Facing Thanos: How To Survive The Worst-Case Scenario

If you don't recognize the reference to Thanos in this article's title, you're obviously not a Marvel fan.

But for the rest of us, Thanos has come to symbolize the worst bad guy that ever existed. I mean, a destructive force that can do away with half of every living thing, across the universe, is a pretty bad disaster, any way you look at it. So, if we can learn survival from watching zombie movies, I think we can extrapolate some good survival points from the MCU.[1]

Of course, the MCU is filled with superheroes, all of whom have powers that the rest of us can only dream about. But there are also a few more normal people, whose only superpower is that they're really good at one thing. Both Black Widow (Natalie) and Hawkeye (Cliff) fall into this category, pulling off some remarkable things as founding members of the Avengers, even while being normal people.

Granted, it's Hollywood, so I don't personally know anyone with Natalie's fighting ability or Cliff's ability with a bow. But I did serve with one of the top 100 Army shooters, a man who was so good that he got to wear a very special badge, which said "President's 100." Only 100 people were allowed that one. He counted being ¼" off the X in the bullseye as a miss. So, I suppose he would have fit in as a member of the

Avengers too.

Sadly, we don't have an Avengers team to rescue us if the Chitauri army shows up. But fortunately, there isn't a Thanos to defeat. At least, as far as we know so far there isn't a Thanos. But then, NASA has released some photos showing a huge wheel space ship that entered our solar system. Coincidence?

Without the Avengers, it's up to us to deal with Thanos if he shows up. But then, it's up to us to deal with any other such problem which might arise. While we would have to depend on the government for taking care of a few things, such a world-killing asteroid (assuming NASA's plans for that would actually work), there's nothing to show that the government is going to be able to do much else to help us in any real disaster.

So, what can we learn from the MCU?

The Snap

There wasn't a thing that the Avengers could do to stop Thanos from making that famous snap of his fingers and disappearing half of all life in the universe. We know that because they tried; tried and failed that is. Had they succeeded, then Endgame would never have existed.

Likewise, there are things that can happen, which we have no

control over. Pretty much any and every disaster I can think of falls into that category. While there might be things that we can do which will mitigate the damage of a disaster, even those are limited.

Our focus, like that of the Avengers, has to be what are we going to do after the snap. Isn't that what prepping is all about? Since we know we can't stop the disaster from coming, we need to be focused on how to make sure that we are not only going to survive the disaster but the aftermath as well.

Keep a Positive Mental Attitude

Endgame opens up with the surviving avengers scattered and demoralized. Nobody is trying to do anything about anything, other than just survive. Even though there are still half the people living on the Earth, we see things deteriorating, rather than people trying to make the most of it. I get that there's a grief process, but they should have been beyond that.

If we can't maintain a positive mental attitude, we're not going to survive much of anything. If a disaster doesn't kill us, we'll allow the aftermath to do so. We won't survive, because we'll have lost the will to live.

Just ask any oncologist how important the will to live is. Cancer patients have come back from the brink of death, just because they decided to. While the doctors did their part, ultimately it was that individual's fighting spirit that won the day. We need that same will to live or we'll just lie down and die.

Do What You've Got to Do

Captain America was against the Sokovia Accords from the very beginning, rightly believing that they would limit the Avengers' ability to deal with situations as they came up. If the Avengers had to ask permission to respond to every situation, many more people would die before a decision could be made and they were released to respond. Apparently, the accords were more about preventing the cost of destruction, than they were about saving lives.

There's a great line in Endgame where Captain America tells Secretary of State Ross, "*I'm not looking for forgiveness, and I'm way past asking permission.*" Cap understood the need to take action and was willing to live with whatever consequences might go along with whatever he chose to do.

That's actually a wonderful attitude to have, especially as a prepper. Will we always be right? No. But at least we'll have done something, rather than just being a victim of circumstances. By doing something, anything, we're going to make our chances of survival greater. Yes, we might make a fatal mistake, but the chance is, the worst we'll do is make things harder for ourselves in the future. On the other hand, we might just do the one thing that will keep us all alive.

Get Your Team Together

Teamwork is critical to success. That's much more than having

a bunch of people and calling them a team. Throughout the majority of the first Avengers film, they weren't a team, they were, to put it in Bruce Banner's words, "What are we, a team? No, no, no. We're a chemical mixture that makes chaos. We're a time bomb."

It wasn't' until the big fight scene at the end of the movie when Banner shows up in New York City and they're standing back to back in a circle, that they turn into a team. At that point, they were emotionally connected to each other and had each other's backs. They were in it together and would live or die together.

But the team always struggled with cohesion, as shown in the Civil War. As we reach the end of the 23 movie saga, the team has a need to confront Thanos but doesn't' do it together. First, some of the team members, assisted by the Guardians of the Galaxy, confront Thanos on Titan, losing. Then the rest of the team confronts him on Earth, also losing. Considering that they all fought him together in Endgame, barely squeaking by to gain the victory, they shouldn't have even tried those earlier attacks.

This error came from not understanding what they were facing or how strong Thanos was. Like that, we don't understand what we will be facing or how strong it is. All we can know for sure is that it's bigger and stronger than we are. So we'd better make sure we've got our team together, physically, emotionally, and working in concert, if we want to win.

That Person Who Rubs You the Wrong Way, May be Just the One You Need

The Guardians of the Galaxy are the unlikeliest group of misfits you'll ever encounter. For that matter, the same can be said about the Avengers. While each is great in their own right, they sure don't fit together and always fought for unit cohesiveness.

When you look at the individual Avengers, there's no way that anyone could say they really fit together. But at the same time, they desperately need each other and each other's abilities, in order to overcome the various villains they face.

Likewise, the person who we might think of like the last person on Earth that we'd want to have on our team might very well be the one person we need the most. Their skills and their personality might be just the thing to complement our own, making us more likely to survive, when we work together.

While it's important to get along with the people on your survival team, whether or not you get along shouldn't be how you select team members. Rather, you should all learn how to get along with each other, with each team member making the necessary concessions and adjustments to fit into the team. Discord comes when it's about "me," rather than being about "us."

You Don’t Need Superpowers

While it’s fun to dream about having superpowers and forming the first real Avengers team, that’s fantasy, not reality. But as I mentioned earlier, that didn’t stop Natalie or Cliff from being part of the original Avengers team. So how did they get there? You could say that their superpower was their training, making them into superheroes, even without a superpower.

If you and I want to be the superheroes of our family or our survival team than we need to train ourselves to the same level that was displayed by these two characters. I’m not talking about taking lessons to become trained assassins, but training ourselves to be survival superheroes; those who know what to do and when to do it, for any survival situation.

Use Whatever You Have to the Maximum

It’s easy to make the claim that we don’t have what we need; people do that all the time. There’s a name for those people; it’s called failures. The world is full of them and they’re going to be the ones in the worst situation when things go bad.

If there was ever a superhero in the MCU who know how to make the most out of what they had, it was Tony Stark. Granted, he was a technological genius billionaire, so he had a bit of an advantage over you and me. But it was his genius, not being a billionaire, that created the first Mach-1 iron man suit. He took what he had and did the most he could with it, turning it into what he needed.

Okay, maybe you and I can’t do that; but there are ways we can maximize whatever we have. The question is, are we doing that? I don’t care if we’re talking about an old beater car or an empty warehouse, there’s got to be a way that we can turn it

for our good and the good of our families. We just have to figure out how to get the most out of it, utilizing it to its maximum potential.

Leverage Technology

Technology is amazing. If you think about it, it's only technology and his grasp of it, that makes Tony Stark a superhero at all. His ability to develop new tech-powered his own accent as a superhero, as well as much of S.H.I.E.L.D.

Okay, so we don't have the technology that Stark did, nor do we have his brains. But we have more technology available to us today than mankind has had at any time in history. If we're not using it to help ensure our survival, what good is it?

I'm not just talking about our survival today, either. If you really want to be a superhero, figure out how to use all those electronics, sitting in metal building warehouses, after an EMP. The person who can do that, bringing power and technology to the people, will be seen as a superhero to their community.

Decide what You Have to Protect and Protect it

One of the many interesting moments in the final Infinity War

fight, was when T’Challa ordered the force shield to be dropped around part of the perimeter, allowing Thanos’ army to get through. As that shield was their protection, it almost seems like a foolish thing to do. Yet, it was done with purpose, so that his sister could finish operating on Vision and removing the Mind Stone from his head.

That didn’t end up working out the way they wanted, but the decision was sound nevertheless. T’Challa, on the recommendations of other members of the Avengers team, dropped the shield to keep Thanos’ army from surrounding them and getting to his sister and the important work she was doing at the time. They had decided that the one thing they had to protect was Shuri and Vision and they were willing to sacrifice everything else to do so.

There’s no way I can tell what the most important thing for you to protect is and that may change with time. I just know that there are key things we all must protect if we are going to survive. When the time comes, it’s important to recognize what they are, so that we can protect them.

Things Aren’t Always the Way they Seem

Throughout the Infinity Saga, there were countless things that weren’t as they seemed. Part of the genius of the series was the ability of the Russo brothers to hide “Easter eggs” in the various films, providing hints of what was to come. But even then, it rarely happened the way we expected it to.

Real-life has a way of throwing curveballs at us, just like it did the Avengers. 2020 has proven that beyond the shadow of a doubt. The Coronavirus pandemic has been far from what any of us imagined it would be, and it’s still not over. We’ve been hit by a constant string of disasters in the midst of that pandemic; something else we weren’t expecting. At this time,

none of us knows what to expect next; we just know there's something else coming.

If there's one thing any of us can be sure of, it's that any upcoming disaster isn't going to look like we expect. Not only that but what we're looking at may very well just be camouflage for what's coming up after it. Perhaps one of the most dangerous things we can do is to see things as they are and assume we know what they mean.

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Resources

[1] That's "Marvel Cinematic Universe" for anyone who doesn't know.