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If You Are Not Thinking Tactically You Are Not A Survivalist

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[Tactical Training](#)

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I am taking a short break from my latest series on the real numbers behind our failing economy to address an issue within the Liberty Movement that I find a bit disturbing; namely the issue of inadequate strategic thinking and common sense amongst a certain new crop of survival writers, “gurus”, and their fans. I have only been a survival and prepping enthusiast for ten years, and I have been training in tactical methodologies for six years, but I think the near constant saturation of training I have received over that time makes me at least moderately qualified to discuss survival philosophies. During my work in the alternative media, I am also exposed to all of the undercurrents and trends within the movement, including many negative and destructive trends.

The following article is only a summation of my personal observations. I am sure some people will disagree with my conclusions and claim that the exact opposite reality is true for them, and that’s great. If they don’t see the same problems around them that I see, then they are lucky. I can only relate my experiences based on my dealings with hundreds of thousands of liberty proponents on a monthly basis.

Survivalism has become in some ways a mainstay of popular culture over the course of the past few years. The mainstream still calls us “paranoid kooks” and “doom and gloomers”, but they can’t seem to get rid of us. Survivalists are a fact of American life now. However, survivalism as a philosophy remains in the infant stages of its progression.

Most of us have never lived through a full spectrum crisis event. Most of us have not lived through the peak damage of an economic collapse. Most of us have not been trapped in a war zone (except by choice through enlistment). Most of us have NO real world experience whatsoever in terms of surviving a true catastrophe. Therefore, it behooves us to NOT make detrimental assumptions where such an event is concerned.

Every once in a while, a person who claims to have survived a collapse event in a foreign nation gives instruction to the movement. Sometimes this instruction is based on true insight, but sometimes the instruction is so amoral and dishonorable it becomes clear that the person only survived because they embraced their inner psychopath (see my article [‘A Moral Code For The Post-Collapse World’](#)), destroying others in order to subsist rather than having any actual sustainable skills, and they lucked out in the fact that no one had the chance to visit revenge upon them. This is, of course, piracy, not legitimate survivalism; for without other people to plunder resources from, the pirate is useless and dies.

What the world needs are producers and intelligent innovators in order to function or rebuild. The problem is, the existence of “pirates”, looters, thugs, and in some cases corrupt government funded murderers, makes life for the average producer rather difficult. I would say that for some survivalists destiny will require them to risk their lives in order to protect and defend producers, not to mention the very values and morals they hold dear. Unfortunately, it is not enough to have “sheepdogs” around, and anyone who thinks the sheepdog is the end all be all of a thriving post-collapse society is living in a fantasy land.

The reality is, EVERY GOOD PERSON, young and old, man and woman, producer and protector, gardeners, engineers, doctors, etc., MUST become tactically proficient in order for free civilization to survive post crisis. Every good person must become as dangerous a human being as possible, and they must organize as dangerous human beings, if they hope to have any chance of facing the terrors ahead.

I’ll say it again; the post-collapse world will require honorable men who are also incredibly dangerous men. If you are not both of these things, then you are useless to the future.

To become incredibly dangerous, average Americans and liberty champions must train in tactical methods, and they must be willing to organize in a tactical manner. If you are not training tactically, if you are not thinking tactically, and if you are not organizing locally, then you will not survive a large scale calamity, and you are thus, not a survivalist. I really wouldn’t know what to call you. A “faux survivalist”, perhaps...

Here are just a few of the obstacles I see stopping good people from adopting a necessary tactical mindset:

Fear Of Public Perception

This is often the worst hindrance to training and organization within the Liberty Movement, and I blame it partly on the militia movements of the 80’s and 90’s. Open training was common during the golden era of the modern militia movement, including rifle proficiency, team tactics, communications, and asymmetrics. This is not to say that their training was especially advanced, but at least they had the balls to do it within the public sphere despite the rabid propaganda attacks of the federal government.

The Oklahoma City bombing changed everything, and within months, the once vast and growing militia movement mostly vanished. Group tactical training immediately became taboo – a methodology survival adherents would not touch with the business end of their M1 Garand. For all intents and purposes, they ran and hid when they should have stood their ground, leaving future generations without a breathing example of tactical knowledge within the civilian world or an outlet for training aside from joining the military.

Even today, some people within the new survival movement cannot seem to shake the Oklahoma City induced fear of what others might think if they train in high grade tactical methods, or train as a neighborhood, church, veteran’s hall, town, or county. Surely, only insane bombers and right wing extremists have any interest in such activities, right?

Now, some folks might say that because I was not involved at that time, I would not understand what it was like, and I might have acted in a similar fashion. I say this is nonsense. In my work with groups like the Oath Keepers Community Preparedness Team, I will NEVER stop training others and helping to organize others. Another Oklahoma City-style event could happen tomorrow and it would have absolutely no bearing on what I know to be the right thing to do.

Public perception is as meaningless as it is changeable. Frankly, the kind of public that shrieks about honest citizens training for self defense is not the kind of public I take very seriously. The “public”, as it

were, can kiss my ass.

Delusions Of OPSEC

A lot of faux survivalists throw the term “OPSEC” around without having any real understanding of what it means. They seem to think that it is a two syllable argument that invalidates any rational call for organization. This is simply naïve. In a true collapse, there is no such thing as a “lone wolf” or a “gray man”. These are fictional musings common only to the imaginations of cinema and the minds of inexperienced preppers.

If you look at the actual proactive survival responses to breakdowns in places like Argentina or Bosnia, or the survival response to the cartels of Michoacan, Mexico, or the survival response in Rhodesia, or even the Kurdish response to the horrors of ISIS, the same scenario always presents itself – common citizens banding together for mutual aid and self defense. There is no denying this tactical response, nor the fact that in most cases it increases the survivability of all those involved.

Yet, again and again the Liberty Movement is cursed with delusions of “Operation Security” in which no one talks to anyone. No one organizes their neighborhoods because their neighbors “might” turn on them. No one organizes past the two or three man “secret cell” because corrupt government might identify them and put them on a “red list”. I think OPSEC has become an all encompassing excuse for faux survivalists to remain lazy and afraid.

First, if you think you are going to go “gray man”, and remain stationary, think again. Hiding who you are from your neighbors will not stop your neighbors from looting your house anyway as soon as the inclination strikes them. And, it certainly will not stop more aggressive pirates from simply moving house to house at random through your neighborhood until they get to you. Gee, in that situation it sure would be nice if the neighborhood was working together rather than huddling like rats in the dark corners of their tract homes.

Second, if you really believe you have no neighbors with the moral fortitude to work with you rather than against you during a crisis, then you should be planning to leave the area anyway. Again, this is tactical common sense that is being suffocated by the idiocy of the OPSEC argument.

Third, if you have ever visited a liberty website on a regular basis, then you are probably already on a government list. Sorry, but that’s just the way it goes. I prefer to make that list so big it becomes useless to the establishment.

Finally, there are many levels of OPSEC. There are public institutions and there are private institutions within any activist movement; both serve vital purposes. You don’t have to tell the whole world who you are and where your supplies are stored, but you do have to work with other people if you want to live. Period. No one has the ability to do everything. No one has every skill set needed to ride out a violent social storm. No one. Either you work within a structure of people you have trained with and you trust, or you die.

Invalid Assumptions Against Military Equipment

There are as many opinions on survival gear as there are survivalists, but, some opinions are utterly wrong. These opinions are often based on assumptions of use, rather than experience. For example, I can’t tell you how many times I’ve had a faux survivalist think himself brilliant for admonishing the use of camouflage.

“Camo makes you a target!” they claim, without any context as to why. And yes, if you throw on your army digital while trotting down mainstreet during the initial stages of collapse, you’ll probably stand out like a sore thumb. But the issue here is one of context of use. Most environments you will encounter across this country are rural, not urban. If you have ever practiced camo tests as I have with multiple survival groups, even a half-assed keyboard survivalist would be able to see the difference between a person wearing normal clothing (even in muddled colors) verses camouflage. In fact, most of the time you will not see the person in proper camo until he is right on top of you.

The root of the anti-camo argument is rather hilarious. Essentially, this crowd is stating that one should not wear camo because camo is a red flag for training, and training makes you a target (if you are seen). So, their solution is for you to wear less effective clothing which makes you easier to see, leaving the potential bandit the option of deciding whether or not you look like a threat (in which case he might shoot you regardless). Why not have clothing for both urban and rural situations? People who do not think tactically often try to make discussions on gear an all-or-nothing proposal.

Another problem common to the new survivalism is that some survivalists simply do not have the money to purchase certain pieces of kit, and so they badmouth said kit so that they don't have to admit to themselves that they want it but can't have it. I can't afford a Barrett semi auto 50 BMG rifle system, but I'm not going to pretend that it's not a useful tool or that a survivalist might not find an occasion where he could apply it.

I see faux survivalists downplay all kinds of useful gear from night vision to ballistic armor, gear that is infinitely useful in all kinds of situations, based on the assumption that the average survivor "won't ever find need for it". This is like Dianne Feinstein's claim that no one "needs" a mag capacity of over ten rounds because when will they ever run into a problem where eleven rounds are necessary?

For those who are tactically minded, ALL gear, especially gear in common military use, is also useful to the survivalist, and if they can afford it they will buy it. Why limit one's own tactical potential because of a blind assumption?

Real Survivalists

This is the bottom line – tactical training matters, and strategic organization saves lives during terrible times. If these two things are not a priority for you, then do not call yourself a prepper, a survivalist, or any variation of the term. If you want a real chance at survival for yourself and your family, then you must:

- 1) Master the operation of your weapons system, whatever that system may be.** This means daily dry fire practice, weekly live fire practice (even if your ammo is limited – training is more important than a large stockpile), shooting from multiple positions, reloading drills, transition drills, and speed drills. This isn't advanced training, it is the very basic fundamentals you need. Going to the shooting range once every three months to sight in from a bench is simply not going to cut it.
- 2) Build a team.** Organize starting with family, friends, church group, neighbors, and then outward. Without a team, there is little chance of survival.
- 3) Train in team tactics.** This is where the majority of people freak out and scurry away to avoid being labeled "paramilitary" or "extremist". It's time for the movement to get over these meaningless labels and get some work done.
- 4) Learn to operate as much gear and kit as possible, regardless of who says it is "useful" or "not useful".**
- 5) Maintain a practical level of operational security, but do not let it prevent you from organization.** Without organization, you will probably fail, and all your carefully planned "OPSEC" will have counted for nothing.
- 6) Push yourself to the best of your abilities.** In the end, survival is about force of will; the will to endure, the will to fight back, the will to stand by one's principles no matter the state of the world. Will and training trump all other deficiencies and enemies.

This article might seem critical, and it is, but there is a purpose here. I want people to live. I want good liberty minded activists to carry on. I want a future where the best people rise from the ashes, not the worst. In order for this better future to become a reality, a number of deluded conventions and poor judgments will have to be changed. Survival, at its very center, is about identifying one's weaknesses and turning them into strengths. If the Liberty Movement is not willing to do this, then we do not deserve to survive.

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