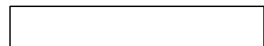




[CLICK HERE FOR ADVERTISEMENT RATES](#)



How To Survive Anything In 3 Easy Steps

0 0 0 0

[April 7, 2015](#)

[Fight-or-Flight-Response](#)



This article was written by Daisy Luther and originally published at [The Organic Prepper](#)

You can have enough food to ride out 15 years of Armageddon. You can have a fully stocked retreat or a bunker. You can have so much ammo stashed that your floorboards are groaning. You may have followed your [favorite preparedness book's](#) guidelines to the letter, and thus have all of the physical aspects of survival in place.

But regardless of this, you may not be fully prepared.

Because surprisingly enough, none of these is an indication of “the prepper mindset.” Those items are a great start, but until your head is fully involved in the game, you’re not actually prepared.

To me, the pinnacle of preparedness is a way of thinking about pretty much everything you encounter. It’s a unique way of looking at a situation, assessing the options, and acting that defines the prepper mindset. Think about any stressful situation that has ever happened to you. Once you accepted the fact that it had happened you were able to set a course of action. Once you had definitive steps to take, you probably felt much calmer. You took control of the things you could, and you executed your plan. Only by taking that first step – accepting that this mishap had indeed occurred – could you take the next two.

There are 3 steps to handling any crisis with aplomb. While the execution isn’t always easy, making these steps second nature will greatly increase your chances of survival, no matter what kind of disaster you are facing.

1.) Accept.

No matter what situation comes your way, the first step is to accept that whatever the event is, it really happened. This is tougher than it sounds, because our minds are programmed to protect us from emotional trauma. Cognitive dissonance means that when a reality is uncomfortable or doesn’t jive with a person’s beliefs, that person may opt to believe in something false just to assuage his desire for comfort.

[Psychologist Leon Festinger, who identified the principal of cognitive dissonance, suggested](#) “that a motivational state of inner tension is triggered by logically inconsistent ways of thinking.”

If you’re wondering exactly how powerful cognitive dissonance can be, check out Amanda Ripley’s book, [The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes – and Why](#). Ripley, a journalist, covered many disasters of immense scale: plane crashes, natural disasters, and 9/11. She became curious about the difference between those who survived, and those who did not, wondering if it was dumb luck or if there was some other quality that made survival more likely. She interviewed hundreds of survivors and got her answer. The ability to *immediately* accept what was occurring was the quality most of the survivors possessed.

The story that stands out in my mind the most was the one about the people in the World Trade Center on September 11. They described the last time they saw some of their coworkers. There were many people who simply could not accept the fact that a plane had crashed into the building and that they must immediately evacuate. They gathered their belongs, tidied their desks, finished reports. They didn’t feel the same sense of urgency that those who survived did, because the situation was so horrible that they just couldn’t accept it. Their inability to accept the scope of the danger caused many of them to perish in a tragic incident that other people, who acted immediately, survived.

When disaster strikes, you can’t spend 5 minutes thinking, “This can’t actually be happening.” It *is* happening, and moving past accepting that propels you through the first step into the second one.

2.) Plan.

Once you’ve accepted that this incident is indeed going down, you must devise a plan. It’s a whole lot easier to come up with a plan if you’ve spent just a little bit of time doing that previously.

This is where more mental preparedness skills come into play. Last week I put together a list for “[Prepper Movie Night](#).” To build your prepper mindset, develop the habit of watching situations unfold and thinking through them. What would you do in such a situation? What are the potential pitfalls? What is likely to go wrong?

Watching movies and reading books with survival situations is like a dry run for actual events. Obviously, it’s not the same as having an actual experience, but it’s a good way to practice the skills of assessing a situation and making a plan.

You can also work on building your awareness. My friend Graywolf told me about “[Kim’s Game](#)“. He said,

Groups including everything from the Boy Scouts to sniper schools to government spy agencies and surveillance teams use a simple game to teach situational awareness and develop your memory. This is a fantastic game that you can play with your kids or your team to get them to be much better at noticing and remembering details.

The game is based on [a book by Rudyard Kipling](#), and it teaches you to immediately observe your surroundings and commit these observations to memory. I have played a version of this with my kids for years, asking them questions like:

- What are 3 things you could use in this restaurant as a weapon?
- Can you find 3 ways out of this building?
- Can you close your eyes and tell me how many people are sitting at the counter? What do they look like?

The habit of observing and absorbing information before a situation occurs will help in the creation of your plan. You don’t have to spend the extra time taking in the specifics, because you’ve already done so automatically.

When you make your plan, don’t stop at just one. The best-laid plans are at the mercy of a fluid situation,

and disaster often comes in bundles. If your Plan A doesn't work, you must immediately go back to Step 1 and *accept* that it didn't work, then move on to Plan B.

3.) Act.

Finally, this is the step that will save your life. You've accepted the situation, and made your plan. Now, it's time to act.

This sounds easier than it is. Many people freeze in a disaster situation. The ability to break this paralysis is paramount to your survival.

"Freezing" is called "tonic immobility" in behavioral science and it is a biological impulse. A [study exploring the "freeze response"](#) to stressors, describes the reaction:

Part of [Barlow's \(2002\)](#) description of an adaptive alarm model suggests that a freeze response may occur in some threatening situations. Specifically, freezing — or tonic immobility — may overwhelm other competing action tendencies. For example, when fleeing or aggressive responses are likely to be ineffective, a freeze response may take place.

Similar to the flight/fight response, a freeze response is believed to have adaptive value. In the context of predatory attack, some animals will freeze or "play dead." This response, often referred to as tonic immobility ([Gallup, 1977](#)), includes motor and vocal inhibition with an abrupt initiation and cessation... Freezing in the context of an attack seems counterintuitive. However, tonic immobility may be the best option when the animal perceives little immediate chance of escaping or winning a fight ([Arduino & Gould, 1984](#); [Korte, Koolhaas, Wingfield, & McEwen, 2005](#)). For example, tonic immobility may be useful when additional attacks are provoked by movement or when immobility may increase the chance of escaping, such as when a predator believes its prey to be dead and releases it.

Some of our data suggested that reports of freeze were more highly associated with certain cognitive symptoms of anxiety (e.g., confusion, unreality, detached, concentration, inner shakiness). This leads to some very interesting speculation regarding whether freeze responses are also manifested cognitively (i.e., the cognitive system, together with the behavioral system, being shut down). There has been some speculation that a form of cognitive paralysis occurs due to immense cognitive demands that occur in the context of life-threatening situations or stressors ([Leach, 2005](#)).

So, in the context of this particular study, the freeze response could be related to an overload of stimuli because of the demands of creating your plan. By having thought through various situations and getting into the habit of quickly developing plans, you can override your body's natural desire to "freeze" and you can take definitive, potentially life-saving, action.

In an emergency, hesitation can kill you. The faster you can move through steps one and two, and then act, the more likely you are to escape many situations.

Please keep in mind that sometimes, your action actually seems like inaction. For example, a person who is aware they would have little chance of victory in a direct combat situation against a stronger, more experienced opponent might take the action of hiding and being very still. Sheltering in place in some situations is a better course of action than proceeding out into more danger. The key is to think clearly and assess each situation on its own merit.

Here are some examples.

You don't have to be in the midst of a terrorist attack or on a crashing plane to apply the three steps above. Here are a few examples of apply the three steps above to other situations:

Job Loss: In this economy, the possibility of job loss is not that far-fetched. If the primary bread-winner in your home became suddenly unemployed, here's how the 3-step Survival Method would apply:

1. The job is gone. The income source is gone. You can't go out to an expensive dinner like you'd planned, or take that pricey vacation, because as of now, you have no income. You must not act as though your income is the same as it was yesterday.
2. You go through your bank records. You check how much money is going out, how much you have, and figure out what expenses you can cut. You check [your pantry](#) and calculate how long the food will last.
3. You take decisive action, immediately cancelling cable, pushing back the family vacation indefinitely, sending out newly-rewritten resumes, and dialing back the grocery bill. You sell some stuff just sitting in your basement and you fill out the paperwork for unemployment insurance.

Car Accident: Sometimes the aftermath of an accident is more dangerous than the accident itself.

1. Your car is halfway down a ravine, held in place by a groaning tree that could give at any moment. Below you is a sheer drop off. You have to get your kids out of the car before it plunges further down, because no one could survive that.
2. You assess the kids and it seems everyone is conscious and relatively uninjured. The car, however, is not so great and could tumble the rest of the way down at any moment. The electronics on the car are working. You speak calmly to them and explain that they will be going out the back window driver window one at a time. They are to immediately run to the left and get as far away from the vehicle as possible. You will be right behind them. The meeting point is the top of the hill by the big rock.
3. You roll down the window, cut a jammed seat belt with the knife from the console, and wait for the kids to get out and clear of the vehicle. Then, you make your own escape.

Convenience Store Robbery: Occasionally, you're just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

1. As you're browsing through the cooler checking the price of a bottle of water, you hear a crash, then shouting up near the cash register. It's not a movie, a robbery is actually going down.
2. You listen and realize the criminal is armed. You are, too, but you have your small children with you, so taking aggressive action is not an option. You decide that your best bet is to hide, but be ready to defend if necessary.
3. You duck down and whisper to the kids to be quiet. You direct them to a hidey-hole, you pull your weapon, and you get between them and anyone that might come down the aisle. Then, you wait.

Evacuation Order: [This almost happened to us last year](#) during forest fire season.

1. There is a giant fire drawing near. It is entirely possible that everything you own will go up in smoke. You have 15 minutes to get out.
2. You grab the bug out bags, the safe full of documents, the pet carriers, and the photo albums. You also get swim goggles for the whole family and respirator masks out of your kit.
3. Pets, kids, and important items are loaded in the vehicle. You're already down the road in 10 minutes, while other people are still trying to put together an overnight bag.

Have you ever had to use your prepper mindset to survive?

Studying situations in which others have survived is a valuable way to develop your prepper mindset. Have you ever been caught up in the midst of a situation where your preparedness mindset was helpful? Want to tell us about it?

Categories: [All](#), [CPT - Preparedness](#), [CPT-Community-Preparedness-Teams](#), [Featured](#)