

A Prepper's Story: Why Practice Makes Sense

2014-09-02 07:16:10 By Earl W. Anderson, Jr.



Those of you who are reading this have been spending time preparing for what many call “the end of the world as we know it” or for the biggest crisis that has ever occurred.

You have been gathering food, household supplies, garden supplies and weapons for protection and to sustain life. You will by now have decided whether you will hide in place or travel to a rural area to continue your lives in that “new” world.

We won't talk about the physical preparations for now, because there is another area which needs to be covered way before using for real any of your survival skills.

Let's get to the point: have you ever really practiced what you are preparing for?

Why Should You Practice?

My spouse and I jumped whole hog into living off-grid in 2009 in a very rural environment. US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) classifies where I live as frontier—less than 5 persons per square mile. Our nearest neighbors are over a mile away (straight line distance); they all have skill sets that we can barter for. The nearest towns of any size are from 22 to 50 miles away. Major shopping and medical facilities are 45 miles away.

{adinserte usdeception}We no longer have air conditioning and our summers get into the mid to high 90's. [In the winter we heat by wood](#) since the forced air heating system that came with the modular cabin we bought uses too much electricity. Not to mention it is unlikely that propane will be available when the economic system fails. If you like being around people this is a shock to the system.

The change was a shock to us since we had always lived in cities with all their conveniences. We have had to learn to truly depend upon each other and to help each other in our daily endeavors. Fortunately we already were best friends as well as being the love of each other's life.

I am a retired high school science teacher, and I have degrees in Microbiology, Chemistry and Project Engineering. But all my skills were academic not practical. When I needed something done on my home I hired it out. My wife was a home schooling mom. Her skills were academic also.

We have had to develop new skill sets to make our life in the boonies workable. In the four years here I have replaced the plumbing, in the middle of winter, from the well house (100 ft) to our cabin because those I paid did it wrong: they didn't bury it well below the frost line.

I have built a raised bed garden using tires. I have built a tire wall around the garden to keep critters out. I am enclosing one of our porches so it can be used in the winter. I will be enclosing the small porch along the south facing wall of our home also. It will help with [heating the house in the winter](#) and can be used to start plants for the garden.

I am developing a plan of action to heat water for the house without the use of electricity or propane. I am in the process of building several greenhouses using the "[Earthship™ model](#)" for the design so I can grow foods year round. I have a year round hobby greenhouse —22 ft. "Growing Dome™"— which I am going to change to an aquaculture system to raise fish.

All of these are things I really didn't think about until we had made the plunge to living off grid.

For instance I had a church friend up helping me frame a sliding glass door for the porch I am enclosing. He pointed out that I was hammering nails wrong. I had always hammered nails using my arm as the lever, but he said only use your wrist and keep the arm still.

I didn't know that, and from that point on no more bent nails. Nails will be in short supply so everyone you can save is a good thing.

Have You Ever Really Practiced What You Are Preparing For?

In the sports world "perfect practice makes perfect." In the weapons world "perfect practice makes perfect." Yet, I have seen little if any talk about practicing living in the "new" environment if what we are all preparing for happens and it will. I challenge you to practice, practice and practice what you have been preparing for.

Do not underestimate the psychological shock to you, your spouse and any children when the major changes happen. It is tough adapting to living without many or all of the conveniences that we take for granted in our culture.

It will be even tougher when you are uprooted from your cultural support systems, extended family and friends.

Whether you hide in place or go to the hidey hole your friends may not be your friends anymore especially if they think you are a bit nutty and they themselves haven't prepared. Your children will suddenly lose their friends and if they are not best friends to each other this will cause a fair amount of strife.

Spend some long weekends and vacations practicing what you are preparing for. That would mean no contact with "friends and family", no televisions, no video games, no telephones, no air conditioner and any other devices that are energy dependent and can't be energized by what you have planned to have.

You need to prepare yourselves mentally and spiritually for the change. Learn how to deal with the sudden change in family dynamics that will hit you and yours before it becomes a life and death situation.

This is the time to evaluate what skill sets you have and what you truly need to still learn.

I have written this to challenge you to practice how to live in the "new" environment and to possibly think about skills you or your family members don't have that should be developed.

So I leave you with this "Perfect Practice Makes Perfect".



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