

Will You Be Ready?

Some future problems are so unimaginable that most of us avoid thinking about them and preparing for them. Find the home site of author Bill Allin at <http://billallin.com>

Ours is a world where people don't know what they want and are willing to go through hell to get it.

- Don Marquis, American humorist, writer (1878-1937)

This applies more to the Western part of the world than to the rest where a majority of people know what they want: food and safety.

It applies as well today as it did during the lifetime of Don Marquis, who died during the Great Depression.

Why do so many of us depend on others to tell us what we should want, what we should strive for and how we should spend our lives?

Let's look at some background. Charles Darwin did not tout "survival of the fittest" as the way all animals--including humans--succeed or go extinct. That "fittest" thing is inaccurate and wrong. If that were the case, the strongest and smartest among us--including in the animal kingdom--would be more successful than the rest, which is clearly not undefined.

Darwin said that the most adaptable species would survive when others are dying off as conditions in their homelands change. Humans live in more and varied parts of our planet than any species other than a few that can only be seen (by us) with a microscope. We live in the frozen Arctic and on mountain sides, in jungles and deserts. Some of us have our homes on water and make our living from it. Since the beginning of the last century, a majority of us live in urban areas. We have adapted to hugely varied living conditions.

Why have so many of us recently migrated to cities? Supposedly because jobs are more plentiful and living is easier.

When the vast majority of living humans earned their living from agriculture, most people worked for themselves, in one sense or another. In cities, most people earn their income working for an employer that determines when they will work, how hard they will work, what days they will work, what they will wear at work, what equipment they will use, when they can take breaks from work, even the quality of the air they will breathe at work.

The attitude of most employers in cities today is "Take it or leave it, and if you leave someone will replace you tomorrow." Ethics and morality aside, most employees stay in their jobs because it's too hard to find other jobs. They need to have employers because they "need to eat" and to feed, clothe and shelter their families.

Recent studies have shown the stress and polluted air, both of which may be found in abundance in all large cities, shorten people's lives. People live shorter lives, even though they may have greater income than their rural countrymen, so that they can have a job, can work at a job someone else has created for them.

When a global catastrophe occurs--and it surely will--who will survive? People who live in big cities obviously have not adapted well enough to live healthier than their rural countrymen.

Look at the problems that have arisen since the downturn of national economies globally. Multitudes of people get laid off from their jobs each week, all over the world. Those people are desperate to find jobs. Because they know they can't survive on their own skills alone. They don't have the knowledge or skills to create jobs for themselves, no matter how wonderful they are at the jobs they do today.

Being able to survive on your own skills and knowledge is what adaptability is all about.

Could you survive if electric power went off in your part of the world for six months? If not, then you have not just traded your labour and skills for the produce of other people, you have sacrificed your personal incentive to survive. Survival, it is said, is one of the few instincts we human have. In cities we are breeding that instinct out of ourselves.

Those who can't adapt in times of extreme stress will die, will go extinct. When the time comes, it won't matter how physically strong you are or how smart you are. It will matter whether you can adapt to survive while others do not.

We may want to consider how successful we are as a species if almost all of us would die because we could not look after our own needs following a global catastrophe. That catastrophe could be as simple as a bad virus bringing down the major internet services of the world.

We have seen how quickly our planet is warming globally (though climate change has caused some places to be colder). The opposite--another Ice Age--could happen even faster if earth is hit by an asteroid or someone decides to set off a nuclear bomb that creates a global black cloud that lasts for years (known as "global winter" or "nuclear winter").

Remember the die-off of the dinosaurs? Some of them--the most adaptable--survived. Today we call them birds. Most died off within 1500 years of the asteroid striking Mexico's Yucatan. Fifteen hundred years is a blink of time in cosmic history.

It's time we consider teaching our children survival skills, an attitude leaning toward independence and interdependence. It's not time to be afraid. Frightened people can't adapt. They are afraid because they can't adapt. If what we really want is to survive, we need to teach that as an attitude as well.

It won't necessarily take a natural disaster of global proportions to find people scrambling to survive. We have seen recently how bad things can get when business people take advantage of weak laws and morals and some sell houses to people who can't afford subprime mortgages. It doesn't take much.

It's time for the less afraid and more adaptable among us to prepare for worse times than anyone has seen in living memory. That's not pessimistic. It's optimistic to think that some of us will survive a tragedy because we know how to adapt. undefined, many of us will die. But that happens in natural disasters frequently. We have adapted to that. As Darwin predicted, the less adaptable will perish.

Bill Allin

Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for teachers and parents who want to teach skills about survival, knowledge of survival techniques and an attitude to treat adapting to changing conditions positively to their children and loved ones.

Learn more at <http://billallin.com>

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