

What History Teaches Us about a Preparedness Mindset

Preparing for a disaster is different than *being prepared* for a disaster—you have to practice and implement. You have to embrace a preparedness mindset.

For example, it wasn't the protein bar in the hiker's backpack that saved his life when he found himself lost somewhere off the Rainbow Bridge Trail. **It was his preparedness mindset that helped him survive.** He knew how to adapt to his environment and how to work hard to build shelter, find water and signal for help.

When we look at examples of survivors in history, those who stand out were prepared with the supplies AND the mentality to fight for survival.

Let's look back and learn from people in history who demonstrated a preparedness mindset.

Pioneers on the Oregon Trail

Anyone who has played "The Oregon Trail" game understands how difficult the journey was. Very few people can beat the old computer game (or card game), which is a good illustration of history brought to life.

According to the [National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center](#), "Combined with accidents, drowning at dangerous river crossings, and...illnesses, at least 20,000 people died along the Oregon Trail."

While that number seems large, most of the pioneers on the Oregon Trail did survive. Only 4% to 6% of those on the trail died.

How did they do it? With a preparedness mindset!

They Had Foresight And Were Thoughtful

Wise pioneers carefully considered seasons and weather patterns before beginning their journeys. They had the foresight to avoid travel when there wouldn't be enough grass for livestock or when the snow would make the trek too treacherous.

The women packed pickles, which were thought to keep scurvy away. They packed extra bolts of fabric, needles, and threads for mending clothes and making warmer garments; they had the foresight to know they would likely not visit mercantile establishments along the route.

They Were Problem Solvers

Fire was essential for survival. However, it was impossible to fill an already heavy wagon with firewood. The pioneers used their problem-solving skills and found that small pieces of dried buffalo "chips" (buffalo dung) worked as a fuel source. Children were dispatched in the evenings to collect the chips. They would so burn sagebrush if they couldn't find enough buffalo dung.

They Didn't Take Shortcuts

Before they set out, pioneers would study the best wagon designs and best draft animals to take on their journey. They didn't choose fast and easy. They made sure they did things the right way.

The Great Depression

Many have said that the children of the Great Depression are the greatest generation. What they lived through helped them develop a great sense of character.

But it wasn't just the children. Children are resilient and they adapt.

On the other hand, their parents saw firsthand how quickly life could change. As a result, they developed a preparedness mindset that is admirable today.

Here are two key mindset shifts that helped them survive the Great Depression:

They Understood That Wealth Is Not Found In Money

Many American families went from living prosperously to living frugally. Without being able to afford day-to-day necessities, they understood that wealth meant more than money in the bank. Wealth was a field of food or a stocked pantry. Women took to proudly showing off their canning pantries. Skills that could be used for bartering could make someone feel rich.

They Knew The Value Of Working Together.

During the Great Depression, more women entered the workforce than ever before, and children found ways to help their families make ends meet. Girls babysat and cleaned houses, boys sold newspapers and shined shoes, and the whole family picked crops. It wasn't only families pulling together—it was also entire communities. Historians believe potlucks became popular during the Great Depression to share food and fellowship with others.

The Amish

The Amish population steadily grew through the 18th and 19th centuries, and their simple ways of life are still practiced today.

If there is any group that represents the preparedness mindset, it is the Amish community.

When natural disasters hit, the Amish aren't affected like their neighbors. For one thing, they aren't tied to the electric grid.

But it's more than power. The Amish community grows their own food, takes care of each other, and strives for self-reliance.

It's hard to narrow down which characteristics lend themselves to their preparedness mindset most, but these two stand out.

They live simply.

Unlike their neighbors, the Amish don't use modern technology (or rely on it for entertainment). Their clothes are simple and homemade. They are grateful for the land they have, and they use it to fill their bellies.

They continually cultivate useful skills.

Gardening, food preservation, and farming are some of the useful skills found in the Amish community, but that's not all. As an insulated group, they strive to take care of things themselves without outside help, except when necessary. As such, they develop handyman skills like carpentry and plumbing.

6 Preparedness Mindset Lessons from History

There are a few “preparedness-mindset” lessons these historical examples teach us:

1. **Be proactive.** While a preparedness mindset differs from stocking up on preparedness supplies, you still need to be proactive. Being proactive means buying the supplies you may need in the face of a disaster.
2. **Learn to adapt.** If SHTF, you will need to adapt. Things may never be the same again. Being flexible and adaptable will go a long way in helping you survive.
3. **Live simply.** Could you live without electricity? Do you need all the latest gadgets? Find ways to practice simple living today so you don't experience culture shock when disaster strikes.
4. **Focus on community.** History shows the importance of community for survival. Get to know your neighbors.
5. **Work hard.** Understand the value of hard work and teach your kids why it matters.
6. **Develop skills.** School is important, but don't forget about the basics. Know how to fix things around your home and in your vehicle.

Develop a preparedness mindset, friends.

