

SurviveInPlace

Lesson #7
Building Your Team
aka -- "Mutual-Aid"

By

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Welcome to your seventh SurviveInPlace™ lesson!

Remember, this is a self-paced course, so you can complete it in 12 weeks or stretch it out longer once you've received the lessons.

Last week, we covered chemical and biological accidents and attacks and how to create a safe-room in your house for both. Did you do the exercise yet? If not, I encourage you to do so as soon as possible.

I'd love to hear how your exercises from last week went for you. Also, let me know about the additional resources that I started providing at the end of the lessons by commenting on the Lesson 6 Resources Page at: <http://urbansurvivalplan.com/306/lesson6resources>

This week, we're going to be covering the following:

1. Strategies for Finding Your Mutual-Aid Team Members
2. **OpSec and Team Building**
3. Minimizing Entanglements With Your Team

So, hit the "print" button, start reading, and let's get prepared!

Much of survival, like life, is about relationships. It's great to have lone-survivor skills, but for most people, it is more practical to survive disasters with someone else. I've gone 6 lessons without mentioning much from the Bible, but there is a quick section from Ecclesiastes 4 that is very applicable for this lesson:

⁹ Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their work:

¹⁰ If one falls down,
his friend can help him up.
But pity the man who falls
and has no one to help him up!

¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?

¹² Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

If you are ever in a situation where civil order has broken down you are most likely going to want to have a put team in place ahead of time that you know you can depend on. Joining forces with other people will allow you to “switch off” your mind and get good sleep, recuperate faster if you are injured or sick, split laborious tasks, and buoy each other’s spirits. In addition, joining forces will allow you to benefit from other people’s skills, experiences, and resources.

Again, this doesn’t just need t be an extreme disaster, like a terrorist attack or a full breakdown of civil order. Having a team in place is valuable for everyday disasters like floods, wildfires, hurricanes, and tornadoes.

When I’ve explained this concept to people before, one of the first responses is, “It sounds like you’re showing people how to make a mini-militia.” This is an inaccurate use of terms. Your group should be willing to help protect each other from physical attack, but most of the benefits of a small survival group are much more mundane. A better way to look at your “team” is as a mutual-aid group.

Let’s look at a quick example of this. Many “aware” and “switched-on” people in the US happen to be in their 60s and 70s. They are in the prime of their life as far as knowledge and wisdom and many have their survival resources in order from years of making frequent, small purchases. Unfortunately, they don’t have the stamina or strength that they did when they were younger, and may even have frustrating physical disabilities.

There are others taking this course who are in their mid 20s. They are full of energy, willing to take reasonable risks, and may even have great skills from Scouts, growing up hunting, or from law enforcement/military service. In any case, they don’t have the financial resources that their older counterparts have.

If the personalities match, and expectations were clearly defined, a couple in their 60s teaming up with a single person or young couple in their 20s could make a great match. They both have strengths and shortcomings and can both benefit tremendously from the relationship.

The older couple can share wisdom from decades of living as well as resources that the young couple would have to acquire over a course of several years. The young couple can do physical tasks much easier than the older couple and are a bigger deterrent to potential looters. In addition, if they are in a situation where they need to do a night watch, they can split it into 4 shifts, rather than only two.

If you remember the “Skills Assessment” that you completed in Lesson 4, you identified areas where you had strengths and weaknesses. You also identified the people who you currently know who live near you who are the MOST skilled in each particular area. We’re going to be using that information today to help pick out possible members for your team.

So how do you go about putting your team together? That’s kind of like asking someone, “So, how do I meet a spouse?” There are as many ways to accomplish this as there are people reading this, but I’m going to start off by telling you some things NOT to do:

1. Don’t tell your neighbors, “I’m ready for anything...I’ve got a year of food, medical supplies, and everything I need to stay safe if there’s a disaster.”
2. Don’t open a conversation by saying, “I’ve got lots of survival stuff...you want to watch each other’s back if there’s ever a problem?”
3. If you’ve got survival food/supplies in your garage, don’t leave them in the open where people can see them when your garage door is open. cover them up or mark them as something else, like “cross stitch from Mom”
4. Don’t approach someone about teaming up simply because they have a lot of guns or martial arts experience.
5. Don’t drone on to your friends/family/co-workers/etc. about preparedness and how important it is for them to start catching up.
6. Don’t team up with someone who has announced their preparation plans to everyone who will listen ever since Y2K.
7. Don’t try to approach the subject by using cryptic comments like, “If the zombies start knocking on my door, I’ve got everything in place to

take care of them...if you know what I mean." <<This is an actual comment I heard in a gun store.

I know people make these mistakes because I was making almost all of them before I started getting my plan picked apart by experts, and I still hear people making these mistakes almost daily.

In every case, these strategies expose you to unnecessary risks. We talked about this early on when we discussed Operational Security, but it's worth mentioning again. The risks that you assume when you talk openly about your preparations increase both your current risk of being burglarized and your possible risk of being looted/attacked in the event of a disaster.

Keep in mind that laws and laws of common decency go out the window when you are dealing with the parent of a hungry child. When you ask most parents how far they would go to feed their child if they hadn't eaten in days and were starving to death, they would say that they would do whatever they needed to in order to protect their child.

If they KNOW that you have a shelf full of #10 cans of food, how understanding do you think they'll be if you turn them away? If you give them food, who do you think they'll come back to in a day or two when they're hungry again? Do you think they'll come back alone or bring their friends too?

You see, the problem isn't helping one family, one time.

The problem is becoming another family's primary source of nourishment when you only have supplies for your own family.

If they bring their hungry friends, you may find yourself helping a dozen families repeatedly when you only prepared to take care of you and your family and possibly some charity.

Some of the stories that have come out of New Orleans after Katrina make this point painfully clear. People who were known to have supplies on hand and people who openly helped friends and neighbors early on often faced an unwelcome reality when they started turning away people.

Once they were identified as a source of food, hungry neighbors felt that they were entitled to that food. Some of the intimidation and revenge

techniques included throwing rocks/bricks at houses, attacks on pets, kidnapping and **holding pets hostage in exchange for food**, assault, and (supposedly) even gunfire.

Add to this the reality that many people's survival plan consists of buying enough ammo to take whatever food they need by force. Just two weeks before writing this, I stood in a circle with eight active duty military talking about how quickly things were crumbling. When the conversation moved to preparations, I found myself listening to them mock families who stockpile food and detail their plans on how to "liberate" it if they ever need to.

Some of the comments were, "If they're dumb enough to buy food instead of guns, they don't deserve to live." and "When it comes down to it, my family is more important than their family and I'll take what I need." and "I don't have room to store a year of food, but I do have room for another case of .223."

I'm guessing that some of the guys in that circle were like me and just played along so as to not put a target on our back, but there were enough active participants in the conversation for it to be unsettling. I love our military, and this plan is not pervasive among military personnel, but it is all too common among the general public. Unfortunately, I overhear this exact line of reasoning at least 1-2 times a month as I'm in stores, restaurants, and at gun ranges.

It's for this reason that I want to share a "mature" analogy with you. While it is not a perfect analogy, there are a lot of similarities between having sex and information sharing. In both cases, if you get intimate too soon you can get taken advantage of. Neither of them can be "undone", and the consequences of doing either with the wrong person can be long lasting.

You've probably made the mistake of sharing too much information about your survival plan already. Since you can't change the past, the only thing you can do is start moving forward smartly. We'll be covering a strategy of "decoy caches" in a couple of lessons that will help limit the damage.

Another analogy (I must admit that it is a little overly dramatic) is that building up your team while keeping operational security is like cultivating a spy network in a hostile country. In both cases, you want to get as much information as possible without divulging any more than necessary and

ideally, you want your level of preparations to remain unknown to everyone except your key people.

The simplest way to look at team building is to treat it somewhat like you would dating and trying to find a spouse or a business owner trying to find a key employee.

Whichever lens you decide to look at the team building process through, there is a lot of overlap between finding a spouse, key employee, and building a spy network, so don't feel like you need to get too tied to any particular one.

There are several ways to find members for your team, but here's a GENERAL 7 point plan:

1. **Determine Your Team Profile:** Figure out what kind of person/people you're looking for. Use your skills assessment from earlier to help clarify what you need.
2. **Identify Possible Individuals/Families:** Start identifying people who you think would fit. (Remember in Lesson 4 when I told you that you were going to use your Skills Assessment in a future lesson? Now is the time.)
3. **Make First Impressions:** Get to know the person on a surface level.
4. **See If You're Compatible:** If the initial conversations go well, start asking them easy questions about politics, the economy, self-reliance, disasters, etc.

Make them conversational and comfortable so that it doesn't feel like an interview or an interrogation.

Not everyone will be compatible. Think of this like fishing. Sometimes they bite, sometimes they don't. Either way, just keep on casting.

There are articles in the paper and spots on TV almost every day on survival, so you can ask what they think about the article or TV spot without revealing anything. Try to ASK as many questions as possible without "showing your cards" (include spouses if it's a married person.)

Don't force a relationship that's doomed from the start. If they aren't on the same page as you, move on.

5. **Test The Relationship:** Try to do some activities together that will let you see each other under LIGHT stress. This could be a household project with a tight deadline (working with concrete is a good one,) primitive camping, or even a road trip or car camping.

It could also be as simple as going skydiving or bungee jumping. It could also be taking a class together that neither of you are skilled in. In any case, you want to see how each other responds when you're outside of your comfort zones.

Test the RELATIONSHIP, not the PERSON. The last thing you want to do is make someone feel like you're trying to make them fail.

6. **Test The Waters:** If everything goes well up to this point, tell them that you're interested in finding a few people who are willing to get the supplies and training necessary to survive a local or national "incident" and commit to helping others in the group regardless of whether or not an "incident" ever happens.
7. **Move Forward:** Develop group and individual goals for supplies, skills, and advanced training together and start sharing information. Make it clear from the onset that operational security is key and that everybody is expected to have supplies above the minimums that they do not tell others in the group about.

Who are you looking for? What kind of attributes are you looking for in your group? It's going to depend from individual to individual, but the more attributes you have on your list, the better group you'll end up with BUT it also means you'll have to go through a lot more people to find your group. Here are a few key things to look for:

1. Trustworthy
2. Similar or complementary worldview (religion, politics, self reliance, etc.)
3. Tolerance for different habits, opinions, and personalities

4. The closer you live to each other, the better. If you're next door neighbors or live across the street from each other, it will allow you to literally watch out for each other, give each of you a retreat location if something happens to your house, and it will allow you to have a larger group and still have some space.
5. Mentally resilient
6. Adventuresome
7. Adaptable
8. Willing to work
9. Willing to learn
10. Someone you'd trust to raise your kids.

You're going to have your own attributes that you consider key. Please share them with myself and the other students by posting them on the blog for this lesson at www.urbansurvivalplan.com/320/lesson7t

How big of a group?

I suggest that you decide this before starting your search for other team members. You're going to want a small number so that disease spread and OpSec aren't problems, but a large enough group so that you'll have a wide range of skills and enough people to have one group venture out while another protects your home base. Keep in mind that if you don't have neighbors on your team, or a very large house, you'll be limited by the size of your house and the duration of the incident.

If you have the space, I agree with James Rawles assessment that 10-12 people is the ideal number. It is a large enough group to allow for people to have down time due to sickness/injury without being a logistical nightmare. Most people are not going to be able to fit this many people, food, water, and supplies into their house, condo, or apartment, so you will have to adapt the number to fit your individual situation.

A few days into an incident, you'll probably have a good idea about who in your neighborhood is "switched on" and who is in trouble. (try to appear as if you're barely making it) Once these "switched on" people start showing

themselves, you can consider joining up with them, but remember to always underplay your resources and skills. You don't want to become the neighborhood convenience store or source of free labor unless you KNOW you have more than enough of both to give.

Strategies for finding people.

1. Start with people you know and like.
2. Promote SurviveInPlace locally. This is a shameless pitch, but it is also good, solid advice. If you promote the course through Clickbank, you'll get 50% of every sale (and rebill) after Clickbank's fees.

So if three people sign up through you, your course will be paid for and you'll be making money. If you are going to do this, let us know your Clickbank ID and where you live and we'll create a special URL (SurviveInPlace.com/Dallas or something similar) that is simple for you to send people to.

As people sign up, you'll get their email address (but none of their billing information or their address, just like I don't get your billing information or mailing address) and you can contact them and start an anonymous conversation with them by email. Here are some free/cheap strategies for promoting it:

- a. Flyers at coffee shops with the URL on tearaway tabs
- b. Flyers at gun ranges
- c. Craigslist.com
- d. Survivalism.meetup.com
- e. Backpage.com
- f. Kijiji.com

If you want a sample flyer, let me know and I'll post it on the forum.

3. Announce yourself (using a handle) in the meetup section of the SurviveInPlace forum at www.SurviveInPlace.com/members

4. Take a local CERT (Civilian Emergency Response Team), search and rescue, or a local multi-day firearms class. In each case, listen a LOT and share very little specific information, even if asked directly. Arrive early so you can sit in the back of the room and watch the other students.
5. Your city/county may have a formal mutual aid or sherrif's auxiliary group in place to help law enforcement and first responders during emergencies.
6. Local John Galt or Sarah Connor groups.
7. 2600.com or lock picking groups. << OpSec is VERY important in these groups, but I've found their social engineering/hacking habits to be valuable.
8. Tea party or "5000 Year Leap" groups.
9. Join an existing group. Groups of people agreeing to help each other through thick and thin are not new and many formal and informal groups already exist. You can find existing groups looking for additional members on survival.meetup.com and you may find less formal groups in your own area during your search.

They may be a group of guys from your local National Guard unit, local firemen/police/medical professionals, or other similar groups.

If they let you into their circle, military and civil service units could be a great fit for your family. In the event of a disaster, they will most likely be hot bunking at their station, if they are resting at all and won't be able to watch over their family. If they realize this and accept you, it can make you a welcome member of their group and give you access to resources that you may not be able to get otherwise.

Asking and answering questions

With any of these strategies, a good segway into the topic (Step 4, seeing if you're compatible, above) is something like the following, "I've been thinking about taking a course I saw online called, "Survive In Place." It basically walks you through the steps to survive a disaster in an urban environment if you can't leave. With all of the stuff I'm seeing in the news,

it seems like I need to do SOMETHING to get ready. It sounds a little crazy to be saying, but...well...I don't know. What do you think?"

Or

"I saw a special on Hannity the other night on urban survival and it got me thinking. With all of the stuff I'm seeing in the news, it seems like I need to do SOMETHING to get ready. It sounds a little crazy to be saying, but...well...I don't know. What do you think?"

These are inviting, open ended questions that make people feel free to throw out their opinion without risk of being judged.

At some point after asking this, you're going to be asked questions. Here is a strategy that you can use early on in these relationships when you're posed with questions.

If they ask if you've done anything to prepare yet, you can say something like, "we've got a few cans of rice and beans, but nothing major." This makes it sound like you don't have very much at all and the terms are so relative that you are not lying.

If you are asked directly how much you have, you can also say, "I know we've got at least 5 cans...maybe 10 or so." This will be an honest answer, regardless of whether you have 10 or 100 cans.

I like this strategy of admitting to having a small amount of supplies because it allows me to tell the "truth" without telling the whole truth unnecessarily.

Rough waters ahead...

Accept the fact right now that you will probably screw up a few times along the way in forming your team. Did you ever date someone who you didn't marry? Did you ever hire someone who didn't work out as well as you thought they would? Unfortunately, that's reality.

Keep in mind that, even though 95% of marriages are "true love", 50% still end in divorce. There are no statistically significant numbers on "mutual-aid" groups like what we're discussing in this lesson, but it's fair to assume that the numbers will be similar to dating/marriage numbers.

With these facts in mind, there are a few common practices that you might want to avoid:

1. Don't co-mingle supplies unless they are clearly separated and marked. If your neighbor has a lot of storage space and you go in on a bulk buy together, spend the extra \$10-\$20 to get big Rubbermaid storage containers where you can store your portion.
2. Don't buy property, vehicles, or other items together. Have each person/couple buy things separately. Let's say that you and another couple both want a roto-tiller and a Big Berkey water filter and they happen to be about the same price. Instead of pooling your money and both buying both of them, simply have one couple buy the roto-tiller and the other buy the Berkey and agree to share them with each other.
3. There is no reason to share all of the specifics on what supplies you have on hand.

Unless you've worked in an undercover role at some point, you're skills are not going to be perfect. I encourage you to not hold yourself to a standard of perfection that is beyond your training. At the same time, take every conversation as an opportunity to improve your operational security skills.

Have fun with your group.

Don't make your group JUST about surviving the end of the world. Make sure to remember to enjoy life together. Have dinners together, do projects together, take classes together. If you've got 3-4 couples, you could even bring in a marriage counselor from your church to lead a couples study on relationships for a few weeks. Get creative. If you already have a group and have some fun, practical stories or ideas for activities to do together, please let us know at www.urbansurvivalplan.com/320/lesson7t

This Week's Assignments

To Do:	Date First Completed:
Go over your skills assessment from lesson 4. Update if necessary	
Practice your "half-truth" responses to questions about your level of preparedness.	
Start "casting" or talking with people about survival news that you see or read about.	
Start writing down what you want your group to look like...number of people, proximity, common traits, etc. Share them at www.UrbanSurvivalPlan.com/320/lesson7t	
Make a post on the forum at www.surviveinplace.com/members in the "Local Meet Ups" section.	
Check local CERT class schedules at https://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/	
Look into local search and rescue, auxillary, and mutual-aid programs.	
Sign up for a Clickbank account so you can get paid to promote SurviveInPlace.com > www.surviveinplace.com/clickbank	
When you've got your Clickbank ID, put it into this link and start promoting on Kijiji, Craigslist, and Backpage. http://YOURCLICKBANKID.urbsurv.hop.clickbank.net	

If you aren't able to get through all of the exercises this week, that is alright. The main thing is that you keep making progress. Remember, this is a self-paced course, so it's great if you complete it in 12 weeks, but there's nothing wrong with completing it over 24 weeks.

I'd love to hear your feedback on this. Did you love this lesson? Have questions? Want to know where to buy the "stuff" listed? Want more information on chemical and biological threats? If so, go to www.UrbanSurvivalPlan.com/320/lesson7t

See you in 7 days!

God Bless,

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