



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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More Prepping Lessons Learned

Last week I uploaded that week's issue ([Prepping Lessons Learned from the Hurricane](#)) a day early and then went to bed as Hurricane Milton made landfall on the Florida coast. The next morning at 6:30 I saw that my 87-year old father (who lives in central Florida) had sent me the following text at midnight: "I need your help ASAP. Tree down on roof with a lot of damage." Now it just so happens that I'm currently facing some important deadlines for my business by the end of October, and then the election on November 5 will produce an extreme binomial outcome that could result in extreme volatility. Lesson #1: *A crisis probably won't happen at a convenient time for you.*

As a risk manager and [a prepper](#), I've thought about and prepared for a wide variety of potential risks (including storms), but I don't think I had ever considered the possibility of having to rescue a helpless relative who was more than an eight hour drive away. Lesson #2: *A crisis may be similar to what you expected, but with a significant twist.* And Lesson #3: *Instead of having to rescue yourself, it's probably more likely that you'll have to rescue other people.*

I didn't know if I could even physically make it to my father's house. In the early morning after Milton made landfall, there was little information about conditions in the state. I knew there was at least 1,000 gas stations in Florida that had no gas. I didn't know if the

roads were passable or what traffic was like. I didn't know which gas stations still had gas and electricity, or whether they would accept credit cards. I didn't know if my father had power, water, Internet or cell phone service. If he didn't have power or water, I didn't know when it would come back up. Lesson #4: *During a crisis, there will probably be little information available.*

A prepper friend of mine heard about my problem and soon showed up at my house with a generator, ratchet straps and rope (none of which I had; I ended up using the straps and rope). He then helped me load my truck even though he needed to get to work. Lesson #5: *You need other people to help you get through a crisis* (ideally, a survival or mutual assistance group). And Lesson #6: *You find out who your friends are in a crisis.*

I started packing using a printed copy of my standard packing list, to which I had to add some prepping items related to storms, loss of power, water and gas, etc. It would have been easier if I had made a (threat-based) list of these items and considerations ahead of time. My wife came up with a lot of ideas at the last minute, some good and some fanciful. At some point, having to listen to and consider all of them started to delay my departure. Lesson #7: *Think about and prepare for things in advance so that when a crisis happens, you can start to take action almost immediately.* And Lesson #8: *At some point, you will need to stop thinking about what you might need and start **doing**; be mindful of when that should occur.*

I had seven [NATO jerry cans full of gas](#) that I took with me in case gas wasn't available locally, or in case we needed to power the generator. I had the option of putting them inside my truck's bed or on an exterior cargo shelf that I could attach to my trailer hitch. I chose the first option with the tonneau cover closed over them, as I wanted to be Gray Man in case I came into an area where stranded motorists were desperate for gas. I also had the means to protect myself.

I also took ten gallons of potable water to drink or use to flush toilets, as well as over a case of bottled water. I also had at least one [Mini Sawyer water filter](#). A [Berkey water filter](#) would have been better, but the Biden administration decided to regulate them as if the filter in them were a pesticide, so they are no longer available.

I threw in some flashlights, spare batteries, solar lanterns, candle lanterns, canned food, plenty of nuts, supplements and superfoods, wet wipes, power banks and a hand crank radio. On my way out of town, I bought a large tarp and withdrew the maximum \$300 from an ATM.

A crisis brings out the best (and the worst) in people, so the vast majority are helpful and cooperative. This has allowed humans to get through crises together for millennia.

My dad's household helpers were actually sheltering with him during the night of the hurricane, so after a very large oak tree fell on his bedroom, the next morning a handful of men busted out three chainsaws and had the tree off the roof and cut up in no time.



After loading my dad's bed and lift chair into my truck and doing some remediation in the house, I had a little time to gather items he might need. I chose two boxes full of medical supplies, some of which he needed within 24 hours. Lesson #9: *Always keep a wide variety of medical supplies on hand.* There is no substitute when you need them.

Relocating and taking care of an elderly, immobile and feeble person who needs regular medical care takes a team of caring adults working together, as it requires a lot of time and energy. Lesson #10: *You can make a difficult situation significantly better by being flexible and helpful, having a good attitude and practicing kindness and gratitude.* And Lesson #11: *It is much easier to get through a crisis if you are healthy and physically fit.*

The other night I received a call in the middle of the night. My dad wanted to talk to me, but his speech was very slurred and something was very wrong with his body. I suspected a stroke, so my sister called 911 and an ambulance took him to the ER. Turns out his blood sugar was only 37: the result of the recent change in his diet, skipping dinner and taking a drug that lowers blood sugar. Lesson #12: *During a crisis, you get out of your routine, which can lead to other problems.*

It's a lot easier to make it through a crisis if you're organized and know where everything is so you don't have to spend a lot of time and energy looking for things or wondering if you have something. Store items such as straps and extension cords in a neat manner so you don't have to waste time untangling them. Keep your address book up to date and know how to get in touch with people using different means.

When a somewhat predictable event such as bad weather is approaching, take a few minutes and think about what you might need to do in case it affected you or your family or friends, or if it was worse than expected or resulted in an unexpected problem, and go ahead and get some key preps ready. And after a crisis, do an after-action review so you can identify holes in your preps and fix them. Pain is a great teacher.

Check your preps periodically (better yet, make it a recurring item on your calendar). Batteries can go dead, food and medicine can expire, etc. A crisis is not the time to find out that the prep you thought you had made actually is not available.

My dad has been very grateful for the care he's received from his family and his support network, and often wonders what people do who have no family or money. Or, I add, friends/relationships, health, knowledge, skills and access to information.

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