



Liberty.me



The Liberty Prepping Mindset

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GUIDE 1.0

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INTRODUCTION

“I am free because I know that I alone am morally responsible for everything I do. I am free, no matter what rules surround me. If I find them tolerable, I tolerate them; if I find them too obnoxious, I break them. I am free.”

— Robert A. Heinlein

Prepping is often associated with planning for emergencies, including a social or economic collapse. Through strategies such as stockpiling food and learning self-defense, people try to make themselves safe in the face of danger. I sincerely wish survivalist preppers well.

Liberty is like luck; it favors the prepared.

This guide has a different focus, however: liberty prepping. It is not about survival but about thriving without the state.



The guide briefly sketches the attitudes and some of the practical tactics through which you can embrace freedom by controlling your time and living according to your own values. Part of that control consists of adopting a more independent, self-sufficient lifestyle, which often overlaps neatly with the more customary survivalist approach to prepping. But the spotlight is not on surviving catastrophic events, as important as such survival admittedly is; it is on maximizing personal liberty by making your daily life a state-free zone or as close to it as possible.

The great political lie is the idea that people need the state.

would not be paved, health-care would disappear, and crime would spill through the streets. Nonsense. The state produces nothing whatsoever; it only consumes what indi-

The great political lie is the idea that people need the state. Truth be known, the state needs people and it is desperate for them to believe it is indispensable. Without it, the state wants you to believe children would not be educated, the roads

The state produces nothing whatsoever; it only consumes what individuals create.



viduals create. The “services” it provides are so notoriously inefficient and incompetent that they are worse than nothing at all; public schools are an example. The state is the single biggest threat to everyone’s freedom and well-being. People may well have to tolerate some level of state presence in their lives—like taxes—simply to avoid punishment. But that presence can be dramatically reduced by refusing to cooperate whenever possible at every turn. You can take effective steps.

The first step is to take responsibility for your needs and desires. Not for the ones you’ve shouldered because of a corporate vision of climbing ever higher on an economic ladder, despite the damage that the brutal climb inflicts on your life. Not the ones inspired by political pundits who want you to act in a manner that suits their ends, such as being an obedient citizen or a good patriot. Ask yourself, What do you want? The question may be surprisingly difficult to answer, because many people have moved so far away from any passions that a numbness has set in. Which activities enrich you and leave you eager to trade your time—which is your life—in order to pursue them? This is “the pursuit of happiness” that was promised along with “life” and “liberty” in the Declaration of Independence. You need to make



a personal declaration of independence, and mean it.

The next step is to define in as specific terms as possible what a free and satisfying life means to you. Generally speaking, freedom means living according to your own values while respecting the equal freedom of others. But the specifics of being free and happy are going to differ for everyone. For people who love a rural lifestyle, a self-sufficient farm may be ideal; certainly, placing acres of space and privacy around you is a protection from the state. For those who need the buzz of traffic to fall asleep, liberty prepping in an apartment is probably a better choice. This means that no peaceful action you take is right or wrong, there is no schedule for you to trip over, and that no one but you has any business judging the process or your progress.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR LIFE A STATE-FREE ZONE

“Freedom is living your life as you want to live it. You can have that freedom now, without waiting to change the world or the people around you.”

— Harry Browne

Liberty prepping is a personal strategy, not a political movement intending to change a law or alter a political institution. It aims at privatizing your own life.

The ideal is to never deal with the state again. You will fall short of this ideal, if only because you drive on the state monopoly known as roads. Think of the goal of freedom as something to be approached (a process) rather than to



be achieved (an end state). The situation is similar to pursuing perfect physical health. For most people, perfection is not possible because of physical defects such as poor eyesight or high blood pressure. But that doesn't mean you should stop taking vitamins or exercising; the real goal is to get as close to health as you can.

An important aspect of liberty prepping is to change your habits, to change your relationship with and attitude toward the state. The following are various strategies to do so. Start with whichever one is easiest; start with whatever benefits you the most.

1. Do not willingly associate with an agent or agency of the state.

This strategy is controversial because it involves not collecting entitlements such as social security and not availing yourself of government “services” such as the police or the public school system. A great many people will decide that the expense in time and inconvenience of eschewing state services is too high. Homeschooling, for example, often requires a substantial investment of time—frequently, one parent must forgo a full-time career.

Nevertheless, the best way to stay out of the system is simply that: to stay out of the system. At least, as much as you possibly can. It is true that next to no one is entirely absent from government databases these days, but the situation only worsens every time you register for a program or file a request with a government agency. You never know what piece of information will cause a red flag to pop up and a government worker to knock on your door. For example, a social worker might want

to follow up on your child's statement to a classmate, “my daddy owns guns.”

View every encounter with the authorities as a potential threat to your safety.

View every encounter with the authorities as a potential threat to your safety. This is particularly true of aggressive state agencies such as law enforcement. Even if you are the victim of a crime, seeking out a police officer is a dangerous matter. You may evince the “wrong” attitude or you may have unwittingly committed a crime yourself; vague offenses such as “obstructing a police officer” can be stretched to fit almost any behavior. If the officer feels his authority is being questioned, then you may well be physically attacked.

You never know what piece of information will cause a red flag to pop up and a government worker to knock on your door.



2. If you associate with an agent or agency, do so in a polite and minimal manner.

Always be polite. Whatever purpose you have in dealing with the state is best served by avoiding conflict and drawing little attention to yourself. It is not only the TSA who will handle you and yours with brutality for telling the “wrong” joke or having a “bad” attitude. It is also every civil servant basking in his meager and petty authority; he may be quick to take offense and retaliate, perhaps without even telling you. Do not make the exchange personal. Zero in on achieving what you are trying to accomplish: renewing a driver’s license, paying property tax—whatever. Then leave.

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on you.

Always provide the minimal information and the minimal interaction possible. If the NSA proves anything, it is that the state wants every scrap of information it can obtain on you and there is never a point at which the collected data enhances your freedom or safety. Information is the state’s lifeblood. Imagine a nation which had no personal databases. How would it know what taxes you should pay or how much they should be? How would the state find your sons and daughters to ship off to foreign wars where they risk their lives to kill strangers? Where would the state go to arrest you for a traffic offense or take away your children because an ex-spouse alleges you use marijuana? The detailed collection of personal data is a top priority for the state. This means privacy should be a top priority for you.

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For example, when you are questioned at an airport, try to make your answers monosyllabic. The agent is not your friend. His job is to police you and catch you in lies or make you slip up in some manner. Then, you will be interrogated and harassed further for trying to exercise your right to travel. If the inconvenience is not too great, consider driving or hopping a train; the state tends to intrude less upon those who travel by car or train than it does upon those who fly.

When you are presented with a form by an agent of the state, fill in as few blanks as you can manage. Do not put down sensitive information; instead, insert the words “decline to answer” or a nondescript response. Whenever possible, mail in forms rather than filling them out in the presence of a civil servant who may become nosy.

Information is the
state’s lifeblood.



3. Keep a low profile. Do not draw attention to yourself.

Do not be publicly ostentatious in displaying your wealth, possessions (especially guns) or dissenting opinions. Just as you do not walk down the street with money bulging from your pockets, do not let the state know you are ripe for the plucking or you may constitute a problem to be solved.

There is at least one controversial point regarding a low profile. It involves what Harry Browne called the third of three rules in dealing with government. He wrote,

Don't organize. Don't get a large group of people together to defy tax laws, promote ways of circumventing the government, or openly violate regulations. By joining protests, you might wind up in jail. And you won't have much freedom there. And mass campaigns are easy targets. That's where the government is likely to devote its limited resources.

The controversy? The rule means you should not join politically radical movements that actively confront the state. For example, you should not join a mass march on the White House while carrying a sign that calls Obama a murderer for using drones in Afghanistan. Equally, do not publicly or blatantly violate laws and regulations. Even though the state's resources are limited, it will respond to a scofflaw who is openly tweaking its nose.

There is a balancing act at work here, because people who are attracted to Liberty prepping are likely to have strong and well-formed political opinions. They have a clear vision of the world as it could be. And they want to make it a better place not merely for themselves but also for their children and their neighbors.

At this political juncture, however, the best way to do so is probably through helping people on a more individual basis—for example, through private charities. Make an anonymous donation to a cause that you respect. Adopt the relatively safe strategy of education: change the hearts and minds of men one at a time. If educating others through political commentary appeals to you strongly, then follow certain basic rules. Do not advocate breaking the law—such advocacy is in and of itself illegal. Consider using a pen name. Anonymity may seem timid to some but there is a tension between dissenting in a radical, open manner and living a free and private personal life.

I have decided to write under my own name and continue advocating voluntaryism. In making your decision, consider the difficulty of hiding in plain sight if you constantly draw the attention of authorities.



4. Prefer lifestyle strategies that move the state toward irrelevancy in your life.

There are many ways to reduce your exposure to the state and minimize its presence in your life. Some are quite simple and easily adopted. For example, buying used goods avoids a raft of taxes.

Other paths are more complicated. One of them is called “going Galt.” The term derives from John Galt’s protest strategy in Ayn Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged*; namely, he remains in society but does so as a manual laborer rather than contributing his genius as an engineer. Few people are willing to make the extreme trade-off of a John Galt, however; and there is no correct position here. “Going Galt” can be as modest a process as an individual wishes. It happens when someone removes any support from the political system in an act of disgust, protest, or self-respect. Usually, the withdrawal involves a financial disconnect: earning less and thus paying much lower taxes. But it can also involve the decision to withdraw one’s skill from society. For example, a doctor might retire early in order to spend time with family. His decision could be prompted by myriad factors: frustration with government paperwork, Obamacare and its cut-back on payments to doctors, etc. If a state penalizes productivity to the point of outright obstruction or seizure, then producing less or stopping altogether are ways to get out of the line of fire and live more freely.

Other strategies that marginalize the state are tremendously innovative. For example, the small (or tiny) house movement seeks to liberate the human need for shelter from the state and from the state cronies called financial institutions. Small (or tiny) house pioneer Jay Shafer describes it

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as a form of civil disobedience. Why? Because it is his personal rebellion against the mandatory consumer laws inherent in building codes that determine how large houses must be. In other words, the codes dictate how large a house people must buy. They do so in the name of safety, although there is little connection between the size of a room and how safe it is. The real beneficiary of such building codes are large players in the housing industry who can squeeze out small competitors and dictate what people can buy or build. In rebellion, Shafer exploits building code loopholes. For example, his home is built on a trailer base which makes the house stable or mobile at his discretion. It also means the house is categorized as an RV and does not fall under the far stricter building codes. His prop-

Adopt the relatively safe strategy of education: change the hearts and minds of men one at a time.



erty taxes are negligible. For some small house owners, taxes on their homes are non-existent because the local government defines the structures as sheds.

Yet another of the many ways to push back the state is to replace the government “services” you use with private ones. A good example is to favor emails over letters mailed through the post office and to prefer private package delivery companies over USPS parcel delivery.

5. Be private!

This admonition is related to but different from the prior advice to give as little information as possible to agents of the state in person or on forms. Be careful in giving out personal information to anyone. Be especially careful with corporations connected to the state through privileges such as government contracts or tax advantages. The line between the state and crony corporations has blurred to the point of becoming invisible, and the sharing of data is often routine. Assume that state-associated corporations and all financial institutions will automatically share your personal information with every level of the state. When the teller at your bank chats about your account or asks a seemingly innocuous question about your life, find a way to be polite without disclosing personal information. The teller is implementing the “know your customer” policy and will report anything she considers suspicious. Come up with a set of pat answers so that you will not be caught off guard. For example, if someone asks, “What do you do for a living?” answer, “As little as possible” with a laugh, or give some other equally uninformative response.

Be discreet with private companies as well. Very few private companies will reject a request for information from a state agency; indeed, many of them actively sell your data in order to squeeze out a bit more profit. The [Electronic Frontier Foundation](https://www.eff.org/issues/do-not-track)¹ describes a method of countering online tracking by private companies.

Be discreet with individuals whom you do not have direct reason to trust. There are basically two types of people who can and will use information in a manner that harms you. The first type are the talkative ones who indiscriminately blab everything they know about everyone they know. They may have no ill intent, but they perform the equivalent of throwing your private data on the front page of the New York Times. Within a few conversations with third parties, your entire community will know the number of guns you own (if any), whether you possess precious met-

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¹ <https://www.eff.org/issues/do-not-track>



als, how much food you store, and personal habits such as how often you travel. Widely-spread personal information makes you vulnerable to individual theft and to crime by the state in the form of confiscation of guns and gold. It is best not to invite indiscriminately talkative people into your home, let alone into your life.

The second category of person who can and will use information in a manner that harms you are those who will turn you in to the state due to malice, envy, or resentment, to settle a grudge, or to collect a fee. And remember, many state agencies offer generous fees to whistleblowers. It does not matter whether or not you have done the whistleblower any real harm.

Consider an historical example to serve as a cautionary tale. The Food and Fuel Control Act became law in 1917 during World War I. In essence, the government became a food rationer and anyone who possessed more than a 30-day supply of food could be arrested. It soon became clear how the state intended to enforce the law which, after all, relied on knowing the contents of people's pantries. In 1918, newspapers reported on a man who was imprisoned because he had invested his wife's inheritance in a year's worth of stored food for his family. His store of food was discovered only because a local grocer informed upon him, presumably for a fee, but perhaps out of jealousy or a misguided sense of duty. The lessons here? Do not buy an ostentatious amount of goods from anyone whom you do not trust. When you do buy goods, shred records. Or, better yet, try not to leave a paper or an e-trail of the purchase at all. Use cash rather than credit cards.

A sad corollary to the wisdom of hoarding food for your family is the need to do so with discretion. This is sad, because the natural impulse of people in a community is to assist those in need. Measures like the Food and Fuel Control Act mean that sharing food with a neighbor who has hungry children is no longer simply a gesture of compassion and generosity; because the state might act against you if the sharing is revealed, compassion becomes a danger to your safety and your own children's well-being.

Eliot Estep's article "[7 Powerful Ways to Maintain Your Privacy and Integrity Online](http://www.collective-evolution.com/2013/06/13/7-powerful-wa)"² presents some great tactics to preserve your privacy online.

6. Stay fit, stay healthy.

It sounds obvious but your future depends on the state of your body. Caring for your health is especially important now because the de facto process of nationalizing healthcare is at work under Obamacare. As the state yanks choice from individuals and health care deteriorates, accessing the medical system will become increasingly dangerous to your health.

7. Don't be afraid of the power of the state.

As a last piece of advice on privatizing your own life, do not revolve your decisions around fear of the state; do not allow fear to define who you are. If a course of action keeps you awake at night for fear of being arrested, then

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²<http://www.collective-evolution.com/2013/06/13/7-powerful-wa>



do not take that course. The purpose of freedom is to achieve a happy life, not to ruin your health and well-being. Embrace only as much freedom as you can tolerate, and do so at a pace with which you are comfortable.

In short, respect the power of the state and protect yourself against it. But remember, the state is limited in its resources and by its inefficiency. Be careful, but choose freedom over fear. Empower yourself and not the state.

“The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.”

— *Albert Camus*

The Freedom and Independence of Self-Reliance

Independent, self-reliant people are difficult to control. They are people who take care of their own needs and the needs of those for whom they care. Generally speaking, they ask only to live in peace and cooperation with others. When pushed, however, they push back, and are willing to defend themselves and their families against attack. Independence is necessary to freedom. It is anathema to the state.

The state encourages people to apply for entitlements such as food stamps so that they become dependent on those programs. The process makes such people far easier to control. They will not bite the hand that feeds them. And, soon—often within a generation—an entitlement psychology traps people into relying on the state, and the habit of feeding themselves and the virtue of self-reliance die within them.

What constitutes independence will vary from person to person as widely as the definition of freedom does. Not everyone is destined to grow their own food or move off the electric grid and go solar. Not everyone needs to. Independence is like freedom: if it doesn't feel right, then trust your gut and change course. Because the approach to freedom can be so individual, many standard prepping strategies are not included in this guide; for example, the issue of gun ownership, the question of shelter, and the purchase of precious metals are not described. Such strategies will be explored in depth on Liberty.me. This guide is intended instead to ground people in the general concept of liberty prepping and to give a sense of its possibilities. One of the best sources to familiarize yourself with the broad range of survivalist prepping strategies is [Backwoods Home Magazine](http://www.backwoodshome.com/).³

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³<http://www.backwoodshome.com/>



1. Honestly assess who you are and what your goals are in life.

“The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work.”

— Henry David Thoreau

Little has changed since Thoreau wrote those words in the mid-19th century. Arguably, people have become more desperate, lost in a hectic race to make money. What they earn is often spent before it reaches their pockets. The state’s fiscal policies, taxes, and reckless spending have bankrupted so much of society. The desperation that many people feel today pools from the absence of a full-time job or job security, from being deep in debt with no savings, from the soaring inflation despite the state’s rigged data. There seems to be no abatement of bad news for the average person.

Undoubtedly, some people enjoy the constant grind for money. They are good at it and they love to splurge on status symbols. If achieving status makes them happy in anything but a transitory sense, then who can quarrel with their choice? Their lifestyle expresses their vision of freedom because it expresses their genuine values. The proof of this lies in the happiness they feel. That is what freedom of action should naturally bring: happiness. Freedom is a means to that end.

Most people do not relish the corporate treadmill, however. Their unhappiness—their desperation—is the natural result of not living according to their own values.

About 25 years ago, my lifestyle changed dramatically due to a single chain of reasoning: material possessions cost money; money is time; time is literally life. The foregoing sounds glaring, but I had never looked at my possessions as representing a specific amount of time taken from my life. If X cost \$100 and I earned \$25 an hour, then X cost me four hours of life. Or rather, it cost four hours plus whatever time was consumed in the transaction costs of earning money, such as the time commuting to work.



I began to reevaluate my possessions. I looked at a pair of expensive shoes that I had worn only once. The money to buy those shoes had cost three hours of my life—time that can never be replaced or reclaimed. Without a hint of morbidity, I wondered: when I confront death, how much would I give to gain back the hours I squandered on useless shoes? In a sense, I applied the economic theory of marginal utility to the time allotted to the rest of my life. Right now, the hours still seem boundless, and it is tempting to value each unit as though part of an infinite supply. Of course, they are not. Again, without morbidity, I have only so many hours left to live. How will I spend them?

In the freedom that brings me happiness, my days will be filled with reading and writing, laughing with friends, and doing pretty much anything with my husband. I want to cook complex ethnic meals that bring the tastes of the world to the table of my farmhouse. I long to travel the world, to gain a visceral experience of the places that fired my imagination as a child—the stars in the African night sky, or the scent of the deep jungle.

Pitted against my pursuit of happiness are the many, many extraneous possessions for which I have traded my time. (I call a possession “extraneous” or “a useless shoe” whenever it is not worth the time I traded to acquire it.) Some of the items I purchased for psychological reasons because spending money provided a temporary respite from the blues or boredom. Similar to eating when full, the purchase of things I don’t need or want would fill an emptiness for the briefest moment. Arguably, the flicker of pleasure was itself a negative thing because it substituted for directly dealing with the underlying cause of whatever was wrong.

It goes against the delivered wisdom of corporations and runaway consumerism, but many people would be happier if they pared down their lives to what they actually wanted and needed. Downsizing their lives would diminish their need for money and increase the time—that is, give them the freedom—to pursue their own form of happiness.

2. Make a realistic budget.

Much has been written on this topic. Start sculpting a budget by browsing some basic sites that provide a blueprint. Money Crashers features an article entitled “12 Steps for How to Make a Budget — Personal Budgeting Tips for First Timers.” Frugal Living offers a valuable Budget Worksheet.

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Four things to stress:

- *Be realistic and also willing to change the budget*
- *Track your expenses carefully by writing them down*
- *Don't get discouraged if you fall off the wagon*
- *Allow yourself some luxuries*

Budgeting is not about depriving yourself. It is about getting out of debt, controlling your time, and reclaiming your freedom.

Budgeting
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depriving
yourself.

3. Divest yourself of “useless shoes.”

At your leisure, go through your possessions and sort out the ones you do not truly value. A good initial litmus test is to ask yourself when you last used an item; if you use it frequently, or if it has high sentimental value, keep it. Otherwise, you should sell it or give it away.

Go through your possessions again and identify items that you value but which cost you more than they are worth. The expense may be monetary, as with a car that is in constant need of repair. The cost could be time: items that you polish or clean every few months and then put back on a shelf where you don't even notice them. Or the cost could be aggravation, as with shoes that are an uncomfortable fit. Sell or give away the items that are a drain and replace them (if necessary or if you desire) with things that are not.

And then, for the next few weeks, question every purchase you make. Is the book or clothing really something you value more than the time that is represented by its price tag? Is a better alternative available? Many purchases are a matter of habit, such as buying a particular brand name when a comparable one is less expensive. Consider buying slightly worn clothing or other used goods instead of always purchasing new ones. Make the exchange of your time for goods a conscious decision.

4. Learn how to barter.

Bartering is one of the best ways to reduce your expenses. It consists of exchanging goods or services without money changing hands. Consider a neighbor who makes \$30,000 a year and wants to spend \$3,000 on a used car. You have just the right vehicle in your garage collecting dust. After talking, you discover that the fellow has a virtually new computer-and-printer setup that he bought for his daughter. She left it behind when she went to college, and now it's a dust-collector as well. You agree to the trade. Your neighbor just saved 10 percent of his income, which trans-



lates to about a month of his life, and you traded that car cluttering up your garage for a computer that you needed. You also avoided the taxes on a new computer.

There are two common barriers to bartering. The first is a simple discomfort with the process due to inexperience; people are accustomed to reading a price sticker and shelling out the requisite cash. An easy way to get comfortable bartering is to visit the online barter sites that are currently proliferating.

The website *Real Simple* has a [feature](#)⁴ that guides you through a low-pressure approach to getting comfortable bartering:

Step 1: Figure Out What You Want to Get—and What You Can Give.

Step 2: Identify a Trading Partner online or in a group.

- Join a local bartering club.
- Join a Time Bank.
- Visit specialized bartering websites.

Step 3: Pop the Question if bartering with an individual.

Step 4: Hammer Out the Details.

- Assess the dollar value of your goods or service.
- Set the time frame.
- Put it in writing. [Note: I can envision circumstances in which a paper trail is a disadvantage.]

A second common barrier is a lack of skills to barter—or, rather, a perceived lack of skills. But almost everyone has a skill to barter even if it is a simple one like babysitting, repairing clothes, or cooking meals. Take inventory of yourself.

5. Build a network of people who act as an economic support system.

As well as having contacts with whom you casually barter, consider establishing a closer network of people with whom you have a deeper connection. The network would probably include family members, good friends, and others you trust.

It is commonplace for survivalist preppers to expect a breakdown of society in which neighbors turn against each other. But the purpose of liberty prepping is not to survive but to flourish, and that process requires alliances with other people. Liberty prepping does not anticipate a Hobbesian state of nature. It seeks to maximize freedom and happiness, which require human contact, and for a variety of reasons.

No one who wants to enjoy a decent standard of living is an island unto himself, however inde-

⁴<http://www.realsimple.com/work-life/money/saving/barter-anything-00000000014565/>



pendent or self-reliant he may become. Cultivate a separate network of reliable people who satisfy your recurring needs and with whom you are comfortable. You may need people with specialized labor skills—a mechanic to repair an old car. Unlike the barter situation, the mechanic's labor may or may not be negotiated but done more out of friendship or a sense of community; and his service may not be rendered as a direct trade, but with the expectation of being able to call in a favor from you later on. Make sure the people with whom you network know exactly the skill sets you have to offer them.

Remember: a network or community will be only as productive for you as the code of morality you bring to it. Reciprocal relationships require you to treat the other people involved fairly and to act responsibly. This is especially necessary in a network where handshake deals depend on your reputation. Be a moral human being.

Be a moral
human being.

6. Stock up on non perishable goods you regularly use or predictably will.

At its core, stockpiling—or hoarding—is merely preparing for the future by storing items you or your family may need.

The most common objection to maintaining a well-stocked pantry is that it is too expensive. The opposite is true. The Austrian investment counselor Jack Pugsley explained the money-saving perspective on hoarding in his book [*The Alpha Strategy*](#).⁵ It is an investment.

A low-income family may not be able to afford precious metals, but they can afford to invest in dry or canned consumables. Last year, with some frequency, my local grocery store had a 900-gram package of dry pasta on sale for 99¢. With wheat shortages, largely due to the state diverting almost 30 percent of corn crops into the production of ethanol, food products containing grain have skyrocketed. The same package of pasta now often costs \$2.99. If a struggling family bought 60 packages of the 99¢ pasta for a future consumption of one package a week, then their hoarding would have knocked as much as \$100 off their annual grocery bill. By consistently buying more sale or bulk items than they immediately need, a family can build a solid pantry within several months. This not only lowers the cost of food but also of the gas and time used to acquire groceries. And the pantry could sustain them through unemployment, inflation, or scarcity.

A good beginner's guide to storing food is the article "[Food Storage Basics Part 1; Preparing to Store](#)."⁶

Those concerned with doing well during an emergency situation should also stock up on barter items on sale. Remember, if an emergency does happen, you will be on your own with no assistance from the state. Barter items can get you through difficult times. The items can be either necessities or luxuries that have a long shelf life and widespread appeal; portabil-

⁵<http://zombieprepdotnet.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/book2-preface.pdf>

⁶<http://americanpreppersnetwork.com/2013/08/food-storage-basics-part-1-preparing-to-store.html>



ity is also an advantage. Matches, heirloom seeds, batteries, flashlights, first aid kits, fishing gear, antibiotics are all far from exhaustive but they provide an indication of common goods likely to be in demand. Examples of luxuries include medicinal and consumable alcohol, tobacco, games for children, books (especially how-to guides), condoms, spices, cards, and pepper spray. Needless to say, do not barter items acquired for your own use, such as gold, weapons and the nonperishable foodstuffs. It is not merely that you may well need them, but common knowledge of their presence encourages theft.

Stockpiling goods is also a fast way to convert the sinking currency into something real and useful. Mother Earth News offers an easy and encouraging article on how one woman devised her own system of hoarding during the inflation of the 1970s: “[Stockpiling Food for a Year](#).”⁷

7. Consider planting a garden.

A decent-sized vegetable garden can dramatically reduce food costs. But some friends I’ve talked to about gardening swear that they would rather starve than put a seed in the ground. It is all a matter of preference. Again, so much has been written on the subject of gardening that pointing to information on where to start reading is probably the best approach. The Old Farmer’s Almanac offers a valuable overview titled “[Vegetable Garden Planning for Beginners](#).”⁸ Better Home and Gardens has a similar site called “[Planning Your First Vegetable Garden](#)”⁹ which includes a link to a useful plant encyclopedia.

A decent-sized
vegetable garden
can dramatically
reduce food costs.

CONCLUSION

*“If we as individuals can’t find freedom in our own lives,
our own work, our own communities, we’re never going
to find it.”*

— Claire Wolfe

The popularity of prepping is increasing. But there is often a sense of gloom to the prepping sites because the standard approach revolves around catastrophe. A sense of bleakness also surrounds political discussion today, especially within the liberty movement. Those who focus on changing politics through elections or otherwise participating in the system are doomed to futility because the system is a game rigged by the elites in power. Like whack-a-mole, policies and laws pop up faster than they can be pounded down. And, as the site Building Freedom observed, “expecting the government to protect your ‘right’ to freedom is just another public demand for big government.”

⁷<http://www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/stockpiling-food-zmaz80jazraw.aspx>

⁸<http://www.almanac.com/vegetable-garden-planning-for-beginners>

⁹<http://www.bhg.com/gardening/vegetable/vegetables/planning-your-first-vegetable-garden/>



Meanwhile, intellectuals in the liberty movement invest so much time in lamenting the freedom destroyed since 9/11 that their pessimism and anger can seem overwhelming. As one of the writers in those ranks, I have worked with the ideas as a labor of love for decades now, and I know how vitally important they are. But it is time to live freedom as well as advocate it. Now is the moment to be free.

Now is the moment to be free.

Liberty prepping is the path to a real liberty that has well-defined and achievable goals. Anyone can pursue it anywhere and to whatever extent they wish, because each individual provides their own definition. Unlike political activism that seems to have little impact, liberty prepping is sustainable because it provides people with tangible benefits and a chance at expanded happiness.

The urge to save America or to change the world comes from a deep love of freedom, but those who pour their energy toward “the cause” need to save themselves first and foremost. Ultimately that is where freedom survives—within individuals who grab hold of their futures and refuse to let go. The libertarian Rose Wilder Lane once famously wrote, “Freedom is self-control; no more; no less.”

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