

Taking Care of Aging Parents in a Survival Situation

For most of us, survival is a family affair. What I mean by that is that we don't think of surviving alone; but rather surviving as a family. I suppose there are some men out there who will abandon their families in a serious survival situation, thinking that they will be better able to survive alone. But then, if they would do that, I wouldn't call them men. When I think of survival, I'm planning on my whole family, even those who aren't living at home anymore.

It's natural to look down the family tree, seeing who we need to take care of. After all, we've been taking care of our kids all their lives. But we need to take a look up the family tree as well, looking to see who is up there, still alive, who we might need to care for as well.

If we look back in history, we find that people didn't send their parents to live in nursing homes when they got older. Rather, parents who had become widows or who were unable to care for themselves, would be brought into their children's homes to live. That ensured that they were cared for, as well as providing an extra set of hands to help around the home. Grandma could pass a lot of lessons on to her grandkids, while sitting there shelling peas.

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Okay, so maybe we don't have our aging parents living in our homes now. Life is easier than it was back then, and many of them can do just fine on their own. But that doesn't mean that they could continue to do just fine in the wake of a major

disaster or TEOTWAWKI event.

Your Plans Are Going to Have to Change

If you are planning on bugging out, but have elderly parents to take care of, you might need to rethink your plans. Just moving around can be challenging for the elderly, let alone trying to hike 10 or 15 miles a day on a bug out. Bringing your parents into the mix may decide the bug out or bug in question for you. This isn't to say that you plan on dying in place if your home is under 10 feet of water. Rather, it means that you don't bug out unless you really have to.

The other part of this question is just how you will bug out, with those elderly family members, if you have to. Chances are pretty good that you're going to have to stick to using a vehicle, rather than doing anything on foot. So, you'll need to work on how to make sure that you can get all the way to your survival retreat, such as stockpiling sufficient gasoline to get there, and rotating that gasoline so that you always have fresh gasoline on hand.

Make Your Parents Part of Your Planning

We need to make our parents part of our plan and part of our planning, especially parents who have reached the age where they can't do everything for themselves anymore. That may be challenging. A lot of elderly people don't want to give up their freedom and independence. At the same time, they don't want to be a burden on their children. You may have to get a bit pushy with them; but if you do, keep your patience and explain the situation calmly. Getting angry with them, because they don't want to cooperate with your plans, isn't going to get you anywhere.

Obviously, the first part of this is letting them know that you are preparing for potential disasters, assuming they don't already know that. You can then ask them if they have any plans for that eventuality. Unless they are the preppers who got you started in prepping, they probably don't. So, that's your bridge to bring them into your plans.

Let me tell you right now, this is going to be challenging. Your parents may not like going along with the idea that you're in charge. But unless they know a lot more about survival than you do, there's no sense in allowing them to take control.

Even if your parents don't know anything about survival, they probably do know a lot of things which will be useful to your family in a survival situation. As life has changed, there are skills which have been left behind, skills that our parents probably know. Their knowledge can save you from having to learn those things, giving them a natural place in your family survival plan.

Once they buy into your survival plan, you can expand on that. In the same way that you and other members of your teams are learning skills for survival, get your parents learning skills... or at least honing skills they have, turning something that is a casual skill into an asset for your team.

Providing for Aging Parents – Medicines

Aging parents have needs which your nuclear family probably won't have. As we age, our bodies begin to break down, requiring that we take lots of trips to the doctor's office and spend a sizeable portion of our income on medicines (even with insurance). Everything that is going wrong with your parents' bodies costs money; and there might be a lot more things that are going wrong than you realize.

However, the big problem of those medicines isn't going to be their cost, it's going to be getting them. Pharmacies only carry a few days' worth of medicines on hand, at the most. With so many people needing those medicines, there's a good chance that they'll run out almost immediately. If they don't, then vandals will break in and steal whatever they can.

This puts us in a serious situation. Without those medicines, we're faced with the likelihood of losing our parents to disease. Few people have more than 30-days' worth of medicines on-hand; and the type of disasters we're talking about aren't going to be over in that amount of time.

There are a couple of things we can do about this though. First of all, we can attempt to stockpile some medicines for them. While medicines all have expiration dates on them, those dates really don't mean much of anything in most cases. Other than things which really do expire, like insulin, medicines will last for several years beyond whatever date is put on them.

Besides your local doctor and pharmacy, there are a few other sources available to us for building this stockpile. A couple of online companies have started offering emergency packs of medicines. That's a good starting place. You might also check for online pharmacies, perhaps in Canada, who can provide some of those medications without a prescription.

My favorite source for prescription medicines is Mexico. The Mexican pharmaceutical industry is wonderful; providing quality products at a much more reasonable price than you can get them here at home. Every year, tens of thousands of retired "Winter Texans" go to Mexico to purchase their pharmaceuticals for the next year.

One other source of supply to consider is herbal medicines. Our modern pharmaceutical industry is actually an offshoot of herbal medicine, with many of the chemicals which are used as

medicines actually coming from nature. While it might not be as exact a science as what our doctors learned in school, herbal medicine still works in many applications and you can grow it yourself.

Providing for Aging Parents – Other Ways

Mobility around the home or homestead may be an issue for elderly parents as well. Finishing the attic of your two-story home, so that you can have a bedroom up there for granny may not be a good idea. Going up and down those two flights of stairs might end up being a real issue for them. Better to move the kids up there and allow granny and gramps to sleep in a bedroom on the ground floor, if you can.

This mobility issue is going to affect a lot of other things too. They will most likely want to do their part, helping out. Unfortunately, one of the problems the elderly have is not wanting to recognize their own body's limitations. There's a risk that they might try to do something that is beyond their body's limitations, hurting themselves. That's more dangerous than them just sitting around, not contributing. You may need to find useful tasks that they can do, which will not demean them, while at the same time, not putting them at risk of injury.

Another consideration is diet. Food is always an issue in any survival situation; but it's an issue in more ways than one for the elderly. Many have dietary limitations, such as diabetics who aren't supposed to eat sugar and should only have limited amounts of carbohydrates. Since carbs make up the majority of most prepping stockpile, that could end up being a problem.

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One thing that will help with the carb issue is activity. Muscles burn sugar to work, so if your diabetic parents are busy working in the garden or doing other light physical tasks, they will be burning more sugar than if they are just sitting in the kitchen. That will allow them to eat more foods that are high in carbs, without it having a negative impact on their blood sugar level.

As for the sugar itself, there are a number of different sugar substitutes on the market, including some newer ones which are much better tasting and healthier than the old ones. My personal favorite of these is erythritol, which is a perfect one for one substitute for sugar in baking and general use.