



# To Not Walk Alone

PREPARING FRIENDS AND  
FAMILY FOR THE COMING  
COLLAPSE

## **To Not Walk Alone: Preparing Friends and Family for the Coming Collapse**

I'm genuinely curious about something. Why is it socially unacceptable to generalize about certain groups of people, while it's open season on others?

Why are some beliefs, religions, and lifestyles protected by media watchdogs and special interest groups, while others are considered threatening and are openly vilified?

It's estimated that there are over 3 million preppers (and growing) in the United States. Some are God-fearing Christians, some are political Libertarians, and others are peace-loving small farmers. We teach our children to think critically, we believe in preparing for events that could be detrimental to our survival, and for the most part, we just want to be left alone to seek our happiness. We are resistant, by and large, to governmental intrusion and to the restriction of our natural rights—those rights bestowed upon all humanity that are not contingent upon the legal laws, customs, or beliefs of any culture or government—the rights that are universal and inalienable.

This reality is actually pretty boring, though. It doesn't sell papers, get TV viewers, or more importantly, further the agenda of demonization by those who feel threatened by us.

So for those purposes, preppers are classified based on the errant behavior of people like Jimmy Lee Dykes, a mean, anti-social recluse whose neighbors feared him and who reportedly beat a dog to death with a lead pipe. After all, Dykes had a "bunker," a supply of non-perishable food, guns, and a dislike for the government. Therefore, when Dykes kidnapped a little boy off a school bus and held him in his bunker, it was put forth by the media that Dykes was the poster child for "survivalists." Likewise, the horrible shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary school were blamed on the mother of accused shooter Adam Lanza, because Nancy Lanza was a home-schooling prepper mom who taught her sons to handle firearms. Less than an hour after the Boston marathon bombing, "patriots" and "right wing extremists" were put in the spotlight as those most likely to have committed the act of terror.

All of this leads me to reconfirm my belief that people sincerely do not understand why we do what we do, and that ignorance leads to fear.

**"People fear what they don't understand and hate what they can't conquer." ~ Andrew Smith**

If you go back through history, the "visionaries" or "wise ones" were always mocked at best and feared at worst. They were cast out of society to live alone at the edge of the village; children would sneak onto their property to show their bravery; villagers burned the outsiders at the stake as witches and heretics. Anything the larger percentage of people does not understand is treated as something evil and frightening.

Am I saying that preppers are all visionaries and sages? Not in a mystical "Joan of Arc" sense, but I *am* saying that preppers are willing to see the writing on the wall and search for a deeper understanding.

If you are a prepper, chances are you have friends and family who consider you anywhere on the "nuts" scale from a bit eccentric to downright certifiable.

But with the snow job by the media and the government, is it any wonder that it is so difficult to persuade family members and friends to see the wisdom of even the most basic preparedness measures? Why would they want to group themselves in with those radical, crazy nut job preppers?

This viewpoint, of course, makes it very difficult for you to talk with these loved ones and bring them over to the "dark side" of preparedness with you. It's painful to see people about whom you care, blithely going along, spending money frivolously, buying their groceries a couple of days at a time, and living in places that are totally unsustainable should disaster strike.

Many people have simply thrown their hands up in the air and said, "Don't come knocking on my door when disaster strikes." But is that the best way to deal with the situation? Could you really turn away someone you loved when you knew that it meant certain death?

Every single person you convince to prepare is a person that you won't have to either feed or turn away should the SHTF. You won't be able to convince everyone, but if you should decide to try, there are some

strategies that can help you get the information across in ways that don't compel concerned loved ones to call the folks with those nice white straitjackets to come and take you on a relaxing vacation at the nearest mental health facility.

As you know, SHTF doesn't generally drop by at the best of times. In fact, SHTF thrives and grows exponentially under more adverse circumstances.

You have to suck it up, put on your boots, and power through it. SHTF doesn't care and neither can you. It can be difficult to persuade the reluctant prepper that...

1. SHTF doesn't care about inclement weather—snow, hail, tornadoes, and hurricanes all just add to the party atmosphere for SHTF.
2. SHTF doesn't care that you sprained your ankle, broke your leg, or are otherwise less than ambulatory. If you have to bug out without a vehicle, you have to bug out, regardless of your injury status.
3. SHTF doesn't care that you decided to start prepping after the trip to Disneyworld (because that trip is expensive!!!!)
4. SHTF doesn't care that you are on a boat in the middle of the ocean, regardless of what you paid for the luxury cruise. (Check out recent ill-fated Carnival Cruise of the Triumph if you don't believe me!)
5. SHTF doesn't care that you had planned to get your vehicle repaired. You have to evacuate regardless of the leak from the oil pan, the condition of the brakes, and the funny noise in the transmission.
6. SHTF doesn't care that the entire family is ill with the stomach flu. The entire family will just have to pause to throw up while bugging out.
7. SHTF doesn't care that you need new hiking boots and that you just haven't had time to get to the store and buy them.
8. SHTF doesn't care that you planned to buy some bulk foods with your next paycheck.

9. SHTF doesn't care that you always use electronic banking. If the ATMs are down and you have no cash, you cannot buy anything.
10. SHTF doesn't care that you used all your ammo at the range and Wal-Mart has been out for the past month.
11. SHTF doesn't care that the grocery store is closed because of a power outage and you only have a can of peas and some saltine crackers in the house.
12. SHTF doesn't care that you are wearing high heels when your car plummets to the bottom of a ravine—you still have to climb out.
13. SHTF doesn't care that the pharmacies are closed because of a pandemic and that you have no OTC or herbal medicines at home. If you catch the virus, you will suffer through it without medicine to treat it. And so will your kids.
14. SHTF doesn't care that your truck is almost out of gas and the local gas stations have closed because of the disaster. If you have to bug out, you may end up walking instead of driving.
15. SHTF doesn't care that you are depressed because you just broke up with your spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend. S happens when S happens.
16. SHTF doesn't care that you have made a rock solid plan to get in shape—as soon as the weather warms up.
17. SHTF doesn't care that you are visiting your in-laws, the most unprepared people on the planet.
18. SHTF doesn't care that you had planned to get the propane tank refilled and now the propane trucks aren't running.
19. SHTF doesn't care that your wood is not dry.
20. SHTF doesn't care that you have 300 pounds of beans and rice but failed to plan on a way to cook them.
21. SHTF doesn't care that you don't know how to cook over an open fire without inflicting 2nd degree burns on yourself.
22. SHTF doesn't care if you have only a week's supply of toilet paper. If the crisis lasts longer than a week, things will be progressively less pleasant regardless of your intention to purchase more Charmin.

23. SHTF doesn't care you planned to reinforce your door frame and install a metal security door. If thugs arrive to invade your home, your hollow core door will serve as a minor inconvenience instead of a deterrent.
24. SHTF doesn't care if you believe the fecal matter is headed towards the oscillating device or whether you think it's a conspiracy theory.
25. Whatever your excuse may be, you may rest assured, it could easily be on this list. And SHTF won't care about that either.

## Why People Won't Listen

It's important to understand why your loved ones see the world through rose-colored glasses. While they are busy casting mental health disorder epithets your way, it is actually the people who refuse to accept reality who are suffering from a psychological phenomenon called "cognitive dissonance."

Cognitive dissonance (a phrase coined in the book When Prophecy Fails, by Dr. Leon Festinger) describes the mental discomfort that a person feels when faced with two diverse values—the reality of a situation and the moral belief system of the person collide. When this occurs, the person must make alterations to one or the other in order to regain his equilibrium. According to Dr. Festinger's theory, "people engage in a process he termed 'dissonance reduction,' which can be achieved in one of three ways: lowering the importance of one of the discordant factors, adding consonant elements, or changing one of the dissonant factors. This bias sheds light on otherwise puzzling, irrational, and even destructive behavior."

People can fight the cognitive dissonance by thinking critically and allowing themselves to be uncomfortable with the reality being forced upon them by the media. That's what taking the red pill is all about in the movie, *The Matrix*.

**"This is your last chance. After this, there is no turning back. You take the blue pill—the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill—you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes."**  
~ Morpheus

It's very frustrating to watch otherwise intelligent people completely avoid the acceptance of our reality. Those deep into cognitive dissonance are simply NOT going to come around by hearing you preach to them. If anything, it will only drive them further away from you. The concepts of, for example, a long-term disaster like an EMP or an economic and social collapse, are incomprehensible to them. Because of this, no matter how fervently you believe these things to be likely in the future, it's best to water down the reality into manageable bites. Feed them a little, then give them time to digest it before feeding them more.

The best strategies for waking up those sleepy loved ones are:

- Using socially acceptable examples that are non-conspiracy related
- Promoting the economic wisdom of a stockpile
- Breaking them in gently and incrementally

And if all else fails...

- Stealth prepping
- Gift prepping

### **Find Socially Acceptable Examples**

Many people find it easier to accept the likelihood of a weather-related disaster that might knock the power out for a few days to a week. You can easily provide recent examples, like Hurricane Katrina, the Derecho in the metro-DC area, and Superstorm Sandy. No one can argue with the fact that storms happen.

For those who reside in regions where events like this frequently occur, it's a little bit easier to persuade your loved ones to stock in at least a 2 week supply. Without risk of sounding unhinged you can point out:

1. The long lines at the stores when warnings about an impending disaster are announced
2. The speedy mark-ups that take place when demand outstrips supply
3. How quickly the store shelves become empties
4. How long it can take before government "help" arrives
5. How unsatisfactory that "help" often is in reality

Is your area prone to ice storms, snow storms, tornadoes, or earthquakes? This can be a gentle introduction to preparedness. Let your loved one know that you are going to get ahead of the game this year and shop for the event before it happens. Invite them to go with you. Make a list together and ask for his or her input. This will help to get the wheels turning for a little bit of critical preparedness thinking.



I know what you're saying to yourself: Clearly, a two-week supply is not enough to weather a long-term disaster. But the goal is to be able to build on this base acceptance and begin to help your loved ones begin to extend their supplies.

## **Everyone Loves to Save Money**

Another great tactic is promoting the economic logic behind a well-stocked pantry. No one can deny that prices are only going up—it doesn't take a prepper to see this. If you can convince someone of the investment value of a food supply, sometimes you can persuade them to prep without them even realizing that is what they are doing. Then, when that supply comes in handy during a disaster event or a personal period of economic hardship, you can gently reinforce the lesson.

The fact is, a well-supplied pantry is a constant work in progress. You can save a fortune on your food budget by shopping carefully and in quantity.

A well-stocked food pantry is not just there in case of an epic disaster or TEOTWAWKI. It can provide a cushion in the event of a job loss or personal economic downturn. Not only that, but as an investment, purchasing food at today's prices is a great hedge against tomorrow's increases. The cost of food will only be going up as we face global shortages.

How can you convince them of the economic necessity of a food pantry? Try one or all of these techniques:

**Start a "price book."** This is a vital tool. This helps the shopper to know whether a sale is really a sale at all. A price book is simply a notebook in which the prices of regularly purchased items are noted. The price book should be updated with the lowest price for these items. This allows the shopper to see that one year ago, peanut butter was on sale for \$1.88 a jar, but now the lowest price is \$5.99 a jar. It can also help people learn the trends of seasonal sales, such as the sale on baking supplies in November (for Christmas goodies) or hams right before Easter.

**Purchase in quantity.** When a staple is found at a good price, purchase in as much quantity as is affordable and reasonably useable before it expires. This is the foundation of a stockpile. After a couple of months of shopping in this manner, your loved one will discover that he or she doesn't actually "grocery shop" any more—they shop to replenish their stockpiles.

**Store what you eat, and eat what you store.** Items in a stockpile should be foods that the person regularly consumes. If they normally eat steak and potatoes, for example, but they fill their pantries with beans and rice, the food will just sit there and seem like a waste of money. Furthermore, when the day comes that they are relying on that pantry, they will suffer from "food fatigue" and feel deprived. Help them learn to make adjustments to the food that they consume on a regular basis to foods that will be sustainable in a food storage pantry. (This doesn't have to mean dull, bland canned food, by the way. Check out the new book by Tess Pennington of Ready Nutrition for some great ideas for serving delicious meals from the pantry: [The Prepper's Cookbook: 365 Recipes to Turn Your Emergency Food into Nutritious, Delicious, Life-Saving Meals.](#))

**Teach them to cook from scratch.** It's surprising the number of people who actually don't know how to cook from scratch these days. If your loved one doesn't already know how to cook from scratch, it's time to learn now, before it's a necessity. Invite them over for a meal made with standard supplies, and then, when they tell you how delicious it is, offer to teach them how to easily make the same meal themselves. Some stockpile foods are very unfamiliar to cooks in today's kitchens. For example, cooking with whole grains is quite a bit different than cooking food that comes from a box on the grocery store shelf.

**Show them the math.** A common sense approach to the economy of preparedness can be easily illustrated with your own price book. If last year, you bought a dozen jars of peanut butter for \$1.88, and this year, the lowest price for peanut butter is \$5.99, then each jar on your shelf represents a savings of \$4.11. Those dozen jars saved you a total of \$49.32. Teach them the wisdom of buying at today's prices and consuming when tomorrow's prices are far higher.

## **Break Them in Gently**

Remember, you do not want to be the Jehovah's Witness of preparedness, knocking on the door during dinnertime while the non-prepper pretends not to be home.

Try some of these techniques to gently and incrementally get your point across and make preparedness the new normal.

**Repetition.** Repetition of preparedness concepts without the scare tactics can help break through the normalcy bias, but it is important to limit yourself within the tolerance level of the person with whom you are communicating.

**Reword the same message.** “Today I went and stocked up on bottled water. There is a sale going on at the Piggly Wiggly, so I got 6 cases.” “Wow, I can’t stop thinking about those poor people in New York City that went 3 weeks without running water.” “Remember last year when that tornado made our city water undrinkable for 2 weeks? Before tornado season this year, I decided to get some of those 5 gallon jugs of water.” “I never realized it, but apparently a person uses 1 gallon of water per day in cooking and drinking to maintain good health. In our family, that means we use 4 gallons a day! WOW!”

**Email.** Sending gentle nudges via email is sometimes helpful, but inundating a non-prepper with preparedness advice will generally fall upon deaf ears and cause them to hit “Delete Unread” when they see your name pop up. Even though you really want to share information, try to limit yourself to one very important topic per week so that the message has a better chance of being read.

**Know when to back off.** Unfortunately, for the most part, you have to realize there isn't a lot you can do to convince others that preparing is vital. People have to come to their own realizations, just the way you did. You have to accept that constantly harping on preparedness will do nothing more than drive a wedge between you and those you love. If they change their minds in the future, it could make them hesitant to ask for your advice.

## **What If They Won't Listen?**

As a prepper, you have to make a difficult decision. Are you going to prepare for a few extra people, adding supplies and making room for them when the SHTF? Or are you going to go about your preparedness business quietly, embracing OPSEC (Operational Security) and building up your supplies with only your immediate family members in mind?

Some people state that they have no compunction turning away unprepared family members when disaster strikes, because they spent years warning them to get ready. This is a choice that most preppers have to make, and there are no "one size fits all" answers. It is important to discuss this among the decision-makers of your household and present a unified front, whichever conclusion you reach.

## **Stealth Prepping**

If the world was a reasonable and informed place, none of us would have to hide our prepping endeavours. There are many situations that require us to be secretive about our plans, not the least of which is OPSEC. However the trickiest situation of all is when we have to hide our prepping from loved ones, whether they are friends, family members, or most difficult of all, spouses.

For some folks, getting their partner on board with prepping may be a long-term project. Some people simply don't want to hear or think about the possibility of a SHTF event, others scoff at our "paranoia," and still others just cannot grasp the concept that one day the grocery store shelves may be empty, never to be refilled again.

Sometimes the concept of "don't ask, don't tell" is wiser than trying to persuade the reluctant spouse that the world is going to end. If you're living in the same home, hiding your preparedness items could be very difficult. If this is the situation you find yourself in, it can be an enormous obstacle to your preparedness efforts.

## Arguments Over Spending Habits

Arguments over money are one of the biggest challenges that face a couple in which only one person is interested in preparedness. How can you satisfactorily explain to an uninterested partner that you just bought 75 cans of mixed vegetables? A few suggestions:

**Financial savings.** Buying 75 cans of mixed vegetables is generally \$75, but today the cans were half price, which saved you \$37.50. (Plus you won't have to buy mixed vegetables for a year). Point out the current levels of inflation—prices are only going up. What you buy at today's prices may hold you through this inflationary cycle until costs go back to normal.

**Time savings.** Explain to your partner that you've begun buying in bulk so that you can go to the store less frequently. When you are busy, being able to reduce those shopping trips can be a big time saver. And don't forget, every trip to the store (at least for me!) involves a few non-anticipated expenditures. Shopping only once per month can really help you save money.

**Power outage protection.** When you have suddenly gone from a deep freezer full of frozen dinners and a refrigerator full of perishable meats and vegetables to a plethora of canned and dried goods, many partners might question why you no longer buy "fresh" items. If you've recently had a major power outage due to a storm, you can point to the amount of food that was lost during that time—we all want to avoid waste in this economy. Storage space can also be claimed as a factor, especially if your freezer is already full.

## Making Sure Your Partner is Prepared

Many of us want to also prep for our partners to be sure that they are well taken care of in the event that they are away from home when disaster strikes. This becomes exponentially more difficult if they are not on-board with prepping. A few things you can do on the down-low are:

- Load the trunk of the car with a "get-home" bag (in case of a winter storm, of course!)

- Stock his or her desk with foods like granola bars and applesauce cups
- Be sure to keep a full case of water in the trunk of the vehicle if weather allows
- Place a comfortable “spare pair” of shoes in the trunk, just in case he or she has a shoe mishap while at work or in case they’d like to start walking for fitness at lunch

### **Non-food Preparedness**

Any prepper knows that there is a lot more to preparedness than merely a stockpile of food. To introduce the concept of non-food prepping items, sometimes other justifications need to be provided to a spouse or partner.

It’s really all in how you spin it. If your partner is unwilling to accept the idea that preparedness is important, then present the idea in a different way.

- Get bicycles for the entire family for a healthy activity you can do together
- Store extra water just so you don’t have to go refill your bottles for the water cooler so frequently
- Add to the home’s petty cash because sometimes on the weekend the ATM runs out of money
- Purchase extra health and beauty items because they are on sale
- Develop a sudden affinity for candlelight
- Make vegetable gardening your new hobby
- Announce that camping is your new favorite vacation and begin stocking up on gear like tents, fire-proof cookware, portable stoves, and cold-rated sleeping bags
- Acquire a new interest in marksmanship or self-defense classes

Sometimes when you gently put these plans into place your prepping mentality will begin to rub off on your spouse. The first time the power goes out and you demonstrate your preparedness with a meal prepared sans electricity, candles and kerosene lamps for a cozy glow and a heat source

to keep you warm, the reluctant prepper may begin to see the wisdom of your ways.

## **Gift Prepping**

For those who don't live with you, of course, stealth prepping isn't going to benefit them. A technique I like to call "gift prepping" can work well with more distant loved ones.

Sometimes, though, be warned that your heartfelt gift may be met with rolling eyes by someone who really doesn't see the bigger picture. If that is the case, try not to be discouraged. One day your gift could mean the difference between life and death for them. At the very least, you will know that you did all you could to help them.

Christmas and birthdays can be a great time to give the gift of preparedness. Because preparedness can take many different forms, your gift can be any of a wide variety of items. Following are a few suggestions:

1. Warm sleeping bags
2. Fire-proof cookware
3. Tents
4. Sturdy backpacks
5. Field guides for identifying edible plants, tracks, and herbs
6. Pocket multi-tools
7. Construction tools (hammer, screw drivers, ax, wedges, etc.)
8. Weapons
9. Ammo
10. Gun holsters
11. Scratch cookbooks
12. A week's supply of long-term storage food
13. Seeds
14. Gardening tools
15. Manual kitchen gadgets
16. A vehicle emergency kit
17. Car escape tool
18. A compass

19. A hunting or pocket knife
20. A great-read survival book like Lights Out, Patriots, or Alas, Babylon
21. A gravity-fed water filter
22. A portable water filtration bottle or drinking straw filter
23. Binoculars
24. A fully loaded bug-out bag
25. A well-stocked first aid kit
26. A good first-aid manual
27. Gold or silver coins
28. Tactical flashlight
29. Headlamp
30. Candles
31. Lighters
32. Waterproof matches
33. Solar chargers
34. Food dehydrator
35. Canning supplies
36. Hand crank or battery-operated radio
37. Kelly Kettle
38. Camping stove with fuel
39. Rocket stove
40. Knife sharpener
41. Survival guide (I have the SAS Handbook and highly recommend it)
42. Paracord bracelet
43. Fire-starting flint
44. Walkie-talkies
45. Hatchet
46. Machete
47. Fishing kit and pole
48. Waterproof jackets
49. Bow and arrow
50. Titanium escape ring



## **Don't Give Up**

It's very difficult when your message isn't getting across. But don't give up. Your patience and persistence may one day pay off and you will be rewarded with a newly converted prepper, asking questions as they proceed on their journey to preparedness and well-being.

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