

November 2022

Communication and Family Plans

Why Communication and Cooperation Are Vital

We live in a time when people have become highly independent. They want to act according to their own desires without interference from anyone in authority. However, we actually all still live and function among other people, and we need each other. While independence is valuable and admirable in many ways, it can be pushed to an extreme that is inconsiderate of other people and often results in negative consequences. When people behave with irresponsible independence chaos becomes the result.

Whether within a family, church, school, business, organization, or government, we need clear rules, plans, and guidelines as well as leaders for things to function well and in a safe and orderly manner. We also need to understand how to follow appropriately and when being independent is unhealthy. You may have heard the sayings, "Too many cooks spoil the broth," and "There were too many chiefs and not enough Indians." It is important to know how to make personal decisions and also how and when to follow directions. The more your family practices these principles the better it will function.

This could not be more important than during the chaos and uncertainty that come with disasters. One common response in difficult times is to act out of fear and behave irrationally. Hundreds of people have been trampled by others caught up in this response. Another response is to freeze up and not do anything. Neither of these things has good results. Many children have died in fires because they hid in their closet or under their bed. People in earthquakes have been hurt or run out in the streets in only their underwear because they panicked. Many times these responses could have been avoided if everyone knew what to do ahead of time. Having a plan and communicating it to everyone involved is the wisest and most responsible thing that a family or group can do to be prepared. While kids at school joke and make fun of fire drills, they do save lives for this very reason.

The Least Expensive Preparation

While this part of preparedness takes little space or money, it is a vital part of looking ahead that is often overlooked. During a crisis of any kind, knowing what to do saves lives and averts secondary disasters (i.e., disasters that are caused by inappropriate responses to the initial disaster). Depending on the age of your family members every family should have plans for the possible disasters or dangers they might face. These plans do not need to be presented in a way that instills fear or makes it hard for kids to sleep at night. If children are older they can take part in creating the plan. After all, people support what they create. If children are younger, parents can create the plans and plan games like "What should I do if..." The main thing is for all family members to know what to do.

Preparedness Ideas

Here is a list of some ideas you may want to consider as you work to form or update your plans.

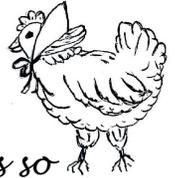
- Make a list of who is the one in command at all times. If the first person is gone or disabled, who is second? Who is third?

This can go through the whole family. For young children you can practice following the leader and have people, starting at the top, drop out. See if family members can lead and follow in succession.

- Be sure you have a meeting place in case you all need to get out of the house. It is best away from the street and sidewalk where a lot may be going on.
- Does your family know what to do in case of fire, flood, earthquake, extreme wind...?
- Do you have a flashlight and shoes (or a simple go-bag) by each bed in case nighttime exit is necessary?
- Do you have a list posted on each floor of the things to gather for an evacuation with items listed under sections for time you have to evacuate—10 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, etc?
- What will happen if family members are away from home when a crisis strikes?
- Do you have pass codes in case someone else must pick children up from school? What is the protocol?
- Do you have a plan for family members who work away from home if something should happen while they are at work? Do you have an escape bag in your car that would help you if you had to walk home?
- Do you have maps in your car?
- If you ever need to evacuate, do you have a Plan A and a Plan B already figured out?
- If you have extended family or family members who do not live at home do you have a way of meeting, connecting, and contacting them? Do you have a designated meeting place?
- Do you know what each family member (who is not at home) plans to do in the event of a crisis?
- Do you have a designated person out of area who all family members can text their status to and who can keep track of your status?
- Do you have plans in case some of your family is unaccounted for?
- Do you have alternatives for sheltering in place?

- Do you have proper equipment for escape from bedroom windows?
- If you evacuate do you know who your neighborhood/ block/ camp captains are? How will you let them know you are going to be gone? Is there anyone else you would want to notify?

————— **Notes from Red Hen** —————



Dear Harriet,

I have been missing you lately. It was so nice when we were both on the same farm and could learn and commiserate together. I heard a strange and gruesome thing the other day. The farmer's wife was trying to do too many things at once and she was fluttered. The farmer told her that she was running around like a chicken with its head cut off. That is something I hope I never see. I honestly think that we chickens have some things well figured out. We are cautious about the unknown, and our roosters are extremely good at sensing danger and letting us know to take cover. The rest of the time we keep things simple so we don't miss the signs of trouble. I am proud to be a chicken. How about you?

*— Love,
Red*