



FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

"One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we are not prepared." ~ Merlin Olsen

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Fear

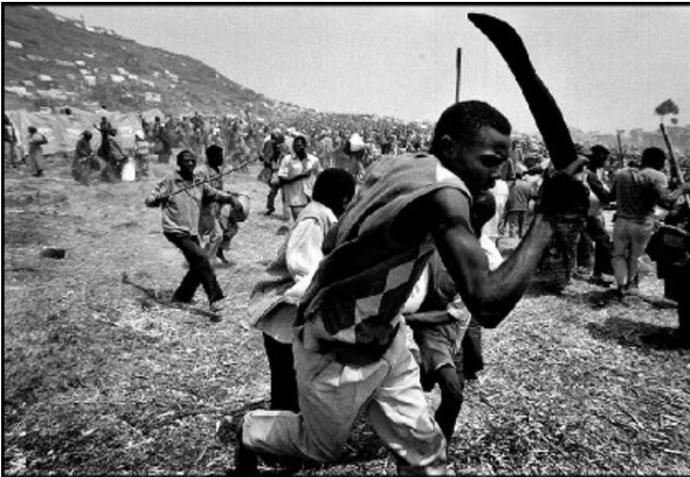
The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace in a continual state of alarm (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing them with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary. ~ H.L. Mencken

The two emotions that drive the financial markets are greed and fear. Due to [loss aversion bias](#), humans feel the pain of a loss about 2.5 times more than they feel the joy of a gain of the same size. This is "irrational" in a financial laboratory, but it's perfectly rational on say, the plains of Africa, where resources are scarce. Having spent nearly 25 years in the investment industry, I can tell you that fear is a very powerful emotion. It reveals human nature, and how Man is really red in tooth and claw.

Dealing with fear is a common topic in the preparedness



literature. (BTW, some people believe that by thinking about what could go wrong and preparing for it, it will make you more fearful, but the opposite is true: It will give you peace of mind. If you want to experience fear, go into a crisis unprepared.) Security expert Gavin de Becker writes that [true fear is a gift](#); it's an instinct that can help you survive.

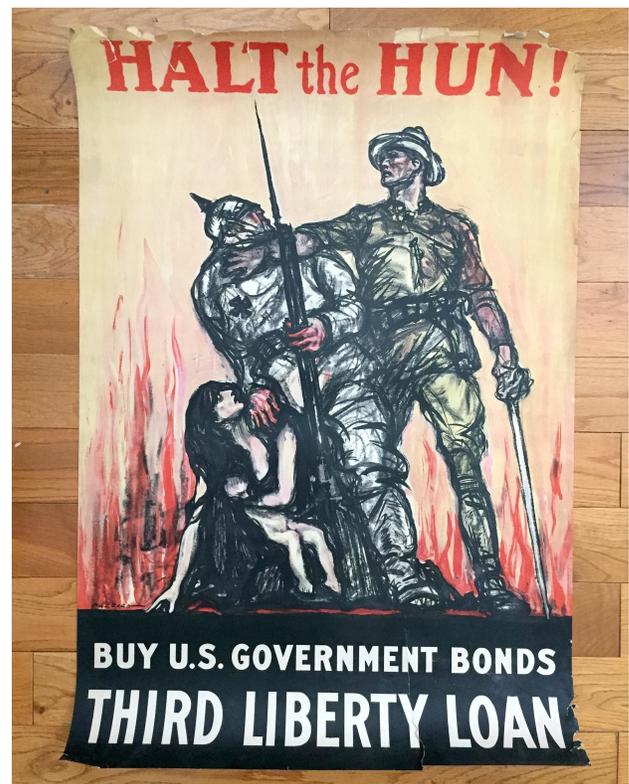


Currently, our society is drenched in fear. In fact, it's been marinating in it for the last 20 years. It's now so bad that some people actually find satisfaction or even joy in the death of some of their fellow Americans. This *Schadenfreude* is a sign of how far off the rails we've gone and how sick our society has become. And if we don't get a grip and start to do our own research (instead of relying on the media and self-appointed "fact checkers") and think for ourselves soon, it could easily

lead to some madness like the Salem witch trials or even the Hutus vs. the Tutsis.

Fear shuts down your brain's prefrontal cortex and puts you in Fight or Flight mode, thus preventing any critical thinking. The power-hungry and most politicians love fear because it allows them to get away with virtually anything. The vast majority of people know almost nothing about psychology, but the power-hungry are experts in it. Invariably, they tap in to Man's basest, most tribal instincts by demonizing a foreigner or a minority. For example, during The Great War, the bloody Hun wanted to burn your house, rape your wife and bayonet your child. The solution, of course, was to shut up, enlist to fight and give your money to the federal government.

The media is in the business of producing and disseminating fear. Even at the local level, "If it bleeds, it leads." Our poor primitive brains (which are used to nothing really happening from day to day) can't handle this never-ending deluge of bad news and fear, especially the anecdotal stories shot in high definition video that make it *real*. (Statistics don't really mean much to the human brain; what it feasts on are *stories*.) If you want to hook your body up to a steady drip of fear (and thus stress, which is terrible for your immune system and well-being), sit there and watch



CNN all day. Ironically, doing so will make you *more* likely to get COVID-19. By the way, Big Pharma is the biggest patron of both politicians and the media. The three of them have a symbiotic relationship with each other, which explains almost everything.

To help wind down at night and get me ready to sleep, I've been reading books that provide some levity so that my brain isn't thinking about the heavy issues of the day when I climb into bed. I just finished reading [I'm Your Emotional Support Animal: Navigating Our All Woke No Joke Culture](#) by comedian Adam Carolla. It's full of raunchy, lowbrow humor that is definitely not politically correct or “safe for work.” But it also has some great writing and brilliant observations. (In order for something to be funny, it has to contain some kernel of truth, so I think successful comedians have to be keen observers of human nature.)

At the end, he addresses the common theme that permeates our society today: “The undercurrent of all my beefs in this book is fear. That's the bottom line of this shitty era we live in. Fear 'Brave' is the buzzword for this era The other version of this idea that I see everywhere is 'fearless.' Recently, I saw a magazine cover featuring Chrissy Teigen with the headline, 'Food, Family & Being Fearless.' Yeah, talking sh*t about Trump on Twitter and making scones with brown bananas—fearless!!!” If criticizing the most reviled person on the planet in Twitter's echo chamber gets you lauded on a magazine cover, it's not fearlessness, it's virtue signaling.

Also, fearlessness seems to be synonymous with bravery, but I don't think fearlessness is a realistic concept because in any situation that's risky or dangerous, every sane person has to grapple with fear. When I coached soccer, I had some small patches that the kids could earn for different things, one of which was bravery. Invariably, this meant being tough and getting back up after getting hurt, hit hard or knocked down. I explained to my team that bravery isn't the absence of fear, but doing something *even though* you're afraid. Carolla writes, “Being fearless isn't about not feeling fear; it's about mitigating fear It's about weighing a risk and embarking on a venture despite that risk—taking the leap of faith that you might not succeed but goddammit, you're going to try.”

Bravery includes doing the right thing even though doing so puts your life at risk and the odds against you are overwhelming. For example, Sophie Scholl and the rest of [The White Rose Society](#) were brave. BTW, I just read this review of the book [An Honourable Defeat: A History of German Resistance to Hitler, 1933-1945](#):

“...after the failure of the assassination attempt on July 20th 1944, the Gestapo and the SS launched operation Thunderstorm, which eliminated thousands of Germans who were under suspicion (however slight) of disloyalty to the regime....It is a book about heroes, those who risked and lost their lives in an effort to thwart the plans of someone that history has confirmed as a madman. Why are they heroes? Among other reasons, because they had the perception to recognize Hitler as such AT THE TIME. It is easy to look back at this era and think of 'what I would have done' but Gill's book shows us how truly difficult it was to be the one who resisted. For instance, it is certain that at no time could the conspirators, at whatever level they were working, count on the support of the populace or any form of legal recourse. Their lives were on the line. No turning back. But we who have



never lived in a police state, who can criticize our government in letters to the newspaper or on an open postcard to a friend, who can speak our minds freely on the telephone or on the computer, can have no idea of what it is like to work against a regime whose hold on power depends on fear and informers, on mistrust and deception, on children reporting parents and parents denouncing children. This book is the story of those who resisted, at a time when the penalty for writing

'Down With Hitler' on a wall was nothing less than death! We can't imagine. Heroes like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, Sophie Scholl, General Hans Oster, Ludwig Beck....You will hope against hope for these and so many others....Gill's explanation of the events makes the heart pound....The resolve, the fortitude, the determination of Stauffenberg is literally amazing.”

Certainly Chrissy Teigen deserves to be included in such a book for her “fearlessness,” with readers' hearts pounding as they read to find out if she will escape with her life after criticizing Trump. If she was “fearless,” it's because she had nothing to fear.

Journalists who speak truth to Power, such as [Glenn Greenwald](#), are brave. Whistleblowers such as Edward Snowden are brave. An Army medic who desperately tries to save the life of a fellow soldier whose leg was just blown off while people are shooting at them and blood from the femoral artery is spurting everywhere is brave (though he will never make the cover of a magazine). The guy who stood in front of a column of tanks to prevent them from entering Tiananmen Square and crushing and killing pro-democracy protesters was brave.



Carolla continues: “The more your life is focused on dealing with fear, the dumber you are. The news media, the politicians . . . are trying to scare you into giving them your money, and in the case of social media, your attention and personal information. The more susceptible you are to that fear, the dumber you are and the more of your life you're wasting.”

“We've been trained to be triggered by the mass media and Madison Avenue, by professors and politicians. We've been trained to live as if we are victims, that our power resides outside ourselves in the form of our support animals or in the group that we've identified ourselves as part of, even if that group is just a bunch of people using the same hashtag.”

In an epilogue about COVID-19, he writes, “...the real pandemic is people . . . panicking. That spread further, wider, and much faster than the virus ever did. This was hysteria in the truest sense of the word . . . This pandemic exposed a major flaw in our society . . . We, literally, can't do the math. All of our problems . . . are fueled by feelings rather than facts. We have data that we are ignoring. The news is complicit in this. It's their job to scare the crap out of you.”



What You Should Be Doing Now

I plan to cover the why and how of these in future issues (if I haven't already), but here are some actions I recommend you take (or at least start thinking about) now:

1. If you are fearful, stressed out, or not sleeping well, go on a hiatus from the news, especially TV news. (If you want a deeper understanding of a subject, read a book.) If you're in Fight or Flight mode, realize that and do what you need to to get yourself out so you can think critically again. Be skeptical of what you read or hear. Look for motives and hidden agendas, and ask who benefits. Use a search engine such as Duck Duck Go that doesn't censor websites or content, steer you towards what Google wants you to see, or track you. Read about psychology and history. Get some perspective. Take long walks in sunshine, surrounded by nature and beauty. Stretch, move and exercise. Prioritize sleep. Feed your body with good nutrition and water. Practice gratitude. Spend time with your family and pets.
2. Prepare for high probability and high impact scenarios so you'll fear them less.
3. Books to read: [The Truth About COVID-19: Exposing The Great Reset, Lockdowns, Vaccine Passports, and the New Normal](#) by Dr. Joseph Mercola and Ronnie Cummins. This is the most devastating book I've ever read. I had always wondered why Dr. Fauci sent millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars to the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) so the Chinese government could do gain-of-function research (i.e., making a virus more contagious and lethal) on bat coronaviruses. This book reveals the reason: When Obama found out that the federal government was funding this research in the U.S., he realized how dangerous it was and banned it in the U.S. So Fauci simply shifted the research to China in an end run around his own boss, even though U.S. diplomats there had warned about the risk of an accidental release at WIV. (BTW, both WIV and the Chinese CDC are located in the middle of Wuhan, a city of 11 million people, so great decision there.) Putting Fauci in charge of the U.S. response to COVID-19 is like putting Dr. Josef Mengele in charge of the Nuremberg trials; it's the perfect place to hide since no one will question you. The book also includes recommendations for supplements and medications you can take either prophylactically or if you contract COVID-19.

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I would love to hear from you! I thrive on feedback from readers. If you have any comments, suggestions, insight/wisdom, or you'd like to share a link to a great article, please [email me](#).

Generally, I don't have time to answer questions about your specific situation, but if you have a general question that I think other readers also have, [let me know](#) and I will provide an answer in a future issue.

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