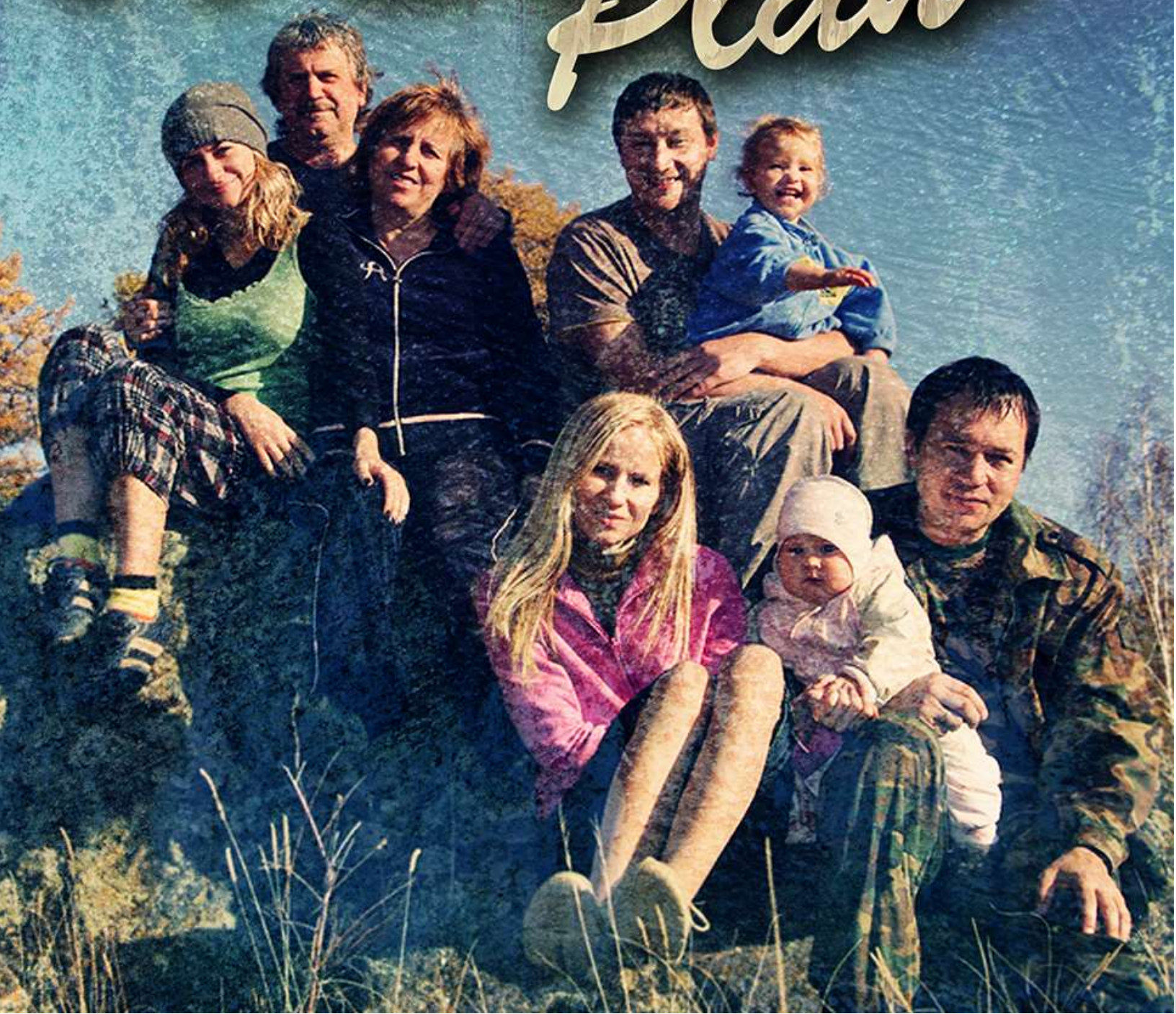


THE PATRIOT'S FAMILY *Plan*



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Preppers are generally family men and women, who aren't just thinking about themselves, but about the ones they love most. They want to be sure that their families can survive any potential problem that they are likely to face, not just that they can do so personally. That can create incredible challenges for the prepper, because not everyone in the family agrees with prepping, nor is everyone in the right mental or physical shape to be a prepper.

There are a lot of skills which are necessary to learn, in order to survive a post-disaster situation. These range anywhere from knowing how to start a fire, to how to purify water, to how to cook with a solar oven. Ideally, the whole family should be involved in prepping, so everyone will get on board in learning those skills.

In case you hadn't noticed, the world is rarely ideal. Things just don't seem to go the way that we expect them to. After all, if it did, there'd be no reason to be a prepper, as there would never be a disaster that we have to survive.

So, even if you are a prepper or are thinking about being a prepper, that doesn't mean that your whole family is in agreement with you. Actually, I'd be surprised if they were. Even those who are in agreement with you may not be much of an asset to your family's survival, at least not on the surface.

Actually, this problem was addressed years back in our country's history. If you think about it, the early settlers of our country and the pioneers that traveled west, opening up new land, were in a worse situation than anything that any prepper is expecting. They had to take everything with them, live off the land, and make sure that nothing went to

waste. Every family member had to participate, so that the family as a whole could survive.

One of the keys that these rugged pioneers found to survival is to put everyone in the family to work. Each family member had certain responsibilities that they were to see to, so that the family's needs would be met. As children grew, they were given a series of ever-increasing responsibilities to accomplish; and woe to the child that played hooky and didn't do their chores. Those responsibilities would be based upon the child's:

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Strength
- ✓ Knowledge
- ✓ Ability

For a family to survive a post-disaster situation, this same model has to be put into place. Maybe your whole family isn't

interested in learning wilderness survival skills; that doesn't mean that they're not interested in surviving. When everything goes to pot, they'll be much more interested in learning the skills that they didn't learn beforehand. Even more than that, they'll be interested in eating.

There's some great wisdom in the Christian Bible that applies here. It Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, he says, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess 3:10).

You know something? That works. If you have a family member who doesn't want to work to help the family survive, and expects to be waited on hand and foot, while everyone else is working, let them reap the benefit of not working... don't feed them. Hunger is a guaranteed way of motivating them to work.

Of course, the work that each one does has to be appropriate to their abilities. You don't send a 12 year old girl out to chop firewood; at least not if there is someone older and stronger to do it. Just as the pioneers did, you have to tailor each person's work to what they can do which will contribute to the family's needs.

Working in this way can eliminate many problems and turn family members who might otherwise be a burden into an asset. The family as a whole will function better and your chances of survival will be vastly improved.



PRE-PLANNING THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF PREPPING

While most people think of prepping as mostly stockpiling and learning survival skills, having a plan is equally important, if not even more important. Without a

plan, you're not going to know what to stockpile, what skills to learn, or what to do when things turn bad.

Those who teach self-defense and martial arts tell you that knowing what to do is half the battle. In other words, when someone goes to hit you in a certain way, you react immediately, without thinking, because you've already learned how to counter that blow.

Likewise, government agencies at all levels prepare disaster reaction plans, so that they'll know what to do when certain types of emergencies arise. That way, when the emergency happens, they don't have to bother to think about it, they just pull out the plan and follow the steps written on it. That saves time, getting the important things done quicker. Even more importantly, it makes sure that nothing gets overlooked.

If this works for self-defense experts and government agencies, it will work just as well for you and your family. Before any calamity falls, think through how you will deal with it and develop a plan. In fact, develop a bunch of plans, each of which deals with how you will react to a different type of problem.

Part of your plan must include what role each family member will play in the event of that disaster:

- ✓ What will the children do?
- ✓ Who will be responsible for taking care of the chickens?
- ✓ Where are you going to get water from and how are you going to haul it to the house?
- ✓ Once it gets to the house, how are you going to make it safe to drink? What bathing methods are you going to employ, to conserve water?

Quite literally, the list of things you can include in your plans is endless; and while there will be some overlap from one plan to another, each separate potential disaster will have its own special needs that you have to deal with.

As much as possible, you want your family to take part in coming up with the plan. Of course, that assumes that your family is involved in prepping with you. If not, they're probably not going to be much help. Nevertheless, by involving them in the planning, they are more likely to be cooperative when it becomes time to put the plan into action.

TEACHING YOUR FAMILY SURVIVAL SKILLS

Surviving after a calamity requires new skills, skills that hopefully you've taken the time to learn. However, just because you've taken the time to learn them, doesn't mean your family has been interested in learning them. That's all right; as long as you know them, they have an opportunity to learn.

Teaching your family can be a challenge. The first, and biggest, part of the challenge is keeping your cool. Patience is not just a virtue in this situation, it's a necessity. You've got to realize that not only is this all new to them, but that they're going through a great emotional shock at the same time. That shock makes it hard for them to concentrate and learn. Many may want to just crawl into the bottom of a bottle, to wait out the problem or crawl back into bed and sleep through it. If you lose your temper at them, you'll just increase that desire.

Start with small steps; don't expect them to learn everything at once. In fact, only

teach them one new skill at a time. More than that may be more than they can absorb. Pick the most important thing to teach them and teach them that one skill. If it's a complicated one, then break it down into pieces, teaching each one separately, explaining everything as you go along.

Kids always learn best if you can make a game out of it. Most survival skills readily translate to some sort of game, besides the playing "cowboys and Indians" in the woods appeal. If you're teaching them to start a fire, then have a contest to see who can do it the fastest. If you're collecting berries, then see who can collect the most.

Obviously, the most critical skills need to be taught first. Things like how to use the outhouse, instead of the bathroom, what water is safe to drink, and how to function without electricity are obviously very important.

We can learn a lesson from business here. Businesses use colorful posters to remind their employees of important information, such as how to lift safely. Well, if it works for businesses, then it can work for our families. All it takes is a little imagination and a box of crayons and you can have your own motivational posters all over the house, reminding

your family of important things that they need to do differently.

This is a great task for the kids to do. You sketch out what you need the posters to say, and have them make them. Not only will they enjoy making the posters, but it will help them learn the concepts that you want them to learn.

WHAT CAN EACH FAMILY MEMBER DO?

One of the challenges in making your plan work is to figure out what each family member can do to benefit the family. Let me say something important right here. Everyone in your family has something that they can contribute to your family's survival. It doesn't matter if they're confined to a wheelchair, as long as they can think and use their hands, they can do something.

Being a part of the family's survival plan has another important purpose too. Everyone needs to feel like they are contributing something, in order to maintain mental and emotional stability. Without that, they are much more likely to become depressed or

emotionally overwhelmed by the situation.



Once again, we need to return to the model of the pioneers who settled the old west. One of the things that made society strong in that time was that the husband and wife were a team, working together. Each had their own tasks, which they were best suited to perform, but each knew that they needed the other in order to survive. You must recreate that same teamwork.

In a pioneer family, everyone had their part to play. Actually, it was an advantage to have a large family, as there were more people to split the workload.

As the children grew, they could take on more and larger responsibilities, although small children had their chores to complete too.

Modern political correctness tries to say that men and women are the same. Both can do the same things and both have the same characteristics. While that is true in some areas, the reality is that men and women are quite different. As we accept and embrace those differences, we discover what each are best suited for. It only makes sense to divide the workload in accordance with that natural ability, so that the work is more easily accomplished.

There's a reason why women have always been the one who has taken care of the kids. It's not because they are incapable of working, it's because nurturing comes more naturally to them.

Unfortunately, the women's lib movement has tried to make the traditional role of women seem unimportant. But, that just isn't true; it's one of the most important jobs there is. Men can't nurse a baby; no matter how hard they try; only women can.

So, men don't bond with the babies in the same way that women do. That makes a huge difference in how men approach everything having to do with kids.

Women aren't as physically strong as men are, at least not in most cases. So, work that requires high physical strength, especially upper body strength, usually falls to the man. That doesn't mean that women couldn't do that work if they needed to, just that it makes more sense to have the man use his natural strength to do that.



GET THE KIDS INVOLVED

For children, everything is an adventure and a learning experience. They typically

don't understand the gravity of the situation and are probably better off not understanding it. That doesn't mean that they can't participate and help the family. It just helps define the type of tasks that they are best suited to doing.

There are a number of simple tasks associated with survival in the aftermath of a crisis. That works out great for kids, as more than anything, the tasks they are assigned to do need to be simple ones, which don't require a lot of thinking. Nor can they be tasks that require a lot of strength, as children typically don't have a lot of strength. However, they do have time and enthusiasm on their side.

- ✓ Care for Animals - One of the best tasks to have children do is take care of the animals. If you have pets, they should already be doing this. Taking care of a pet teaches children responsibility. That could come in handy if you decide to raise chickens or other animals to help feed your family.

There's no reason why children can't feed the chickens and other animals, along with gathering eggs. In fact, they'll actually enjoy those tasks, as children generally love animals. Just remember to check up on them, as they tend to forget their responsibilities if not reminded.

- ✓ Bringing in Firewood - Another area that children can help with is bringing in firewood if you are using wood for heating or cooking. While a child can't carry a lot of logs at one time, they can carry a couple of cut pieces. If they have a wagon, they can bring in much more at once. Perch a stuffed animal on top of the wood, and it suddenly becomes a game.
- ✓ Watering & Weeding the Garden - If you start a vegetable garden to supplement your food stocks, the kids can help there as well. Watering the plants and pulling weeds are both time-consuming tasks that children can do.

This isn't the type of task to send them out to do on their own though, at least not at first, as it does require instruction and supervision. An added benefit is that it can become a great learning experience for them as well, as they learn to distinguish between weeds and the edible plants that you have in your garden.



LET YOUR WIFE BE A WOMAN

It is in a woman's nature to take care of her family. Feeding them, making sure that they have clothes to wear, and making sure the kids are clean are all part of her character. She doesn't need to be trained to take on these responsibilities, she just does them naturally.

Even women who work outside the home are focused on meeting their family's needs. Career women may struggle with internal conflict over priorities; whether

their work is more important or their family is. This is different for every woman, depending upon how they were raised and what priorities they have established for their lives. Nevertheless, women in a crisis situation will generally revert to what makes them most comfortable, taking care of their family.

While cooking for her family is second nature for most women, she may need some training in how to cook without the conveniences that she's used to using. Of course, this should have happened before the crisis started. Practicing the new cooking methods that your family will need to use in the aftermath of a disaster is an important part of prepping. Collecting recipes for the types of food you're going to prepare is important as well.

Always remember that there is a lot more strain on everyone's emotions during and after a crisis. A woman may struggle with this a bit. However, the best therapy is often to be able to take control of her home and her world. Being able to do the things that she feels are needed to take care of her family will go a long way towards making a woman feel as if things are okay, even when they clearly aren't.

It's not fair to expect a woman to do heavy physical tasks. Unless she spends a lot of time in the gym, she doesn't have

the muscle mass for this. Actually, women in third-world and developing countries are usually more muscular than American women, simply because they have to do a lot more physical work. That doesn't mean your wife can or should develop that strength. It simply means that she may need to borrow her husband's muscles at times, for tasks that she would normally do herself.



GRANDMA AND GRANDPA ARE VALUABLE ASSETS

While older family members may not have the physical stamina to do everything they used to do, they do have one thing that your family is going to need in order to make it through any crisis; they have experience. In many

cases, the ways that you are going to have to do things are ways that they grew up with. That experience will be invaluable, as they can teach other family members how to do things “the old way.”

Much of the supervision that children need for their tasks can be accomplished by granny and gramps as well, whether it's feeding the chickens or weeding the vegetable garden. This frees up stronger family members for tasks that require physical strength and stamina. This not only becomes a bonding time between grandparents and grandchildren, but it can also become a great teaching time for the younger generation.

While grandma and grandpa may not be the best help for your family physically, they can still offer a lot to help your family survive. More than anything, the knowledge they have will help keep your family healthy and functioning well.



WHAT ABOUT DISABLED FAMILY MEMBERS?

The greatest challenge in a difficult situation, such as the aftermath of a disaster, is what to do with disabled family members. These can be a challenge to take care of, even when things are “normal.” To most people, even the thought of taking care of them when things go bad is more than they care to face.

Nevertheless, most of the time these family members still have something that they can contribute to the family. While they may not be able to do heavy lifting or cut the firewood, most can still do manual tasks with their hands. What exactly they can do depends a lot on their level of disability, yet even people with severe problems can still do something.

So, what types of tasks can these family members do?

- ✓ Food preparation tasks

- ✓ Lookout for impending danger
- ✓ Keeping the fire burning
- ✓ Making candles and fire-starters

Putting these family members to work, even doing simple tasks, can do a lot to make them feel as if they are worthwhile and that they are contributing to the well-being of the family. That can make a huge difference in how they feel about themselves. In some cases, people who were totally incapacitated started becoming better, simply because of being given some responsibility that they needed to fulfill. As their feeling of self-worth increased, they tried harder, overcoming many problems.

DON'T FORGET THEIR SPECIAL NEEDS

In some cases, grandparents and disabled family members don't live at home with the family. Yet in a disaster situation, they might have to be brought home, as the places where they are normally cared for are unavailable to care for them. Part of your planning must include a plan for bringing these people home, in the case of a disaster.

This is actually much more than just how you are going to physically go pick them

up. That would only require having a vehicle and gasoline on hand. More than that, you also need to figure out where they're going to sleep and what special needs they have.

There are a number of special needs that need to be considered; everything from special foods to medicines and other medical supplies. Bringing these family members into your home, without the ability to care for them is only going to put a bigger burden on everyone. Having stockpiles of their special needs items can make things easier for everyone.

These could include:

- ✓ Medicines
- ✓ Feminine hygiene items
- ✓ Adult diapers
- ✓ Vitamins
- ✓ Durable medical equipment
- ✓ Special foods

Other stockpiles will need to increase as well. A family of four, who is going to bring grandma and grandpa home to weather the disaster, is suddenly a family of six. That means that you'll consume 50% more food, use 50% more water, and even need 50% more toilet paper. Everything that your family is stockpiling will have to be increased, in order to have enough to go around.

Children have their own special needs as well. While they may not have needs for special medicines, they have other needs. One of these is clothing. Adults can wear the same clothing until it wears out but children can't. Typically, they outgrow clothing much faster than they wear it out.

A prepper family who has growing children needs to keep this in mind. They literally need to buy clothing a couple of sizes larger than what their children are wearing, so that they'll have it ready in case clothing isn't available. This isn't actually much of a strain on the family budget, once you get started, as most are buying clothing for their children almost constantly. It just requires a different mindset, one in which you are buying for what they will need, instead of what they do need.

As the child grows, the clothing that they are growing into can be brought out of storage for use and new clothing that is larger can be purchased. By rotating clothing stocks this way, the same amount of clothing is being bought; it's just bought at a different time.

The only problem with this system is if you have a fashion-conscious child. There is no way of buying next year's styles today. Not only do we not know what they will be, but they usually don't

even exist. Of course, even the most fashion conscious child would rather wear something, than go around naked. So, some clothing can be bought ahead of time and stored, while the more stylish can be bought when it is needed.

Children also need play. While it is helpful to turn their chores into games, playtime for children is serious business. If your children are used to living in an electronic world, like most are today, then the loss of electrical power may leave them at a loss for what to do. They

may need help in figuring out how to play without electricity.

This is another area where grandma and grandpa can help. They didn't have electronic toys when they were children, they played with simple toys and used their imaginations. That could be just what is needed to keep the children comfortable and happy.

RECAP

You have to come to realize that no matter what your family situation is, you can do it! A very important part of prepping is developing a mindset that you are not going to be a victim of circumstances, and neither is your family. With that in mind, developing a plan that includes children, the elderly and even the disabled is possible.

Some people may think that they would be better off trying to survive without grandma and grandpa. The truth is, leaving them out will cause you more trouble than including them. If you are conscientious enough to be a prepper, then your guilt about not taking care of your family will be more than you can bear. That will ultimately hurt you and your family more than the extra work of taking care of family members that may seem too weak to take care of themselves.

Once you've decided that all your family is going to go through the crisis together, supporting each other, then it's just a matter of figuring out what part each family member is going to play. Developing a survival plan, where each family member can contribute, makes it much easier for everyone. It also helps build a feeling of teamwork and community.

Getting everyone involved is the best way to make your prepping and your survival work the best. Each can contribute something of value to the group's survival. They are valuable members of your community. As you make it through the struggles together, it will draw your family together, making you stronger and making your love for one another stronger too.

One last thing that I'd like to mention; there's another way that you can face any crisis, which might make it easier to have people who might otherwise be considered a burden. That is to create a prepping community.

If you and your neighbors work together in your prepping and make plans to help each other out in the case of a disaster, then the burden of taking care of children, the elderly and the disabled becomes easier. Not only that, but the contributions that those people make are magnified, as they will be helping the whole group, not just doing something for your family. Creating a prepping community actually makes it easier to find ways that your "problem family members" can contribute.

Always be sure to try out any plans you make. The old saying of "practice makes perfect" applies as well to prepping as it does to anything else. Not only that, but those practice runs are also test runs to make sure that everything is going to work as it should. As you find problems during your trial runs, you are able to make adjustments while you have the luxury of time, before you are faced with a crisis.

God bless,

Matt Stevens