

Living in a World of Conspiracy Theories

Ever since my teen years, I remember hearing conspiracy theories and other dire predictions. Whether they were about the second coming of Christ, the Illuminati taking over the world, or all our computers ceasing to work, there was always something that people said was going to bring drastic changes to our world.

I've known people who are quick to believe the latest predicted disaster or story about how "they" are out to get us, and I've known others who don't even believe the weather report. Both have been wrong more than right, but in both cases, there have been instances where they have been right. Surprisingly, there are a number of things that were once called conspiracy theories, which ultimately turned out to be true.

Of course, that doesn't mean we should believe all conspiracy theories or even pay much attention to them. There is enough real potential for disaster in our lives without going around looking for people who are trying to take over the world.

Are there people trying to take over the world? I'm sure there are. Vladimir Putin isn't just interested in taking over Ukraine, and the Chinese government has made it clear that they would like to expand their territory. The United Nations seems to be convinced that they're the one-world government and that all other governments should be subordinate to them. Besides those bad actors, there are non-government groups who have their own agendas, like the Bilderberg group, who seem to be the major force behind the whole one-world government movement.

But while these sorts of bad actors are real, and they are

each working to bring about their own version of utopia, they really don't affect our day-to-day lives. It's also unlikely that their actions will affect our futures. Even if they do get their way and get all the power they want, there's really not much we can do about it.

So, the real question is: what should we do?

Be Aware

It makes sense to hear what the conspiracy theorists are saying, just as long as we don't spend too much time on it. Their theories are often built on something going on in the world around us that we should be aware of.

The trick is finding that kernel of truth buried under their theory.

One of the realities we must face is that the world we live in is a dangerous place. Part of that danger comes from nature herself, but the biggest dangers are the two-legged predators that walk around amongst us. Unfortunately, those predators don't have horns and tails to let us know that they're bad. Some might look quite good. What they do makes them bad or at least dangerous.

Are there groups out there who are bent on taking over the world? I'm sure there are. As I mentioned in the introduction to this article, there are both nation-states and groups of people who have their own ideas about how to rule the world. But the reality is, those groups tend to hold each other in check, as none of them want to take a back seat to another group. As long as that's the case, the worse that can happen is them fighting amongst themselves, or maybe that would be the best.

It's always a good idea to look at these groups' websites, reading such things as their statement of purpose and their core beliefs. That will allow you to use that information as a

filter for the things they say, looking for the real meaning behind them.

But of greater danger are those in politics who want to change our system of government, whether that means turning us into a socialist county or something else. But there's little that we can do about that either, other than to make sure that we vote for politicians who truly support the Constitution in its entirety.

Tying the two together, we need to understand where each conspiracy theory comes from on the political scale. Some conspiracy theories are created more to cause damage to a political opponent or the opposing party than for any other reason. The Trump – Russia collusion story was a perfect example of this. Tens of millions of dollars were spent investigating Trump and his team, all in an attempt to pin crimes on him that he didn't do.

If some sources can be believed, the whole reason for that conspiracy theory was to hide Hillary's involvement with Russia, especially while she was the Secretary of State. Since that story has neither been fully investigated nor substantiated, I can't say how true it is; but it shows us something about how politicians think.

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Be Educated

The more we know, the better we are able to see through conspiracy theories, distinguishing the difference between fact and fiction. People who create and spread those theories depend on others' ignorance to be able to sell their theories.

A perfect example of this was when smart meters first came out. There were conspiracy theories about those, especially about how the power companies could spy upon us through them. One of the less-believable theories attempted to paint those meters as being dangerous to our health because of the radio frequency radiating from them.

The interesting thing about this theory was that it started talking about radio frequencies and used information about the danger of atomic radiation to show how dangerous they were. In other words, whoever came up with that one was confusing the two, either through their own ignorance or intentionally. In either case, I was able to dissuade some people who had bought into this theory by explaining the difference between radio wave radiation and atomic radiation.

Going back to the earlier example of the Trump collusion conspiracy, anyone who has kept track of Russian and, before them, Soviet activity knows that they have been messing with our elections since the 1960s. They don't try and get one party or the other elected; but rather just try to sew distrust in the system and widen the political divide in our country.

By the way, Russian propaganda, along with others, is still working to push division between the two political parties and those who subscribe to their platforms. Their main tool for doing this is trolling social media, starting arguments, and spreading lies. Plenty of people pick up on those lies as truth and spread them around, to the point where people start believing them just because they see them all around.

Scare Tactics

Much of the negative news we see, whether in the form of conspiracy theories or from news sources, is nothing more than scare tactics. Donald Trump called it out good when he started referring to the reports of the mainstream media as "fake

news.” The truth is, they were taking everything he did and putting a negative spin on it, trying to make it look like he was destroying the country. That was supposed to help the Democrats win the next election and did.

Don’t think that the political left is the only one who does that, though. While they might be the experts in it, there are plenty of people on the political right who are perfectly willing to use scare tactics of their own. Whether that is to garner political points or to sell products, it happens.

Fear is a great motivator, and there are many people out there who have learned how to use it. But there’s nothing that says we have to fall for it.

Knowledge, the same knowledge that I was just talking about, is the greatest counter to fear. While there will always be things to fear, we don’t have to fear everything that comes along. We must learn to discern which are real and which aren’t.

Y2K was a great example of fear tactics. The whole issue back then was that the world’s computers didn’t have the capability to read dates beyond 12/31/1999. Once the calendar rolled over to 2000, everything would supposedly shut down.

I’m not a computer programmer, but I’ve used them since Radio Shack came out with the TRS-80, model 1. So, I know a thing or two about working with computers. Based on that, I just reset the date on my own computer to 10 years before. That way, if Y2K was real (and I really didn’t believe it was), it wouldn’t affect my computer. Now, if I could think of that, why couldn’t all the IT guys out there do it?

Don’t Panic

We should never allow a conspiracy theory to cause us to worry or make any changes in our preps. The reality is that these theories have existed all through history. Some of them have

turned out to be true, but most have been false, just like today. Even the ones that are true are likely to be far beyond our reach and might end up being far enough away that they can't really reach us all that well.

We don't know the motivation of the people who create those theories; all we know is what we hear. And what we hear might not even be what they started out as. Just like the game of the telephone, where people try and pass a message around a circle, the messages that come through social media and other forms of communication can come through garbled and confused.

Panic will prevent us from making rational decisions, and if any of those theories are true, we're going to need to be able to make those rational decisions. We must learn how to become consumers of information without allowing the information to consume us. When suspect information starts controlling what we do, then the conspiracy theory might as well be real.

Keep in mind that there's little that we can do in most of these cases. If one political party or another is planning something nefarious, we can't stop them. All we can do is figure out how to roll with the punches, and to do that effectively, we need to be prepared.

Keep Prepping

This brings us to my final point; we need to keep prepping. Regardless of what anyone or any group does, it is our preps that are going to get us through. The more independent we are, the less impact they can have on us.

In reality, any conspiracy theory that turns out to be true is no different than the other disasters we prepare for. If anything, it's closest to a financial collapse. But considering that we've already lived through a pandemic and the shortages we experienced in the supermarkets, there's little anyone can do, and we won't be ready to survive.

The other thing that's useful to do is to take those conspiracy theories and use them as a way of testing out your preps. Do a mental exercise, assuming that the conspiracy theory is true, and try to figure out what impact that will have on your life and your community. Then ask yourself if there's anything you should be doing different so that you're ready to face that particular problem.

Many preppers who believe in the Second Amendment were faced with this during the Obama presidency and are now looking at it again during Biden's. Both were severely anti-gun, threatening our Second Amendment rights. As a result, firearm and ammunition sales have gone up.

The big difference in this particular example made in the prepping community is that many of us have more ammunition in our stockpiles than we did before. We've seen the risks of the anti-gun rhetoric and invested in buying ammunition. It has also resulted in an increased number of preppers building 80% lowers so that they could have firearms that weren't serial numbered or registered in any database, including the manufacturers. In other words, we've adapted to the threatening rhetoric as if it were a conspiracy theory and taken the necessary steps to ensure that we were prepared.



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