

SURVIVAL PAPER

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Survival Will Building

By Jim Jones

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 moral 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 chose 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 -
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Congratulation! This is why you are doing this and need to stay alive and free

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?