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Problem Solving 101

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by Larry Diffey , November 21, 2014

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What do you do when you don't know what to do? This question may seem simple but many people have a hard time answering it when critical decisions are needed. We make critical decisions every day and most of them are in the normal course of daily life so we don't think much about the process we utilized to make those decisions.

Every decision you make boils down to two things. Where you are and where you want to go. This may be defined and enacted in a physical, mental or emotional state. What store to shop at, what clothes to buy, what show to watch or how to respond to something that has happened.

Basically, you are here and you need to get over there. The problem many people face during times of stress is they suddenly find themselves lost and don't know where they are now and where they need to go. This is the factor that can cause people to freeze up or run in the wrong direction.

When faced with the decision of what to do in a stressful situation the first thing you need to do is take a deep breath and calm down. When you are stressed your mind operates like a person in a flock of chickens trying to grab one. You find yourself going in all directions at once to no avail.

To make a rational decision you need to be calm and determine exactly where you are so to speak. Once you have identified your position you need to determine where you need or want to go from there. Your final destination is what you are trying to determine at this point. Everything in between is about how to get there. This is much like planning a trip across the country. You identify your destination and plan your route to get there with the fewest problems.

If you are in bed and suddenly hear someone breaking into your home the process begins to work. You identify where you are, in this case in a vulnerable position. You determine where you want to end up, in this case standing with the intruder lying on the floor with a gun pointed at him, either dead or alive does not matter. The rest of your thoughts are about how to get from here to there with the fewest problems.

If you decide to prep for some type of disaster, you will need to identify where you stand right now then decide what your ideal position would be going into the crisis. Having determined those two points, you develop a plan to get from here to there or at least as close as possible.

In many dangerous situations this process is a matter of seconds from start to finish. In some cases you will have plenty of time to think things through to determine the best course to take.

If you are in bed and you hear someone breaking into your home and realize it is a large number of DHS agents with the intent to harm you, you may decide your destination is anywhere but here and seek an immediate exit. In this case, hopefully you already have an escape plan.

In the military, soldiers do battle drills to practice their response to dangerous situations they may find themselves in to speed up their response time to insure a positive end result. You can do this too with many of the situations you may find yourself in. Having a plan to deal with situations you may find yourself in will help prevent a delay that may cost you your life.

By doing these battle drills you provide yourself with a lot of maps to get from here to there depending on the situation and can immediately pull up one of these maps and follow it without having to analyze too much at the time.

When you are worried about some type of disaster or crisis that may take place and you don't know what to do first, just take a deep breath and draw yourself a map. Determine where you are starting from, where you want to go and how to get there. You can then decide what you need to take with you. Even if you are not physically going anywhere, you can still plan it just like a trip. Your final destination will be an image of what you want things to look like or function like once you get there.

Indecision can kill in a crisis and you don't want to ever be left wondering what to do once in that situation so now is the time to think about these things while you have the time. When confronted with something new and unknown, use the same process to think things through to find a quick solution to your situation. When everything else fails, you need to rely on your brain so exercise it accordingly.

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