

AMERICAN SURVIVOR

Survival Information For The Prepared Citizen

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IN THIS ISSUE: What Is Life, Dental Health, Collapse, Homemade Desiccant, More

WHAT IS LIFE?

By Jim Jones

Since the very definition of "survival" is to stay alive, it would seem worthwhile to determine exactly what "life" is. Almost every time I examine a philosophical or psychological concept, I find that it consists of three elements. Life consists of time, energy and choices.

Time: all entities have a time of existence in that form. Rocks have a time of existence, but are not alive.

Energy: most entities have some form of energy or potential energy that is dissipated over time. A star has a tremendous amount of energy and time, but yet it is not alive. Energy for humans includes physical energy exerted by muscles and mental energy of learning and creating ideas. We can choose to waste our energy on frivolous activities or constructive pursuits.

Time and energy are the components of "existence". Rocks exist, stars exist, plants exist, and machines exist. Time for human beings is the days and hours of our existence. We can make some

choices to extend our time through risk reduction and health care.

Choices: Choices are the selection of how one uses available time and energy. At what level animals truly start to make choices is arguable, but there is no doubt that humans have a well-developed capacity to do so. There are some who argue that our choices are really predetermined by our biology, experience and environment. That may or may not be so, but they are still choices that we make. Knowledge and skills greatly expands our choices. Available resources (e.g. funds, supplies) greatly expand our choices. Associations (e.g. friends, family, contacts) greatly expand our choices. We must be willing to consider choices that challenge our fixed ideas and capabilities. The most important choices are often the ones we most hate to face.

Freedom: the range of choices available to an individual. A prisoner may have very limited physical choices, but may have considerable choices as to how he or she thinks. A person who is uneducated, has been programmed or is closed-minded has little true freedom.

Life: Life then is having freedom to choose how you use your time and energy. If you are reading this, you have time, energy and choices; therefore you are alive.

So we can be more or less alive depending on what we do to extend our time, use our energy and expand our choices. A person who is unfortunate enough to die young may have less life than one who lives long. A person who shuns hard work and education is less alive than one who is constructive and creative. A person existing under conditions (prison, dictatorship, etc) where his/her time, energy and choices are directed and used by others against their will has less life than a free person.

Survival: While existence is a necessity of “survival”, it is not “survival”. A person lying in a coma with no hope of recovery “exists”, but has not “survived”. A prisoner in a concentration camp may “survive”, but has limited choices. Someone lost on a mountain may “survive” , but has limited choices A victim of crime on a city street may “survive”, but has limited choices. The more knowledge and energy and time the person has, the greater his/her choices and the greater the chances of survival are. A person (and there are many) who wastes time, contributes just enough energy to exist and chooses to make few choices is not a survivor. So survival is the preservation and utilization of time, energy and choices. The more of these you have the more you survive. Survival is the preservation of “life” and the quantity and quality of life is defined by time, energy and choices. Therefore, life (biological)

and freedom are necessary for true survival.

We are willing to freely trade some of our time, energy and choices for things we want. We let the boss make our choices and use our time and energy while we work. We trade time, energy and choices to be married and raise children. We may be willing to *grant* some of our time, energy (taxes) and choices (laws) to government in return for some benefits of cooperative efforts such as crime prevention, national defense, traffic control, etc. That fellow living in the cardboard box by the railroad tracks has chosen not to give up much time or energy to others.

Power: Power over others is derived from the capacity to direct; through persuasion or intimidation, the time and energy of others. Power over others is the ability to limit the choices of others. To the extent that your information, food, water, shelter and protection are provided by others, your choices and therefore your freedom is limited.

Liberation or Self-Empowerment: The extent that one has the option and capacity to sustain biological life and make choices independent of the social, political and natural environment establishes the extent to which that person is free. This, by no means implies a paranoid, reclusive, off-the-grid existence. It does mean a meaningful and applied resistance to psychological and biological dependency. It means participation and cooperation on one’s own terms.

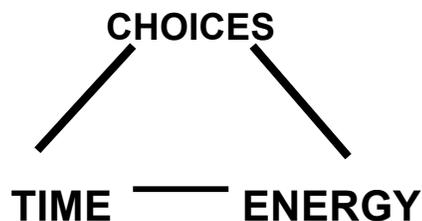
Life and Death: Ultimately all power comes down to the power of life and

death. Most of what we do and most of what we give (time, energy, choices) is voluntarily done for the mutual benefit of all. We drive safely, we pay taxes, we do our jobs, etc. A criminal points a gun at us, we give him the money. You don't pay your taxes; eventually (if you refuse to cooperate) men with guns will come and use force to take you and your property. If you have the capacity to effectively resist, you have power.

Life (biological) Vs Freedom (choices): The true division is between those who give up freedoms for (biological) life and those who would risk (biological) life for freedoms (choices).

The Triangle of Life

Take any element away and you do not have "survival"



Survival then is the protection, preservation and expansion of life. Life is dependent on the ability to choose how one uses one's time and energy. This number of choices and the capacity to exercise them is dependent on the individual's capacities to provide the necessities of life (e.g. water, food, medical care, protection, etc.). Survival capacity is personal power. Survival capacity is freedom and potential freedom. That is the difference between the philosophically (survivalist) independent and the fear-motivated survivor.

A Few Things You Can Store for Dental Health

By Ken

With all the possible uses for dental floss, keeping your dental health during a long term disaster, when dental services are unavailable, is paramount. There are only a few things that you can use and store for your own dental health.

Amount to store per person per year:

1. Extra tooth brushes (1 to 2 is not too much)
2. 6.5 six ounce tubes (at 113 brushings per tube) or from your bulk stores of salt & baking soda
3. A few ounces of various essential oils mixtures of eucalyptus, thyme, wintergreen, clove, cinnamon, peppermint oils, and myrrh extract:
 - As a mouthwash, you will only need a few drops in a small glass of water for plaque formation prevention.
 - A few drops on the tooth brush worked into the gum line and in between the teeth to treat periodontal disease, and prevent dental caries.

4. Dental floss for once each every day for a year, it comes to 61.5 yards.

If you have ever had an abscess or tooth ache, you know it is something well worth avoiding even when you do have professional dental services to turn too.

Our Goose Is Cooked!

The Film “Collapse” Documents Our Predictions

A while ago, we ran a two-part article entitled Storm Warning in which we outlined the combination of factors that make a general economic and social collapse inevitable. We stated that the recent gas price crisis and the economic recession were just the first tremors in a series of increasing disasters that will lead to a total collapse of the existing social/economic system. Back in the “good old days” of the Cold War we helped people prepare for a “possible” nuclear war. In spite of what our detractors preached, nuclear war was survivable and civilization would have recovered. The general population could pretend that it would not happen or that if it did there was nothing they could do, so most did not act. Fortunately that massive nuclear war did not occur. **Unfortunately we now face a completely unavoidable catastrophe that will probably kill more people and do more lasting damage to civilization than any nuclear war.** It is also one that almost no one can ignore because they are already being affected. Back in the Cold War days we were often subject to

near hostility for reminding people of dangers. Not anymore. **No one is saying that everything will be fine and the future is bright.** We are being conditioned to do with less not hope for more. We are told to ride a bike, get a windmill, use less water, and keep our home colder. All that is fine, but where does it say we are going. I have not talked to one person that was not at least worried. Most are scared or even terrified.

The just released film by Michael Ruppert and Chris Smith entitled “Collapse” is a documentary film that outlines the grim and unavoidable future that our children face. We have passed our peak in global oil reserves while the demand for oil by China, India and other emerging economies is exploding. Oil is not only a fuel; it is the key ingredient in almost everything we use. It takes 8-gallons of oil to make a tire. No oil, no plastic, no tires, no fuel to raise crops and move goods. We have a rapidly declining supply of a critical resource and an exploding population. You do the math. **The big secret is that all the wind farms, solar panels and alternative fuels cannot cover the gap as oil runs out and the population continues to grow.** Like the pumps on the Titanic, alternate energy can buy time but the ship will still sink. Oh, by the way, we will be running out of water too.

The film points out that people lived happily in the centuries before oil, but there were just about six billion of us then. **The prediction of the film is that there will be less than six billion of us left at the end of this century. That is not going to be pretty.** As the fuel runs out there will be more wars and revolutions and unemployment and

gangs, and terrorists, and epidemics, with less and less governmental services such as police, fire, and medical services. The rich will be able to dig in and survive. The poor will be ravaged by hunger and turn to gangs and crime. The middle class will have to organize, work and probably fight to survive. It is unlikely that any existing economic system or national government will survive intact. What our world will be like at the end of the 21st Century will be up to our children. The skills and values that we provide to them will surely be the key. Let's hope those skills are survival and self-reliance and those values are freedom and responsibility.

Collapse is a Vitagraph Films production running 82-minutes. Now available on many "on demand" cable channels . If this fails to move your family and friends towards preparedness nothing will.

The Road, by Cormac McCarthy, 287 pgs., paperback, \$7.99

The Road

A Very Worst Case Scenario

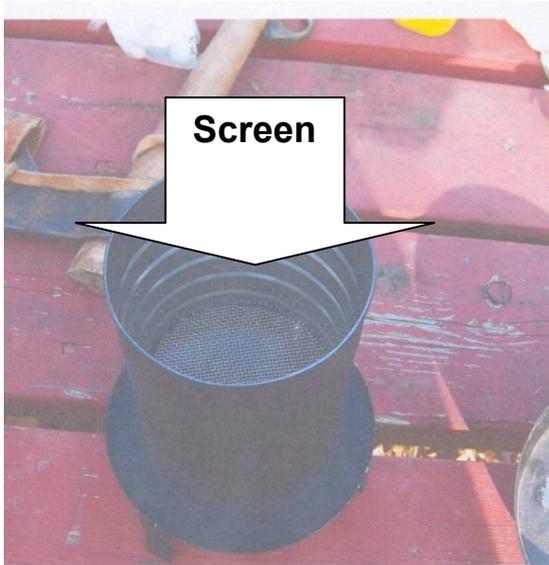
At 287 well spaced pages, The Road by Cormac McCarthy is not a very impressive volume. As the title implies, this is the saga of two survivors traveling down the road in a postapocalyptic world. A boy and his father trudging through the ruins of civilization while dodging a variety of threats. Whatever happened, it was total, worldwide and cataclysmic. The sky is filled with ash and the weather is always cold.

The trees are all dead, the fish are all dead, the plants are all dead, the animals are all dead. All of the towns and cities are long burned and looted. There are very, very few people left. Only by luck and what they scavenging from the last remnants of civilization (a few canned goods, some grain, etc.) are they able to keep going. The father's revolver with just three rounds of ammunition is all that saves them on several occasions. There are just "the good guys" "the bad guys" (very bad guys) and of course the dead. The father's only mission seems to be to save the child and with him the last trace of humanity and compassion. The father calls it "the fire". In a hopeless world they keep going and they keep holding on to that fire. The Road is the winner of the Pulitzer Prize in literature. A highly readable and unusual book.

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Homemade Brazier

At the most recent winter camp, one of our members brought out a nice little heating device that he built from tin cans and sheet metal. The brazier can be made up in several sizes and can burn charcoal or wood. The advantages over an open fire are that it conserves and controls the heat in a small location , uses less fuel and is easy to cook over. The legs let you put it on a table floor or other surface without the danger of starting a fire The open space underneath provides air to aid combustion while the screen inside holds the fire but lets the small ash fall through. Here are photos of the one he made.



Homemade and Expedient Desiccant Packets

By Ken

If you have purchased, salvaged or made your own bulk desiccant you will need to make your own packets with measured amounts of desiccant. How much you need depends on the size of the container and the type of desiccant used. Filter paper, cheese cloth, thin loosely woven cotton sheet, nylon

pantyhose material, and fine fabric screen are all permeable to moisture but it is tight enough not to let the desiccant grains out. Edges can be glued and or sown together.

Using Desiccants

Use the charts below to determine how much of the particular desiccant you will need for the size of the storage containers you wish to keep dry. Desiccants begin to adsorb their moisture as soon as they are exposed so you want to keep out in the open air for any longer than fifteen minutes or so.

TYPES OF DESICCANTS SILICA GEL

The most commonly used desiccant is silica gel, it will work from below freezing to past the boiling point of water, but performs best at room temperatures (70-90° F) and high humidity (60-90%). Its performance begins to drop off over 100° F, but will continue to work until approximately 220° F. It will lower the relative humidity in a container to around 40% at any temperature in its range until it is saturated. Silica gel will absorb up to 40% of its weight in moisture.

INDICATING SILICA GEL

This is ordinary silica gel with the colored specks being coated with 0.3 – 0.4 % of cobalt chloride. When the gel has absorbed approximately eight percent of its weight in water the colored crystals will turn from blue to pink making an easy visual indicator of whether the gel has become saturated with moisture. The indicating silica gel will still adsorb up to 40% of its weight in water vapor like the non-indicating type will but once it has gone past the 8% level and the crystals have turned pink

there is no way to tell how close it is to saturation. When saturated, both varieties of silica gel can be dried out and used again by heating the crystals in an oven at a temperature of no more than 300° F for approximately three hours or until the crystals turn blue. Spreading the desiccant in a broad pan in a shallow layer will speed the process. Heating to 325° F can damage the gel and render it unable to absorb moisture. Spread the packets so they are not touching and keep them at least 16 inches from any heating elements or flames.

CLAY DESICCANT

The material is Montmorillonite clay, composed primarily of magnesium aluminum silicate, a naturally occurring mineral. It works well at low and room temperatures, but has a rather low ceiling temperature. At 120° F it will begin to desorb or shed the moisture it has adsorbed. This is an important consideration for storage in hot areas. Subject to a degree of variability for being a natural material, clay desiccant will adsorb approximately 25% of its weight in water vapor at 77° F and 40% relative humidity. When temperatures rise above 120° F, Bentonite Clay releases the moisture it has absorbed back into the air. As a result, this desiccant can be reactivated to be reused many times.

CALCIUM OXIDE

Quicklime is a slow, but strong adsorbent, efficient at low humidities and can drop moisture vapor to below 10% relative humidity. Quicklime is caustic and must be carefully handled, particularly with regards to dust inhalation and exposure to skin and eyes. It expands as it soaks up water vapor and this must be taken into account

when packaging it. It will adsorb up to about 28% of its weight in moisture, but does it slowly over a period of several days rather than a matter of hours like other desiccants. It is most effective when used in high humidity environment where a very low humidity level is desired. It will release a fair amount of heat if exposed to direct (liquid) moisture or extreme humidities. Calcium oxide can be recharged by roasting at fire temperatures.

CALCIUM SULFATE

Also known as the mineral gypsum and commercially as Drierite, calcium sulfate is another naturally occurring mineral. It is produced by the controlled dehydration of gypsum (CaSO₄). It is chemically stable and does not readily release its adsorbed moisture. For expedient use, gypsum is commonly used in household drywall and Kearny mentions using this source in his Nuclear War Survival Skills. This makes only a so-so desiccant but the low cost of calcium sulfate must be weighed against its equally low adsorptive capacity; it adsorbs only up to 10% of its weight in water vapor but in an emergency it can get the job done. Gypsum or Drierite regeneration: spread about 1 inch deep in shallow pans and heated in a oven at 450° F for 2 hours to achieve complete dehydration. The temperature at which Drierite desiccants are regenerated is crucial in restoring it to its original condition. Absorbed moisture is water of hydration and is chemically bound to the calcium sulfate and temperatures in the range of 400° - 450° F are required to break these bonds and release absorbed moisture. Lower temperatures, regardless of heating time, will not regenerate. Do not to

overheat Drierite Desiccants as high temperatures can alter the crystal structure and render the desiccants permanently inactive.

Dry Wood

Dry a piece of wood in the oven until it is bone dry then put it in your container and seal it. The wood will suck up available moisture, up to 14% of its weight in moisture, depending on species. Low density, non-resinous woods with coarse, open grains work the best. I could not find temperature it will begin to "desorb" but it might be fairly low. Some empirical experimentation would be in order before relying heavily on it.

Desiccant Needed to Adsorb 6 Grams of Water Vapor at 40% relative humidity at 77° F.

- Silica Gel 15 grams
 - Indicating Silica Gel 15 grams
 - Montmorillonite Clay 24 grams
 - Calcium Oxide (quicklime) 21.5 grams
 - Calcium Sulfate (gypsum, Drierite) 60 grams
 - Wood 43 grams
- To maximize surface area for optimal adsorption, desiccants are granular or powder forms.

REQUIREMENT CHART

Container Size				Grams of Silica Gel Desiccant
Gallons	Cubic Ft.	Cubic In.		
1.1	or 0.14	or 237		Grams needed = 5 *
2.1	or 0.28	or 476		Grams needed = 10
3.2	or 0.42	or 714		Grams needed = 15
6.2	or 0.83	or 1,428		Grams needed = 30
12.5	or 1.67	or 2,856		Grams needed = 45
18.7	or 2.5	or 4,284		Grams needed = 60
25	or 3.33	or 5,712		Grams needed = 90
37.4	or 5	or 8,568		Grams needed = 135
50	or 6.66	or 11,424		Grams needed = 180

*Silica Gel 15 gr = Montmorillonite Clay 8 gr = Calcium Oxide 7.2 gr = Calcium Sulfate 20 gr = Wood 14.3 gr

Humidity Indicator Card.

These cards are made to show various humidity ranges and can be had from many desiccant and packaging suppliers. They will help you find the actual humidity in your storage.

WHERE DO I FIND DESICCANTS?

Indicating silica gel: is sold in one and five pound cans for flower drying.

Silica gel: A number of companies in the US market use 100% silica gel

crystals in their cat litter; include Clorox (Fresh Steps Crystals), Nestle-Purina (Tidy Cats Crystals) and Amazing Cat Litter are all 100% silica gel crystals granules
 Montmorillonite clay: in shipped containers coming in from overseas, bags as large as a pound.
 Gypsum: from drywall and Plaster of Paris, reprocessed to make your own desiccants.
 Calcium oxide (quicklime): produced from limestone (calcium carbonate) or slaked or pickling lime (calcium

hydroxide) by roasting to drive off the adsorbed water and or carbon dioxide. Note: calcium oxide is

caustic and hazardous, handle with care.

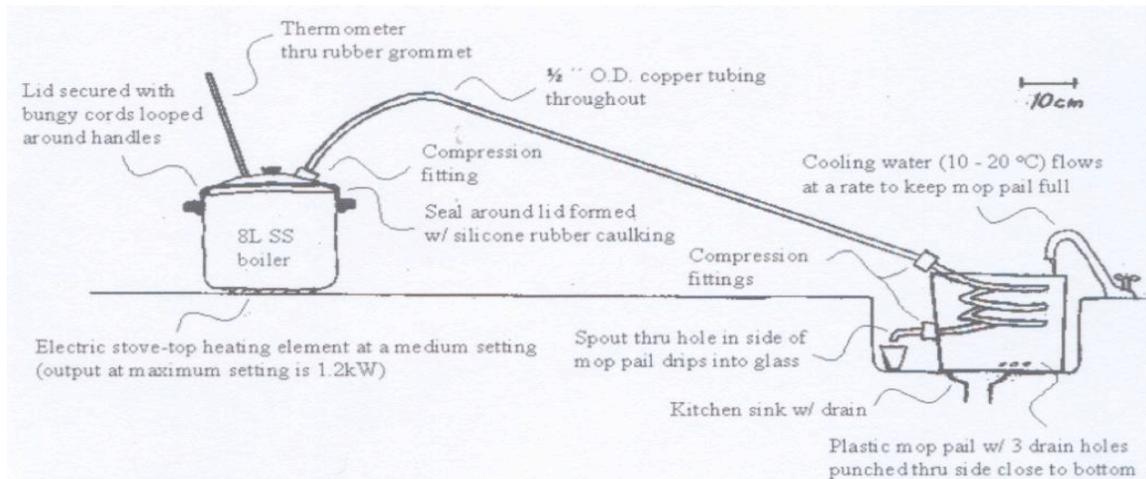
POT STILLS

By Ken

Disclaimer: The unlicensed distillation of alcohol is currently illegal (Government wants their taxes) and not worth risking when legal alcohol is available. In a long term EOTWAWKT situating, where current legalities no longer apply and small amounts of your food productions can be sacrificed, small amounts of alcohol can be produced for medical and solvent applications like herbal tinctures. Elaborate still are not necessary as every day kitchen equipment can be made in basic pot stills which will produce sufficient alcohol concentrations.

A Pot Still simply collects and condenses the alcohol vapors that come off the boiling mash, wine or beer. This will result in an alcohol at

about 40-60% purity (80 to 120 proof) good enough for most tincturing work. For drinking purposes, this type of distillation retains much of the flavor of the alcohol producing medium. If this distillate were put through the pot still again, it would increase in purity to around 70-85% purity, with a further loose of its flavor, but good enough for most remaining tinctures. Common boilers are modified pressure cookers, steam juice extractors and crackpots can be modified and sealed with flour paste. If designed correctly, it can be dismantled, cleaned up and returned to its intended service.



A liquid of 10% alcohol will boil at 199°F, so, for a simple still, a 10% alcohol wash will boil at (initially) 199°F and the vapor, once condensed, will contain about 55% alcohol by volume. Likewise, redistilling a 40% spirit should result in a brew around 80%.

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