

10 Vital Questions to Ask Yourself When SHTF

Our motto is "Hope for the best and prepare for the worst!" even though hoping has little to do with the outcome of a disaster.

An SHTF event can hit unexpectedly and the manner in which you act, but most importantly, the timing will be the main key to determine your odds for surviving.

The following article can be classified under the "common sense" category although, many of us know too well, common sense has become a rarity nowadays. Before starting to evacuate or hunkering down, it is mandatory to stop and think, and to act with a clear mind.

There may be little to no warning before a crisis arises, and people usually start panicking when time is running out. The event is the main thing that will dictate your course of action and response time, regardless if you are a prepper or not. However, to make sure you are doing the right thing, you need to develop a crisis mindset.

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This type of mindset is common among first responders and other agencies dealing with the natural or social element. They develop it

through regular training on the field, and the lessons they learn following a

certain real-life event will often become a new chapter in

their training
manuals.

For the common Joe, it would be ideal to be aware of the signs of an impending emergency situation. However, due to our way of life and the fast-moving times, developing a good sense of awareness is almost impossible. Even so, if you will ever have to face a disaster, you should remain calm and figure the answer for the following questions before making the next move.

Ask yourself this when SHTF:

1. Am I Ok? Are those that count OK as well?

During a stressful event, you could be hurt without even comprehending it. Due to the adrenaline rushing through their veins, most people don't realize they are hurt only after the event has come to a stop.

This is a common occurrence during terrorist attacks, and panic, combined with an adrenaline rush, makes people unaware of what happens to them. Their well-being may be at risk, but they won't check themselves due to other "priorities."

Regardless of the event currently unfolding, you should first make sure you are ok. Once you have established that you were not exposed to physical harm, you can check those close to you.

Under certain circumstances, you may not provide medical assistance to everyone surrounding you. If you happen to find yourself in such a scenario, your loved ones should become your main and only priority.

If you are not together, the next step would be to get in touch with them by telephone or other means of communication or by trying to reach their location. This last action depends mostly on your bug out plan and how trained everyone (meeting points, alternative route, etc.).

2. What happened? (not why)

During a crisis, one should gather as much Intel as possible in the shortest amount of time. However, most people will just waste time figuring out unnecessary details. They may do so involuntarily, depending on how their brain is wired.

All you need to know when a crisis occurs is what happened, where it happened and where it is heading. Any other detail can wait for when you reach safety. An old saying goes, "curiosity killed the cat," but unfortunately, humans are curious creatures as well. Whatever you do, avoid risking your integrity when seeking out information.

A quick example of situational awareness, in this case, could be the chaos created inside a building by a shooter. In such a case, you can hear gunshots and that's pretty much all the information you need to work with. You need to know where the shooter is located if there's one or multiple shooters (depending on the locations of the gunshots) and where the

shooter is heading. Details like who the shooter is, what his motives are if some will step in to stop him and other such things are not needed at that time.



3. Is it safe to be here?

Once a crisis has occurred, you need to establish if your home's integrity was affected or if it will be affected in the future. If you notice cracks in the walls or if there are large holes in your roof, you should leave your home. Since you are not a construction engineer, you cannot establish how long the home will stand. It may very well crash down on you,

tapping you for God knows how long. Act based on the information you have and don't get trapped.

If a hurricane will hit your region, logic dictates that you should seek safety in an underground shelter. If waters are rising and you are caught up in flood, heading up may be the only way of escaping. However, don't get trapped in the attic and bring some tools to make your way out. Many people die during flooding because they cannot escape from their attic once they end up there. Most emergencies will dictate a specific course of action and you should evacuate if you consider it's not safe to stay put.

4. If I need to get out of dodge, how far and how fast do I need to go?

This question is strictly related to your bug out plan, and if you don't have one, you might as well hope things will go your way. If evacuation is foreseen in your future, a bugging out plan becomes mandatory. You should have a destination point with three or four alternative routes to reach it, some stopping points which can serve as meeting or observation points, and last, some caching or re-provisioning points.

The timing of your bug out plan should be calculated based on the required travel distance, and this means you should make calculations for traveling by both vehicles and on foot. Also, you should acknowledge that every stopping point will affect the overall timing and the

time of travel

(nighttime or daytime) will also influence the speed of travel. Make assumptions

and plan some buffering time. However, all this means squat if you don't

practice based on your bug out plan. You need to test it a few times to make

sure it is feasible for everyone.

5. Based on what caused the event, where should we go?

Although this may seem like a contradiction, if you have a bug out plan, things may not work the way initially planned.

Certain events

will force you to rethink your actions. Think about it this way, if you are

evacuating because a wildfire is threatening your community and once you're on

the road, you find out the fire is also heading towards your bug out location,

then going there should be out of the question. There are certain events that

could block your escape routes and in some cases, hunkering down may be your

only chance of surviving said events.

If your family is out of town or anywhere else that would require a long detour, your destination point may change more than once. Having a bug out plan is, without a doubt the right way to go, but having a backup plan to your bug out plan should also be considered.

The 10 "C"s of Bushcraft



Cutting tool



Combustion



Cover



Container



Cordage



Candle



Cotton



Compass



Cargo Tape



Canvas Needle

6. What is readily available to take with me?

The importance of a bug out bag is not up for debate, and everyone knows that a survival bag (may it be a go home bag or other customizations) will increase one's survival chances considerably. If you are not preparedness minded, you can still take supplies with you that will keep you alive for some times. The type of supplies you can carry such as food and water, the tent you've used during your camping trips, money, etc.

Take things that are in reach and the ones you can carry, regardless if you go by foot or vehicle. If time allows it, I recommend using your mobile phone and taking a few pictures of your home, both inside and outside, before you go. This will allow you to notice if something is missing and will greatly help with the insurance.

7. Is the current season an obstacle for my survival plan?

Going into the woods during the cold season is a totally different survival game compared to the warmer months. Most people organize their bug-out bags, and they forget to upgrade (or update them, if you will) for the particular season. This is what I call seasonal prepping when it comes to your bug out bag and you need to take it into account. A crisis might dictate your next moves, but the time of the year may affect your chances of

survival worse than the crisis itself. Make sure you are equipped to face the seasonal weather.

Not to mention that driving is also different on snow, and it will affect the speed and the overall timeline of your bug out plan. Even if you travel by foot, cooking a meal and building a proper shelter is much more difficult in wintertime compared to summertime. These are things you should consider before stepping out the door.

8. Am I alone in this?

The nature of the crisis can drastically affect the social element, and as we all know, this is the most unpredictable and random factor when it comes to emergency preparedness. If you are not the only one affected by the event, and others around you are asking for help, you have basically two choices: leave them be or give a helping hand. Your decision may be influenced by many factors and it's hard to predict all of them, what kind of training you have, and overall, what type of person you are.

Even so, assuming you have time to help others, the first thing you need to do is assess their condition. Deciding whether they should be moved or not is an important step, and it requires first aid knowledge. Triage may also come into play and telling someone their loved ones can't be saved is not easy.

Deciding to make an improvised survival group is a complex

task and requires certain actions dictated by the event itself. Every group, regardless of its nature, requires a leader. Without leadership, there's only chaos.

Keep in mind that improvising a survival group will take a toll on your time and resources. In a survival situation, the main thing you need to keep in mind is that being selfish or altruist is always up for debate. Not everyone is a hero, and nobody can judge you if you do what you think it's right for yourself.

FOODS WITH A LONG SHELF LIFE

- DRIED BEANS
- RICE (IN MYLAR BAGS WITH O2 ABSORBERS)
- PASTA (IN MYLAR BAGS WITH O2 ABSORBERS)
- HONEY
- DEMMICAN
- HARDTACK
- PEANUT BUTTER
- SALT
- POWDERED MILK
- COCOA POWDER
- SUGAR
- PINK SALMON
- GRANOLA BARS
- PROTEIN BARS
- POPCORN
- BAKING SODA
- HARD CANDY
- VITAMINS
- BOULLION CUBES
- COFFEE
- TEA
- POWDERED JUICE
- JAMS
- JELLIES

9. Is it safe to get out or go back?

This follows under the “curiosity killed the cat” classification, and regardless if you hunkered down or bugged out, at some point, you will have to go back or emerge from your shelter. The hardest part here is to decide when it is

best to do so and everyone has different timing. The timing is calculated based on the type of information you manage to gather. You should listen to the world outside of the safety of your bugout or bug in locations by using any means you have (Radio, Internet, TV, etc.).

If you are bugging in, the safest approach would be to keep your head down and maintain a low profile. Observe the outside world without putting yourself at risk. The number of resources you have should give you a general idea when it is time to return to normality. Those who are bugging in may be forced to get out sooner if they don't manage their supplies properly.

10. What are my next moves now that it has passed?

The nature of the event dictates your next steps. However, the safest course of action would be to assume that the event is a long-term one and may produce consequences that can last. If you are well prepared, you can last for months and you won't have to worry.

However, at some point, you will need to figure out what you should focus on. Rebuilding is the next step for most Americans when dealing with a natural disaster. If the event has long-lasting and large scale consequences, one might want to become self-sufficient (which is impossible without planning for it in advance).

The point here is that even though it may be impossible to predict the aftermath of an emergency situation, you should not wait on others to help you. There are still people in Puerto Rico without power, and there's

no one who can tell how long it will last. Not to mention that the recent discovery of the unused hurricane aid is something that should make you think.

When reading about it, my blood started boiling, and regardless of the anger I felt, for me, it was once again confirmed on how little the Government cares for its people.

The type of person you become and how you manage to mitigate the risks of an SHTF event is two things conditioned by your prepping plans.

Concluding

In the current state of the world, there are many concerns, but the most frightening part is that people are starting to see this as normality. If you feel that you are at risk and that something may one day alter your way of life, it's better to develop a certain mindset that can keep you ahead of the masses.

You can't afford to have any "unknowns" in your survival plan. Take some time and figure out if you have the right answers for the above-mentioned questions and I guarantee that you will discover new things that need your attention and involvement. Stay safe and be prepared!

**HOW TO BUILD:
THE ULTIMATE
SURVIVAL STOCKPILE**

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