



GEORGE URE & GAYE LEVY

11 STEPS TO LIVING A STRATEGIC LIFE

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**A GUIDE TO SURVIVING
2012 AND BEYOND**

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BY GEORGE URE & GAYE LEVY

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Table of Contents

DISCLAIMER/LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITY	1
11 STEPS TO LIVING A STRATEGIC LIFE.....	6
The Story of Image Directors	6
THE ELEVEN STEPS TO LIVING A STRATEGIC LIFE	8
STEP 1: BE HEALTHY AND PURSUE WELLNESS	12
How the Health & Wellness Game is Played	12
Playing the Health Game	13
Exercise and the Four Hour Body.....	13
Eating Healthy Foods.....	14
Dealing with Addictions.....	17
Issues of Ancestry.....	19
STEP 2: ACHIEVE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE.....	21
Playing the Money Game	21
Live Below Your Means	22
Mortgages: A Special Case.....	24

One Skill or Many?	25
Self Employed or Work and Manage the Nest Egg?	27
STEP 3: EMBRACE FOOD PRODUCTION.....	30
You Are What You Eat	30
The Food Production Game	32
What to Produce?	32
Gardening Return on Investment Chart	33
Of Grains and Gluten	39
Ethical Issues and Food Animals: Chickens.....	40
STEP 4: REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION.....	43
Home Energy Expenses	43
Energy Costs of Transportation	44
The Most for Your Money.....	46
STEP 5: LEARN TO BARTER	47
Simple Barter Explained	47
Three-Way Barter.....	48

Tax Consequences of Barter	49
STEP 6: USE IT UP, WEAR IT OUT, MAKE IT DO!	52
Use It Up	52
Wear It Out	53
Make It Do.....	53
STEP 7: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NATURE’S BOUNTY	55
Far Afield.....	55
Shrooming.....	55
Hunting and Fishing.....	55
STEP 8: PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED	57
What’s the Threat?.....	57
What Do You Need?	58
STEP 9: CHOOSE SIMPLICITY	59
A Simple Simplicity Checklist	59
STEP 10: ENJOY THE GOOD LIFE	62
Get Some DDT – Daily Down Time	62

Get Some BFT Scheduled, too!63

Take REAL Vacations.....63

STEP 11: THE LOSTD65

WANT TO LEARN MORE?66

CONCLUSION67

11 Steps to Living a Strategic Life

The Story of Image Directors

Back in the day, we used to talk about something called Image Direction and the Image Directors.

What we meant by that was, in the most basic of terms, determining who we were and what we wanted to do. From there the goal was to create a targeted plan of action to get us where we wanted to go. And as part of the process, becoming an Image Director.

Now let us say – and this is important – this was in the 70s. You know, the era of bell bottoms, mini-skirts and disco? We were starting our careers and along with our peers, we were driven to become “someone”. With a legacy of campus unrest, anti-war protests, and a general distrust of the older generation, we wanted to make a difference and along the way if we made a ton of money, all the better. That was the way it was for the 70s generation.

Yep. Image Direction. It was our 70s fancy, schmancy word for setting a goal then making it happen.

Those days seem like a long time ago. While the optimism of youth still resides in these now, decidedly older bodies, the old concept of image direction seems dated. Instead, we would like to think we pursue a life of Strategic Living. What is that you say?

Living strategically – by our own definition – means living a life full of abundant adventure while embracing the tenants of simplicity and sustainability. It means being healthy and reaping the benefits of bounteous friendships and caring relationships. It means living a life full of happiness and readiness, without the burden of wanting to be someone else or someplace else. It means liking yourself and moving forward with this business of life with animated spirit and optimism.

This all sounds like lofty stuff but when you get right down to it, we think we have been preparing for this moment for a long long time. Living strategically means being self-sufficient and being self-reliant. It means being prepared for life in these uncertain times.

So how do you get there? In this book we would like to outline 11 basic steps to achieving a strategic life.

The Eleven Steps to Living a Strategic Life

What is a “strategic life” anyway?

Since we’re both technology geeks, we tend to think in terms of software algorithms (Gaye) and business models (George). What unites us is rudimentary appreciation of [Game Theory](#).

This means at some level we appreciate (from the experiences of daily living) that yes, *life* is a “game.” The notion is well-supported by watching how people describe one another’s performance in the game: “She’s a *winner!*” may be heard along with the flip-side remarks like “He is such a *loser!*” You see it now? People automatically refer to others as somehow being competitors.

What are the elements of a “game?” Two, or more, competitors and a set of rules.

From there it can become endlessly complex, or extremely simple.

In the game of golf, for example, it may seem there’s only one player necessary. But, in the maddening game of sticks there’s always the “second player” – and that’s whatever the previous best score was.

You could argue that there is no “second player” in jogging single-handed sailing, or even riding a horse over a course of jumps. But we have bad news for you: The “second player” is often *time*.

Other games are extremely complex. Chess is a good example: Chess pieces are bounded-movement pieces, and in a sense, they share a *bounding* aspect that is common to football, basketball and other “field” games (i.e. soccer).

One of the bounding aspects of chess is that bishops can only move diagonally, although any distance desired, all the way to the edge of the chessboard’s eight-by-eight grid. By the same token, in field games there are boundaries beyond which players may not venture. Out of bounds is where forward movement of the ball stops in football. Or, a point from outside “the key” may score differently.

Life, we agree, has boundaries, too. Step outside of certain boundaries and you will “lose.” Where it becomes a bit complicated is in learning to see *what* you lose. It could be a time out for bad behavior. In hockey, that would be a trip to the penalty box, but in life (depending on the offense) it could be a trip to jail.

In worst-cases the boundary penalty is Death. Driving too fast on a mountain road may seem like a “game” to a young person, not accustomed to slippery corners, but player *awareness* of the rules doesn’t change their existence. Going too fast, sliding through a barrier, and down over a cliff into a lake may carry the ultimate penalty.

We have come very much to believe that there are plenty of very *real* rules, which if closely followed, can lead to a superior score in the Game of Life.

“OK,” you’re thinking There might be something to the *game* angle, but what does “strategy” have to do with it?”

That's a fair question that deserves a detailed answer because as we explain the Strategic Life, we will try to support the *strategy* with specific *tactics*.

A “strategy” in game play explains the *overall concept of play*.

The “tactics” are the fine points of how *strategy is implemented*.

Let's go back to golf for an example: Let's pretend that SurvivalHubby decides to closely analyze his game and concludes that on the days he played his best previous rounds he had two cups of coffee yet managed to relax his swing. So he ventures onto the links with a “Relaxed but with Coffee” strategy thinking he can improve his score this way.

Each time he addresses the ball he will mentally check his knowledgebase to determine if he knows of any *fine points* (tactics) for a particular shot, which can be applied in support of the “Relaxed, with Coffee” strategy.

A hush falls over the crowd (both of us) as we watch SurvivalHubby's first tee shot. We notice that he has taken several practice swings rather than simply walking up to the tee and swinging like a wild man. He then does a few body twists, touches his toes a few times, and takes another practice swing, or two.

The *strategy* is “Relaxed, with Coffee” but already we see the first *tactic* has emerged: focused, relaxed warm-up shots emphasizing a smooth, balanced swing.

We don't need to follow him around the course to know what the outcome is, since it is binary: If he holds to the strategy, and applies all of his learned tactics, he has a better chance of carding a personal best-ever game.

So it goes with humans. If we analyze past performance – and there’s plenty of information in textbooks, personal stories like biographies, and our own knowledge of what works and what doesn’t – we can evolve certain key strategies which will improve the odds of us being “winners” in the Game of Life.

What we’ll do over the balance of this book is to discuss some of the master strategies - the 11 “steps” - and then discuss specific strategies that effectively support the steps. As you select strategies, then comes the task of picking tactics, but since there are so many, we won’t go into too many examples of tactics that work to support a given strategy choice or particular step.

Sounds complicated, but think of Life as a kind of pro golf tour. The tour makes certain stops over a season; these would be the steps. Each course on the golf tour is best played a particular way (or two); this would be the strategies. And then each hole has unique quirks, and it’s here that tactics become key. It turns out, Life is like the pro-golf tour and we all end up either in the rough or in sand traps along the way to the final hole.

It’s different from golf, though: We are engaged in simultaneous play against ourselves, others and the clock. So things are never so simple as we might wish them to be.

Step 1: Be Healthy and Pursue Wellness

Sometimes good health is elusive. The combined effects of stress, alcohol, tobacco and controlled substances can take their toll on your health. Add poor eating habits and a genetic predisposition to a disease and you may feel that you are doomed. The best you can do is to exercise, eat a healthy diet, limit stressful activities and avoid substance abuse.

You may, through no fault of your own, be unhealthy but most certainly you can pursue wellness.

How the Health & Wellness Game is Played

You'd think there'd be just one player – you – in the Healthy Game, but as you have already figured out, Life is infinitely more complicated. Yes, there is one *central* player in You but there are other parties that have some skin in the game, or at least DNA.

Much is to be learned from a study of your parent's health history. If you have a parent with a history of dementia, for example, then your Strategic Life would include strategies for dealing with Alzheimer's and other dementias.

A tendency on either side of your ancestry toward cancer, high blood pressure or heart disease or any other serious ailments (diabetes, or alcoholism for example) mean you should adopt tactics to lessen known health risks.

Playing the Health Game

After you have done a simple health risk assessment (list everything people in your family back to grandparents, if known have died from) you can then work up simple tactics to win the Health Game.

The key points are likely to be:

- Exercise
- Eating healthy foods
- Avoiding “sand traps” like drug or alcohol addiction
- Specific tactics related to your ancestry

Exercise and the Four Hour Body

A small number of books came out in the mid 1970’s that rocked the health industry. One of these (“*Total Fitness in 30 Minutes per Week*” Morehouse and Gross) made the amazing discovery that the length of *time* spent exercising is not nearly so important as the time spent at a properly elevated heart rate. In effect, what Morehouse and Gross discovered was that 30-minutes a week of elevated heart rate did almost as much as long daily gym sessions. Cardio was, and is, the game.

But it’s not the *whole* game. Timothy Ferriss’ book “The 4-Hour Body: An Uncommon Guide to Rapid Fat-Loss, Incredible Sex, and Becoming Superhuman” available from Amazon [here](#), adds ultra-high pay-off exercises with kettle balls and other simple tools.

The result is that these two tactics alone can dramatically improve your physical conditioning with a very small investment of time and money. When you compare the cost of exercise with a major medical procedure, the selection is a no-brainer: Exercise!

Eating Healthy Foods

Here again, the Strategic Life is easily within reach with just a handful of specific tactics to realize the overall strategy.

They might be summarized “Eat what your ancestors ate.” There are lots of diet books out there that go into endless levels of detail about the number of carbs, versus how much fat, how much protein, and so forth, but let’s break it down to some basics:

- Reduce carbohydrate consumption and eat more veggies
- Eat organic meats and protein sources
- And be extraordinarily careful to use no hydrogenated oils!
- Cut out virtually all sugar including and especially corn sugar

Read a few books on what people used to eat. They did not do as much bread-making and carbohydrate consumption as we do today. Typically they ate a good bit of protein, veggies from basic foraging, and so forth. Various high protein diets make this abundantly clear and a good front-runner in the category is the book [“The Paleo Diet: Lose Weight and Get Healthy by Eating the Foods You Were Designed to Eat”](#) by Loren Cordain available from Amazon.

Eating grass-fed beef, free-range chicken, and wild fish species makes sense and is easy to follow. That cattle might be fattened in a feedlot operation didn't used to make much difference, in say the 1950's. But, with the advent of genetically-modified corn and grains for animals (no FDA oversight here, yet the stuff ends up in our food!) the risk of significant "junk protein" via grain fed meats is increasing.

No, we are not making any claims that there is a provable link between grain-fed meats and disease. We are instead simply reporting our personal choices not to take risks which are not clearly defined.

In order to keep an eye on this area, we would encourage you to visit the website www.pubmed.gov which is an effort of the National Institutes of Health and it's where you can find current "best of class" research on issues (and searches) like "grain-fed beef."

One paper that might be interesting is titled "Rumen microbial population dynamics during adaptation to a high-grain diet." Another – and close to this discussion point is "[A review of fatty acid profiles and antioxidant content in grass-fed and grain-fed beef.](#)"

Mention of good websites brings us to the Weston Price Foundation website where you can find one of the most important works on fatty acids around: [The Oiling of America](#) written by Mary G. Enig, PhD and Sally Fallon . It turns out that butter may not be the evil it was once made out to be, after all.

Directly related is the matter of cholesterol and if you're thinking about "telling your doctor that you want to be on a statin-type drug, you may wish to read

[“Ignore the Awkward.: How the Cholesterol Myths Are Kept Alive”](#) by Dr. Uffe Ravnskov. He asks the most awkward of questions like “If low cholesterol is good, why do most heart attack victims have cholesterol which is *lower* than the general population?” Of course we can *tell* you that it’s because drug companies didn’t purchase his research like they did others, but you might want to follow that path yourself a ways to see where it leads.

Want another landmark health book that has been buried by corporate food interests? Try [“Sugar Blues”](#) by William Duffy for \$7-bucks on Amazon.

The case against sugar is simple: In historical times, sugar was not nearly as available as it is today. Even items which can be made deliciously, like bread, can be crafted with no sugar added. Next time you go shopping, though, check your bread for sugar...you may be surprised.

Anyone who bakes seriously knows that bread making does *not* require sugar. It does require *time*. And in the world of corporate profits time is money, so if adding sugar will puff up bread faster, at some well-hidden health cost...care to guess who wins?

Sugar was once primarily supplied in the form of molasses. Dark, shipped from faraway places like Jamaica on sailing ships, there was no bleaching, additives to preserve flow, or any other oddly named mystery ingredients. Thanks to their colonial powers, England was the last of European countries to adapt to local sugar beet production, so prosperous were sugar plantations in the colonies.

Today, worldwide sugar consumption is still increasing, and will likely go up another 2 to 3 pounds per person per year to about 53 pounds.

But if you look at health statistics and compare them to sugar consumption, a strong correlation may be inferred. In 2008, the average American consumed 132.6 pounds per person.

If you really have a sweet tooth, making every effort to switch over to honey or stevia for sweetening makes good sense. Although fructose is often implied as “fruit sugar” to the lay public, it’s at the heart of corn syrup sweeteners and the medical case against high fructose corn sugar (HFCS) is rapidly building. It’s one of those areas where the Food and Drug Administration completely botched its oversight role, in our view.

Dealing with Addictions

Closely related to the discussion of sugar is the matter of alcohol abuse and addiction.

The chemistry of the relationship is fairly straightforward. As Wikipedia reports “Ethanol is a 2-carbon alcohol with the molecular formula $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$. Its empirical formula is $\text{C}_2\text{H}_6\text{O}$.”

This is close in form to the description of sugar “Glucose, fructose and galactose are all simple sugars, monosaccharides, with the general formula $\text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6$. Sucrose, maltose and lactose are all compound sugars, disaccharides, with the general formula $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{22}\text{O}_{11}$.”

The easiest way to wean off of alcohol abuse is to simply eat something sugary when an strong urge to drink comes along. This is one of those “secrets” that

George came across when he asked a high end technician he knew *“Why do you put so much sugar in your coffee?”*

“I used to have an alcohol problem,” explained the tech. “What I learned in coping with my addiction was that it was as much a sugar-malfunction, as anything.”

We don’t offer medical advice, and any long-term abuse should be closely monitored by competent medical professionals since severe alcohol withdrawal can have many dangerous side effects, such as seizures, temporary blindness, and so forth.

But as long as we’re on this point, the same tactic should be used on withdrawal from any other abused substance, particularly the synthetic opiates. Abuse of hydrocodone, for example, is widespread and for people with a serious “oxy” habit, the only really safe way “down” is a closely monitored professional dosing program with a synthetic opiate like [Buprenorphine](#) which is compounded under different trade names such as Suboxone or Subutex.

There is usually a psychological aspect to addictions. In its simplest form, addictions tend to move users to a different mental time-state. In waking states, humans live in three distinct time domains: Past, Now, and Future. Addictive substances can be used to force or encourage a change in time-state. Some people with addictions are running from the past while others plot endlessly about their futures.

People who live “in the moment” may not have these issues, but may instead have a different kind of “now” addiction characterized by death-defying activities

such as car racing, dirt-biking with lots of “air,” and extreme aerobic flight activity. Of course, we don’t know anyone like *that*, do we?

If you would like a more detailed discussion of the past ->NOW ->future continuum, “[The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment](#)” by Eckhart Tolle may be worth a read.

Issues of Ancestry

Developing specific tactics to give the desired strategic approach is beyond the scope of a general overview such as the one we are offering here.

We can, however, offer a kind of step-by-step *process* that anyone can implement in order to develop a decent “be healthy and pursue wellness” strategy:

- **Assessment:** Begin by collecting all of the historical health data you possibly can about your parents. George’s father, for example, had an extremely low pulse rate measured at 42 while sleeping. As a result, George doesn’t worry when his pulse drops to the mid 50’s while he’s working.
- **Analysis:** Look at all the data and look for the two most-threatening conditions. You may find a heart problem with one parent in their 50’s while the other had cancer in their 70’s. The first thing to develop tactics for might then be the heart issues, since if they end your life at 60, the cancer threat is still a long way out. What’s more, the tactics to fight heart disease might actually help fight cancer, too.

- **Practice:** Once you identify a problem, and potential solutions, schedule a 20-minute session with your doctor to get expert advice. Invest in baseline medical measurements so that any changes over time can be spotted. Most people use doctors in a reactive mode. That is, they go to see the doctor when they are sick. People walking the Strategic Living path use them *proactively* because small problems are cheaper to fix than big ones!
- **Share:** Last but not least, write down (long hand) in simple terms how you are managing your health issues in life so your children will have an easier time of optimizing their own health in the future.

Step 2: Achieve Economic Independence

Eliminate debt to the greatest extent possible. More and more, the value proposition when it comes to housing is to rent rather than buy and, to take things one step further, share a home with another family, related or not.

Achieving economic independence means you might have to give up your credit cards, give up meals out, and sacrifice your nights out on the town. Just remember, debt does not magically appear in one month, one year, or even a decade. It can insidiously accumulate over time.

As with your preparedness and prepping activities, take increasingly larger baby steps toward getting out of debt. As long as you are consistent, those steps will eventually take you toward your goal of economic independence.

Playing the Money Game

Unlike golf, which as a game may be you-against-you, the Money Game is a one-against-many proposition. There are basically only two modes of play to be a winner in this one:

- You can either work for someone else and manage what little money you get very, very effectively OR...
- You can work for yourself

Either way, you need to figure out some way to get people to pay you to do something, and with any luck, it will be something you really, really *like* doing. If

you're going to work forty years (or longer) it might as well be something which you find personally challenging and rewarding, right?

So is there one big strategy to focus on first and foremost? You bet!

Live Below Your Means

The only real “business equation” you need ever learn is that if you spend less than you make, you will always be well off. It seems almost childish to say this, but if you can pay cash for *anything* it is a good idea to do so. There are plenty of reasons why:

- If you pay cash, your ownership is generally unencumbered. This means that you *own* something outright and no one can take it away from you without breaking the law. One exception here is that the government can seize property for nonpayment of taxes.
- If you pay cash, you don't pay interest charges. Even though real estate loans are at record low levels of interest, there are still credit card outfits which gouge people for 21% and higher at a time when they are borrowing at the Fed discount window for less than 1%. Oh, sure, they whine about nonpayment's, charge-off rates and other items, but in the end they're gouging. You don't have to contribute to their greed and that's the power paying cash offers.
- You don't *have to work*. We can't count the number of people we've run into who *have to work* or face bankruptcy, and some multiple times! Even if you don't have a lot of cash, you can still get a small home with modest utilities and taxes. Then you can start to save something up so as

to provide a few years of financial cushion. Once you have that, you can take off work for extended periods of time. You stop being a wage slave.

These are just a few reasons, but by living below your means, you may never have to borrow money, never have to work, never have to be “owing to The Man.” You become a somewhat sovereign individual.

This may seem like it is too darned easy to be called a strategy yet millions of Americans owe tons of short-term revolving debt. In fact, the May 2012 Federal Reserve Consumer Credit report noted that “Consumer credit increased at an annual rate of 8 percent in May. Revolving credit increased at an annual rate of 11-1/4 percent, while non-revolving credit increased at an annual rate of 6-1/2 percent.”

Yes, people in America are addicted to debt and when the national output of goods and services is going up only a few percent per year, seeing such high rates of debt increase by regular humans means something: Average people are falling to below average because of their voracious appetite for borrowing as they pursue the devil called consumer products.

As of that May 2012 report, there was about \$2,771 of credit card/revolving debt for every man, woman, and child in America. Or, if you want to think only about people actually holding real jobs, it’s more like \$6,110 per worker who has a job.

That doesn’t include non-revolving debt (like student loans). For these, we need to toss in \$1.7-trillion more worth of debt so the final debt burden (not counting mortgages, by the way) is \$2.5728-trillion or \$8,212 for each man woman, and child in America. Or, \$18,065 for each American worker who has a job.

It becomes easy to see why getting out of debt – and staying out of debt – is the key strategy to follow.

Mortgages: A Special Case

There is one fine print exception to the matter of shunning debt: A mortgage is OK since you have to live somewhere. But there are lots of special considerations to consider before adopting home ownership as a strategy:

- Because commissions run 7-10% (when all costs are counted) figure how long you will have to stay put in order to just cover buying and selling costs.
- Most Americans move every 7-9 years. There's a reason for this slow turnover rate. Housing flipping is a thing of the past!
- You need at least six months of cash reserves, and more is better. Nothing could be worse than buying a house and then losing it a year later.
- Have confidence in yourself, the economy, and the housing market before you buy. Check the latest Case Shiller/S&P Housing Index and look at the trends. Do not buy in a declining market until a definite "bottom" is in.
- Don't take out home equity loans (HELOCs) since there is no free money.

In fact, you might want to frame that part: "There is no free money!"

One Skill or Many?

Another strategic decision you'll make, to be sure of winning the Money Game, although it's often not made consciously, is to decide whether you're going to pursue a *unique mix of skills* for which there will be high demand in the long term, or whether you're going to be a *single skill specialist*.

Gaye is an example of the latter. We don't talk too much about our resumes on the net, but Gaye was a highly successful computer industry professional and principal of a firm which designed and built paging industry software. This was the software accounting backend that takes care of billing pager users.

When she sold her company in 1988, her competence in complex accounting issues garnered her lots of job offers. After some further exploits in software, she decided that being a financial controller for select clients was a good skill to focus on and to this day and her highly successful "Controller in Motion" consultancy competes for attention with [Backdoor Survival](#).

She's a dandy example of going from software into a very specialized field of expertise for a handful of very happy clients. Key: Single focus, extremely knowledgeable in a single vertical market.

George, on the other hand is an example of multiple skills which work together to make him desirable as a *generalist*. Starting with a broadcast engineering background, he then moved into major market news casting, then into airline management, and while completing a bachelors and masters, he moved into proprietary school management (technical college level). From there it was

radio and electronics technology, then back to running accredited colleges and eventually to semi-retirement, though he still does some consulting.

He's an example of the *grab as many skills as you can* approach.

Either strategy will work, but once you pick one, the specific *tactics* are widely different. The single-focus expert (Gaye) approach works best in either a *high growth industry*, or in a *required/staff category* (referring to the difference between the assembly "line" and supporting "staff" in companies). She got real traction in a growth industry, sold near the top of the pager market and then moved into high end accountancy which is a staff function, but with lots of zeroes left of the decimal point.

In this role, she has fostered many very long-term relationships and clients love her work because she genuinely is expert in her field.

The "jack of all trades" strategy (George's strategy) worked well because he's a learn, conquer, and on to the next challenge kind of person. Since he's changed fields several times (is this ADHD?) he's been better at short to medium-term business relationships, which suit his personality.

The "jack of all trades" strategy may offer one small advantage over the single-focus expert: More job choices in an economic recession. On the other hand, with the right mix of clients, the single-focus expert strategy can also be recession-resistant, since accounting expertise is needed regardless of the economic environment a company is operating in.

Self Employed or Work and Manage the Nest Egg?

It's about a tradeoff, in many cases, but picking the strategy you're comfortable with and can stand behind for a lifetime is getting tougher. That's because when today's "grays" (like the two of us) were growing up, it was assumed that a person would get one job, stay there 30-40 years and then retire with a good pension.

But that no longer works. What has gone wrong with the old "Work and Manage the Nest Egg" theory?

- Massive jobjacking (offshoring) of formerly US manufacturing jobs to third world, least-cost labor places like India and China.
- Technology has obsoleted many industries by introducing software-based alternatives. Electronic document management sound familiar?
- Many company functions once done by humans, such as clerks and typists have disappeared (or been outsourced) and that trend will likely continue.
- Whole industries have "gone away." As an example, telephone installer jobs are in a long-term decline because of increased competition from wireless. There may still be wiring jobs (fiber and DSL) but expertise on touchstones? Fading and fading fast into oblivion.
- Worst of all is that pensions are in trouble: They invested in some of the bad mortgage paper out of the housing bubble and care to guess how

that's working out? (Didn't someone say just a moment ago "There is no free money?")

Still, there are still some great jobs where a person can work for a long period, get vested in a good pension program at a good company. Boeing will be making jets for a while longer, for example, but even here don't expect anyone to hold up a sign that reads "Cash in Now!!!" The world simply doesn't work that way.

We both happen to be in the "self-employed" category, but it is not for everyone.

The key, if you're not self-employed, is to pick the right vehicle to accumulate your wealth.

One of the surest ways to collect it has historically been buying one or two rental housing units. But, with the general decline in social behavior, this has become more difficult. It's easy to be taken for a ride – to the cleaners.

One of George's friends had a number of rental homes a few years back – nearly a dozen had been accumulated. And then he ran into a string of bad renters. Cleaning feces off window sills from people who moved out in the middle of the night and ripping off some appliances, is not what he was "in the game" for. Neither was his wife, so they sold all the rentals, did fine on the investment side, and put the money in gold when it was considerably lower than it was today.

They made out fine. But there are two strategic points: One is that sometimes renters will give references which are really friends. Other times, a landlord who knows they have a really bad tenant will build up the outgoing tenant in order to

get rid of them and be done with it. (Lying for profit is becoming a widespread tactic in America, in case you haven't noticed yet.)

The other strategic point is to watch investments closely and have a backup plan thought out well in advance of need so as to reduce the odds of making a bad decision should the need arise to change classes of investment.

Economic Independence is a tough strategy to make work, but it's also very rewarding. Just like developing a winning Health & Wellness Strategy can be done in a few hours a week, so too can economic independence. But you can't farm most of this stuff out.

Remember investment advisors and wealth management types have to be paid – and one way they get paid is by commission. This makes their advice often times very suspect, so please, buyer beware!

Step 3: Embrace Food Production

Grow a garden – it does not have to be large. There is a certain joy in picking a few tomatoes off of your own vines. Not only do they taste better, but you gain the knowledge of knowing how to work the soil and plant the seeds. The same thing applies to baking bread or canning chili. I'll bet you never thought of those domestic arts as food production.

Shift your mindset and start thinking about those things you can grow or make yourself – without reliance upon the shelves at the local grocer.

You Are What You Eat

In 1972, a very tall – 6-foot 6-inches perhaps – fellow walked into the studios of KOL AM/FM where George was news director. He'd come to be interviewed about his way of living: Mainly without food.

As the interview evolved, George learned about "[Breatharians](#)" – a group of people who claim that they can get most, if not all, their nutrition from breathing correctly. George naturally was skeptical and persisted in his questioning, only to learn that the Breatharian he was interviewing would take water a few times a day – hot water with a squeeze of lemon in it – and would occasionally eat a bit of food.

But the Breatharian held that man's best physical state was achieved by not eating too much. "You will have a higher vibration," he was told.

That vibration may be related to an increase in heart rate and blood pressure from dehydration, as it turns out. Science has taken on the Breatharian rap and come away unimpressed. Humans are not, after all, air ferns.

Still, the food production equation begins by looking at two bits of science which are well-described in the literature.

First is the idea that the amount of food you need to produce is equal to the size and weight of the human body you're planning to live in. Look for calorie and weight charts on the internet ([like these](#)).

At a moderate activity level the 100-pounds (on a heavy day) SurvivalWoman only needs 1800 calories per day and in office mode (low activity) she can do fine on 1500 calories per day.

The UrbanSurvival guy has genetics and a higher weight to support: 210 pounds which means if he'd ever get moderately active, he'd need a bit over 3,000 calories but even in his usual lazy/office mode and the heart rate of 55 he needs 2,200 calories.

According to George's wife, Elaine, he seldom drops below the 2,400 calorie level and mutters "just to be safe" and other nonsensical things.

Seriously: Embracing food production is something that *scales* according to size and gender of the person.

Which means what, exactly in terms of food production?

The Food Production Game

The first strategic decision to make about “embracing food production” is “How to get there?” In other words, George might be able to radically reduce his food requirements by dropping to 160 pounds. His food saving would be 400-calories per day and while that may not seem like much, it adds up, depending on how the calories are consumed. Some TV-dinner style meals are in this calorie level, so you can get a sense of how much less food production is involved.

If we assume George has no will power, he will have to put about one third more food production than Gaye in order to support his current body weight. Since George likes *lazy*, he may quickly conclude that in order to do less work in the garden, one way to get there is to reduce consumption.

What to Produce?

Having decided to optimize weight doesn't put a meal on the table and there are a number of low tech ways that even apartment and condo dwellers can effectively produce some of their own food.

This turns into something of a calculus problem because everyone will have a different answer to the question based on:

- The climate they live in
- The amount of growing space available
- How much sunlight per day
- Personal taste

The climate available is usually not variable. However, the amount of growing space you can claim can be pushed around a bit. One approach to it get the excellent book "[Square Foot Gardening](#)" while another is to put in a high density small hydroponic setup that George described with JB Slear in an eBook available from <http://mygroponics.com/>.

Sunlight can be “pushed” to extend the growing season by installing cold frames and by installing solar powered LED lighting which is gaining some popularity. But use some discretion when you go down this path as too much high tech gardening equipment tends to be viewed with regulatory suspicion by drug enforcement types who often get leads to pot-growing operations by looking at grow-light purchases!

Personal taste in local food production is extremely important. When the two G’s were living in the same large apartment complex 40-years ago, sharing recipes and such, Gaye’s small condo even then was completely self-sufficient in herbs and a number of high production planters of tomatoes. There’s *nothing* that equals the taste of fresh herbs and if you’re a person with “No Green Thumb” herbs are a rewarding way to gently work into gardening without a lot of hassle.

Gardening Return on Investment Chart

On the following page is a chart we’ve condensed from several sources which is extremely useful because it shows you the relative calorie return for a given kind of plant.

If you wish to embrace food production to the point of producing a fine salad every day for six months out of the year, this chart won't mean much to you. But, if you were suddenly placed in a position where survival gardening was important, then you'd focus on the high calorie content (top of the chart) veggies as well as those – like broccoli – that have a wide protein spectrum in them.

Iceberg lettuce may be the perfect low calorie bed for a shrimp salad, but 3 cups of shredded Iceberg lettuce is less than 25 calories. In order to keep George alive (3,000 calories, right?) he'd have to eat more than 100 heads of lettuce per day. George doesn't embrace that kind of food production.

Instead, he's more interested in a good mix: Especially the higher calorie items at the top of this chart:

Garbanzos, dry, 1 cup	367
Rice, brown, 1 cup, cooked	232
Pinto beans, 1 cup	228
Navy beans, 1 cup	224
Rice, white, 1 cup, cooked	223
Kidney beans, dried, 1 cup, cooked	218
Great northern beans, 1 cup	212

Lentils, 1 cup	212
Lima beans, 1 cup	189
Rice, instant, 1 cup, cooked	180
Black-eyed peas, 1 cup	178
Sweet potatoes, fresh, 5 x 2 in. - baked	172
Potato, boiled, large, pared, 2.3 x 4.5	146
Potato, baked, 2 1/3 x 4 3/4 in.	145
Corn, cooked, 1 cup	140
Butternut squash, baked--1 cup	139
Potatoes, mashed with milk, 1 cup	137
Coleslaw with salad dressing, 1 cup	119
Peas, cooked, 1 cup	115
Coleslaw with French dressing, 1 cup	114
Bean curd, 4 oz.	81

Tofu, 4 oz.	81
Green beans, low sodium, Del Monte,	80
Corn on the cob, 1 5 in. ear	70
Lettuce, iceberg, 1 head	70
Artichokes, 1 artichoke	67
Onions, raw, 1 cup	65
Olives, ripe, 10 extra large	61
Brussels sprouts, 1 cup, fresh	56
Beets, 1 cup, fresh	54
Carrots, sliced, 1 cup	48
Kale, fresh, 1 cup	43
Collards, fresh, 1 cup	42
Watermelon, 1 cup	42
Broccoli, cooked, 1 cup	40

Kale, frozen, 1 cup	40
Eggplant, 1 cup, boiled	38
Turnip greens, frozen, 1 cup	38
Bean sprouts, raw, 1 cup	37
Asparagus, fresh, 1 cup, boiled	36
Bean sprouts, boiled, 1 cup	35
Green pepper, diced, 1 cup	33
Chard, fresh, 1 cup	32
Mustard greens, fresh, 1 cup	32
Cabbage, cooked, 1 cup	31
Cauliflower, raw, 1 cup, chopped	31
Green beans, boiled, 1 cup	31
Carrot, raw, 1 carrot	30
Cucumbers, each	30

Mustard greens, frozen, 1 cup	30
Pickles, sweet, 1 oz.	30
Squash, 1 cup	30
Turnip greens, fresh, 1 cup	29
Cauliflower, boiled, 1 cup	28
Tomato, raw, 1 tomato	26
Zucchini, 1 cup	22
Mushrooms, 1 cup, chopped	20
Radish, 1 cup sliced	20
Cabbage, raw, shredded, 1 cup	17
Green pepper, 1 pepper, 1/5 pound	16
Spinach, fresh, 1 cup	14
Celery, 3 small stalks, 5 in.	9
Radish, 10 medium radishes	8

Lettuce, iceberg, 1 cup, shredded	7
Pickles, dill, 1 pickle--3 3/4 x 1 1	7
Garlic, raw, 1 clove	4

Of Grains and Gluten

There's one class of plant missing in this chart and you'll have spotted it right away: No grains. The reason is that grains (except corn) tend to be very space-intensive. Sure, you can go ahead and plant some wheat and rice, but don't call us with your tales of woe when things don't work out at planned. There are some things which are really better purchased.

That said, however, we agree that unbleached flour is best and that for baking and so forth, what you're after are good gluten levels. But how do you get these and, at the same time keep to the idea of minimal food processing and maximum independence?

Simple: Buy good whole wheat in long-term storage containers (nitrogen packed) and invest in a good wheat grinder.

Not everyone can eat wheat, however, and we've both been eyeing some experiments with Amaranth which has been consumed by humans as a grain for more than 8,000 years. We'll keep you posted on our web sites how those experiments come out. But the main feature of Amaranth is that it has [more protein than even oats](#).

Ethical Issues and Food Animals: Chickens

A couple of years ago, one of George's Peoplenomics reports dealt with "The Coming Protein Cost Explosion" and we may be on the leading edge of that forecast condition now. Drought is causing ranchers to reduce herd sized, oceans have been poisoned in the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific off Fukushima, and thanks to ocean dumping, and it is getting harder and more expensive to get good protein at reasonable costs. Toss in ocean-sweeping "long-liner" operations and global famine arises as a very real future possibility. It's already endemic to certain parts of Africa (sub-Sahara) and spreading.

We hold vegetarians in very high regard, but we also recognize that vegan isn't for everyone. But, since food animals are a real burden, we also look for happy solutions that don't negatively impact human food production. Grain-fed beef may sell well at upscale steak joints, but it is demonstrably inefficient.

What are "perfect" animals to embrace? It's hard to go wrong with chickens as a starter. George & Elaine picked up three Rhode Island Reds and found they were up to their eyeballs in eggs within a few weeks. Healthy chickens produce about 0.75 eggs per day and they didn't eat enough. When local predators finally cleaned out the chicken house (raccoons have a taste for chicken, turns out) they didn't get replaced.

Still, there are lots of ways to preserve the protein from eggs and one of the most effective is making egg noodles. You can use up a lot of eggs and store the protein for future consumption very effectively.

Chicken output varies by sunlight: The more hours of daylight, the more eggs come along. In the wintertime, you might only get an egg or two per week due to the long hours of darkness.

Chickens do a fine job of keeping down bugs, too. On the other hand, there are certain predators (chicken snakes) which come along with the territory, too, so just remember when embracing animals that Ma Nature has a fine set of checks and balances and good farming involves making small adjustments to “the systems” already operating around the home.

Many cities are rediscovering the home chicken coup issue, since a fresh egg from the coup is an entirely different experience nutritionally and taste wise from what’s in stores, where the shelf life is often 60-days even for AA and A grade eggs.

Oh...and most people don’t have a clue what those egg grades are all about. So here’s the official USDA explanation:

“§56.201 AA Quality: The shell must be clean, unbroken, and practically normal. The air cell must not exceed 1/8 inch in depth, may show unlimited movement, and may be free or bubbly. The white must be clear and firm so that the yolk is only slightly defined when the egg is twirled before the candling light. The yolk must be practically free from apparent defects.

[38 FR 26798, Sept. 26, 1973. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977, and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981]

§56.202 A Quality: The shell must be clean, unbroken, and practically normal. The air cell must not exceed 3/16 inch in depth, may show unlimited

movement, and may be free or bubbly. The white must be clear and at least reasonably firm so that the yolk outline is only fairly well defined when the egg is twirled before the candling light. The yolk must be practically free from apparent defects.

[38 FR 26798, Sept. 26, 1973. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977, and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981]”

If you do decide to raise some chickens for eggs, you’re in for a treat. They are excellent bug-chasers, display some degree of intelligence, and make effective intrusion alarms and wake-up calls.

Oh, and chickens which have a little fresh “scratch” every day and don’t live in a high density factory farm almost *never* put out anything but AA grade eggs.

Step 4: Reduce Energy Consumption

Here in North America, our reliance on fossil fuels is epidemic. There is nothing self-reliant about using gas or oil to heat your home or cook your food. Still, to accept that as part of our way of life is perfectly acceptable. But we would like to see you challenge yourself to reduce your carbon footprint by doing with less.

Turn off the lights and light some candles in the evening. Learn to entertain yourself with a book, a board game or simply a great conversation with someone you enjoy. Leave the car in the garage and take a walk.

These are all small things you can do to reduce energy consumption but like pennies in the piggy bank, the little things can add up quickly.

Home Energy Expenses

The good thing about energy - the thing that makes it easy to manage – is that it comes as individual line items in the household checkbook. You may get electric and gas bills, plus if you burn fuel oil for heat, that's another bill, too.

The easiest way to reduce home energy bills is to retrofit a home with as much insulation, weather-stripping, and dual (or triple) pane windows as you can manage. If you are buying a home insist on one which has been framed with 2X6 sidewalls and at least 2X10 ceilings in order to get enough insulation in place to be effective. The more insulation you buy and install up front, the lower the energy bills for the life of the building.

Windows have always vexed homeowners: Double, even triple-glazed windows (three sheets of glass) cannot compare with a well-built home's 2X6" sidewalls. But, windows let in light and provide scenic views.

The work around, in new construction, is easy: Triple-glazing and moderately sized windows and LED lighting. Retrofit LED lights are in the works, but for now on an energy efficiency basis, compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) are best.

The only problem with compact fluorescents is they have disposal issues that arise from their use of mercury, which vaporized and charged with electricity, creates ultraviolet light inside the bulbs. When the UV light strikes the phosphors coating the inside of the light, they fluoresce and visible light is created. Not happy chemicals to dispose of, and the lifespan of many CFLs has been disappointing, especially in the lower price ranges.

Energy Costs of Transportation

The airline ad that proclaims "You're free to move around the country" leaves out the fine print of reality: Getting around the country ain't free!

Let's start with the car: You can cut your energy bills in half by trading in your 20 MPG slug and buying (as one of George's friends just did) a 50-MPG highway Volkswagen Golf turbo diesel. You won't get much change from a \$28,000 bill, however. And \$28,000 buys a lot of gasoline, even if prices were to jump to \$12 a gallon due to war in the Middle East.

Energy consumption is speed related: A 49 CC moped may be able to turn in 100 MPG on a regular basis (the 4-cycle mopeds are way more efficient than the 2-

cycle type since tighter tolerances can be used due to a different lubrication technique in 4-cycle engines). A big Harley may get similar mileage to a car (though way more fun to drive).

Commercial airliners (small, like the Boeing 737) burn about 2.3 gallons per mile, so for a 500-mile trip, you're talking about 1,150 gallons. But, since a typical 737 carries around 125 passengers, at typical load factors in today's airline world, each passenger's share works out to about 54 MPG equivalent.

OK, you might want to drive the Golf and skip the grope.

The Golf versus Boeing comparison is important because at a busy airport (which requires up to 2-hours of TSA-related screw around time) you can quickly see that for trips under two hours duration driving, the car is the hands down winner. In the Pacific Northwest, this means a trip to Portland from Seattle is nearly a push: The Golf TDI will still do about 50 MPG even with two adults and modest luggage. The airline will want lots more money (and you have the car payment anyway, so might as well use it, right?) plus the hassle factor for short flights is ridiculous.

Four hours of driving seems to be where airplanes start looking better (250-miles and beyond) but even here, the Golf still beats Boeing in some ways (no rental car needed at destination) though Boeing wins on total time (an hour less time, but you may get a good groping).

The Most for Your Money

These two examples should make it really clear: You can only spend your money once. Before you spend a dime on energy? Make some time in your busy life to list *all* the costs you'll encounter. In the airline example there's a time difference; that much is obvious. But add up the little things: Cost of the airport parking or the shuttle to get there. Then toss in time spent in lines not only for security, but baggage claim (did you remember that time?) and let's be sure to clock the line time at the rental car desk and...oh-oh, the bus ride out to the rental car pickup lot which is sometimes a mile or two from the terminal.

This is the *essence* of the Strategic Life: expanding your horizons to make well-founded judgments in all areas of Life.

Step 5: Learn to Barter

Times are tough. Many are unemployed. And many have had their retirement funds decimated by the sneaky (and dare we say corrupt?) Wall Street types. Perhaps you have a useful skill. Or perhaps you have a healthy flock of egg laying chickens. Learn to trade your skill or extra commodities for something you either need or covet.

You would be amazed at the things people will barter for. Even in business. Take a plumber. He or she might trade plumbing services for some year-end tax services from an accountant. Or the chicken farmer. He or she might trade a year's supply of fresh eggs for roof repairs. Think about those things you have to trade. Start small but start now. Bartering is the "in" thing to do these days.

Simple Barter Explained

In a simple barter, you look for someone who is looking for a particular kind of goods, or service, which you have an excess of. Let's say you do carpentry work, but you need a new television.

You go to the local sources of items for sale (such as Craigslist or the local newspaper classified section) and you look for the item you need. Here's one: A 47" LCD TV One year old, \$300 and a phone number.

"Hmmm...how do I work this?" you're wondering.

Easy. You call the number in the ad and say something like this:

“Hi. I saw you had a nice 47” TV for sale and I’d sure like to get it. Now, I don’t have any money, but I’m a very good carpenter and I’d be willing to trade you my time and materials up to \$300 worth in exchange for the TV set. Maybe you have some shelves you’ve like built, or repairs to a porch...that kind of thing. How does that sound?”

Don’t be disappointed if you don’t score a deal on the first call. Typically it takes 10-20 such calls to come up with a barter that will make sense for both parties. The reason is simple when you think about it: Some people are selling because they simply need to raise cash and there’s no deal if they don’t get the “long green” they need. And then there are people who are trading up, so they need cash, too. Others have life issues (divorce in the works, going in the military, and so forth) so they have no incentive to do a barter deal with you.

But with some persistence you should be able to come up with a deal. In this regard, seeking out local barter deals is a lot like going fishing. You never know which cast (or call in this case) will catch you the fish you’re after!

Three-Way Barter

Simple person-to-person barter works great for many things, but there’s an expanded version of barter that most people don’t know about: It’s called three-way barter and it takes a little more work.

To do it, you still make the simple two-way barter call, described in the previous section, but when the person on the phone turns you down you ask one more important question:

“Well, since you don’t need any carpentry work, do you know anyone who does? Maybe they have something you want...perhaps a trolling motor for your boat, or something else you were planning to buy. We could do a three-way barter. Do you know how that works?”

Most people don’t so you continue your spiel:

“Let me explain: I’ll do the carpentry for your friend, but instead of paying me, they would pay me by giving you the trolling motor, then YOU would pay me by you giving me that television. How does that sound? “

In order to visualize multi-party barter, think of all the people involved as forming a big circle. Everyone has something another party wants. What happens is the goods simply move one place to the right or left and everyone’s left happy.

Tax Consequences of Barter

We don’t offer financial advice. How goods are priced in barter deals is entirely up to the parties. In the case of the TV and carpentry deal, the “price” could be agreed upon as \$1 or \$5....or left unstated at all. It would just be a *trade*.

Still, IRS wants a piece of even non-dollar trades. Here’s a bit off the IRS website:

[Bartering Income](#)

“Bartering is the trading of one product or service for another. Usually there is no exchange of cash. It is the most ancient form of commerce. Any business owner or professional who has a product or service to offer can barter.

While our ancestors may have exchanged eggs for corn, today you can barter computer services for auto repair. Another example of a one-on-one, non-barter exchange transaction is a plumber doing repair work for a dentist in exchange for dental services. The fair market value of the goods and services exchanged must be reported as income by both parties.

Barter may take place on an informal one-on-one basis between individuals and businesses, or it can take place on a third party basis through a modern barter exchange company.”

As a practical matter, the IRS has very limited enforcement capability to enforce income tax laws in cases where there is no money, only an in-kind exchange agreeable to the parties.

For example, an hour of carpentry or tractor driving for four dozen eggs might seem untenable since there is no dollar value assigned.

Where it gets even *more* complicated is that an hour of heavy equipment operator in Washington DC might be \$25 an hour and those four dozen organic farm fresh eggs might fetch \$22 dollars at some upscale organic grocer. But in someplace like the East Texas Outback where George lives, those are just “yard eggs” and since the chickens laying them just dump ‘em here and there, they may be considered virtually valueless. Moreover, neighbors in the country share work – especially specialized work like welding, well-drilling, or machine work, all the time.

As we said, we don’t offer financial or tax advice. Let your conscience and your good, honest accountant, be your guide. But also remember that as cash

disappears, barter will be on the upswing as people rediscover ancient ways of commerce that existed long before government – and with zero overhead as a bonus!

Step 6: Use it Up, Wear it Out, Make it Do!

We love this saying. Believe it or not, it was coined by our government during World War II. We think it speaks for itself: Use what you have and use it until it wears out. Sure, a nice set of new tools would be nice. But there is nothing wrong with the old ones other than old age and perhaps a little rust. Clean them and make do. They are just fine the way they are. This applies to clothing, automobiles, dinnerware, you name it.

Use It Up

This one is so obvious we shouldn't even have to write it, but look at leftovers for example. Some people throw out leftovers without giving it a second thought. No, no, no! Wrong strategy!

You have a freezer, microwave and a reefer, right? With some Tupperware and Corel, and you can dramatically reduce your food budget.

One of Gaye's secrets? Toss all left-over veggies in a freezer bag. When the bag gets full, thaw out in chicken or vegetable broth and bring to boiling. She calls it "Garbage Soup" but it tastes like a million bucks, takes no time to make, and it's easy on the budget.

George ("Slim" as we jokingly call him when he's not around) tosses in a frozen hamburger patty or two, thawed and formed into meatballs, plus a small can of kernel corn, stewed tomatoes, and half a cabbage sliced up. Different name, goulash, but the same idea: Healthy food for next to nothing. Think of it as free

bonus meals. Serve with French bread, butter, and a glass of Italian vitamins (Chianti).

Wear It Out

Ever throw away a pair of shoes just because you don't like them? Most people do. Yet some of us actually have developed a transition path: We buy good clothes for work and professional settings. Then, after they are looking a bit worn, they get moved to the "working around the house" collection.

Generally, they stay there for a long time. In fact, George just used some Liquid Nails to put his most comfortable chukka boots back together – the sole was coming off the shoe. The fact that it was a \$49 pair of shoes wasn't a factor. What drove him to borrow some Liquid Nails from Gaye (during a recent visit) was that except for the glue job failure, the shoes were not used up.

Could George afford a new pair? Of course. But that's the kind of saving (\$49 less a buck's worth of glue) that adds up when practiced for half a century and invested elsewhere.

Make It Do

The same thing holds true in fashion and automobiles, so be extra careful of these ego-traps. Women's clothing comes and goes, but if you are decisive about how you look, you can still wear the same clothes you wore in high school. Obviously, George can't, but he's worn out everything. But Elaine still has a few pieces of clothing she carefully selected when she was 19. Her current age is

[highly] classified, but many of those clothes she bought long ago are now coming back into style (retro!) and she gets to be a fashion diva with no cost except the closet space involved. Ditto with Gaye.

It's really quite remarkable.

And no, you don't need to ask: Yes, clothes were much better made back in the day. So when you buy something today, don't just buy it for *now*. Buy it for the longer term. Is a Coach purse more expensive? Sure, but you're worth it especially if you plan to continue using it for twenty or more years.

So go ahead: Invest in yourself.

Step 7: Take Advantage of Nature's Bounty

Fish, hunt, or forage for edible native food. Again, the possibilities are endless. Not only will you reap the benefit of free or almost free food, you will develop an enjoyable hobby as well.

Far Afield

There are several books on how to forage that are pretty good and many local groups around the country offer classes on foraging.

The main thing to be aware of is who owns the land you're foraging on and be aware that some states still put herbicides along roadsides.

Shrooming

Mushroom hunting is very tasty and rewarding, but don't rely on a book to get you into this aspect of nature's bounty. Certain mushrooms have spores which will blow out your liver in no time. Get expert training!

Hunting and Fishing

You get to make an interesting strategic decision here: Fishing is our favored tack since guns make noise and kill things. But, if times get tougher – as they are bound to – hunting skills become more important.

Fishing though, especially in coastal areas, can be enjoyed year-round for the cost of a fishing license. A little study time on your local area, perhaps visiting a bait shop or two, and most of the time you can find some satisfactory fishing without having to invest in the high overhead items like a boat.

In most big cities a bus ride to a public fishing spot can get you as much fish as all day in a high-end boat. No motor, no boat registration, just casting and catching (when things work out right). See the chapter on Simplicity.

Step 8: Prepare For the Unexpected

This is what prepping is all about: acquiring the skills, tools, gear and food you will need when and if faced with a crisis. The crisis can come from a natural disaster, a family emergency, a job layoff, or even a collapse of society. We don't have a crystal ball that tells us nothing bad will ever happen. So we prepare we hope you do too!

What's the Threat?

The truth is it doesn't matter, at least until you get down to the fine points level of prepping. Look at the list here:

- Nuclear War
- Pole shift
- EMP attack
- Global Pandemic
- Planet X/Nibiru
- Global Revolution
- Civil War 2
- Sudden unemployment
- Earthquake
- Asteroid impact
- Massive earthquakes
- And yada, yada, yada . . .

What Do You Need?

Now let's sit back for a moment and think through what you're going to need no matter what:

- You'll need some water or you're going to die of dehydration
- You'll need some food
- You may need outdoor clothing
- A roll of toilet paper could be priceless
- You may need to leave the city – walk an extended period
- Maybe you'll need medical attention so a first aid kit would be nice.

If you read any of our web sites ([BackdoorSurvival](#), [UrbanSurvival](#), [Peoplenomics](#), or [Strategic Living](#)) you're going to learn more about survival than 99% of people who are already preppers *think* they know. That's because we test, retest, retry, retool, and so forth. Enough of the pitch...you get the picture, we're sure.

Step 9: Choose Simplicity

Given the choice of living a simple, minimalistic life or one filled with non-stop appointments, complicated logistics, and expensive habits, we choose the simple.

Living with less does not mean you are being cheap. It means picking and choosing the best you can afford for those things you do choose to own. This allows you to appreciate your surroundings and your stuff because they were thoughtfully and carefully chosen with purpose in mind. Gone is the clutter and gone is the excess. Everything you own will have a place in your home and a place in your life. The word “junk” will become foreign to you.

Living simply and getting rid of stuff will allow you to open up your senses to what really matters. And you will be happier for it.

A Simple Simplicity Checklist

Ask yourself simple questions to lead a simple life:

- How much space do you *really* need to live in?
- How much money do you *really* need to be happy?
- How new a car do you *really* need to drive?
- What are the simple things you can really do that would give you a sense of fulfillment?
- What can you do to really make yourself happy?

For most people, the answers are surprisingly simple: A good lifestyle, good food, and above all a solid relationship with a single significant other is all it takes.

Helping people in need or cleaning the environment in some way (even if it's just cleaning up your own house) can be hugely rewarding.

The motivational speaker Earl Nightengale made a very astute observation in his audiobook series "[Lead The Field](#)" which you can buy on Amazon (and it's a classic). He wondered why it is that poor people – the unemployed always seem to live in the most ramshackle, run down, uncared-for properties?

These people – perhaps above all others – have the time and opportunity to really harvest Nature and do something spectacular. Yet, they don't.

The master motivator then posted an interesting question: Why don't they?

The reason he proposed was "attitude."

From his observations we might conclude that simplicity is a key attitude. You don't need to have two old refrigerators in the front yard, even if you are dirt poor. More than anything, poor turns out to be a mental disease, a state of mind.

The key to simplicity is attitude. And a fundamental thing to remember at all times is that you can be very very short of cash yet not be poor. Broke means no money. Poor is a matter of spiritual poverty, lack of self-respect and a poor attitude.

Neither one of us has ever met a poor person with a healthy, vibrant optimistic outlook. Those Biblical hints that go to the idea “As above, so below” are playing 24-7 in the world before you. It really is *that* simple.

Step 10: Enjoy the Good Life

Number 10 is to enjoy the good life under your own terms. Your. Own. Terms. Repeat that. This is your life and as far as we know, the only life you will have. If you spend your life fulfilling the dreams of others to the exclusion of yourself, you will be missing out on experiencing the wonderment of a new challenge, the joy of a job well done, the adventure of a path less traveled.

It does not take a lot of money to enjoy the good life. What it does take is a commitment to having fun and a dedication to pursuing dreams. So go ahead, smell the roses. Figure out the life you want to live given the resources you have. Just do it!

Get Some DDT – Daily Down Time

This is a simple strategy that will expand your enjoyment of Life immensely: Take at least one hour per day and dedicate it to having fun. What's "fun?"

- Get serious about your hobby. If it's a good one, there should be no problem at all devoting an hour a day to some pleasurable pursuit.
- Look around you: Do you like your present environment? Could it be painted, rearranged, refurnished, cleaned, or perhaps you need a scented candle burning... Devote part of your downtime to focusing on your surroundings and how to make them better. They're where the most important person in your world works and lives: YOU!

Get Some BFT Scheduled, too!

What's BFT? Brain Feeding Time.

In order to produce superior results you need to set aside at least a half hour per day to engage in “brain contact” with the world around you. How can you do this:

- Visit a new place every day, if you can. Try a new store, wander into a new shop, look at a new catalog, think about a new topic.
- Every week, go to the library, or use free online sources to find at least one new book you can “power read” in a few days. (One technique is to read just the right-hand, or just the left-hand pages. You'll be able to follow the gist of most books this way and cut your reading time in half.)
- Above all schedule some MFT – music feeling time. Your brain operates most of your waking hours in the logical (left) brain hemisphere. Music soothes the right (spontaneous, artistic, emotional) side of the brain. The beat in music and sounds can dramatically change your mental state. Google “Binaural beats” to see what we mean.

Take REAL Vacations

The idea of recreation gets seriously lost in the modern work world. The word means to re-create – rediscover and recharge yourself. Amp your mojo. You should take vacations because you simply don't have enough time during the regular workweek to accomplish everything you have the potential to do.

Watch the movie “The Bucket List” with Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. Don’t fall into the trap of waiting till you’re nearly dead to get out there, kick some ass and live the life of the truly unlimited person you are.

Step 11: The LOSTD

What's this? It's short for List of Stuff (sometimes spelled with four letters) To Do.

Promise us that you will read at least one book on time management in the next month and that you will keep a written list of goals handy.

You're really doing it for YOU but the magic is that if you write down a list of things to get done every day you'll have better focus and higher output. That's how we get so much done for ourselves, our clients, and our spouses.

Above all remember this:

- A successful hour is made of well-spent minutes.
- A successful day is made up of well-spent hours.
- A successful week is made of well-spent days.
- A successful month is made up of well-spent days.
- A successful year is comprised of well-spent months.

We'll trust you've got the brains to figure out what a successful Life is made of.

Want to Learn More?

Come on over and visit the blog at [Backdoor Survival](#) and the website at [Urban Survival](#) for the latest in survival, prepping and coping tools.

We put up articles on all kinds of eclectic subject matter geared toward helping you live a strategic life under your terms. And at the end of the day, who could ask for more?

Except us, perhaps. We still want a cold beer for George or red wine for Gaye plus a winning Lottery ticket. But that doesn't stop us from 12-hours per day focus on our lists of stuff to do.

Conclusion

We hope that you have received some value and, of course, motivation from our eBook. Both of us encourage you to contact us via our websites or via email with comments and suggestions.

Respectfully,

The Two Gs

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