truth

There is just not enough money and people at any level of any government to save and protect everyone and everything all the time. When you are assaulted, it is highly unlikely a policeman will be there soon enough to prevent it. When your home is invaded, there will be no SWAT team on the premises. When a fire starts it will probably spread a while before a fire truck arrives. When sudden illness happens, there will be critical minutes before professional help gets there. Obviously in a large scale disaster what help is available is overwhelmed or even wiped out, leaving the citizens on their own for weeks, months or maybe longer. Life and death will depend on individual preparedness, survival skills and yes a little luck. The first two you know are up to you!

Civilians are the Targets

The reality is that it is not buildings, or land, or machines, or leaders that make a civilization. It is people. So, all wars become focused on the physical and/or psychological destruction of the citizens. Over eleven million civilians were killed in WWII. Both the Allies and the Axis practiced carpet-bombing of civilian communities. Throughout the Cold War cities full of civilians were the targets (still are) of thousands of nuclear warheads. The primary targets of terrorist attacks are civilians. When nations armies cannot be defeated (e.g. Vietnam, Al Qaeda) then sowing confusion and terror among the civilians is the strategy. When a nation's military is defeated it still cannot be truly conquered (resistance, insurgency) if the civilians are armed and determined. It is there-for essential that civilians of a strong nation are encouraged to be armed and prepared. They should be able to render aid of all kinds to themselves and their communities when the need arises. These kinds of activities will discourage crime, gangs, drugs, and other destructive manifestations while encouraging good government and economic stability.

When is Doomsday?

I cannot find a period in human history in which "doomsday" was not being predicted by someone based on current events. There are people who like to predict "doomsday" in order to get money or power from the people. People who have a very limited knowledge of history are inclined to see signs of "the end" or "the big one" everywhere. In reality, the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is fairly quiet when

compared to some other periods. There are no “great plagues” killing two thirds of the population as they did in 1347-1351. There are no “great famines” that starved millions as they have often done. And there are no world wars currently devastating whole continents and killing thousands each day. Surely these were times that doomsday must have seemed near. We have a few dozen small and medium wars going on, an occasional killer tsunami, earthquakes, and hurricanes, throw in the usual terrorist massacres, crime wave, and epidemics and you have *normal* world conditions. Good reason to be aware and prepare but not necessarily for “doomsday.” However, the lack of a truly big, world-class disaster actually increases the potential for such an event. Increased population, dwindling resources, world travel, urban sprawl, Over-use of water, land and fuel sources inevitably create social, economic and natural pressures that can only lead to wars, revolutions, plagues, famines and much more catastrophic effects from natural events. The longer that the natural and social order is stable the greater the upheavals when it adjusts. History is a series of many, many small disasters interrupted by truly world changing disasters, each one greater than the past ones. No one, no time and no place is immune to such events. If it is calm, the storm will come. If it is stormy, it can still get worse. If it gets worse you must still go on. “Doomsday” can be any day. “Dooms day” is the day that your choices or cruel fate put you in the wrong place at the wrong time unprepared. Use the choices wisely and hope for the best.

The Decline of the Nation State and the Rise of the Non-State Soldier

A rational observation of history will reveal that the evolution of civilization is driven by environment and technology. Political philosophy and religions rise, fall, and adapt to these changes, but do not control them. In this constantly changing cycle all dominant systems are in decline. While most recognized the fall of the Soviet Union as the fall of communism alone, it was also the first warning of a more profound change. The Soviet Union was the largest and most centralized and most rigid of the great nation-states of the 20th century and so it fell first and hardest. It should be evident that the centralized nation-state was a product of the industrial age and thrived and grew for several centuries. It should also be obvious that the proliferation of information technology, world trade and high-speed transportation has changed the world environment and thus the relevance and survivability of the nation-state, as we have known it. This reality is already evident in the loss of border integrity, massive legal and illegal migrations, and wars that have little or no national identification. These changes can be expected to dominate the 21st century. We may hate to hear it, but the unalterable pattern of history is that there is always a “new world order” coming in and an “old world order” going out. When the British surrendered to George Washington in 1781, the band played “The World Turned Upside Down.” The world is always turning upside down. Get used to it! This does not imply that the UN will take over or that America is going to disintegrate but it does suggest that the “would be survivor” must be prepared to survive great social, economic, and environmental changes. It also suggests that rigid resistance and denial will not be a wise tactic. Periods of great change generate chaos and wars, and the new conflicts of the 21st century are as different from century wars as medieval battles were from World War Two. The threats to human survival and individual freedom will come in forms unimaginable to the patriots who stood

at Concord and Lexington and only those who are ready to learn and adapt and fight in new ways will survive.

The changing national/international environment as brought with it the rise of the “non-state soldier” *. Of course the non-state soldier has existed in various forms since before there was a “state”. By definition the “non-state soldier is any form of combatant that is motivated and directed by a non-geographic entity.” His or her loyalties are not defined by a place or a government. In the past, the non-state soldiers were limited by poor communications and poor logistics. They had great difficulty recruiting, coordinating, financing and moving equipment and forces. The centralized nation-state held great advantages over these dispersed and uncoordinated elements. That has changed. In fact the nation-state is now too slow, rigid and inefficient to cope with the rise of the “non-state soldier”. The efforts of old-fashioned military and law enforcement organizations to cope with the new reality are almost pathetic. The non-state soldier comes in many different forms and fights in many different ways and makes war for a variety of causes. The non-state soldier renders national governments, the United Nations, borders, the Geneva Convention, and established laws and standards irrelevant. These soldiers may be a loose network of semi-trained criminals or part of a well-trained, well organized and well financed organization. In most cases we find a small well-trained core within a much larger and less well-trained screen. Some non-state soldiers may clearly define themselves as a “soldier” such as the religious terrorists or political extremists. Other non-state soldiers such as gang members who think locally (“turf”) may not realize their role in the network of international drugs and terror. As with all soldiers, they may think only in terms of small tactics situations, but there are non-state generals (terrorist leaders, drug lords, etc.) who think strategically in hot and cold states of war that they control. These non-state soldiers of non-state armies simply ignore national laws, borders and armies and go straight for the social and economic targets in the civilization. In the past, the traitor, the infiltrator, the spy, the saboteur, and the provocateur acted on behalf of a nation-state, but in the 21st century they are a force of their own. In fact the non-state soldiers have substantially infiltrated the military establishments of virtually every major nation. Drug cartels have infiltrated the military and police forces of South and Central America. Religious extremists have overrun most of the military and intelligence organizations of the Middle East. Gang’s signs and gang graffiti are seen throughout the U.S. military establishment. It is estimated that there are from 650,000 to one million street gang members in the United States that are ultimately tied to international networks of drug cartels and terrorists. There are certainly hundreds and perhaps thousands of terrorist cells active throughout the United States at any time. These are not all just thugs and fanatics. There are “street soldiers”, but there are also “cyber-soldiers” who conduct sabotage, information theft, and psychological warfare through the Internet. There are chemists, engineers, weapons experts, and other highly skilled professionals in the ranks of the new non-state soldiers.

These new non-state forces are in a constant state of changing alliances and conflicts that Machiavellians would envy. Of course there are conspiracies and conspiracies within conspiracies and counter conspiracies. Add to this a complex web of greed, fanaticism, accidents, and an unpredictable environment and you have the perfect storm of chaos and danger brewing in the 21st century

In response to these threats, private enterprise and the wealthy have increasingly turned to another form of non-state soldier. The dramatic increase in the demand for private

security forces and even mercenary soldiers is a direct result of the inability of traditional military and law enforcement organizations to cope with the new reality. The increasing number of “gated communities” is another indication of a regression to a fortress mentality. It should be apparent that the state’s ability “to provide for the common defense” is in jeopardy.

To a population that has drifted more and more towards depending on traditional military and law enforcement systems to protect their lives and the highly vulnerable social and economic systems that provide food, water, shelter, and medical care the threat posed by the new non-state soldier is “unthinkable.” Their perceptions of war and soldier are based on the experiences of 20th century cold and hot wars.

The emergence of the non-state soldier fighting non-state wars for non-state related objectives will be the dominant battle reality of the 21st century. This reality will be manifested by:

- World shortages and environmental changes that will dramatically increase the generation of non-state forces recruited and trained in the third world and physically, economically, and ideologically invading the developed nations.
- Actions of the non-state soldier will increasingly degrade the economic prosperity and quality of life of the average citizen. Consider the added costs of goods and the diversion of tax dollars to security since 9/11. This drains the wealth and productivity of the nation and every citizen.
- Actions of the non-state soldier will more seriously interrupt the availability of fuel, food, water, and other essential services to the average citizen. It has been demonstrated that a comparatively small percent of a crop being contaminated renders the entire supply “unsafe”. You cannot guard every farm, every truck, every factory, every mile of railroad or power line.
- Actions of the non-state soldier will affect street safety on the community level. There are not enough nation-state resources to cover all the threats. Already, the shift from street crime to counter terror is resulting in a resurgent of gang activity and power.
- Actions of the non-state soldier will from time-to-time initiate catastrophic chemical, biological, and even nuclear disaster. While the thousands of small tactical attacks will do the most harm, we can still expect the occasional large strategic attack to get through the nation-state defenses. Conventional explosives and biological attacks are most likely, but chemical and even nuclear attacks cannot be ruled out.
- The great majority of the population of even the most prosperous nations will not have access to effective commercial security forces and will be increasingly at risk. This will drive more people into accepting greater restrictions on individual freedoms from the nation-state or joining one of the non-state soldier organizations for “protection.” Both are poor choices.

The non-state survival reality is that the good responsible people of America fighting (and they will need to fight) against the non-state soldiers attacking their means of survival and their rights to live free will have more in common with their non-state survivor brothers and sisters in foreign lands than with the enemy non-state soldiers and the non-state, volunteer victims in their own communities. If you see a battle between America and the non-state soldiers or between Western civilization and the non-state soldier, you are thinking in 20th century terms. The struggle is evolving as one between non-state soldiers of terror, crime, and tyranny and non-state soldiers of independence, freedom, and humanity. It is to be expected that those raised in the most “civilized” and “established” cultures will be the slowest to adapt and survive such changes. It is certainly not desired or advocated that we abandon civilized and responsible citizenship for some form of medieval lifestyle. The proliferation of independent political and religious “militias” may only add to the potential for chaos and division. However, we must see the individual assume greater self-reliance, greater independence. The people must assume the role of the responsible defenders of life and freedom. Survival knowledge, survival preparedness, and the survival philosophy/mind-set creates a culture wherein people are more inclined to turn *to* each other rather than *on* each other in the struggles to come.

** Defending Against The Non State (Criminal) Soldier, by Robert J. Bunker, PH.D. Military Writings 2004*

Building Self-Reliance

The objective of a truly beneficial parent, organization or state is to make itself as unnecessary as possible. Parents, executives, and bureaucrats often serve and support their constituents, not so much to do them good as to enhance their own power and need to be needed. Their apparent selflessness and caring is actually born of selfishness and fear. They fear the independent child, the self-driven employee, and the self-reliant citizen. The child who must always call mom or dad and the citizen that must always seek aid and regulation from the state cannot survive and remain free under hostile conditions. Weak and helpless members make weak families and weak nations. A truly responsible parent, a truly great leader, protects and aids, while building self-reliance and independence of actions and capabilities.

Technological Disarmament

When the second amendment was written by men like Jefferson and Franklin, who certainly were aware of the ever-accelerating march of technology, chose the wording with care. Yes, they had the word “technology” back then. These were acknowledged geniuses who selected the word “infringed” rather than “prevented” or “controlled” because they meant, “do not touch this right in any way!” They used the generic term “arms” rather than “muskets” or “muzzle loader”, because they knew that more modern “arms” would keep being developed and they intended that access to them by the people would be assured.

They certainly knew that whatever these future “arms” might be, criminals would get a hold of them and the state could use them to abuse its power. There is no doubt that they understood the balance of force between citizen, criminal, and state must be maintained to assure future freedoms. Recently the US Navy announced that its new ships will have electronic rail guns in place of old chemical explosive powered cannons. The guns were tested as “small palm sized models”. There is no doubt that illegal arms manufacturers and terrorists will quickly produce these and other new high tech weapons and there is no doubt that police forces will (justifiably) want this kind of firepower. Without a police and military demand for gunpowder, arms manufacturers will phase out making them and the ammunition for them. Even the most modern current firearms will be relegated to the hard to get and hard to maintain antique status. Few, if any newer firearms will come to market. Meanwhile the enemies of civilian self-reliance and freedom will argue that new technology weaponry should not be available to the people and that it is not covered under the second amendment. If this happens, public disarmament will be a reality as a result of economics and technology, without any legislation required. It would be the same as saying you have the right to a free press but it only applies to wooden type letter presses while radio, TV, and the Internet are not protected.

The right to effective self-defense is a fundamental human right that exists before and regardless of the Constitution. The right to protect your own life and freedom is recognized by all but the most sheep-like people. Therefore it must follow that people have the right to the means to exercise that right. The evolution of weapons technology starting with the rock and the club and will continue into the future. The human right to self-defense requires the possession of a means of defense that is consistently equal to the potential threat. To say otherwise is ignoring history, human nature, and reality.

Defending Property

While the law, in theory supports the use of force in the defense of one’s life, it is generally not legal to use deadly force in defense of property. The original wording for the Declaration of Independence was to have said “life, liberty, and property” holding all three of equal value. What the hell does “the pursuit of happiness” mean? So legally and morally we are obligated to use deadly force in the defense of life and liberty. Arguably, you should have the option to use deadly force in defense of property as well. From a survival standpoint it may be foolish to put your life at risk for most material possessions, but what if those possessions (firearms, food stores, medical supplies, water, etc.) are necessary for the preservation of life and liberty? You may not be justified in using force to defend you television set, but what about using force to defend your families shelter or to keep weapons out of the hands of criminals? What about using force to resist being placed in a position where your survival choices will be limited?

Going a bit further, we can propose that all of your property was acquired by sacrificing some of your time and energy. Time and energy is what life is! So property is already bought with life and liberty and you should have the option to use force to defend it. The criminal has chosen not to use his time and energy to acquire property and acts to take the results of your sacrifice. I am not advocating the shooting of some petty thief, but we can question the justice and effect of not energetically defending one’s major property.

It would seem that a criminal in the act of committing a significant crime in the sight of a responsible citizen has voluntarily abrogated any rights to expect consideration.

Self-Reliance and the Media

First of all, let me say that there is no conscious or deliberated conspiracy by the media against the values we advocate. It is just their nature to look at issues from a rather elitist and authoritarian point of view. They get their orders from big business and their main supply of information from big government. They observe society from on high and cannot help but feel they know what's best. Uncovering "dangerous" people and "extreme" ideas is what generates ratings. Create enough fear and panic about a person or a group and you could get a Pulitzer Prize! Generate a big issue that gets a new law passed is a real feather in any reporter's cap. They simply need to select the stories to present, the sound bites to use, and the people to interview. Then add some selected statistics and a little spin to get things going. They may occasionally comment favorably on some act of self-defense or self-reliance, but this is against an overwhelming mass of negative, anti-self-reliance "news." We seldom if ever hear any reporter say "Hey! Maybe we need fewer laws here," or "Let's give citizens more power." Such ideas have not been healthy for reporter careers. It is just not in the nature or the best interests of the mass communication media to promote civilian self-reliance and civilian liberation. While I doubt if these are written rules, it often seems that they follow these instructions:

1. Never portray self-reliant citizens or self-reliance advocates in a positive light. If you cannot find something negative about them just bury the story.
2. Never publicize or credit citizens who defend their own life, family, or property, especially if they used a weapon. If you cannot show how dangerous they are, just ignore the event.
3. Take every opportunity to portray anyone who tries to be too self-reliant and independent as silly, paranoid, or dangerous.
4. When possible, associate the ideas of self-reliance and self-defense with extreme political, racial, or religious ideas regardless of the facts. Mentioning a responsible person or group in the same article with an extremist group will effectively ruin the image of the former.
5. Scripted fiction programs ("Law and Order", etc.) with hypothetical cases that portray prepared citizens as hateful, crazy, and dangerous. Show the acts of armed and responsible citizens as criminals that should be disarmed and prosecuted. Since it's presented as fiction, no one can ask for equal time and the public mind is being conditioned against civilian preparedness and self-reliance.

I must say again that reporters and editors are not evil or conspiratorial. I must also say that I have had the honor of meeting several exceptions to the above tendencies. It's

just the nature of the beast (no biblical reference intended) they exist in.

Counter Survival Syndromes

In trying to get good people to accept the possibility of hard times and catastrophic occurrences, we run into four arguments. This syndrome of attitudes is sometimes referred to as the Titanic syndrome. The folks on that fated vessel probably exhibited some of these fatalistic and denial characteristics prior to that unintended interaction with the frozen obstruction.

1. The first one is simply denial. **“It can’t happen.”** Now, admittedly some things are highly unlikely, but almost nothing is impossible. When we consider the history of nature’s power and human folly, no one can honestly think that a ship cannot be sunk, a war cannot be started, an economy cannot collapse, or a climate cannot change. Unfortunately, catastrophes of all sorts are normal.

2. The next position is that while it can happen or is happening. **“It will not happen to me.”** The Jews of Germany and the dissidents of Russia really paid for this kind of thinking. You cannot deny that bombs are going off in the next block or neighbors are losing everything, or other folks are being rounded up, but I am immune because ----- . This idea does make it easier to go on with life under dangerous conditions, but not if you really believe it.

3. Then there is the fatalistic notion. **“If it does happen, I am doomed anyway.”** The folks in London during the German bombing in World War Two often frustrated the Air Raid Wardens with that one. I guess that’s okay, but that’s not the way it may work for you. You may just get badly injured or be a desperate survivor. And what about your family and friends that may need you?

4. Finally we hear, **“If that happens, I don’t want to survive.”** This was a very popular argument for non-preparedness during the Cold War. What a bunch of bull! These folks would be the most desperate predatory and violent animals on the planet after a large catastrophe. Having made no preparations physically or mentally, they would be at best a burden and at worst a serious hazard to all those around them.

All of these are just excuses for avoiding reality and responsibility for one’s own life and freedoms. I am not saying that the passengers on the Titanic should not have enjoyed its fine amenities any more than I would suggest that we go through life endlessly stocking supplies and building bunkers. Enjoy life, do good things, but protect the people and the freedom you value and enjoy with a healthy dose of reality and preparedness.

Doing the Hard Things

It would seem that the value of an act is usually in direct proportion to how difficult, frightening, and/or uncomfortable it is to do. This is true for most efforts to become more self-reliant and independent. As they say, “no pain, no gain.” When I ask myself; what acts am I most proud of or what actions made the biggest difference in my life, they are invariably the things that made my head hurt, my stomach turn, my hands shake, my body hurt, etc. etc. Things like: Driving in a snowstorm to attend a funeral to comfort a friend. Walking miles to college on subzero nights. Being cold, hot, hungry, tired, or dirty while learning survival skills. Looking stupid in order to learn from others. Doing without to stay out of debt. Standing for unpopular or unpleasant ideas because they were right. In many cases the very thing that you least want to do is the most important thing you must do. Fear of pain, fear of looking foolish, fear of discomfort are not justifications for any caring and responsible person to avoid doing the right and the necessary thing. This is true in life and even more important in survival situations. Once it is determined that doing a thing is right and will lead to a better situation, *do it!*

Divided We Die

Clearly there are certain attitudes, actions, and philosophies that are directly opposed to self-reliance, preparedness, and individual freedoms. However, such errors and evils are not the exclusive product of any particular group of people. The great majority of people (all people) may be susceptible to the misdirection and disinformation of gangs, cults, and demigods. But no group, as individuals, are more or less inclined towards any particular evil. The fundamental concepts of self-reliance, responsibility, and survival are universal. The poorest fellow in a third world country and a rich man in America may see the world very differently, but when it comes down to survival, self-reliance, and freedom, he is either a responsible defender or an irresponsible predator. A person is defined by one's acts alone. The division of people along artificial (race, religion, nationality, etc.) lines serves only to weaken humanities chances for survival, freedom, and progress. Those who focus on and magnify differences and negatives do so in order to gain something for themselves. Unity and self-reliance strengthen the responsible citizens and weaken the criminal establishments and political extremism. Identify your enemies only by their individual acts. Be a friend and mentor to all that seek survival, self-reliance knowledge.

Learn and Work

In life and in survival, the two key words are “learn” and “work.” Emergency preparedness is a matter of learning skills and doing work ahead of time, before an emergency happens. This is putting knowledge and resources into your life and freedom account. In the actual emergency, you will need to learn and work very fast and draw on your preparedness account of knowledge and supplies. Simply put, if the account is not sufficient to meet the level of the emergency fast enough, you may perish or be forced to exchange freedoms for your survival. Knowledge and the work you do based on that knowledge is the only thing that makes you more valuable than a rock. When a person, group, or nation consumes resources in excess of what they create, they must ultimately

exhaust their reserves and be consumed. This simple rule applies to your economic life, your survival plans, and the world around you. Build up your survival, self-reliance, account for yourself, your family, and your future.

The Future and Survival Self-Reliance

Do not make the mistake (as many do) of thinking that emergency preparedness, survival, and self/reliance is about just hanging on for today and preserving the ways of the past. Such defensive and narrow-minded thinking would doom its advocates and practitioners. There are certainly values that are essential and worth fighting for and there is much practical knowledge (skills and crafts) from the past that continues to be of value in the pursuit of self/reliance, but the ability to adapt to the future is a primary survival requirement. The philosophy and practices of survival and self/reliance is a vehicle, not a foxhole. One might see it as an armored vehicle able to defend lives, freedoms, and good values while moving through the dangerous and hostile terrain of the future towards a vision of a better world. One must remember that the concepts of survival and self-reliance were most evident in pioneers and explorers, not in those who stayed home and avoided hazards. These were people who were prepared to take risks in-order to expand knowledge and freedom for themselves and their children. It is the highly regulated, institutionalized, bureaucratic, and pacified societies that stagnate and die. It is the highly individualistic, self-reliant, responsible, and independent people that lead, innovate, explore, and progress. The future belongs to the prepared and self-reliant pioneer who survives assaults on his/her life and liberties while building a better future.

Do You Owe Survival to Your Neighbor

In dire circumstances, is it my obligation to share what food and supplies I have with a neighbor in need? Years ago, when nuclear war was the major survival scenario (at least with the media) I was on a talk radio show. The “host” was rather hostile to the whole idea of folks being prepared (hard to understand) and accused us of being selfish and dangerous, because we might have to use force to defend our supplies when our (unprepared, irresponsible) neighbors came calling. We were the bad guys! I pointed out to him that only those of us that were prepared would be able to choose to help anyone. My exact quote was, “You cannot be your brother’s keeper if you are not able to be your own keeper.” I stated that while most of us would choose to help those we could, we had no moral obligation to risk our survival and that of our family for those who had chosen not to prepare. If one person chose not to buy insurance, spends into debt on gambling, etc. it is not the obligation of others to pay for the consequences of those choices. Suppose I drive an older car and take fewer vacations in order to achieve a bit more self-reliance and survival capacity. My neighbor drives a nice new car and heads for the Bahamas. Choices! Then one day the waste material hits the circulatory device. Well, he didn’t let me use that new car or take me along on that trip. I am sure if I had come over demanding that I use that car, he would have used force or called the police to use force to stop me. So, while we may have a moral obligation to help save the lives and freedoms of our fellow human

beings if and when possible, we do not *owe* the advantages of our good choices to anyone, especially those who have chosen to be irresponsible and have felt no moral obligation or responsibility to prepare at all.

Safety First?

After forty years of teaching emergency survival and industrial safety, I have concluded that safety and security come first, unless it is inconvenient, expensive, too slow, unpleasant, not cool, uncomfortable, or not popular. This is true on a governmental, corporate, and individual level. It is human nature. If safety and security were first, every house would be a self-sufficient fortress, everyone would drive to work at about 10 mph on the side streets, and the whole US budget would go to emergency management and the military. It is far better to face this reality and manage safety and emergency preparedness based on cost vs. benefits. Here again we have choices. Choosing to ignore the real hazards to your life, your loved ones, and your values would be foolish. Choosing to spend all of your time and resources trying to avoid every conceivable disaster is equally foolish. A realistic analysis of what realistically *could* happen (fire, flood, assault, job loss, etc.) and what impact it would have on your values (life, family, home, freedoms, etc.) should lead the responsible citizen to an effective plan for prevention, avoidance, and survival of disasters small and large. I must recommend the concept of personal hazard surveys and analysis in place of apathy on the one hand and paranoia driven action on the other.

Mental Focus in Safety and Survival

In his book *Deep Survival*, Lawrence Gonzales cites several cases where victims of outdoor disaster were experienced experts and yet made foolish decisions that led to serious trouble. As a safety professional I have investigated scores of injury cases and “near miss incidents” where there was no result of real engineering failures or training flaws, and yet the wrong thing was done. In my studies of military history I see great generals make errors* that in hindsight seem hard to understand. As Gonzales put it, “Be here now!” In safety we talk about, “Mind on task, eyes on task,” as being necessary to avoid injuries. When we are driving to our jobs, our minds may still be at home or already at work, or focused on that jerk that just cut in front of you, or you have tunnel vision on your lane? In a survival or combat situation you may be thinking about what others will think of you or how much better it would feel to be home, etc. In long-range emergency preparedness, we may let pride, anger, or other emotions misdirect our efforts and establish unproductive goals. This displacement of our efforts and resources can be defined as:

- **Strategic Displacement.** This is the establishment of goals and objectives based on negative and false values and motivations that are not supportive of your survival, self-reliance, and freedom. A person who chooses to use drugs, join a criminal enterprise, spend excessively, adopt extreme and negative ideas, focus on luck rather than effort, etc. would be practicing strategic displacement.

- **Tactical Displacement.** This is the more immediate action or reaction motivated by negative activators. Fear, anger, embarrassment, pride, jealousy, laziness are all negative activators that can put you and others in great danger when they affect your actions in a survival situation. In one case, one member of a climbing team seriously doubted the wisdom of taking a short route off the mountain back to the lodge, but didn't say anything because the longer safer route would not get them back to that nice warm lodge in time for dinner. He would have been the guy that kept them out in the cold so he kept quiet. People died! They were not "there now," they were at the lodge (mentally) at 7:00 PM. How often have you almost had an accident because you were not mentally there then?

Simply put; bad things happen when our mental and psychological focus does not match the needs of the situation. The range is between complete withdrawals from reality (curled up in a ball) to a total lack of perception of immediate reality, as in daydreaming. Many things require our minds to multi-task rapidly. In fact, the ability to widen and narrow our mental focus is essential to most activities and especially to survival situations. The key is to (1) keep the focus within the time/place/subject area of effect and (2) prioritize your attentions on the areas of most immediate impact on your survival. For example: in combat you have to alternately focus on your weapon, your body movement, your team members (if any), your environment and terrain (lighting, cover, footing), your immediate assailants, and other potential threats. You do not want your mind to start thinking about, "Did I load this gun?" or "Will this guy kill me?" or "Why did I come here?" or "Boy, this will be a great story!" All of these are outside the immediate range of effect and are tactical displacements based on negative (pride, fear, etc.) actuators. You also do not want to have tunnel vision just on the assailant, because this could cause you to trip, shoot one of your team, forget to take the safety off, etc. Obviously, spending too much time focused away from the primary assailant can be disastrous as well. You multi-task maybe 90% assailant, 10% on the other factors. The military refers to this as "situation awareness"—putting yourself where it counts.

Think of your awareness range as a series of concentric circles.

1. In the very center are your hands, feet, head, fingers, etc. There are times when you damn well better know where those are! Yet there are cases after cases where people obviously did not know where they were putting themselves.
2. Next are the things you have immediate contact with such as your tools, clothing, steering wheel, glasses, etc. Have you grabbed the tool in the wrong place? Left your coat open? There are potential hazards in not paying attention in this range. Obviously, everything in this range is a potential and immediate hazard.
3. A few feet out is what we often call "our personal space." We generally feel a bit threatened if someone gets too close (well, it depends on who the someone is), yet we can become unaware of what is going on that close.
4. Next comes the immediate environment including a room or vehicle

we are in, or things out to about 50 feet that could impact our situation very quickly. This is the range usually excluded when fear or concern causes us to get “tunnel vision.”

5. After that comes the larger environment including incoming threats, weather, sounds, smells, etc. They are not likely to kill you this minute, but not being aware of changing temperatures or the faint smell of smoke certainly can mean trouble in the near future.

6. Now we get to mental environment that includes where you were, where you want to be, where you don’t want to be, what you want to do, etc. On a cell phone in traffic is a perfect example of this. You are “there then,” not “here now.” This can be a very creative and enjoyable area of awareness if done in the right place. For example: I am there now as I write this article.

The table below may help illustrate the matching of awareness ranges with some survival situations. I have shaded the area that would be the highest priority for awareness, but the other areas cannot be ignored and could demand higher attention. Your focus can be too wide or too narrow, or it can linger too long in one range. Knowing this, it is possible to develop awareness. You can say to yourself, “Hey! I need to get focused back here,” or “Oh oh! I am not thinking and acting in the critical areas here.” Going into a situation, you can mentally identify the priorities and boundaries for your awareness.

| Awareness Range | Driving | Combat | Wilderness | Survival Planning |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Body Parts Actions | Position | Position Movements | Injuries Temperature | Minimal Hazard |
| Immediate Contacts | Seat Belt Steering Wheel | Weapons | Clothing Temperatures | Minimal Hazard |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Personal Space | Interior Controls | Dangers? | Shelter Hazards | Minimal Hazard |
| Close Environment | Adjoining Vehicles | Dangers? Enemies? Friends? | Hazards Resources Others Involved | Factors to Consider |
| General Environment | Traffic Conditions | Potential Dangers? | Weather Routes | Factors to Consider |
| Mental Emotional Location | N/A | N/A | Self-reliant Attitude | Consider Hypothetical Situations, Times, Places |

Champion target shooters never ever think about what the other guy is scoring, whether they are winning or losing, or how great the victory will be. While they are shooting they are thinking about the shot they are taking, or even the incremental step (e.g. grip, trigger pull, etc.) of that shot. I can guarantee that anyone who does not know how to control his or her focus (“be here now”) will not win.

Being able to match your awareness range to your situation is critical to virtually every task in life and has special impact on safety and survival. Knowing this, you should be able to consciously say to yourself, “Am I where I belong mentally?” The ability to bring your awareness within the time and place you are at and apply your attitudes of resourcefulness and self-reliance means you are never lost.

In addition to the range of personal, internal issues that can cause you to misdirect your focus in life and in emergencies, there are people and institutions that thrive on keeping you from focusing on what’s in your best interest. Politicians, salesman, conmen, lawyers, magicians, etc. are all experts at redirecting and misdirecting your focus in order to further their own causes and agendas. Others can also be adept at using your internal emotions (fears, anger, pride, greed) to cause tactical and strategic displacement of your focus that results in bad or even fatal decisions. Recognition of this hazard and constantly matching your focus with what’s real is a must. Don’t let emotions, environments or other people choose how you focus and react to a situation. It’s “mind over mind” and “think before you think.”

**Notably: Napoleon at Waterloo who became obsessed with taking the chateau at Hougoumont to the detriment of the overall battlefield, and Japanese Admiral Kurita at the battle of Samar where he let his losses divert him when the objective of the whole operation was in-hand.*

You Are Never Lost!

The classic survival scenario is one in which the victim is lost in the wilderness or stranded on a deserted island. Laurence Gonzales in his book *Deep Survival* proposes that you are never lost. While you may be lost to others who do not know where you are, you are never lost to you because, “Hey! I’m right here.” Being lost is a state of mind. Being lost is a choice. Being lost is when you are not mentally and spiritually where you are physically. You may have inadvertently misplaced civilization while traveling (hiking, boating, flying, etc.), or civilization may have left you through acts of man (war, terror, etc.) or nature (storms, earthquake, etc.) but you do not need to be lost. Once you choose to accept the situation and the environment (wilderness, combat, weather, chaos, etc.) as it is and mentally abandon the environments, situations and values (comfort, pride, safety, wealth) that are not applicable, you are where you are ready to live in that time and place. The better you are prepared psychologically to adjust and find yourself, the better off you will be in a survival situation.

Survival, Self/Reliance, and Youth

I do not intend to be one of those “old timers” who laments about the weakness and degeneration of the young. Generation gaps and misunderstandings from one generation to the next are normal. Children will challenge their parents and their values as a way of declaring their independence and establishing their own identities. We all did it. Ultimately, they will make choices that will alter the courses of their lives for better or worse. Today’s youth are no more or less likely to be good and responsible people if they survive their teen years. They are well adapted to a high-tech, multi-tasking, fast reaction world. During their lives, computers will achieve human intelligence, fossil fuels will be exhausted, the technology for total surveillance and control will be perfected, and the very existence of humanity as we know it will be in their hands. The youth can be particularly susceptible to simplistic solutions and short-term thinking. It is at this stage that big mistakes like smoking, drugs, crime, etc. can be made. It is at this stage that salesmen, gang leaders, politicians, and others find them easy to lead in wrong directions. Knowledge is mistaken for wisdom, and mass nonconformance is mistaken for individuality. A narrow view of history and their role in it causes them to repeat past social, economic, and political errors. A limited experience and lack of historic perspective causes them to think that they are the first ones to face challenges and emotional crisis that mature people understand to be normal and survivable. To some of them, the sky is always falling and the world is focused on doing them harm. For others it is “live for today.” Well, as we know, the sky *is* always falling, but yet tomorrow does come, so we deal with it!

There is a growing segment of the youth that may have been over protected and

over directed by well-meaning parents. Conditioned to the idea of “entitlements, guidance, protection, and comfort” they will be ill equipped to cope with any unstructured, hazardous, and even violent situations that the future will bring. A life of comfort and gratification will meet with some hard realities and difficult decisions that will leave them vulnerable to political manipulation and panic-driven decisions. This component of the generations will be eager to blame others rather than accept responsibility for problems. They may be inclined to follow leaders who offer false hopes in exchange for their money and freedoms.

However, there is another element of the youth that does learn from history and/or their own hard times and deprivations. They are good or lucky enough to get through their youthful errors and challenges, and still hang on to their survival and self-reliance choices. Their survival training may have been formal or more often just real, tough street and wilderness experiences. They are going to be stronger, more adaptable, and highly resistant to assaults on their self-reliance and freedoms. They will be more able to overcome chaos, disaster, despair, and intimidation. They will recognize threats to their lives and their existence as free people and be ready to do whatever is necessary to survive. Humanity would not have gotten this far without extinction or total enslavement if it were not for the constant regeneration of this kind of person.

The Bunker and Hunker Mentality

Ben Franklin said, “Three men may keep a secret if two of them are dead.” It is a fact that many crimes are committed by someone the victim knows. As they say, “Sometimes paranoia is just good thinking.” There is no doubt that reasonable caution and information security is an essential element in emergency preparedness and self-reliance. In fact, it is an unwritten rule among preparedness advocates that one never asks or tells about the exact supplies, arms, equipment, or plans one has. Who else really needs to know? The dispersal of information that can only help potentially hostile forces is foolish. The sharing of ideas, opinions, and skills with those of good and friendly intentions builds strength and security. Blindly withholding everything is not sane or responsible. The “bunker and hunker” mentality is characterized by fear driven isolation of speak no survival, show no survival, and hear no survival. These folks totally avoid communicating, educating, or advocating for what they secretly believe and practice. They may want to meet others and share knowledge but are unwilling to open up enough to do so. Often they’re silence and attitude actually attracts negative attention and suspicion among neighbors and friends. Often, what others imagine about these individuals and groups is far more sinister than any reality. They might be surprised to find many sympathetic or even enthusiastic allies among their acquaintances, but they never find out. So they hunker in the bunker (real or hypothetical) waiting for “the big one,” whatever that may be. They do not network. They do not share. They do not teach. They do not advocate. They think that they can somehow hang on to meaningful survival and freedoms alone. They are wrong.

The idea and the hope is that if enough people are prepared, more self-reliant and more dedicated to personal and family security and independence most of “the big ones” can be made into smaller less traumatic ones. The advocates and enablers of dependency,

vulnerability, and conformity are the masters of advocacy, legislation, sales, and organization. They sell their damaging notions and spread their ideas while the values of preparedness and self-reliance are left virtually defenseless. I must pronounce that if you are already afraid to speak for your ideas and teach your skills, you have already surrendered the future. Surely, if you have chosen to go literally and figuratively underground, you have voluntarily buried yourself and what you stand for. There may be a place and a time for hunkering in a bunker, but meaningful life and real freedoms tend to die in such places if kept there too long.

Slow Vs Fast Disasters

It may be said that a disaster is simply a change that you were not prepared for and that “doomsday” is just the day your personal survival preparedness failed. When we think about “disasters” and “emergencies” we usually think about the kind of fast moving event that takes minutes, hours, or a few days to unfold. We prepare for earthquakes, storms, fires, attacks, accidents, or even the big meteor hit. These I call “acute disasters” and the wise and responsible person will do their best to: anticipate these situations if possible, prevent them where safety practices can be applied, avoid them where relocation or route alterations are an option, prepare for them as necessary, and survive them if and when they do happen using the skills, equipment and attitudes they have acquired. The need to establish the capacity to survive and recover from acute (fast) disasters should be obvious to all.

There is a whole other class of “disasters” that are more common, less obvious, and often more deadly than the classic big events. These kinds of disasters have taken the lives and freedoms of more people than all the storms and earthquakes in history. They are more complex, more insidious, and more pervasive. We can call these “chronic disasters” because like chronic diseases they just take longer to kill. These are negative changes in our internal and external environment that can take years or even decades before their impact threatens our lives, property, and liberties. While preparedness and fast reactions are required to survive acute (fast) disasters, it is early recognition, constant adjustment (adaptation), and maintained self-reliance that are the keys to surviving chronic (slow developing) disaster. Examples of chronic disasters are: declining health, dwindling job security, growing debt, environmental shifts, dwindling supplies of fuel, food, water, etc. disappearing freedoms and privacy, rising world crime, and gang power. Any changing trend that has potentially negative effects on future survival and freedom needs to be addressed with the same: anticipate, prevent, avoid, prepare, survive actions as other potential disasters. Like the frog that will jump from the boiling water when dropped in, but will perish if put in the pot and slowly brought to a boil, there is the dangerous tendency to deny or put-off reacting to chronic disasters until it is too late. The evidence of chronic emergencies may be seen on your streets, at your job, in your bank account and budget, on the news, in books and in the lessons of history. What’s past is indeed prologue. The only constant in life is change. Change can be good or bad for you. Failure to recognize and prepare for change is a highly risky choice you make. Look, listen, learn, read, and think. Where is the world going? Where do I need to be in relation to that in order to avoid negative consequences? When the society and environment reach this state what should I

have done? What personal fears, doubts, or inadequacies stand in my way? What must I do to stay one step ahead of change?

Voluntary Ignorance

How often do we hear, “I’d like to help, but I don’t know how to do that,” or “I would have done something if I knew what to do.” Of course, we can’t know everything we need to know in every situation. There are times when we should call on the experts. As Clint Eastwood said, “A man’s got to know his limitations,” but we all have a lot to do with what those limitations are. Few of us will master nuclear physics or brain surgery, but most of us can learn CPR, first-aid, self-defense, and millions of other things that would increase our choices in life, our freedoms, and our survival capabilities. Knowledge is everywhere. Every little thing learned gives us choices to learn more. Regardless of our starting point or mental capabilities we can get smarter if we make that choice. Ignorance is no excuse for not doing anything; it is just the starting point to learning how to do it. Even a slow learner beats a no learner every time. Ignorance is voluntary and a surrender of responsibility. In a survival emergency you depend on all you have learned while you rapidly learn more from the situation. Survival and self/reliance is defined by the choices you give yourself. Choices are the sum of your knowledge and skills multiplied by your imagination. Continuous active learning is a key habit of survival, self/reliance, and personal freedoms.

The Brotherhood of the Survival Pack

I have had some sort of “survival pack” since my late teens. It started with a simple Boy Scout backpack stuffed with various items that I thought I might need. Back in the 50’s there was a lot of WWII surplus stuff and I was able to put a good pack together on my paper-route money. I still have the army blanket and scout knife from that pack. Later evolutions were a larger WWII era bag, an aluminum frame pack, and the ubiquitous Alice Pack from the Viet Nam era. I still have the Alice Pack for demonstrations, but my current “Survival Pack” or “Grab and Go Pack” is a lighter and well-padded commercial pack designed for hiking and hunting. My attachment to the ready to go “survival pack” predates my involvement in the “survival movement” or any organized programs. I am sure that it evolved from an impoverished and insecure childhood, where I was on my own most of the time. As I moved forward to build a relatively secure personal life, I retained the “always ready” philosophy because (1) I was well aware of the very insecure world we live in and (2) I knew that events over which I have no control could put me into a survival situation. Along with the pack goes the fact that I have never been unemployed, never owed more than my liquid assets could pay for, and have backup plans for just about everything. I have never had to use my “survival pack” (except for demonstrations), but knowing it was/is there is a great comfort and practical tranquilizer. Hey, if everything goes to hell, I’ve got my pack.

Through the years I have been fortunate enough to meet many men and women who also have become attached to the idea of always having a “survival pack” at hand. These are folks who never assume that “the system” will take care of their needs. These are folks

who know anything can and *will* happen. These are folks who are unwilling to put their ultimate survival in the hands of others. These are folks who do not believe in luck. And these are folks who would not submit to being victimized and oppressed by anyone. I like to think of these folks as “The Brotherhood of the Survival Pack.” While I have met hundreds of these folks, I seriously believe there are thousands and maybe hundreds of thousands of citizens who keep some kind of “survival pack” in the closet or under the bed.

There are many, many published lists of what one might put into a “survival” pack and I will not do that here. I will list the abilities that the possession of this pack bestows on its owner. It is these *potential* abilities that put him/her above the unprepared and creates a practical spirit of freedom. These are listed below in order of priority:

1. The ability and means to breathe uncontaminated air.
2. The ability and means to obtain and if necessary purify drinking water.
3. The ability and means to create shelter from sun, wind, rain, cold, and airborne poisons.
4. The ability and means to create a fire under all conditions.
5. The ability and means to stay warm in cold weather.
6. The ability and means to have and obtain adequate food.
7. The ability and means to defend life against assault.
8. The ability and means to provide basic first aid and medical care.
9. The ability and means to maintain ones equipment and clothing.
10. The ability and means to travel and navigate safely through urban and wilderness environments.
11. The ability and means to escape and evade criminals and mobs if necessary.
12. The ability and means to help others.

In short, the “survival pack” provides the ability and means to live and operate independently of the social, economic system for extended periods of time. While this may never be necessary, the very existence of this pack confers a state of independence and liberation upon its owner. Typically, “survival pack” owners are the most law abiding, hard working, and responsible members of the community. They do so by choice because they could never be coerced or intimidated. They are better able to withstand natural and man-made disasters and still reach out to help neighbors. They would never need to panic or loot

when times are tough.

I still have my “survival pack” and constantly update it. I may never use it. I hope I never need to use it. I know some will need their packs at some time and I know many others will regret that they do not have one. In world of danger and uncertainty I am proud to be a member of The Brotherhood of The Survival Pack.

Five Myths That Affect Survival and Self-Reliance

When things we take for granted as facts do not seem to match what happens, we need to reexamine the foundations of our thinking. I am sure some of you already have identified some or all of these myths, but some of you may not have. Regardless, these five myths are common and they impact the public perception of emergency preparedness and self-reliance. Often these myths are promoted by politicians, religious leaders, and sales agents to either panic or pacify the public for their own profits and power. They are manifestations of human nature and much easier to propagate and maintain than truths.

Myth #1: There have been, or will be periods of peace, stability, and safety.

The less history the people know, the easier it is to mislead them. The superficial history taught in schools only covers selected “major events.” A more in depth examination will show dozens of small wars between every big one. Mother Nature is constantly exterminating people and animals through floods, storms, earthquakes, and diseases. Genocide, massacres, organized crime, and brutality are (unfortunately) humanity’s habits. If you are lucky enough to have escaped the ravages of human and natural chaos, be thankful. It was just luck. No place, no people, and no time will ever be truly safe. Nature and humanity are all about change, and change destroys and kills as it builds and restores. I seriously doubt that humanity would survive peace, stability, and safety. There would be no challenges, changes, or freedom. Freedom and hope are preserved by surviving and adapting to the effects (war, disaster, chaos) of change. You cannot prevent or avoid most of it.

Myth #2: We live in unusually dangerous times that are more likely to lead to “doomsday” or “end-times” than any previous epoch.

I try not to laugh when someone tells me that the end is near. Maybe so, but there is no more evidence of that than there was 40 years ago, when I became interested in survival and self-reliance. In the midst of World War Two there must have been good reason to see “doomsday” on the horizon. Surely the folks in 14th century Europe foresaw “the end-times” coming as millions died from the bubonic plague. The fall of Rome or the invasion of the Mongolian Hordes were surely signs of the coming apocalypse. Yet, here we are. An examination of old newspapers going back through the 19th and 20th century reveals the same mixture of war, crime, disasters, and chaos as do today’s newspapers. No, there is no more and *no less* reason to expect “doomsday” now than at any past time. This may seem strange coming from a strong advocate of survival preparedness and self-reliance, but fear

is not what drives the philosophy. Of course, there is no reason to be sure that “the big one” *won't* hit today or next week. The reality is that we are all *potential* victims of a wide variety of personal, local, and large-scale disasters at any time and any place. People, civilization, and cultures rise and fall. The difference is in preparedness and the forms of awareness, knowledge, skills, and will.

Myth #3: Governments are responsible for and capable of protecting and providing for the civilian population.

First of all, let's give great credit to the men and women of our law enforcement, medical services, rescue teams, and disaster relief agencies. The great majority of them are competent and dedicated citizens. The fact is that it is rare that the police are there when you are being assaulted, robbed, or raped. They may come later, file some paper work, and maybe catch the perpetrator. Their job is to enforce the law, not defend your life and home. It is just as unlikely that a paramedic or doctor will be on hand when you suffer a serious injury or sudden illness. They will get there as fast as they can, but that may not be fast enough. Add a large-scale disaster or civil unrest and help may be a long way off. Governments are by nature inefficient and wasteful in all they do. They create no wealth and survive by the support (taxes and labor) of the people. Funds spent on emergency preparedness get fewer votes than roads, schools, and parks. Their first priority is always self-preservation. Do the math. It is totally absurd to expect any government (local or national) to have the resources to sustain and protect a large portion of the population for any length of time. I need not list here the many examples of this truth. Those who would entrust their survival to any government do so at the risk of losing both life and freedom. Personal emergency preparedness and the quest for practical self-reliance are traditional American values well worth preserving and advocating.

Myth #4: Crisis and disaster leads to changes in behavior and values.

After every disaster one may expect a mass move towards survival education and preparedness, but it never happens. Oh, some folks may stock up on a few things for a while, but it doesn't last. I was in San Francisco a year after one of the biggest earthquakes and found the stores full of “survival kits” on sale and gathering dust. Statistics show that less than ten percent of people who have suffered a heart attack actually change to a healthier life style. Lots of smokers smoking outside the lung cancer clinic! After 9/11 Americans put out the flag and returned to their TV's. Nothing changed. We need to stop expecting this kind of change in attitude after disasters. Let's face it, survival preparedness is perceived by many as a negative and fear-driven idea. It is not, but that's how it is seen. Interestingly, TV programs like “Survivor” have a wide audience. Why, because there is a positive, one million dollar goal involved. The movies *Deliverance* and *First Blood* were popular because there were clear heroes and villains. So, if survival and self-reliance is going to be accepted and popular it has to be about reaching positive goals and winning over negative situations and forces. Survival

must be exiting, heroic, and yes, even fun.

Myth #5: Facts will make people change behavior and values.

The above four myths are each founded on a defiance of facts. There is much truth in the old saying “don’t bother me with facts, my mind is made up!” We are all “wired” by our experiences, society, and culture to reject facts that are unpleasant or that challenge our core beliefs. History is loaded with wars, revolutions, and other unpleasant events that were generated by one side or both simply ignoring the facts of the situation in favored of prejudice, pride, or greed. The outcome of most wars was obvious from the facts, but they were fought anyway. The facts indicate that certain political, social, economic, and natural changes will happen, but many will refuse the facts and be victims instead of survivors. Even knowing and acknowledging the facts is no guarantee of survival and victory in life. Often facts don’t make people change, it just makes them angry. Such is human nature. Know this about yourself and you can become stronger and more adaptable. Know this about others and you may do better at advocating the survival and self-reliance mission.

Conclusion

Just because you know these are myths does not necessarily vaccinate you against their effects. They can easily creep back into your psyche and affect your actions. They can degrade your awareness and action levels. They can mislead you into apathy or panic driven decisions. Your chances of survival, continued freedoms, and personal successes depend on those around you and what they believe. You may not always be able to defeat these myths, but you can recognize and manage them and their effects.

Strange Values

A few years ago I was out with some corporate executive types and the subject of “What did you do this weekend?” came up. Almost everyone started talking golf. Eventually they noticed that I was not participating in the conversation and asked me what I had done. I explained that I had spent the weekend in the woods learning and teaching various emergency survival skills. They looked at me as if I had landed from Mars! After a few polite comments that indicated that my activities were strange and maybe a waste of time, I asked them to describe to me what golf was. “Let me get this straight. You pay someone to let you spend the day trying to put a ball into a hole in the lawn with a stick, but I waste my time learning survival? Now, I sure don’t question what folks do with their leisure time, but please don’t criticize the use of one’s time to become more self-reliant and survival capable.”

The “Anna Karenina Principal” of Survival

Chapter nine of Jared Diamond’s book, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fate of Human*

Societies, is devoted to what he calls “the Anna Kerenina principal.” He bases the idea on the first sentence of Tolstoy’s classic novel, *Anna Karenina*, which states that “Happy families are all alike, every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” Tolstoy applies the idea to families; Diamond applies it to societies and though I am hardly in the same league, I would apply the concept to survivors and non-survivors. To paraphrase, “Survivors are all alike, non-survivors fail in their own way.” I would further maintain that what is “alike” about successful families and societies are the same psychological and philosophical trait that separates the survivor from the non-survivor. Once this “all alike” element is weakened or missing, families are divided, societies fall, and individuals perish as free and living beings. The Anna Karenina principle implies that success requires some common “alike” factor that, when missing opens the victims to a host of scenarios for failing “in their own way.” Another way of putting it would be to say that “all strong chains are alike, but all weak chains break at different links.” Life is just a low intensity survival challenge. The principles of emergency survival apply to life in general. While the “bolt out of the blue” can get anyone, the great majority of the factors of life and of survival success are founded on common and controllable mental and physical elements. These elements are clearly identifiable in the study of history, business, war, and survival. Of course, having this “all alike” trait does not guarantee success or survival, and not having it does not assure disaster, but all things being equal, (they seldom are) those who succeed and survive most of the time in most situations will do so because of a common way of thinking and acting. Those who fail will do so because of a wide variety of errors.

The element that survivors share is a free and independent mind and spirit. This is the kind of person that survives the greatest variety of situations. Families that are composed of and accept free and independent members survive. Societies of free and independent citizens last. A free mind is manifested in resourcefulness, flexibility, imagination, adaptability, and constant learning. A free mind is like a shield carried at all times that can move and flex to cope with ever changing challenges from many directions.

Of course, no mind is totally free. We are all “wired” or programmed by our environment and experiences to interpret information and act in certain ways. The difference is that a free mind is a recognized and controllable program, not “hard-wired.” The free mind makes choices based on the unique and critical aspects of the situation without being influence by ridged and preconceived limitations, fears, prejudices, habits, and irrelevant influences. The survivor is self-defined and internally motivated. They know who they are and they choose what to do independently of outside influences. They are unlikely to have idols, follow trends, care about styles, gamble, or acquire addictions. They can be team players if the team’s mission and members are valuable, but they can go it alone if that’s what it takes. They do not acquire knowledge to be “cool” or money to have status. They always know the difference between “needs” (water, food, air, etc.) and wants.

For the purposes of this observation there are three kinds of minds.

- The “soft mind” that has few established value systems, habits, goals, and preferences, but constantly vacillates with the crowd or trends. They often jump from one political group or religious group to another looking for someone to tell them what to do. Under pressure, they have difficulty making decisions on their own and will freeze, panic or follow the crowd to destruction.

They ask, “Who can tell me what to do?”

- The “hard mind” has formed very ridged value systems, habits, and objectives. They are often political or religious extremists. For them, anything outside their view of “how it should be” is unacceptable. They simply reject all information and choices that do not fit into their system of thinking. They are followers of other people and ideas without question or hesitation. They may do well in some situations, but will fail when faced with changing and inconsistent realities. They ask, “What does ---- tell me to do?”

- The “free mind” is one that has developed values and standards based on experience and observation. It is a practical and logical mind guided by a moral compass. The free mind can choose to follow and learn from others, choose to sustain values, choose to change habits, and choose to take actions that are necessary, undesirable, and painful if survival and freedom are at stake. The free mind may also choose to put a value ahead of physical survival in some cases. The free mind can die and the body that supports it may be imprisoned, but the free mind will not be controlled or confused by external forces. They think, “What should I do?”

When we examine the fate of “victims” we are often made to wonder: Why didn’t they hang on? Why didn’t they run away? Why didn’t they fight? Why *didn’t* they do the right thing or why *did* they do the wrong thing? With the advantage of twenty-twenty hindsight, we know what they *should* have done, but the question remains; Why? Of course, if the right choice was inhibited by physical limitations or lack of information that is understandable. It wasn’t really a choice to begin with. Although the choice limitation may have been improved through preparedness and training. But in many cases the right choice was available and practicable and yet not taken. There are two categories of reasons why people make the wrong choices under survival (and normal) conditions.

The first category is short-term psychological diversions. These include fatigue, distractions, frustration, anger, and being in a hurry. These conditions are major contributors to the majority of “human error” accidents and disasters and can cause even a well-trained and normally sharp-minded survivor to make the wrong decision and become a victim. What happened? “Well, I was in a hurry and I ---,” “Well, I was tired and just wasn’t thinking.” Dangerous enough when performing normal tasks. Deadly when facing a true emergency. A fatigued, angry, distracted, or rushed mind is temporarily not a free mind because it is controlled by these conditions. We have all been there. We will all be there again, but we can recognize these “at risk” states of mind and take control of our thinking to focus and make good decisions.

The second category is the more profound or “hard wired” long-term psychological diversion. These are those mental attitudes and habits that lead to patterns of counter survival behaviors and wrong emergency decisions. “I’d rather starve than eat that,” “I’d rather die than go up there!” or “I don’t want to live like that.” Well, okay. We fear this, we hate to do that, and we recoil at the idea of that, even when it is the very thing we must do to survive, to save others, or to retain our freedom. We all have these mental speed bumps on the road to survival. The free mind asks, “Why am I doing this?” “Is this the right thing

for this situation?” The free mind is not in its own past or trapped by its own preferences, tastes, and habits. The free mind is at the place, at the time, on the case. There is the old line about the Captain of the Titanic sailing through the cold night “with everything he knew about ships working against him” because things had changed. General Grant was a poor student at West Point while most of his Confederate opponents were at the top of their class and were masters of Napoleonic tactics. Grant’s was more likely to see situations as they were, not as he was taught. He saw war as it needed to be fought in 1862 not 1812. Education is a very, very good thing, but indoctrination can lead to counter-survival and counter-freedom behaviors. Think about how you think and why you think it.

All those who tend to survive because of good choices are free minded to a greater extent than those who perish due to a host of poor choices. Computer software is frequently upgraded and debugged, and scanned for worms and viruses. We can at least try to do this for our own minds so that we get optimum performance when we need it most. Many of the survival challenges of the twenty-first century will be the old, primal ones of our ancestors, but many others will be physically and mentally new to humanity. These challenges will come from new sources and new directions. Those burdened with traditional, established, accepted mind-sets may not do well. At the end of the century, many existing institutions and cultures will be gone or irrelevant. Only the free mind will be capable of surviving physically, mentally, and spiritually. To live free, first you must think free.

Independence Through Self-Reliance

Every act that improves our personal emergency preparedness and basic self-reliance is a step towards personal and family independence. The American Declaration of Independence speaks of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” as the goal of independence. It is generally accepted that Jefferson substituted “the pursuit of happiness” for the word property. So let’s say that the object of independence (national or personal) is “life, liberty, property, and happiness”. While the document specifically addresses the causes for the revolution against Great Britain, it implies the rights of independence for the people individually. A nation does not have life, liberty, property, or happiness. These are attributes of the individual and family. The founders of America understood that:

- No one can be secure in “life” if he or she is dependent on others for water, food, shelter, protection and other essentials for preservation of “life.”
- No one can claim to have “liberty” when others control the sources of life. This is why the words “live” and “free” are welded together.
- No one truly has “property” when it is subject to those who control the sources of all sustenance.
- All “happiness” is an illusion of games and circuses with no truth, no freedom, and no safety for the helpless and independent.

The foundation of “life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness” is personal

and family independence, and that starts with basic emergency preparedness. Preparedness and self-reliance come from the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and equipment. The quest for these “self-reliance” assets starts with a personal sense of responsibility and a determination to “live free.” Your survival and self-reliance program is your declaration of independence.

Personal and family independence does not imply any form of paranoid isolation. When American independence was won, she immediately resumed relations and trade with the world, but on her terms as a sovereign nation. So it is with an individual or family that moves towards greater independence. One does not become a recluse or a “drop-out” at all. Independence simply means that one has the potential and the means to participate voluntarily on one’s own terms for life, liberty and happiness.

It is paradoxical that the degree of one’s independence is somewhat dependent on the independence of others. It is far easier to be independent in a society that values and respects independence than in one that does not. An unprepared and dependent society is composed of controller/providers and compliant/dependents. The former is constantly predatory and the later are inclined to become destructive and predatory when (inevitably) the system fails. But, independent and self-reliant people are by definition not controlling or predatory towards other. They exist in mutual respect. Therefor it is imperative that one advocates, teach support, and defend all those ideas, skills, technologies, and programs that expand survival and self-reliance for all. So, the result of one’s emergency preparedness and self-reliance efforts is the *potential* independence that achieves and protects one’s life, liberty, property and happiness. The means to this end are skills, knowledge and equipment. The process starts with a responsibility to one’s self and ends with a responsibility to others.

Your declaration of independence is your survival pack, your survival library, your survival training, your solar panels, your garden, your firearms, your food and water supplies, and most of all your determination. You don’t need a *written* declaration of personal independence. Actions speak a lot louder than words and only actions will achieve independence of body and mind. However, a personal declaration of independence might look like the one below. Note that the American Declaration of Independence starts with a list of complaints and causes for the revolution. I am sure we can all fill in our particular issues and reasons for pursuing preparedness and self-reliance so I elected to refrain from this aspect in my example.

My Personal Declaration of Independence

Now becomes necessary and prudent to reject the ties of dependency and vulnerability that have put at risk my life, liberty, and property and reassert the human right to have and exercise all means for personal survival, self-reliance, and self-protection. I here-by declare my intentions to achieve personal independence by:

- Acquiring the skills, supplies, and equipment necessary to survive emergencies and disasters without outside help if necessary.
- Being able and ready to help my friends, neighbors, and community in times of need and emergency.

- Consistently increasing my capacity to provide the necessities of life to myself and my family independently of the society, state, and economy.
- Opposition to any restrictions or regulations or actions that would interfere with the right and ability to perused personal preparedness and self-reliance.
- Support all organizations and technologies that support and expand the capacity of the individual to achieve and practice a prepared and self-reliant life.

I here-by pledge to the world my resolve to my dedication to the cause of freedom and personal independence through preparedness and self-reliance.

Your version might look somewhat different than the one above, but you get the idea. You may want to write one just to stay focused on the mission, but your real declaration of independence will be in your actions and attitudes. **Prepare to live free.**

Why Disaster Are a Sure Thing

Of course natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and meteors are sure to happen, but there are reasons why mankind is seldom ready to avoid even the predictable and avoidable disasters and is also seldom prepared to survive the unavoidable disasters. Simply put **“we are always prepared for the last disaster and seldom prepared for the next one.”** The fact is that safety, security, and preparedness run against human nature and economic imperatives. Humans tend to take risks in order to gain immediate gratifications. We take the expressway rather than the side streets to get to work faster. We accept risky jobs for higher pay and unfortunately we often ignore safety procedures in favor of comfort or speed. Families, corporations, and governments will ignore or postpone spending time and money on safety, security, and preparedness in favor of the immediate economic and political rewards of more popular and enjoyable investments. What often looks like a conspiracy to fail is actually just human nature, shortsightedness, and political and economic reality. It’s the story of the three little pigs over and over again. Let’s look at a well-known case. When the tanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on Bligh Reef in Alaska spilling 11 million gallons of crude oil, the cover-up was to blame Captain Hazelwood, but here is what happened.

- The land based radar that was responsible for watching the waters that the ship was in had been replaced with less powerful equipment that could not monitor the tanker’s location. Budget cuts.
- Exxon had not gotten around to replacing the ship with the newer double-hulled ships. Economy.

- Crew size on the Exxon Valdez had been reduced from 40 people in 1977 to only 20 working 12 to 14 hour shifts. The crew worked overtime the night before and were very fatigued. Bean counters at work.
- Equipment to monitor icebergs was never installed, so the ship was outside its normal shipping lane to avoid possible icebergs. More money saved.
- The Coast Guards staff had been cut by one-third so it could not perform the required safety inspections. Congress!
- Tanker crews relied on the Coast Guard to plot their course all the way to Bligh Reef, but the Coast Guard had discontinued this practice without informing the tanker crew.

Now, they say that the captain was drinking. I can't blame him. It was not the captain's fault, or the crew's fault or the Coast Guard's fault. It was the inevitable result of decision and priorities established by the United States Government and the Exxon Corporate culture. These kinds of decisions can be found at the root of 9/11, Chernobyl, Pearl Harbor, the Titanic, Katrina, and they will be there when they investigate the next cataclysmic event. On a smaller scale, you will find the same kind of failures behind that house fire or industrial accident you read about every day.

- Would the captain of the Titanic been applauded for arriving late in New York on the maiden voyage of a new "unsinkable" ship? He probably would have been fired!
- Would the public have paid higher airfares and taken off their shoes for security *before* 9/11? They would have complained until it stopped.
- Did New Orleans want higher levies or bigger casinos *before* Katrina? You know the answer!
- If Dad said that the family vacation was canceled so that we could stock up on emergency supplies, would he get away with it? Probably not!
- Will most folks spend real time and money being fully prepared and self-reliant before the inevitable next big or really big disaster? Unfortunately, the answer is no.

Basically, funds, time, and support will always flow away from security and preparedness and towards immediately popular and rewarding investments and programs until there is a dramatic failure. Then resources will be focused temporarily on preventing a reoccurrence of similar failures. In addition, special interests almost always misdirect government programs into ineffective or even dangerous programs that are more about making money for someone than protecting anyone. For example: the US Navy at Pearl Harbor was thinking in terms of the big battleship threats of the previous war. As time goes

on, even the resources initially dedicated will be whittled away until once again disaster strikes. There were no air marshals on any planes at the time of 9/11. The program had been canceled since there had been no hijacking in a long time.

Then there is the old military axiom that, “you cannot be strong everywhere and weak nowhere.” Resources (e.g. manpower, funds, time) directed at one threat must inevitably be taken away from some other threat and create a new weakness. The effects of 9/11 were that resources to prevent terrorist attacks were drawn away from anticrime and antigang programs. The huge cost of the so-called “War on Terror” has cost the private economy billions and run up the national debt, thus hastening an economic disaster. One need only remember how the Soviet Union’s economy collapsed from the constant costs military preparedness to see where things are going. So it can be said that **(1) peace and security are almost guaranteed to create the proper environment for violence and disaster and (2) we are most ready for the least likely (repeat) disaster scenarios.** For example: After 9/11 FEMA said they were caught off guard because they focused on being ready for a natural disaster. Then after Katrina, they claimed that they were mainly ready for a terrorist attack. **Simply put, “We never learn from history and we are doomed to repeat it.”**

It’s Going to Get Worse!

The aforementioned patterns are dangerous enough in a healthy economy and a relatively stable world. When things get tough (as they are going to get) safety, security, and preparedness are the first things to be cut. Metaphorically speaking: a nation, or a corporation, or a family that is suffering economically is like a human body that is bleeding. When the body loses blood it contracts the blood vessels, reduces blood to the extremities, and pumps it faster. This is called compensated shock that keeps things looking normal for a while until collapse and death. In the case of state*, corporate, and family economies, the extremities are almost always safety, security, and preparedness. So everyone is working harder, with greater debts and less security to sustain a “normal” life, but inevitably there will be a catastrophic and domino effect collapse. **It can be said that the United States in particular and much of the world in general exists in a state of “compensated risk” where most things seem normal and the illusion of prosperity and security exist on a weakening foundation.** The realities are:

- There are simply never enough resources in even a healthy economy to provide more than minimal security and preparations for limited emergencies.
- In a constantly changing matrix of threats, limited resources will most often be for the wrong disaster at the wrong place.
- Population densities, international travel, weapons proliferation, and new technology have greatly increased the size and effect of disasters.
- In the “gravest extremes” governments are about government survival and corporations are about corporate survival. So people have to be about people survival.

- Regardless of the nature and scope of a disaster (e.g. storms, epidemics, crime, economic collapse, fire, etc.), it is individual and family preparedness and self-reliance that will be the most reliable and effective means of preserving lives and freedoms.

The effect of dwindling resources on governmental and corporate safety and security will assure the occurrences of bigger and more frequent accidental and intentional manmade disasters and reduce preparedness for all kinds of disasters. Families that have waited too long or misplaced their faith in government agencies will unnecessarily suffer loss of life, liberty, and property. Once the symptoms of social/economic shock appear, it will be too late to invest time and money in preparedness and self-reliance because there won't be any time or money available. Those who have taken survival preparedness and self-reliance as a personal responsibility and commitment will have a far better (not guaranteed) chance of coming through the challenges ahead and being able to lead their communities in retaining safety and freedom. **Just because we are doomed to repeat the history of unpreparedness on larger and larger scales does not mean we, individually have to be doomed.** That's still up to us. Self-reliance and preparedness beats dependency and complacency every time. It may not be normal thinking, but it *is* superior thinking.

* By "state" here, I refer to any level of government entities.

The Way It Is

Truly, bad things do happen to good people. Fortunately, good people also happen to bad things. That is what true survival is all about. That is the source of hope for the future.

Those who fail to face reality have no chance of changing it and no chance to survive it. The reality of history is that all of us have ancestors who practiced genocide and slavery, and all of us had ancestors that were victims of genocide and slavery. The reality of history is that when land and life sustaining resources are at stake, wars are the way they are acquired and kept. The reality is that who we are, where we are, and what we have is the result of a long series of conflicts, displacements, and struggles combined with a variety of plagues, climate changes, and other phenomenon. We are all descendants of survivors who did terrible things and endured terrible things. Within this great struggle for physical survival is the uniquely human struggle to hold on to civilization and individual freedom. We have dark ages and ages of enlightenment. We have victories of the barbarians and of the liberators. So we stand with neither guilt nor pride. We are only defined by what we do now. To survive not merely as organisms, but as free human beings in the face of challenges that grow greater with every year that passes.

The 21st century will challenge the very existence of human life, civilization, and individual liberty as never before. No war, plague, or natural disaster in history has come close to being as extensive and catastrophic as the combination of threats that are developing on a worldwide scale today. A variety of increasingly severe manmade and natural disasters that will combine within the matrix of economic, social, and political

degeneration to create challenges to human survival and freedom for many generations to come. Nothing that exists now will be immune from change or destruction.

History and archeology tells us that when humans move into an area, they exterminate or drive away weaker occupants, kill off all the animals, and use up all the land, food, and fuel and then move on or at least disperse until the land recovers. In cases such as islands, where humans were unable to move on, they turned on each other to fight over the remaining resources. They fought until there was nothing left and then the few survivors died-out or lingered on in the ruins of the civilization their ancestors built. Americans have a false sense of security and morality. Those who came here over the past several hundred years displaced the native population and began filling the unused space and devouring the untapped resources. That space is about full and those resources are draining. We are nearing the point where we lack the resources to sustain the existing population at the level it is accustomed to. We see this in the balance of trade, the declining dollar, the unemployment, and the increased taxes for declining services. America was the last open land and untapped resources on earth. We are now like those long-ago lost island civilizations. We have no place to go. There is just not enough water, food, fuel, land, or anything else to go around. There is simply no way that this planet can sustain a population growing at the current rate with a constantly improving standard of living. The very poor are dying of starvation and diseases now. They are invading adjoining lands and killing each other over access to land, water, and food. In other cases they are swarming across borders into more affluent nations in order to survive. The wealthier nations are existing on debt and lies. The wars that claim to be political, religious, or ideological conflicts are all really about survival. These small wars will multiply and spread into every nation and even into the very streets of America. It is a tragic paradox that because we have avoided large-scale wars and improved health care, we have hastened the creation of the ideal conditions for disaster. Population density has established the prime conditions for epidemics, famines, shortages, pollution, conflict, and oppression on a worldwide scale. There is no likelihood that humans will voluntarily lower the population, reduce their aspirations for a better life, or share the resources they have. Historically, humans tend to use war and genocide often cloaked in religious or political justifications to assure that their children prosper at the expense of others. In the past, free and prosperous societies became more and more oppressive and desperate as the land and resources declined. The people often fled to better places or died as the society crumbled. But there is no place to go. The first dominos have already fallen.

- Natural disaster will take much greater tolls on the populations and property because of the climate changes and population densities.
- Epidemics will take millions of lives and disrupt society and the economy.
- While the population of people increases, the need for people to do work will decrease as smart machines and robots take away millions of jobs.
- Governments at all levels will seek to survive by increasing taxes on a population that is less and less able to pay them. The infrastructure and services

will continue to decline. High crime rates and civil unrest will spread from the poorer nations and communities to all nations and everyone's streets.

- Massive migrations from poorer to richer nations will create border and street wars over the remaining jobs and life resources.
- Governments will try to maintain order by passing more laws, taking away more rights, and confiscating more property.
- Some politicians and religious leaders will try to exploit the situation and increase their power by advocating hatred, violence, and obedience to their orders. Unfortunately, a lot of people will follow them and make things even worse.
- Local and international disputes over water access, fuel, land, food, jobs, and other survival needs will become more and more common and less and less peaceful.
- Criminal organizations and the black market will grow in power and acceptability.
- People will work harder and harder for less and less because there *is* less and less to go around.
- The combination of these natural and man-made disasters will result in a worldwide economic collapse that in-turn will lead to further shortages, epidemics, and battles.
- How many wars will result and what kind of wars they will be is difficult to predict, but there are no peaceful solutions to many of these situations.

At some point between now and the year 2100, a lot of conflict and chaos is going to occur. It is not anyone's fault and it is irrelevant if it were. It is the way it is, the progression of history, nature in action, God's will. While we have an obligation to try to do the "right things"—to prevent disaster, to oppose hate, violence, crime and oppression—we have an even higher obligation to survive. Not just to survive as biological entities, but as civilized and free human beings in a world that will become increasingly hostile to healthy, self-reliant, and free people.

While the nature and forms of these changes is difficult to predict, two things are certain. The first is that staying alive and free will not be assured for anyone on this planet. The second is that for those who do survive, nothing will be the same. Social orders, political systems, religious dogmas, power balances, economic foundations, even the natural environment and geography will be shifted, changed, or completely replaced. So there is no question about there being a "new world order." The world order has always changed and will do so again. Those who ignore the obvious signs of change or just hang on to the old ways in a defensive posture will become irrelevant curiosities or simply disappear. The real survival strategy is to adapt worthy values and ideas to the changing natural, social, and economic environment. **If we are not ready to happen to the world, the world will happen to us.** Vigilance, preparedness, flexibility, determination, responsibility, and courage will be the absolute requirements of these centuries' survivors

and thrivers. We can survive and emerge a freer and greater people, or we can let reaction and fear drive us to poverty and subservience. To paraphrase General Patton, “We are not about holding on to anything; let the enemies of life and freedom worry about that.” We should be new ground with better ideas. Survival is not an end; it is a foundation upon which to build greater self-reliance and independence for the future.

“There is nothing new about prophecies to the effect that the end of the world is near -- What is new is that it is now likely to come true ---- With the world population now doubling every forty-one years, we soon shall reach the biological limit to growth, at which time we shall have to start fighting each other in dead earnest for a share of the world’s fixed pie of resources.”

A quotation from the book *Collapse* by Professor Jared Diamond

Survival Ethics

The “big one” has hit and the entire system has shut down. There is no water, power, or gas service and no place to get food. You are doing okay because you stocked up on food and water years ago and your family is reasonably warm and well fed. After about a week, your neighbor comes knocking on your door asking for food and water. This is the same guy who chose to buy a big screen TV and a luxury car instead of emergency supplies. He is the one who called you a “survival nut” a few months ago, but he has two small children. You do not know how long the emergency will last and how long your food and water will be needed to keep your own family alive. What is the “right thing” to do?

You are moving with your family to escape from a riot zone. You hear cries for help from a doorway you pass. Do you stop and help or keep going?

You and your family are on a makeshift raft in a flood. A panic stricken person is desperately trying to board the raft, but his efforts and his weight threatens to overturn and sink your small raft. Do you do the “right thing” based on normal codes of conduct and help him even though the outcome and your duty to your family are compromised? Do you do the “best thing” and fight him off to assure the survival of your family? Do you do the “acceptable” thing in the eyes of your family and society by helping or the logical thing to the most people? If you let him drown are you a monster? If you save him you may be a hero, but if you only succeed in drowning your whole family you are a fool. These are the classic “ethical dilemmas” that face the survivor. In real disaster the dead are dead, the desperate are the desperate, but the survivor has choices. Those choices are going to be gut wrenching moral and ethical decisions that have no easy or absolutely correct answers. A good grasp of ethics may aid the survivor.

The subject of ethics is a major issue in business and in medicine today, but nowhere is it more important than in a survival situation. If “survival of the fittest” means survival of the meanest and most ruthless, then what really survives?

Each person has his or her own ideas about what is right or wrong. We make what we consider to be “moral” decisions. Morals are what we feel about right and wrong. Ethics, on the other hand, are guides we use to examine situations and guide our actions. Our families, communities, religions, and society program our ideas of right and wrong

from an early age. These expected behaviors stick with use. Laws establish standard of behavior and “morality,” but “morality” is not necessarily ethical. Slavery was once considered morally permissible, but is now recognized as unethical. During World War Two the Japanese considered surrender immoral, but suicide was a duty to the Emperor. Mobsters have moral codes that make them “good fellows” to each other and to whom murder can be “doing the right thing.”

The concept of ethics came from the ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The Greeks focused on the concept of personal virtue. Virtue was viewed as an internal value. The individual was expected to be the best they could be and right and wrong were defined by how the acts represented the actor. British philosophers such as Mill and Bentham brought forth the “utilitarian” concept of ethics. In this concept, it is the results that justify the action. This is the “end justifies the mean” philosophy. The “deontological” philosophy advocated by Immanuel Kant is based on the idea of doing your duty. It would support an action for its own sake, regardless of the consequences. It is about the means rather than the end. So we have right and wrong based on who you are, what the results will be, or what your duty is. It gets complicated when your *duty* is to do something that will result in a bad *end*, or when the *means* needed to serve a good *end* will have little personal *virtue*. Always telling the truth may be a good moral code, but it may be ethically questionable when it could result in real physical or psychological harm. Killing another human being may be morally wrong, but ethically defensible based on the situation.

Survival ethics comes down to life and death. Your life and death and that of others you come into contact with. Do you save life, risk life, or take life? A primary question that everyone must answer is; how do you define your life? Are you *what* you are physically or *who* you are morally and spiritually? Are you about how you look and what you have, or are you about what you believe in and stand for? While your body is mortal your values and ideas are immortal. So, does your survival action justify your continued physical survival, or does your survival alone justify your action? Is what’s best and safest for you also best and safest for what you stand for?

In survival, laws are not an issue. You are left with your own moral code and ethical concepts to make life and death decisions. You must ask yourself:

- What is the right thing to do based on my values?
- What is the best thing to do for me?
- What is the best thing to do for others?
- What represents my values and ideas?
- What is my duty?
- Would I want others to do this *to* me or *for* me?
- How will others that I care about judge my actions?

Yes, the answers to each question may be conflicting! What *can* you do? What *should* you do? What do you *want* to do? In the heat of a survival situation there will be no time to engage in a philosophical discussion. Most true survival situations are about risking your life, or risking or taking the life of others. You must have an idea of where you draw the lines. In a situation where you may need to choose to risk or even sacrifice your own life, when would you do it?

- Never. Even if it would protect those I care for or values I stand for.
- Only if absolutely necessary to protect the lives of others I care about.
- To defend the life of others being attacked or abused.
- Only if necessary to defend my values and ideas.
- Only if necessary to remain free.
- To defend my property.
- To maintain my pride and honor.
- Rather than live an unpleasant life.

If you know when you would be willing to put your own life on the line, have you established when you would take a life or put the life of others at risk?

- Never. Not even to defend my life and that of those I care for.
- Only in the immediate defense of my life and those I care for.
- To defend the life of others being attacked or abused.
- To defend my personal freedoms and rights.
- To defend my values and ideas.
- In order to remove potential threats to my life and freedom.
- To defend my property and lifestyle.
- When insulted or disrespected.

For the purposes of the above questions, taking or risking life is not just about shooting or being shot at. Risking your life could be the act of sharing your food, entering a danger zone to rescue someone or stopping to help instead of keeping moving. Taking life

could be just failing to aid others or withhold food or water needed by others to survive.

We may look at our moral code as a compass that directs us towards the right action, but ethics is the map that guides our route. Ethical choices must be free of fear, anger, hate, pride, and other negative emotions. Flexibility and adaptability are key concepts in survival psychology. Ridged moral codes that are valuable assets during “normal” times may conflict with survival imperatives in emergency conditions. The lines between right and wrong can become blurry in the heat of survival and conflict. What can you live with and what would you die for? The true survivor must know themselves and have a firm ethical foundation upon which to base life and death decisions. How and why we survive is as important as *that* we survive.

The Culture Factor in Survival

Self-reliance is the means to having choices, and choices are the very definition of freedom. The two concepts are inseparable.

The definition of “culture” is: the attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and customs of an organization, group, or society. It can be supportive or unsupportive of a goal or idea. We are all creatures of the cultures that created us. Understanding this can free us from habits and attitudes that conflict with our own survival and freedom. Cultures are powerful forces that can be constructive, and creative, and uplifting, or oppressive, enslaving, and catastrophic. Most of how we think is not because it is right or wrong. Most of how we think is because we were raised and conditioned to think that way. A key act in achieving individual freedom is to question if your attitude and values are taking you where you really want to go.

If you do not think that culture can be destructive consider these examples:

The Japanese combination of racist superiority and Samurai culture lead them to start a war they could never win and incur casualties far beyond any sane levels. The German culture lead them to follow a leader into a nightmare of killing and destruction. Modern terrorists kill themselves and innocent people with no clearly defined objectives. In gang-controlled communities, the established culture is one that accepts or ignores the presence of drug gangs with such slogans as “he’s family” and “don’t snitch” that support the destruction of the community and the killing of children. Anyone who attempts to break this culture would be at best isolated and more often killed. Culture is why two groups of people with the same opportunities and resources will have drastically different results.

Ridged cultures that put a high value on order, stability, and the status quo are generally doomed. Cultures that oppress or enslave some part of their society eventually destroy themselves. Cultures that do not constantly question and change eventually succumb to those that do. Well established cultures are not changed by logic, fear, incentives, or behaviors. They will go on doing what they do even if it leads to disaster. Only the strongest and bravest individual can break the grip of a decaying or destructive culture.

Cultural differences are often mistaken for racial differences and criticism of what a culture does is often mistaken for racism. We all are part of multiple cultures and we all are inclined to be suspicious of or hostile to some other cultural actions and values. When our

own cultural values are found to be destructive to our own life and freedom we have the right and obligation to alter them. If the culture and values of others truly endangers our lives and liberties, we have the right to defend against them.

It is not easy for one to change or oppose one's culture, even if it is a destructive one. Drug users, alcoholics, and criminals tend to bond with other drug users, alcoholics, and criminals in a mutually supportive subculture. They have an identity within that culture and when they stop using drugs, alcohol, or committing crimes all of their "friends" turn away from them while few others will befriend them. They have no culture or identity until they go back to their old ways. If you live in some ethnic communities you will have a very unpleasant or even dangerous life if you fail to follow the unwritten rules and accepted practices of your neighbors. All of us are the same way within our more positive, educational, economic, religious, philosophical cultures. Lawyers want laws, politicians make laws and taxes, and bankers make money. Doing these things are the values of their cultures. Most of what some call conspiracies are just cultures and vested interests in action.

People tend to do what is acceptable in their culture and what takes care of them. The maintenance of a cultural status quo is beneficial to a political, economic, and religious minority (party, gang, class, etc.) because it serves their best interests. They will rigidly hold on to it regardless of where it is leading. Unfortunately, cultures do not change because of logic or reason. At some point the culture becomes so out of touch with reality (environmental, social, and economic) that it collapses in some form of catastrophe. The Indians, the old south, fascism, Japan's militarism, and the Soviet Union are just a few examples of cultures that held on until they totally collapsed. We are all part of many cultures that are developing or declining.

Some cultures are easy to abandon. We may stop smoking, change religion, quit a club or move to another community. Other cultures carry us along even if we do not identify with them. We may be victims of high taxes or high crime. We may be caught in the decline of the society or the economy even though we opposed the cultural trends that caused it. But the Survival/Self-reliance practitioner has more options. We can compare cultures to the Titanic and its unfortunate passengers to today's people. We have a variety of people from various educational, ethnic, and economic classes all aboard what they want to believe is an unsinkable ship. We have a culture in the management class that makes bad judgments. Even after the ship hits the iceberg and begins to list, the passengers (public) wants to believe that "everything will be okay" and most of the lifeboats depart half-empty. Only after it is far too late is reality recognized and panic and catastrophe ensue. The survivalist or survival/self-reliance practitioner is like a passenger on the Titanic that brought along his or her own inflatable raft. They are surely part of the culture and a passenger, but they kept their fate in their own hands as much as possible. One may say that they are selfish to have that boat when others may drown, but that boat left one more seat on the lifeboats. That boat gives the owner the choice to survive or to save another. A choice and a freedom the unprepared do not have because they put their fate and faith completely in the hands of others. So survival/self-reliance is a culture and an anticulture, because it shares the common values and actions of being able to separate from the fate of the prevailing mass culture around it.

Self-reliance and survivalism is a philosophical subculture that exists within and in combination with other cultures that shape our attitudes. However, being a culture of

individualists and a conspiracy to be self-reliant we are unique. Most cultures are founded on some form of physical and/or psychological dependency. We need to be accepted by our family and community. We need to be part of an economic (job, union, profession) group. We do not want to be an “outsider” or a “loner.” These motivations hold street gangs, military units, political parties, religions and almost every other kind of group together. We consciously or unconsciously surrender various degrees of our individuality and freedom in order to fit in or get along. We may pretend to agree with ideas or common beliefs mainly because we think everyone else does and we do not want to start arguments. The true individual is forced to adopt a form of social camouflage in order to survive in a world where individualism can be dangerous. Survivalists are the ultimate individualists. **They are individualists in word and deed. Survival/Self-reliance practitioners (survivalists) may have the widest range of philosophical and cultural background, but they all question the very foundations and reliability of the social and economic system.** There is an old saying that, “One would rather have an army of sheep lead by a lion than an army of lions lead by a sheep.” A culture of sheep will get sheared and herded by their masters and eaten by the wolves if they stray from the flock. Lions are not herded or sheared, and when they die it is on their terms.

The following two articles both address the same survival issue from a different perspective so I have included them both.

Survival Will Building

Most survival texts list air, water, shelter, and food as the primary needs of survival. There is no doubt that these are absolute necessities to physical survival. But there is one other factor that outweighs even air and water in survival. If the will to survive is weak, then the mind and body will surrender before all options for survival have been exhausted. It is well known that depression leads to suicide. So it follows that low self-esteem, low personal morale, or lack of purpose will cause one to give-up more easily in a life-threatening situation. There are numerous cases where healthy individuals who had the knowledge to survive failed to do everything they could do. There is one case where a man was trapped in a camper truck on a back road in a snowstorm. He had the options of building signal fires, hunting for food, or making snowshoes and walking out. Instead he sat in the truck for weeks until he starved to death. Animals have survival instincts and so do humans, but humans need more than instincts. **Human beings have to apply reason and determination in a survival situation and that requires that they have a reason to survive that is stronger than the reasons to quit.**

Certainly the fact that one has taken the time to learn survival skills and acquire survival equipment would indicate a high level of value on personal life and freedom. But we all have ups and downs. Things are going badly or we feel we have failed in some way. Maybe we just haven’t given much thought to the “why” of survival until we are plunged into a life and death situation. When faced with the prospect of pain, cold, hunger, injuries, and unending hardship some people suddenly choose to give up. Back in the Cold War days I heard people say that they would rather die than live on canned goods! Some say they would rather die than kill another even in self-defense. They are saying that their life

is not as important as that of a criminal murderer. **There are those who die because they refuse to live and those who live because they refuse to die.** A strong will to live is not a guarantee of survival, but it is the foundation of your survival potential.

We can improve our survival will just like we can improve our survival skills and add to our survival supplies. To do this we need to prepare our minds and spirits by establishing the reasons why our personal preparedness and survival matters. In a tough survival situation your mind could tip towards the negative unless it is conditioned not to. You must do for yourself what the military does for soldiers when they instill pride and *esprit d'corps*. The exercise below will not only help strengthen your will to survive emergencies, it should also encourage self-improvement and self-respect in everyday life.

This short exercise is designed to help you identify and define who you are, why you should survive, and what survival means to you. The answers to these questions should be the foundation of your efforts to be prepared for emergencies and to seek greater and greater freedom and self-reliance. Take a few minutes to sit down and write out the answers to the following questions:

1. What are three reasons others would want you to survive?
2. What are three reasons your survival is important to you?
3. What are the three most important ideas or values you live for?
4. Who are the three most important people and what are the three most important possessions in your life?
5. What are three goals that you want to accomplish with your life?
6. Do you have life mission statement? If not, write one now. "My mission in life is to -----"

Congratulation! This is why you are why you are reading this book!

Based on the above, what actions will you take to improve your safety, health and survival capacities so you can complete your life mission and uphold your values and responsibilities?

Closing thoughts:

- Safety and survival are directly linked. Weak reasons to live lead to high risk behaviors and poor health habit on a daily basis.
- True "human" survival is living for a reason that you freely chose.

- It is a paradox that a life mission must be the strongest reason for survival and at the same time the very thing you will risk your life for.
- If you cannot identify what you live for, you are unlikely to have a strong will to survive.
- If you cannot define your mission in life, how do you know where your efforts are taking you?
- Are your life priorities (time, attention, funds) focused on a worthy life mission?

Why Survive?

We spend a lot of time on “how” to survive, but seldom ask “why” we want to survive. The will to survive is taken for granted. In animals, survival is an instinct and at a visceral level there is a human/animal survival instinct, but the difference between humans and animals is that we always ask “why?” The will to survive is more important than access to air, water, food, warmth, or any other survival need. The will to survive is not an inherited instinct. The will to survive is a product of reason and individual attitude. Human survival is not just an instinct. On the one hand, people deliberately blow themselves up for a cause or shoot themselves when faced with a stressful situation. On the other hand, people survive horrible conditions and overcome deadly threats that should have killed them. Then there are those who value life, but clearly put their survival at risk for others or for a higher good. There are those who would kill or destroy anything in order to survive. They value nothing more than themselves. Then there are those who place little value on themselves and would give up at the slightest threat. The former would kill his friends to get their supplies. The latter would simply wait to die rather than initiate any survival action. Most of us lie somewhere in between these extremes. We have reasons for survival and our will to survive is dependent on the strength of those reasons. It comes down to, “What are you willing to do to survive?” and “Why is it important that you survive?”

Is existence alone a worthy goal? Survival as an animal instinct drives the search for water, food, and shelter. The same things humans do every day. The instinct kicks into high gear when we (animal or man) are threatened by the environment (e.g. fire, cold) or predators. Survival can be as peaceful as drinking from a waterhole, munching on plants, or trotting to a better location. Survival can be as violent as tooth and claw or gun and knife combat. Animals survive in order to survive, but humans survive for higher reasons. **We all die, so survival and all that goes into it is pointless unless there is something more. Survival is about buying time. Time for what?**

Most people who have survived a serious catastrophe say that they learned a lot about themselves. Wilderness emergencies, combat, and other survival situations quickly answer questions about who we are, what is important to us, and how much we will struggle and endure to stay alive. Unfortunately, most people never think about these things until their lives are at risk. They may suddenly realize that their life is important to others, important to things and ideas they support, important to what they are or can be. But

because they never thought about these things, they have not acquired the skills or equipment to survive. **They have only will and luck, not will and skill.** Even those who have acquired some skills and equipment may not have seriously examined their own motivations. Well-equipped and trained people have often failed under survival conditions because of a failure of will. As we study our survival texts and gather our gear and supplies, should we not reinforce our will? Surely knowing more about *why* we are preparing to survive will drive our efforts and harden our determination when the need arises.

Maybe you survive to be there for others. Maybe you survive to defend an idea or belief. Maybe you survive because who you are important. You may seek to survive as a free and self-reliant person. Is your survival important as a free and self-reliant person, a contributing member of your community, a helper, a friend, a parent, a builder, a teacher, or a protector? Why? Knowing the answer to this question will be the foundation of your quest for preparedness and self-reliance.

Survival is 50% what you can do and 50% what you can do without. Self-reliance is doing 50% more with 50% less. The will to survive is 50% caring about yourself and 50% what and who you care about. What do you live for and what would you die for? If your *will* to survive is truly prepared you should be able to answer the following questions:

- Name three people that are important to you.
- Name three ideas, groups, or values that are important to you.
- Describe who you are in relation to your family, community, environment, etc.
- Write your personal life mission (why you are here) statement.
- Why is your survival important?

Thinking about and answering the above questions is a will building exercise. Your survival preparedness and self-reliance program should be justified by and guided by how you answered these questions. The survival priorities are: will, air, water, shelter, food, and (depending on the situation) defense. In a survival or self-defense situation the first resource you will need to call upon is your will and determination. Knowing the answers to the above questions in your mind and heart are the first survival tools you will use to act, to keep going, to endure pain and deprivation without giving up. **Are you ready?**

Ten Keys to Survival

I wrote this a few years ago for Directions Newsletter as sort of a survival/self-reliance 101 for those new to these ideas that wanted the basic philosophy and what to do in a few pages.

I thought it would be appropriate to provide ten key principles for survival and freedom. The majority of people are content to be dependent on the system to provide their means of shelter, nourishment, and health. These folks are like-wise content to let regulators and confiscators whittle away at their personal freedoms and independence. No one here is advocating that the sky is falling and we should all run to the hills and live in caves. We are just advocating that the people retain the right and the ability to protect their own life and liberty when necessary. A good citizen (survivalist) contributes to and benefits from participation in the social/economic system, but always maintains a mental and material capacity to survive without it. Education, employment, family, and community are all important to every-day survival. The better off you are in terms of education and income, the more resources you have for preparedness and survival. Since independence and individualism are the hallmarks of the survival/self-reliant philosophy the approach to life and freedom will differ widely. The four key elements that unify and motivate use are:

- The principles and values that we hold in common and use to guide our actions.
- The missions and goals that we establish to defend and advance our principles and values.
- The skills and knowledge we must acquire in order to achieve our missions and goals.
- The threats that we perceive as most dangerous to our lives and freedoms and the future of our children.

Each of these has been detailed in numerous articles in Live Free publications over thirty years. The following actions will greatly improve any citizen's chances of staying alive, staying free, and thriving in the twenty-first century.

1. Always be able to provide water, food, shelter, and medical care for yourself and your family for at least six months.
2. Always have a survival pack ready to "grab and go" that will support survival under most conditions for one week.
3. Always carry items with you that could help assure short-term survival and escape.
4. Always retain the capacity for effective armed resistance to crime and tyranny.
5. Always preserve the knowledge and skills of survival, self-reliance and self-defense.

6. Always be learning the most current technology in order to use it to advance and promote self-reliance and personal freedom.

7. Always be a responsible and helpful neighbor that is ready to help others in time of disaster or oppression.

8. Always be alert for current and developing threats to survival and liberty.

9. Always resist legislation and regulation that would inhibit the preparedness, self-reliance, and self-protection.

10. Always respect the rights and property of others.

These simple actions by a major portion of the population can assure the continued freedom and prosperity of the nation.

STORM WARNING

The Perfect Storm of Change and Disaster in the Years to Come and How to Prepare For It

In the twentieth century, we put in less and less and took more and more.

In the twenty-first century, survivors will be the ones who do more and more with less and less.

*The twentieth century was the time of waste and consumption and luxury.
The twenty-first century will be the time of conservation and self-reliance.*

In the movie *The Matrix*, Agent Smith (a virtual being) says, “Humans are the only mammal that acts more like a parasite, moving from one area to the next while growing exponentially until all of the resources in one area are gone and the area is dead and then moving on to the next area.” In fact, archeological and anthropological data supports this assertion. The arrival of humans always correlates to extinctions of animal, vegetable, and mineral resources. In cases such as islands where the human population was unable to move on, they fought with each other over the little remaining resources and then died out or lingered in misery and poverty. In the twentieth century, America has populated and consumed itself into a dead end. We were the last place to go. There is no place to move on to. The entire world is now populated beyond the remaining resources. We have a fast growing population seeking higher living standards on a nearly used up planet. There are as many people alive now as there were during the whole of recorded history combined and that will double in the next 40-years. Windmills, hydrogen power, solar power, and better farming will buy a little time, but this is a race that humanity cannot win.

The use of corn for fuel has instantly caused a food shortage. Many stores in the US are rationing rice and other staples. Africa is starving and there have been food riots in Egypt, the Philippines, and Mexico. 37 countries have declared being in a food crisis. Some countries have banned exports of grain to assure local supplies. The falling value of the dollar has resulted in more of them being needed to buy the same amount of oil. The drive for biofuel is leading to less food crops and massive deforestation in third world countries. Grain reserves are at a 30-year low. A bad harvest anywhere could be catastrophic. Massive legal and illegal immigration from “have not” to “still have” nations is generating instability, crime, and unrest throughout Europe and the US. This will only get worse. In some cases food is the new drugs. Criminal gangs known as “boosters” are beginning to steal food and resell it on the streets. The “black market” and government price controls will be more and more evident over the next 5 to 10 years.

Water is the new oil. There are already legal conflicts developing between states in the United States and between many foreign nations over access to water. Water is currently classified as a “resource” belonging to everyone, but that could change. There are motions afoot to classify water as a “commodity” to be owned, bought, and sold like oil. Think about the consequences of that! Even freedom from thirst may not be a human right.

Urban sprawl is eating up farmland. When I was a boy, I lived on the edge of

Chicago at 97th street south. There were open marshes, woods, and farms nearby. Now, 60-years later I have to go out to 225th street to see similar areas, and that is being developed fast. With exponential growth, Chicago's sprawl could reach the Mississippi by the end of the century. The oceans are no longer international territory. As resources dwindle, nations are reaching out for the ocean and the ocean floors. The Russians recently planted their flag on the sea floor at the North Pole to claim any mineral resources that may be there. Other nations are trying to extend their boundaries or are disputing current limits. There is no doubt that in the future, every inch of the Earth's land, ice, and water area will be claimed by someone. This will of course result in serious border conflicts and probably wars.

Americans once lived the "American Dream" with one working parent, good vacations, and benefits while buying with cash and saving regularly. Today it takes two working parents taking few vacations with few benefits and high debt to desperately hang on to a vanishing dream. As the late George Carlin said, "We spent money we didn't have on stuff we didn't need" and know we are broke with a lot of junk. The politicians will continue to try to fool the public with smoke and mirrors to get reelected and since false hope gets more votes than hard choices, the issues will not be faced. So there will be an ever-increasing series of ups and downs, but the downs will always be greater than the ups. The elite will thrive, the unprepared will perish, and the prepared will survive and stay free.

What Will Happen?

In essence, the entire social, economic, political, and environmental structure of the planet will be progressively stressed to the breaking point. Virtually everything we consider "normal" will be subject to change.

- Cuts in police, fire, and medical services will put every family in growing danger. Trauma centers in cities and suburbs are closing at an alarming rate.
- The aging infrastructure will continue to degenerate faster than it can be maintained, causing failures in power distribution, water service, sewer systems, bridges, and roadways.
- Natural disaster will become more and more lethal due to the increased population densities, a more dependent population, and declining emergency services.
- Climate changes will kill hundreds of thousands. Climatologists agree that heat waves of weeks with temperatures of 110 F – 120 F will be common in cities like Chicago and New York by the end of the century. Don't even think about Arizona or California! Recent heat waves in Chicago and Paris killed thousands. As the population doubles and the sources of water and energy for air conditioning diminish, heat alone could be enough to bring down civilization. The fire season in California was a few months in the 90's, but is all year now. There is a clear water path through the North polar cap.

- No doubt, epidemics and pandemics will occur, with or without terrorist involvement. It is simply a natural phenomenon when populations become too dense. There are millions of viruses that could mutate and spread quicker than they could be controlled. Bubonic plague hit India as recently as 1994. Influenza killed millions in the last century and mutate constantly. Antibiotics are becoming less and less effective and resistant viruses are multiplying every year. Experts agree that a world-wide pandemic is inevitable within the next 10 to 20 years.

- The power of gangs and international criminal organizations will grow dramatically as they begin to control access to food, medications, and other vital needs. The so-called “black market” will return. The gangs will often be able to offer better protection than the state. This is already a fact in poorer communities and third-world countries. Citizens may have a choice between being a ward and slave of a corrupt and oppressive state, or a member of a brutal gang.

- Prices will continue to rise faster than income. This will dump the lower income people and smaller businesses into bankruptcy. Service jobs such as landscaping, waiters, cleaners, general labor will be the first to go. Then semi-skilled jobs will go. Being poor is a bad survival plan.

- Shortages of just about everything will result in rationing, price gouging, increased theft, violence, and the rise of the “black market” as in “I know a guy that can score you some cornmeal.”

- Massive legal and illegal immigration will occur as people flee from countries where the economy, food supply, and water sources are already inadequate. These people will flee towards any adjoining country where prospects are even a little better. This trend will result in increased border conflicts and civil disorder.

- State and national governments will greatly increase regulations and confiscation (laws and taxes) in an attempt to sustain programs and authority. They may well attempt to institute socialist economics and unconstitutional laws. Hungry and desperate people will accept false promises of security in exchange for their (and your) freedoms. Even the Constitution and Bill of Rights will be at risk of being scrapped.

- When things get tough, those who seem to be doing okay will be regarded with suspicion and even anger. We are talking about the folks who stayed out of debt and were better prepared to survive. The politicians will gladly blame them for hoarding, conspiring, and hurting the economy. They will do this to deflect blame from themselves and their associates. This is what Hitler did to the Jews (they know about survival) in Germany.

- Demigods and fanatics of all kinds will rise out of the chaos to offer solutions that will involve hate, violence, obedience, and the surrender of freedoms

and property. They will be more dangerous to survival than any of the manmade or natural disasters that may have occurred.

- Local governments are closer to the people and will struggle to cope with changing conditions. Some may collapse, some may become corrupt, but some may restructure to involve citizen volunteers, local food co-ops, and other innovations to maintain and secure their communities.

This will all work out in one of three ways:

1. There will be one or more population reducing events such as wars, pandemics, famines, or other disasters that will bring the population to a sustainable level where “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” can still exist.

2. The entire society will degenerate into a constant state of conflict on a local and world basis. In this scenario, the wealthy elite and the gang leaders will live well, while the masses obey, pay, and struggle to survive.

3. The world population will exist in a regulated, pacified, crowded, and meaningless subsistence existence under the rule of a world state.

What, exactly will happen, how it will happen, and how soon it will happen is hard to predict, but grim and dangerous changes will happen. There will be three groups of people involved in these struggles.

- **Predators** exist on the bottom and top of society. They believe they have the right to take the property, freedom, and even the lives of others. On the top end, we have the politicians, bureaucrats, the ultra-rich, and corporate executives. Of course, they are not all evil conspirators (some may be), but as a culture they tax, price, exploit, manipulate, regulate, and confiscate. On the bottom we have the “criminal class” that steals, intimidates, drugs, destroys, and murders. When things get tough, these people thrive and multiply like rats. The rules and natural inhibitions that kept them in check tend to breakdown. They will steadily fight over the decreasing resources of the general population. They have always survived at the expense of the welfare and safety of good and hardworking people. But in the hard times to come they will survive at the expense of the very survival of those people.

- **Victims** are the great majority of the world population that remains in denial of reality and dependent on others for survival. In the poorer communities and countries, it is people that even now are barely able to obtain enough food, water, and shelter to get by from day to day. They exist in dwindling resources and the excess of the better off. These resources and excesses will continue to diminish with predictable and horrible results. In the richer nations it is the middle class that works harder and harder for less and less in the face of increasing debt, crime, and taxation. They have more time, but are on the same road to losing life, liberty, and

property.

- **Survivors** are people that are not dependent on exploiting others or being supported by others. They take full responsibility for the sustenance and security of themselves and their families. While they are hardworking and productive members of society, they have not become fully dependent on that society. While they enjoy life, they avoid waste, unnecessary consumption and debt. They tend to live a bit below their means and have at least some reserves and backup systems if things get bad. Their sense of responsibility makes them good citizens and good neighbors who are often involved in volunteer work. In the gravest extremes most of them will manage to stay alive without harming others or surrendering basic freedoms.

Predators will say, “Let me save you.” Victims will say, “Who will save me?” Survivors will say, “Let’s save ourselves together.”

What Can We Do?

To quote yet another movie (Terminator Three), “We were not intended to prevent the catastrophe, just to survive it.” You must survive without becoming predators, or victims, or slaves. You and your children have the mission of surviving physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. Compassion, knowledge, responsibility, freedom, and hope must survive with you. The past belongs to those who took more and more while giving less and less back. The future belongs to those who can do more with less and fight those who would take what is not theirs. The past was the age of dependency and waste. The future must be the age of self-reliance and efficiency. You and your children must be ready and able to adapt to painful and deadly changes. You and your children must be ready to outlast, outsmart, and even outfight the predators and opportunists that will victimize the unprepared. While it may or may not be necessary to “take to the hills” or drop off the grid entirely, you must consider that possibility. Meanwhile, you need to change your habits and take serious steps to improve your survivability before it’s too late.

1. Reduce your “needs” and consumption. There is a big difference between what society calls “needs” and what you really need. Society says you need golf, Starbucks™ coffee, Gap™ cloths, every new DVD that comes out, and bottled water. Most tap water exceeds bottled water in safety; beats bottled water in blind taste tests, and is 240 to 10,000 times cheaper. Stop using credit cards to buy everyday items. Cash makes you think and visibly see what you are spending. Resist fast foods. Brown bagging or home cooking is much cheaper and healthier. You do not need to go to a health club to get exercise. Walking, home exercise, gardening, and other activities along with a good diet will do the job, but you need to have will power. Leave the Starbucks™, health club, designer labels, fast food, and credit card rip-offs to the future victims. And of course you don’t need to smoke. That eats up your money and endangers your life.

2. I am not advocating that you adopt an Amish life style. Treat yourself occasionally, go out to dinner from time-to-time, but think and stop wasting your resources. They are not endless and what you waste today you cannot get back for what you may really need later.

3. Stop wasting. Use real plates and cups instead of paper plates and cups for everyday meals. Use washable rags instead of paper towels. Use all the contents of containers of food and household cleaners. Turn off lights in rooms you are not using. Plan “right sized” meals that leave a clean plate without an overfull stomach. This will save money while you lose a little of that extra weight. Here’s a good weight loss tip, “You do not need to eat every time you feel hungry!” Rain barrels on downspouts can catch thousands of gallons of water you will not have to pay for. Yes, water will be the new oil. If you do not have one, install a fireplace or wood stove in your home now. Dry your clothing on a clothes line or at least get clothesline and pins so you will be able to. Buy fans and use them as much as you can in place of A/C. If things get tough you will have fans that can run on less power. Learn how to can, dry, and vacuum pack foods.

4. Learn to do more with less. Instead of making several trips to stores, plan a loop trip that gets the most done in one trip to save gas. Plan menus carefully to avoid throwing out leftovers. Swap books and CDs with friends to save money, close off unused rooms in your house so you do not need to heat or air-condition them. Remember; survival is 50% what you can do with and 50% what you can do without.

5. Build your reserves. Put real needs and future needs first. The first step in building reserves is to get out and/or stay out of debt. While there are some opportunities where limited, short-term borrowing is justified, you need to get on the positive side by accumulating property, assets (equipment, tools, trade goods) and life supplies in place of debts for luxuries, expendables, and services you could do for yourself.

6. Think smaller. While you may be able to “live large” (big refrigerator, whole house A/C, big SUV, light on in every room) today, you must have the ability to downsize your need quickly. Electric bills and fuel bills could quickly become unaffordable. Have a small refrigerator. You can use it for cold drinks in summer, but it could replace your big one if things get tough. At least half of what you now keep in that big refrigerator (bread, cheese, soft drinks, water, pickles, etc.) does not need to be there. Have enough fans and small heaters to keep a few rooms comfortable if you cannot run that big furnace and A/C unit. Replace all your incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents. Another benefit of these steps is that you will be able to get by better with a portable generator, solar, or wind power if the need arises. Unless you need it for business, trade in that big SUV for something smaller. If you must have that big SUV to “make a statement,” you are already a victim of the system. Consider getting a bicycle for short trips in good weather. Save gas and get exercise. That’s a win-win. Bicycles are also the

ideal survival escape vehicles. You can carry more, move faster, and go almost anywhere. Bikes are actually more efficient than walking. The Vietcong used them to move and supply a whole army in Viet Nam.

7. Buy durable and simple stuff. If you need to, spend a bit more on tools, generators, vehicles, tools, weapons, electronics, etc. Do some research. When possible, buy military surplus equipment that is specifically designed for hard use and easy maintenance. Be sure to buy essential spare parts, tools, and manuals for all essential survival and self-reliance items. You may not be able to afford or even access a replacement part or a repair shop when you need it most.

8. Stock up on essentials like non-perishable foods (e.g. pasta, honey, sugar, vinegar, molasses, rice, corn meal, etc.) and essential supplies such as toilet paper, soap, toothpaste, light bulbs, batteries, LP gas cylinders, water filters, socks, underwear, ammunition, candles, clothesline and clothespins, matches, over the counter medications*, canning equipment, how-to books, and don't forget a spare sump pump.

9. Stock up on tradable goods such as batteries, toilet paper, ammunition, over the counter medications*, cleaners, lubricants, disinfectants, salt, kerosene (does not evaporate, less flammable, used for heaters and lanterns), vegetable seeds (vacuum packed), insecticide, tools, anything that would be badly needed and hard to get. Actually, just about any necessity bought today will be worth more later if you can safely store it. There are still lots of well-built World War Two bolt-action rifles in new or like new or good condition (e.g. Mosin-Nagant 1938, Lee-Enfield 303, Gewehr 43) that can be had for less than \$150.00 and ammunition is cheap and available. What will a good rifle and say 500 rounds of ammunition be worth in trade to unarmed survivors in the future?

10. Maintain a stock of bleach. It will be essential for water purification, sanitation, and decontamination. Rotate the supply because it will lose strength over years. Soap and Listerine™ for decontamination and insect repellent are other things to stock up on.

11. Buy crank powered and solar powered radios, lanterns, and flashlights and any other devices that work independently of batteries or plug-in power sources.

12. Take up gardening. Until the late twentieth century almost everyone raised vegetables for their own use. Even chicken coops were common in the city. During World War Two they were called "Victory Gardens." Big lawns, swimming pools, and supermarkets became part of the lazy and dependent life after the war. It is time to turn some of that grass back into food. These would be truly "Freedom Gardens" or "Survival Gardens". You save money, eat better, get exercise. No down side!

13. Consider adding solar or wind power systems. Generators are great for short-term emergencies, but how much fuel can you store and how much will there be in a future economy.

14. Arm yourself. If you have not already done so, consider purchasing at least one firearm and at least 500 rounds of ammunition. At the very least, have a 22-caliber handgun (revolver or automatic) and a rifle of the same caliber. These will give you some deterrent against predators, animal and human. Much better, get yourself a reliable (e.g. Glock, Colt, Ruger, SIG, S&W) 9mm, 40 or 45 caliber auto loading handgun that will stop any home invader or looter. Even if you lock them up in a safe place for now, you should get them. Their value will increase faster than just about any other investment and when and if you really need them, they will be worth more than any amount of money you spend.

15. Consider taking up hunting and fishing. These hobbies could have real value in tough times. Not only could fish and game supplement your own food supplies, but also you can use them as trade items. Consider also learning to dry and smoke the meat and fish that you get.

16. Always be prepared for an emergency. While you can't go around carrying a pack and wearing a protective suit, you can keep items on your person, in your locker, at your desk and in your vehicle that will give you an edge in an emergency. Wherever possible, carry a pocketknife. A good quality single blade or the ubiquitous "Swiss Army TM" knife will be invaluable in a number of situations. Carry a folding N95 respirator in your pocket for when smoke, dust, and perhaps biological hazards fill the air. One of those tiny LED flashlights can go on your key chain. Include some painkillers and Band-Aids TM. Large plastic bags can become rain, wind, and chemical protection. A water filtration straw (available at sporting goods stores could come in handy), and a whistle may be something to consider. If concealed carry is legal and practical, a small firearm may be your choice. If not, go with a small pepper spray. Wear sensible shoes that you could run through debris in if necessary.

17. Develop alternative income sources. Don't give up your day job, if you still have one, but do start to develop a backup source or sources of income. If you have skills, consider developing them into a home business. Accumulate the tools and supplies you may need to make money in a desperate economy. Auto repair, home repairs, gun repair, reloading, food preservation, clothing repair, shoe repair, and many other skills will be in high demand. Gathering and rehabilitating broken and discarded appliances, tools, and furniture could be a good business. Surplus sales and the sale of survival and self-reliance products would surely be a good choice.

18. Stay healthy. Get regular medical and dental checkups. Keep your teeth in good condition. Stock up on prescription and non-prescription medications. Have extra pairs of glasses. Once good medical care becomes unavailable or

unaffordable, it will be a bad time to discover that you have a problem that could have been treated or prevented earlier. Learn first aid and stock up on basic first aid items such as gauze pads, tape, bandages, splints, antibiotic cream, disinfectants, etc.

19. Prepare for serious disaster. Kits, caches, plans, packs. While “slow disaster” of climate changes, economic decline, shortages, and crime (by the criminals and the state) will challenge survival for most, “fast disasters” such as riots, epidemics, floods, storms, etc. will be more frequent and more devastating in many areas. With less and less help available, it will be critical for every home to have the capacity to sustain itself for weeks or even months without outside sources of water, food, sanitation services, heat, and power or even police, fire, medical services. In addition, each person (including children) should have a “survival pack” that is light enough to carry, but contains all of the necessities (necessities only) to survive in any weather for several days in the event that you are forced to evacuate. There should be a small quantity of water and a water filtration device, non-perishable foods, shelter, and warmth (sleeping bag, blanket, tent, and plastic sheets), a first aid kit, spare socks, underwear, medications, weapons, fire starters, a knife, and everything you would need. There are many sources of lists on how to put together a “survival pack,” but don’t wait. Any pack is better than no pack.

20. Have emergency plans. Consider what we have said about the future. Consider the various emergencies (fires, assaults, floods, epidemics, etc.) that could happen in your area. Think “what if?” Make basic plans for each situation. Think, “If this happens I will do this.” Consider what skills you need, what supplies you need, who you can work with, priorities, routes, alternate routes, communications. When others (family and friends) are involved, passwords and rendezvous locations are necessary. Remember that many emergency situations may develop while you are not at home or while you are asleep. Where will you be? Where will your loved-ones be? If you are one of those people that thinks, “I don’t want to think about it,” then you are already a victim and so are those you care about.

21. Be Prepared 24/7. Do not go out into the world prepared to be a victim! Carry a pocketknife (where you can) a firearm when conditions require, a small respirator, matches, a mini-flashlight, a whistle, extra medication (if you need it). A few Band-Aids™ are advised. A large plastic bag if there is room. These pocket items will be a big help in the unexpected emergency. A more complete survival kit should be in your vehicle, brief case, or locker.

22. Network and team up. There are a lot more self-reliance, self-defense, survival ready oriented people than is generally visible. The media and the governments generally discourage independence and self-reliance. Practitioners are often low profile and disinclined to share their ideas with others. Even though self-reliance is essential, family, community and group support (not dependence) is critical to long-term survival, greatly enhanced potential, and recovery. Self-

reliance does not require isolation. Self-reliance means you have a choice as to who, when, and how you support and are supported by others. In the short-term, the capacity *for* individual self-reliance is critical. In the long term, the option and capacity exist for mutual voluntary support

23. Teach the children to survive and value freedom. A recent study indicated that many young people become stressed if they lose their cell phones. They are no longer individuals. They think and act as part of a network of cell phones and web sites. They may confuse reality with computer games. Their grasp of history is so shallow that they are truly “doomed to repeat” the errors that ruined and enslaved past societies. It is the most important parental responsibility to assure that their children have the will, knowledge, and capability of taking care of themselves in emergencies and through hard times. The cruelest thing you can do to your children and grandchildren is to set them up for disaster by over protecting and under preparing them. It is the duty of every responsible parent to empower children with a sense of self-reliance and independence. This is the gift of life and freedom.

24. Use technology, but do not become dependent on it. The Internet, computers, and cell phones are great tools for gathering information, networking, communicating, ordering equipment and books, and making some extra money, but these tools will be the first to fail or be used against you when you need them most. So use them, but don’t need them. Keep hard copies (books, papers, tapes) in a safe place. Develop direct communication systems based on those used by the underground and spy crafts of the pre-computer age. Set up things so that at any point things (emergency plans, organizations, teams, and business) can go on without regular communication.

25. Don’t let your guard down. The recent Supreme Court decision to support at least part of the Second Amendment, a temporary drop in the price of oil, or a slightly improved economy does not mean that all will be well. The UN (United Nations) wants to ban small-arms on an international scale and over-ride the US Constitution. The weakening dollar guarantees that fuel and everything else but your paycheck will go up as your living standard goes down. Those in power will use every trick to disarm you and render you poor and dependent. You *will* have to fight for your freedoms and struggle for survival. Hold on when you must. Advance when you can. Know your friends and your enemies.

26. Build up a self-reliance library. There is lots of great, free information on virtually every survival and self-reliance subject available on the Internet. Google “survival,” “self-reliance,” self-defense,” “water purification,” “first aid,” etc. Print what you find and make up binders that you keep in secure containers. When things get tough, you may not be able to access the Internet, so print it now. Order the Paladin Press catalog from: www.paladin-press.com or Paladin Press, Gunbarrel Technical Center, 7077 Winchester Circle, Boulder, CO 80301. Check out www.modernsurvivalmagazine.com & www.survivalring.org.

Subscribe to Backwoods home magazine at www.backwoodshome.com or Backwoods Home Magazine, 29545 Ellensburg Ave., Gold Beach, OR 97444

27. Above all, don't give up and don't doubt yourself. Those who live in challenging times have the opportunity to make a profound difference in the future. You will be the ones that decide if your children and grandchildren survive to be free, creative, and happy.

** A Department of Defense study found that most medication last far past the expiration dates on the labels.*

Conclusion

Live Free has been fighting for freedom and self-reliance for over 40-years. We have seen the threats of the Soviet Union, Red Dawn, Y2K, and many others come and go. We have also seen a lot of panic peddling by various groups trying to promote products or sell fear and hate. We have seen dozens of so called survival organizations come and go. We have never been a big organization and we have never received a large contribution or grant, but we have endured and retained a reputation for responsibility and integrity. We have never claimed to know exactly what will happen, when it will happen, or who to blame. What we do know is that changes and disasters will happen and they will happen to many of you. We also know that only through emergency preparedness, self-reliance, and a steadfast determination to hold on to every inch of personal freedom and survival capability is there any hope for the future. If you have not seriously thought about changing your life style to a prepared, self-reliant, freedom first mode, do it before it's too late. If you already call yourself a "survivalist" or a "self-reliance practitioner," redouble your efforts and reach out to friends and neighbors now. **If you do not happen to things, things will happen to you. You can happen to the future before it happens or you can choose to be a future victim.**

A Parting Note

I have read about how some visitors from Europe notice a difference between themselves and most Americans. They lament that their fellow Europeans walk slumped with their heads down and dismayed expressions while Americans stride with head held high “as if they own the place.” The fact is that most of the world’s people were “granted” such freedoms as they have or were “liberated” by others (mostly Americans). An immigrant once informed me that we were lucky that the government gave us these rights. He just didn’t get it. Americans built their nation and took their freedoms by force. They thrived and survived on preparedness and self-reliance. While these values have been attacked and eroded, they are still strongly maintained by many responsible citizens. We can energetically support and earnestly hope for the continuation of a safe environment and a free society, but should nature and man fail us we have choices. We can have: confidence without arrogance, strength without menace, self-reliance without selfishness.

The End

Not If You Can Help It!

Recommended Reading

While there are thousands of books dealing with survival and self-reliance skills, there are few dealing specifically with the psychological and philosophical issues related to the values and reasons for their acquisition. Most of my material comes from life experiences, survival training experience, observations, historical studies, and adaptation of military and business texts. The recommended books that follow are intended as mental raw materials from which the reader may select, reject, interpret, and adapt for use in your own mental survival kit. In other words, make choices.

1. *Survivors: True Tales of Endurance*, by John B. Letterman, Simon & Schuster
2. *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies and Why*, by Laurence Gonzales, W. W. Norton & Company
3. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, by Steven R. Covey, Simon & Schuster
4. *The Art Of War* (Sun Tzu, 500 BC), by Samuel R. Griffith, Oxford University Press
5. *Leadership Secrets of the Rogue Warrior*, by Richard Marchinko, Pocket Books, NY
6. *The SAS Mental Endurance Handbook*, by Chris McNab, The Lyons Press
7. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, by Jared Diamond, Penguin Books.