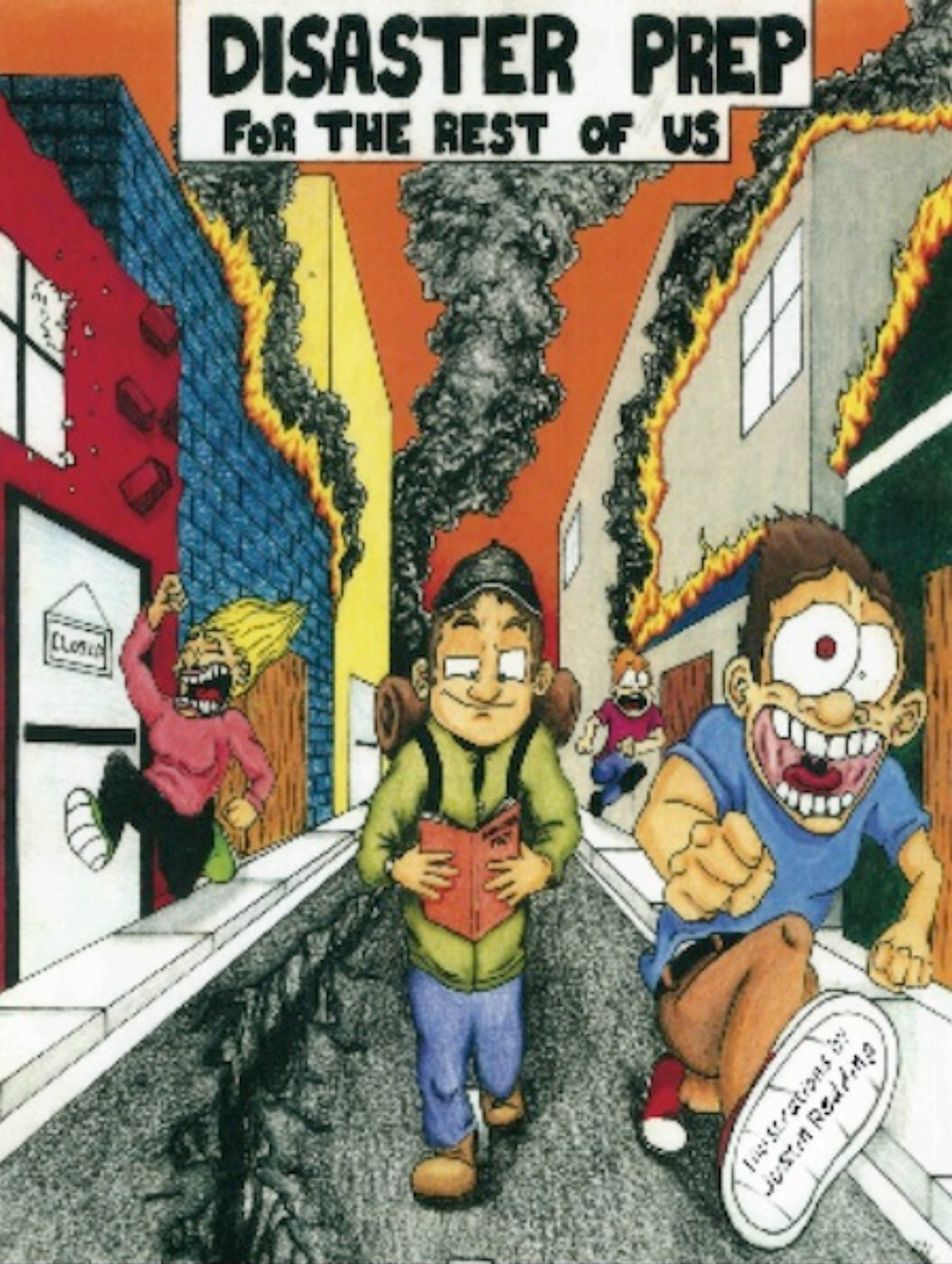
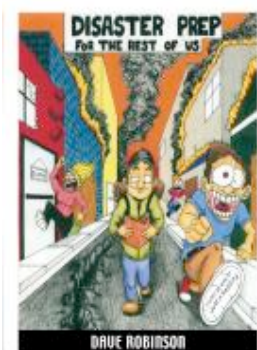


DISASTER PREP

FOR THE REST OF US



DAVE ROBINSON



Have you ever been curious about how to prepare for a disaster? What should you do first? What should you buy? What should you not buy? Disaster Preparedness is often considered complicated and expensive. Author Dave Robinson, a disaster preparedness newspaper columnist, dissects topics into bite-sized pieces, showing how the average person can be prepared for a disaster with minimal expense and a little ingenuity. This easy-to-read guide is sprinkled with humorous wisdom, and a few lessons gained only from experience. You will learn who the REAL First Responders are and how you can become an asset to your community rather than a liability during a disaster.

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Disaster Prep for The Rest of Us

or

What to Do When the Lights Go Out

Dave Robinson



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Y.O.Y.O. (You're On Your Own)

I know I keep mentioning this, but in the event of a major disaster, **YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN!** Several weeks after Superstorm Sandy came ashore on the other coast people were still without power. Essential services are slow to be restored and government resources are insufficient to “fix it” for everyone.

In spite of all this, I still have people tell me that in lieu of preparing for a disaster, their “plan” is to rely on government services or local charities. This may seem harsh, but in the words of John Wayne, “Life is tough, but it’s tougher when you’re stupid!” It doesn’t take a genius to see that local services are dangerously overwhelmed during any emergency, let alone a storm like Sandy or similar event.

I will concede that F.E.M.A. and other disaster responders have come a long way in the years since Katrina. Supplies are pre-positioned more quickly and resources are in place far more rapidly than in times past. Still, nothing trumps personal preparedness. To have your own stores and plans in place means you have to rely on no one. If you have done your homework, you know what you have at your disposal and are familiar not only with your local geography but with the local weather habits.

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Knowing what you have on hand is essential. After the power goes out and blown-down trees are blocking your route to the grocery store is no time to find out what you're lacking. Secondly, knowing your way around is essential. Familiarize yourself with alternate routes. Now would be a good time to purchase a good quality local map showing all the side roads or back roads in your neighborhood. Then after you buy the map, go for a drive some nice afternoon and prove out the accuracy of your map. (Experience talking here!) If you're new to the area, find out which roads flood first. And while you're at it, find out which roads stay frosty and slick all day after the temperatures dip below freezing at night.

Locally speaking, we are very fortunate, weather-wise. Our region gets neither severe winter blizzards, nor the hurricanes of the eastern and gulf states. Our temperatures are moderate and for the most part, the occasional wind storm is manageable. Primarily we have to contend with the odd high-wind and rain storm during the winter months. A major earthquake has been predicted for our coast and when that occurs, it will be a life-changing event. Make no mistake about it. Those folks on the east coast have certainly had their lives changed! Get prepared because Y.O.Y.O!

One of the problems with disasters is they have no soul. They don't discriminate and they don't care who

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they hurt. As evidenced by the recent monster tornado in Oklahoma, the only advantage you have in some instances, is your level of preparedness.

After a disaster, there are two kinds of people, those who have been injured (or worse) and those who have not. The casualties are out of the game, so to speak, and the rest of us (the uninjured) fall into two categories. There are those who are equipped to handle a disaster and there are those who, for one reason or another, never thought this could happen to them and have failed to prepare.

Of the survivors, there are assets and liabilities. Those who have sought out training or set about storing up supplies have just become assets. The survivors who have neither training nor supplies, are now liabilities. They, in many cases, are a drain on the resources, much like the injured.

The military knows when the shooting starts, soldiers don't necessarily panic, rather they perform to the level of their training. When the bullets start flying, their programming takes over and how they have been trained becomes their pattern of behavior. The more intense the training, the more "routine" the activity seems. Instead of running wildly in a circle, a trained combat soldier will get down, seek cover and concealment and hopefully live to see another day. All because of training.

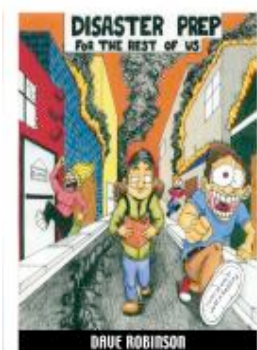
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For those trained in First Aid, coming across a traffic accident is simply another exercise except now the blood is real and so is the pain. These are the ones who become assets in time of disaster. Humans tend to rise to the level of their training in a crisis. Maybe it's time to ask yourself: What am I trained for? When's the last time I was pushed into a crisis? How would I respond in a REAL disaster? Would I be an asset or a liability?

Why not seek out a First Aid class? Even if you don't think you could ever be used in a disaster, maybe you could be the family hero when your charge needs something slightly more than a Band-Aid. At least your training in triage gives you an understanding of what needs to go to the emergency room and what can be treated at home.

Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is held periodically and is a weekend well-spent that will equip you to be a huge asset to your community in the event of a disaster. In fact many jurisdictions won't even let would-be volunteers into the disaster area without CERT validation. The attitude of the on-scene commanders is that someone without proper credentials is simply one more liability, but a CERT member can help lessen the load of the full-time emergency responders.

So what will it be? Asset or liability? The choice is yours.



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