

# Ten Principles' of Self-Reliance

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A few years back I wrote Preparedness Overview followed by the Ten Principles of Survival. Preparedness is preparing to survive so these articles fit together almost as a manifesto, but self-reliance goes deeper and further than mere survival. Recently we published Self-Reliance Overview so it seems appropriate that we now establish some principles for this level as well. I do not establish “principles” as a dogma or set of rules. Ten is just a convenient number and a way to organize important concepts. Subjects like survival, preparedness and self-reliance can be complicated and confusing. Establishing reference points and guides can be helpful in setting priorities and goals in any endeavor. Disaster preparedness by definition is based on the assumption that something bad is going to happen. As such it is defensive and reactive in nature. Self-reliance is the active pursuit and assertive maintenance of personal independence and freedom regardless of external threats and conditions. It is happening to the conditions instead of letting conditions and events happen to you.

## 1. Be self-reliant in a disaster

Being self-reliant does not necessarily imply preparedness. A self-reliant farmer may not survive a home invasion, drought, flood or epidemic. A way of life is not insurance against the effects of nature and man. Disaster preparedness is the foundation and first step towards self-reliance. You need to be able to survive in place or evacuate without support or aid. You need to be able to provide basic defense, medical aid, food, water, shelter, sanitation and other critical needs for extended periods while chaos and hazards abound. You need to have functional evacuation packs and plans. Most of all you need to follow the ten mental and psychological principles of survival set forth in our earlier articles.

## 2. Achieve financial independence

The myth that debt is okay or normal has destroyed the foundations of freedom and independence. Do without, do more, do what you must, but get out of debt and stay out of debt. Start building savings and saving valuable and tradable goods. When the Titanic went down people in first class did better than those in steerage. You will have a better base, a better vehicle, a better survival pack, be in better health and have better self-reliance technology all based on your income. The job comes first. Gaining skills, resumes and experience comes first. Your potential for functional independence and freedom is dependent on this.

## 3. Establish backup systems for life critical needs

You do not have to live off the grid, but you do need to be *able* to live off the grid. You start with “backup” systems for water supplies, food supplies, energy, medical care,

defense, etc. and then extend them into sustainable independent systems. The grid provides almost unlimited supplies of energy, water and food, while the system protects us from fire, crime and medical issues. We know that all of these are declining and vulnerable to failure, but they are still functional today. The trick is to (1) start developing replacement methods such as rain barrels and cisterns, gardens and aquaponics, solar and wind energy sources while (2) reducing your requirements and wastages. Most of us use far more water and energy than we need. We can reduce wasting food. Good health habits can dramatically reduce illness. Good safety and security habits can cut the risk of fire and crime dramatically. At some point you will achieve basic self-reliance and go on towards actual independence.

#### **4. Disengage from destructive and negative people and ideas**

This is often a difficult issue. You may have habits or associations that hurt you financially, psychologically or even physically. Friends or even relatives that are always in trouble or dragging you down\*. Habits such as smoking, drinking or associating with groups that are primarily negative will always prevent your success. Your security, health and survival are badly inhibited by these factors. Cutting loose of these is a major step to independence.

- *I do not want to imply that you abandon honestly ill or temporarily needy friends or family members. They are a moral responsibility, but those who are victims of their own bad habits, sloth or irresponsibility do not deserve your support.*

#### **5. Build self-reliance knowledge**

While technological skills can be the key to financial independence in the *normal* world as we know it, more basic and functional skills will serve you well in becoming self-reliant. You can't *virtually* raise food, fix broken tools, collect water, treat an injury or generate electricity or heat your home. You have to *actually*, physically do these things. Books, tools, experience, classes and trial and error make you valuable. Being able to do things gives you options and freedoms. App's are not skills. Smart phones are not tools. What did you learn to do today that has practical uses? The answer should always be something.

#### **6. Acquire self-sufficiency and sustainable living technology**

The term "technology" goes back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century so it does not necessarily imply just the newest techniques and devices. The Amish get along just fine without most modern methods, but some do use windmills and steam engines. We have great opportunity to combine the well-established methods of independent sustainable living with modern technological advances to give ourselves a survivable and then a comfortable and eventually a new, freer and better way of life. Avoid being dependent on vulnerable and intrusive technologies such as computers and smart phones. Use them to acquire knowledge and build networks, but remember that they are likely to

collapse in any disaster scenarios and they are a serious threat to the very freedoms, privacy, security and independence you are trying to achieve.

## **7. Develop associations and networks**

In fact you cannot really achieve true long-term, total independence. Humans didn't get this far by being lone wolves. The slogan "Together Each Accomplishes More" always applies. The whole strength of the growing Self-Reliance and Sustainable Living movement is networking among individuals, families, groups and commercial enterprises. Paranoia and the bunker mentality are self-destructive and roads to failure in all things. Starting with basic preparedness we must advocate, educate and participate. You work towards voluntary interdependence for your family, group and community based on your personal value and potential self-sufficiency. Ben Franklin at the signing of the declaration of Independence said "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately". This applies to our quest for personal and family survival and self-reliance today.

## **8. Secure your base**

Back in the 90s a house was considered an investment not a home. That proved to be a disastrous error for millions of families. If possible get out of renting (money down the drain) get out of apartments. Apartments are as vulnerable as the weakest most irresponsible tenant. You can achieve some levels of semi-self-reliance, but you are always at risk. Work towards a separate home. Maintain it, improve it, secure it and make it a base for self-sufficiency and even a home business. Without a secure shelter all your survival and self-reliance systems are constantly at risk.

## **9. Become mentally and psychologically independent**

This may seem easy, but with all of the incoming messages and data from the internet, government, media and associates that are determined to occupy and confuse our minds are we really independent? About 90% of incoming information is (1) useless to us personally (2) intended to influence us for the benefit of others or (3) wholly or partial false. If you can't do anything about it or it does not affect you directly and immediately don't let it affect your actions and priorities. You have to make your decisions based on what works for you, but free of ego, anger and fears.

## **10. Establish a mission of independence**

Many self-reliance practitioners seem to bounce around from one concern to another. They are often driven by negative imperatives rather than positive goals. True self-reliance is a state of mind, a life style and a lifelong quest. Without a firm (a preferably written) mission for yourself and your family you're sure to drift off course into wasted or even dangerous activities and ideas. You need to establish what a successful self-reliance program will look like in terms of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (yep that's what it's about) for you and your family, How do you want your world to be? What do you need to get there regardless of what the world (political, environmental, and

economic) is going to do? Go write that down and refer to it often when making decisions. Is this action consistent with my mission or destructive to it? Be very sure that the future of your children and community are included.

### **11. Don't give up and don't wait**

This is pretty much the same as the 11<sup>th</sup> principle for survival, but whereas survival is just not giving up in a struggle to survive, self-reliance is an active quest for a positive achievement regardless of the challenges. While you prepare to survive and then wait to use your survival skills and equipment, you build self-reliance and gain freedoms and benefits constantly as you move along. Waiting can only achieve failure. Obviously you are going to have financial, and physical obstacles and may seem to be too far behind to ever achieve your goals, but persistence, determination and often unexpected opportunity will get you there.

### **Conclusion**

I hope that I have provided an organized approach to a complex and multi-faceted subject. Maybe you have not considered these aspects. I like to think of the people who have moved beyond preparing and surviving as "the New Americans". After two centuries of movement towards more and more dependency and centralization these new Americans' represent a quiet revolution that can rescue the future. This revolution can only succeed if it is energetically pursued and constantly built and defended by all of us. Our children and their children (dare I say "ourselves and our posterity") will depend on how determined and effective our efforts will be.

### **In Closing**

I Found this item in our files from a long ago issue. I thought it might be appropriate here. Maybe sign this and put it on your wall?

## **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.
- Oppose any restrictions or regulations or actions that would interfere with the right and ability to pursue personal preparedness and self-reliance.
- Support all organizations and technologies that promote and expand the capacity of the individual to achieve and practice a prepared and self-reliant life.

I hereby resolve to dedicate my life to the cause of freedom and personal independence through preparedness and self-reliance.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_