AMERICAN SURVIVOR

Survival Information For The Prepared Citizen

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Self-Reliance Overview

By James C. Jones EMT/CHCM

There is no question that the next decades will be dangerous to our lives and freedoms, but how we respond and adjust will determine the future of America. What we do now to expand and support the movement will make the difference between a freer and more self-reliant society or a more centralized and oppressive one.

While self-reliance is often treated as simply a form of advanced survival preparedness it is different in both psychology and execution**. Preparing and surviving imply that one is anticipating a passing threat to life or life, as we know it that must be survived in order to recover and rebuild as life was before the event**. In this respect Prepping may be compared to a life raft that saves life, but hands no sail or destination. While survival is certainly a laudable and necessary objective and preparedness is essential to getting through the multiplying threats of the Twenty-First Century it will not take us to a new and better place. In fact mere survival leaves us alive among the ruins and with little control of where we land. **True practical self-reliance goes beyond survival in these ways:**

- It immediately changes how we live and provides economic and psychological advantages over the unprepared and dependent masses.
- It is proactive rather than reactive. Instead of hoping to get through coming challenges, you are challenging current and future threats.
- It is positive and inspiring. While the public may be in denial about impending disasters and negative trends, they more readily embrace ideas that make them more independent, secure and prosperous.
- The focus is not just on staying alive. Self-reliance is about being better, smarter, safer and going towards the future with confidence.
- Fore those who want change, self-reliance offers a revolutionary opportunity to withdraw taxable income, avoids regulatory systems and counters centralized power in a positive and non-violent movement.

True self-reliance then can be compared to a ship that not only keeps one afloat, but also takes one to a better place. **To that end, self-reliance advocates**

should have a firm concept of where that ship is going. We also need to face the fact that those who have benefitted by centralized authority, dependence in the grid and massive taxation will act strongly to intimidate, discourage and misrepresent self-reliance practices and advocates. Such resistance may well become violent at some times. As the existing economic, political and support systems fail the conflict may take on aggressive dimensions.

All of this must take into account the underlying imperatives of surviving the assaults of nature (e.g. storms, floods, epidemics, climate change) and mankind (e.g. resource depletion, famine, war, etc) that will ravage the decades to come. It is far better to put our ourselves and our posterity in the ship of self-reliance than just the life raft of preparedness. Granting of course that the ship still needs to have those life rafts aboard.

We must not regard self-reliance as simply a technical process for sustaining life needs into the future. Our children deserve better than maintenance. They deserve to come out of the challenges of survival and change as smarter, freer and more human. Self-reliance is not about going back. Self-reliance is about building a better future as the failed and wrong values decline and fall.

United As Individuals

Humans are social by nature. **While survival skills and self-reliance capabilities may keep us alive alone for a while, but we are hardly human without family, friends and associations**. The struggles to survive, find water, build shelter, gather food and defender against others leaves no time for thinking, improving or advancing. So effective self-reliance is being independent while choosing to share and exchange with others. Being basically self-reliant provides the foundation for voluntary participation in cooperative efforts and exchanges. One may have special skills or excessive supplies in one area, but be short on others. A small family or community may be vulnerable to looters or need help producing food. **The difference between collectivist and centralized society and self-reliance is that the power of choices starts at the bottom with the individual and family instead of with bureaucrats**. As we develop individual and family self-reliance capacity we should be creating regional and dispersed networks for both technological and political support. If self-reliance is a ship and not just a life raft then we will need a fleet to get through the storms ahead.

The philosopher George Hegel (1770-1831) developed the theory of the dialectic. He postulated that there is a flow of events and changes from one time to the next that is driven by multiple events and conditions. Karl Marx wrongly used the dialectic theory to show history leading only to a communist society. As we examine history leading from the times of the American Revolution through the Twentieth Century it is hard to avoid the evidence of a continual dialectic flow from one decade to the next. The following three phases of change will not actually happen as distinct periods. They will overlap and occur concurrently in some ways. All three of them are in progress now, but the later phases are less evident and yet to have their full effect.

Phases One

- Economic instability
- Loss of public confidence and support
- Frequent local and regional disasters with less and less recovery
- Degradation of big, centralized business, government and infrastructure
- Rise of a minority preparedness and self-reliance culture
- Rise in small self-reliance technologies

Phase Two

- Disintegration of established economic systems and bureaucracies
- Shortages of life critical materials (food, fuel, medicine) and services
- Unrecoverable disasters (epidemics, storms, droughts, etc) that significantly reduce populations and render areas uninhabitable
- Unrest and conflicts with society and between nations caused by shortages and limited resources.

- Extremist leaders within government and outside of government will feed on public fear and desperation to accumulate power and wealth at the expense of the public
- Desperate actions by governments to retain control and wealth may include confiscations, suspension of liberties and general oppression. The prepared and self-reliant may be branded as selfish and dangerous*.
- Hopefully, self-reliance business, organizations and concepts will begin to involve a significant portion of the public

* ***If self-reliance is still a small minority movement at this stage I will probably be extinguished. Freedom and self-reliance will only survive if it has been advocated organized and taken root in the communities***

Phase Three

- Through evolution or revolution government will be reinvented as a more limited, decentralized and supportive entity
- The primary economic and political power will come from the counties and states driven by a highly independent people
- Multifunction networks of families, communities and organizations will proved life critical materials and support to semi-self-reliant people. *

* *Ultimately we will need to do many things cooperatively. Full, long-term self-reliance requires almost 100% of an individuals and families time and energy. This leaves little for improvement learning and progress. If a community floods they can all build multiple sandbag dikes around each house or they can work together to build one effective dike at the river. If a gang attacks a community each family will by killed off one-by-one unless they all work together.*

Declaring Independence Through Practical Self-Reliance

The table below is a very brief outline of a family plan for replacement or backup systems for supplies and services currently provided by the failing centralized structures. Don't let the image of "dooms day prepper" "off the grid" capabilities discourage you from working towards reasonable and responsible self-reliance in all of the categories.

LIFE NEEDS, SURVIVAL TO SELF- RELIANCE

WATER

NOW: Store at least 10-gallons per person, have bleach available. Have a good quality filter system

FUTURE: Install rain barrels, cistern, advanced filters

ISSUES: Droughts, waterborne infections, legal issues

FOOD PRODUCTION

NOW: Start gardening, stock up on heirloom seeds, take up fishing and hunting

FUTURE: Enlarge garden, Aquaponics?,
ISSUES: Climate change, available area, security

FOOD PRESERVATION
NOW: Store at least 30-90 days supply
FUTURE: Canning, drying, smoking,
ISSUES: Supplies, storage space

SHELTER
NOW: Home preparedness and safety, Alternative shelter for evacuation
FUTURE: Develop home as base for meeting all life critical needs
ISSUES: Ownership, community compatibility,

HEALTH
NOW: Maintain and improve while you can! Stop bad habits, exercise.
FUTURE: Ability to avoid exposure to public is critical. Clean water and adequate food must be maintained
ISSUES: Poor sanitation, government interference

SANITATION
NOW: Chemical toilets bleach. Stock up on TP.
FUTURE: Outhouses, lime, ash, bleach, composting toilets
ISSUES: Legal issues

MEDICAL CARE
NOW: Learn first aid, stock supplies and medications
FUTURE: Develop capacity for advanced and extended medical care. Learn alternative medicines. Network with medically skilled
ISSUES: Medication acquisition and storage. Legal issues

PERSONAL HYGIENE
NOW: Improve health habits, stock up on soap, Listerine, alcohol, bleach, toothpaste, etc.
FUTURE: learn to make soap, showers without water pressure
ISSUES: Water supply, drainage

LAUNDRY
NOW: Changes of cloths available. Stock up on soap and detergent.
FUTURE: Laundry tubs, wringers, scrub-boards, lines
ISSUES: Water supply, drainage

HEATING
NOW: LP gas heaters, sleeping bags, tent in house
FUTURE: wood stoves, closed rooms,
ISSUES: Safety, fire, Carbon monoxide, fuel supplies

TRANSPORTATION
NOW: Alternatives to driving in an emergency, Evacuation packs, and bikes.
FUTURE: Bicycles, electric vehicles
ISSUES: range and weight limits, routs

CLOTHING
NOW: Plenty, but stock up on socks, underwear, sewing supplies
FUTURE: manual sewing machines, knitting, repair.
ISSUES: skills, supplies, tools

WASTE DISPOSAL
NOW: Temporary health hazard. Bleach, insect spray, burning.
FUTURE: fewer waists. Burn for fuel. Use for compost
ISSUES:

COOKING
NOW: Have camp stoves
FUTURE: Solar ovens, rocket stoves, outdoor cooking
ISSUES: Safety, fire, Carbon monoxide, fuel supplies

ENERGY
NOW: Batteries, generators
FUTURE: Supplemental and alternative solar and wind. Need reduction
ISSUES: space for systems, safety, legal

PERSONAL DEFENSE
NOW: Personal weapons and vigilance. Stock up on ammunition, parts, etc
FUTURE: Increased need for more effective weapons. Need for family or community 24/7 vigilance and defense
ISSUES: legal issues.

FIRE SUPPRESION

NOW: Fire extinguishers, smoke/CO detectors, and ability to evacuate and survive.
FUTURE: Large volume water pumps. Community cooperation, prevention
ISSUES: Increased risks, heat and embers from adjoining areas

TRADE & BARTER
NOW: Trade and barter when possible. Stock up on barter items. Learn tradable skills.
FUTURE: Value in hard items and skills replaces currency in many areas.
ISSUES: Legal and tax issues

TOOLS
NOW: In addition to packable survival tools, have tools to repaired home damages, rescue etc.
FUTURE: Shop tools, garden tools, auto tools, nail, and screws fasteners all valuable. Replace power tools with hand tools, use solar power to recharge cordless drills etc.
ISSUES: Cost, storage space, skill in use

MISCELLANEOUS CHALLENGES (Nuclear, Biological)

NOW: Carry N-95 masks, hand-cleaner, etc. Avoid crowds
FUTURE: Get out of contaminated area ASAP. Don protective wears and dust mask. Remove contaminated clothing and decontaminate ASAP. Treat symptoms, dehydration
ISSUES: Shelter, radiation sickness, epidemics,

Preparedness is about surviving the future. Self-reliance is, or should be about conquering the future. Preparedness is about reacting to events. Self-reliance is about being events. Both preparedness and self-reliance are necessary, but survival alone cannot be enough. A smarter, freer more responsible and self-reliant people must be determined to own the future regardless of the dangers and challenges that lie ahead.

Cooking When The Gas Goes Off

The capacity to cook food along with the parallel needs to smoke and dry foods and boil water is an essential survival need. Short-term situations can easily be met with the use of various camping stoves. Long-term lose of natural gas and/or electricity would be a much greater challenge. Even a significant increase in fuel cost or rationing would necessitate the use of alternative methods. The fuel sources used for cooking would compete with the needs for heating and transportation. The survivor would be wise to have devices to utilize all possible sources of fuel including, wood, kerosene, gasoline, charcoal, LP gas, and solar heat. Since everyone else would be using the same resources it can be anticipated that wood would disappear rapidly. History tells us that a modest population using wood alone for heat and cooking can decimate acres of forest in a few years. In urban areas that were cut off during wars the furniture, fences and outbuilding quickly went into the fires.

A Brief History of Cooking

Because cooking is one of mans oldest technologies, it offers the most alternatives and variations. Certainly cooking was discovered almost simultaneously with fire. Anthropologists believe that cooking food was essential to improving mental capacity as civilization developed. Cooked foods are provides the body with a much greater share of the starches and proteins and 30-percent more energy than raw foods. In fact humans can starve to death eating only raw foods.

Open fire cooking was the predominant method for thousands of years. Pots, pans, grill and ovens were developed, but the fire remained. The fires came inside as fireplaces and then inside of iron stoves in the 1800s. Gas ranges replaced the smoky and messy wood stoves

starting in the late 1800s. Electric ranges and then the microwave finally brought non-fire cooking in the mid Twentieth Century. Unfortunately modern fireplaces are not designed to accommodate the grills and pot hangers that our ancestors cooked on. Most homes are not well suited for installation of stoves. The grand wood cooking stoves of old are too heavy and costly ($3,000. to $5,000) for many locations. Fortunately people have stubbornly hung on to campfire and charcoal cooking methods

Alternatives and Options

Camp stoves are adequate for short-term emergencies and can be placed on the inactive range under the vent hood. Long-term and large-scale cooking brings the hazards of carbon monoxide, smoke and fire into the home. There-for cooking should be done outside. Open fire, and charcoal cooking should never ever be done inside; Liquid fuel stoves should be used with good ventilation and never fueled inside. It would be best to establish a cooking shelter near, but not attached to the house. Fire extinguishers should always be ready and immediately at hand. In all but the most inclement weather cook outside with wood, charcoal and liquid fuel. Save your LP gas for warming food inside. . Solar ovens offer many advantages, but are ineffective during cloudy weather and in extreme cold conditions. Try to plan meals to minimize cooking time and conserve heat. One-pot meals cooking in Dutch ovens. Boiled dinners, baking multiple breads while the oven is hot etc. When selecting foods and cooking utensils consider how they will be used. Most modern cooking pots, and utensils are not designed for use on open fires or rough conditions. Camp cooking equipment and cast iron cookware are recommended. In the past the kitchen was in a separate building from the house. This was for safety and to keep the excessive heat and smells isolated. It would be a good idea to have some knd of shelter near the outdoor cooking area so you can cook while protected from sun, rain and snow. Under extreme conditions one may have to use a variety of fuels. Each fuel has its advantages and disadvantages. One must also consider space and safety issues when storing fuels. Below are the most likely fuel sources.

- Wood: Smoky and dirty, but available for the first months of an emergency. Use a fire pit away from the house. Save your other fuels for when the wood runs out. Beware of fire hazard!
- Charcoal: Much more efficient than wood. A few briquettes can do a lot of cooking and baking. Great to use with a Dutch oven. The supply will be limited so use sparingly. Never use in an enclosed space!
- Kerosene: A good hot fuel and safer than gasoline, but smelly and sooty.
- Gasoline: Probably in short supply and dangerous to use indoor. Last resort.
- Alcohol: Clean and renewable with multiple uses.
- LP gas: Various compressed gas stoves are highly effective and safe, but refilling will be highly improbable under disaster conditions. Various cylinders are safe to store so stock up.
- Solar: Certainly the safest and most economical alternative under most conditions. A solar oven is a must have item.

Fuel availability and the length of any shortages is imposable to predict. Having the widest variety of cooking methods and fuel options is the only way to be sure of being able to have hot safe food throughout long-term situations.

Cooking methods and Equipment

A wide variety of commercial, improvised and homemade devices are available. Camp stoves, survival stoves and military surplus devices abound Here are a few examples.

A variety of small stoves, left to right: Swiss Army “rocket stove” with cup that uses heat tablets or other fuel, Primus™ brass expedition stove uses kerosene, Single burner LP gas stove on cylinder, Primus ™ gasoline burning stove, classic WWII German Army Esbit ™ stove with package of Troxane ™ tablets. Center: (MSR) mine pack stove with fuel cylinder.

Corn cooking on a fire pit while canned goods are heated in the bucket of boiling water

Homemade stove from a metal can using heat tablets or Sterno

One version of a “rocket stove” these stoves will burn twigs or can be fueled with canned fuels (alcohol) etc. They are very efficient in the use of fuel and heat conservation, but must be used outside.

Solar ovens are available in many sizes. There are also plenty of instructions on how to make them.

Conclusions

Most stored survival foods and basic (wheat, corn, rice) storable foods require cooking. The ability to cook and bake foods has health and psychological benefits that are essential to long-term survival and recovery. A hot cup of coffee and a hot meal can strengthen the body and raise the morale. Having a variety of methods and stored fuel supplies will assure that this basic need is fulfilled under the most difficult conditions.

Making Cordage

Cordage is one of those items that you should have in your survival packs. You can often forage for string, rope and wire anywhere where humans have been. Cordage becomes a necessity for building shelters, making traps, fishing and many other important survival tasks. In the absence of adequate man-made line or rope you can use a variety of plant fibers to build cordage. The following basic skills can help you to make fishing line and string from plant fibers or thin threads. The same techniques can be used to build available string or line into stronger ropes. These techniques are easy to practice and should be mastered before you need them.

Twisted Line

Figure "A" shows a two strand line made from plant fiber. Fasten the two strands together and secure. Then twist the fibers clockwise between the thumb and forefinger of each hand. Then "B" at the same time twist them together counterclockwise "C" and "D". as the fibers get shorter add more fibers as shown in "E". You can build a twenty-five foot line in about one to two hours this way. The combined two strands will be four times as strong as the original two strands.

Braided Line

Below are the steps to braiding fiber or string into line or rope. Proceed as shown in figures 1 through 5. In this way you can buid very strong cordage

Tying Lines Together

Below is one of the best ways to secure on length of line or rope to another without weakening the line at the knot point, which is often the case with other methods.

Some good sources of plant fibers that can be made into line are:

1. The inner fibers of thistle plants
2. Fibers from the stinging nettle (protect your hands) after you soak and dry the stalks then role and remove the outer skin
3. The inner bark of basswood
4. The inner bark of red cedar
5. The bark of grape vines
6. The bark of hickory
7. The inner bark of willow.

Book Review

Doctor Prepper's Family Preparedness Handbook

By: James Talmage Stevens

Originally published in 1974 Making the best of Basics: Family Preparedness Handbook has been updated 12 times and is in its 29th printing. The 81/2 x 11, 562 page size makes it more of a manual than a "handbook". Like many other preparedness books, it contains lots of data on supplies needed, food storage, food preservation and preparation, heating and lighting alternatives, health and much more. One of the best features is the extensive tables of Internet sources and survival book recommendations for building your library. The best aspect of this book is its layout and program guidance. The reader has an actual guide to move through preparedness and on towards self-reliance. There are even blank forms to use as guides. The author's philosophy and approach are very much in line with the Live Free USA mission and vision. At $39.95 Making the best of Basics: Family Preparedness Handbook is a bargain and an ideal book to use a family and survival group guide.

Making the best of Basics: Family Preparedness Handbook
562 p. Illus, 8 ½ x 11, soft cover, from Sagan, LLC, 11035 Technology Place, Suite 100, San Diego, CA 92127, $39.95.
Doc@DoctorPrepper.com

BioLite ™ Camp Stove

The idea of a battery-powered fan operating a wood burning camp stove is a bit counterintuitive. A wood fire is what you use when you have no power and do not want to carry fuel around. There are a number of fan powered, portable wood stoves around. Most of them require carrying batteries that must be replaced or recharged. The BioLite ™ camp stove has a rather heavy battery-pack and fan module that attaches to the stainless steel stove, but is unique in that the heat from the stove actually recharges the fan battery and produces excess electrical energy for charging cell-phones, flashlights and other devices. You can also charge the battery from the plug adapter provided. To operate you simply drop in twigs, sticks, fuel stick and other dry fuel, light it and turn on the fan. The fan will assure high heat and complete burning of the fuel to boil water or cook food while the excess heat charges the battery and maybe your radio, etc. As the fuel burns down the fan continues to run and only shuts down automatically when the stove shell is cooled down. This assures that you get all the charging out of the stove heat and that the excessive stove heat does not damage the adjoining battery and fan unit. Although it packs into a compact 6" x 4" bag the stove is a bit bulky at 33 oz for a survival pack, but is quite practical for home use (outside) or long survival treks where fuel weight and availability are an issue. You can cook a meal with a few handfuls of wood without a big fire with its smoke and light. Rechargeable batteries have come a long way. I have some that have recharged every day for 8-years without noticeable degradation. Based on this, I think that the BioLite ™ stove gives the owner a limitless fuel source cooker and mini generator that should last through very long-term emergencies. BioLite ™ also makes a HomeStove ™ based on the same principles but a bit larger and

sustainable for cooking larger meals. The camp stove costs a hefty $130.00 at Bass Pro Shop. Go to www.BioLitestove.com for more information.

BioLite ™ Camp Stove. Note battery/fan unit attached and folding legs.

Aladdin ™ Lamps

While battery powered LED lights, candles and wicked oil lamps may be sufficient for short and medium term situations, kerosene-burning mantel lamps may be the best option for long-term survival home lighting. These lamps are highly efficient, bright, cleaner and relatively safe. They were the standard rural lighting method until electricity was extended beyond the towns. Aladdin ™ brand lamps are generally considered the gold standard for this type of lamp and are still used today in many remote cabins and off the grid facilities. Depending on the model, these lamps can provide from 8 to 18 hours of 60-watt equivalent light on one filling. They come in a wide variety of beautiful designs that can be kept ready in the home. They are not cheap. Prices run from $134.00 to $285.00 depending on the models, but they will last a lifetime. If you are extremely lucky you may find them at yard sales or flea markets at much lower prices. You will want to get extra mantels and chimneys for long run use. Lehman's catalog has a full line of these fine American made lamps and all the parts. **Send to: Lehman's P.O. Box 270, Kidron, OH, 44636 or call 1-877-438-5345 or Lehmans.com. Their full catalog of back to basics supplies and equipment is an absolute must for anyone working towards self-reliance.**

Two models of Aladdin ™ lamps. Note the boxes' containing two spare mantels and also wicks for converting then in case the mantels run out. Conversion kits are available to use wicks as a backup. You can even convert them to electric lamps for everyday use and then convert back to kerosene when TSHTF

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GunsSaveLife.com

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Pontiac: First Tuesday of month.
Pontiac VFW Post 886, 531 W. Lincoln Ave., Pontiac, Illinois 61764

Effingham: First Thursday of the month.
Effingham Elk's Club, 2102 S. Banker Street, Effingham, IL 62401

Peoria: First Thursday of the month.
Knights of Columbus, 7403 North Radnor Road, Peoria,IL 61615

Win a gun!

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