

In the last webinar many excellent questions were asked with regard to group recruiting, vetting and building. One of the critical takeaways was the idea that a group's recruitment goals should be based on that group's purpose. You have to state up front when forming any group of people exactly what it is you're planning on doing- and with a topic as broad as 'preparedness', it can be a challenge. Everyone's definition is a little bit different and I think, at least based on my years training and advising several small groups and individuals, that the first hurdle to jump is figuring out what that coherent goal is. After that you can focus on the real issue that faces most folks: *keeping members*.

*Not everyone is a trigger puller. And that's ok.* If you're the type who only hangs out at the local square range looking for people to bring into the fold you're going to have marginal results. Guns and cool guy gear get the primary focus in these circles- I get it- but that's a problem. You're going to be doing a lot more eating than trigger pulling, a lot more homesteading than trigger pulling, and a lot more of pretty much everything else other than trigger pulling. So if you've got one dimensional people who's literal only skill is shooting stationary targets at a given distance (*or even worse, bragging on their split times at a whole 7 yards!*), you're in for a headache and a group that will fall apart in about six months' time. I can make anyone a competent shooter- but I can't make up for more important basic skills that people might lack, such as basic sanitation, food preparation and preservation, animal husbandry or principles of agriculture.

Finding people who are well rounded in their skill sets is what's most desirable but beyond that, they have to have a real motivation for participating. That cannot always be militant in nature. The reason that most prepper groups fail around the six month mark, when all they focus on is guns, they as a group hit a plateau. You've shot together, camped out in your nice tents together and cooked some food around the fire pit. You've run through some battle drills, maybe even went beyond that and practiced some patrolling skills. And while all of that is what you *absolutely should be doing*, your least motivated members will start making excuses to not be there. *We've already done that, we did that last time. Jimmy has a football game. Jen has a dance recital. It's gonna be cold. I went to the range on my own last week,*

*I'm good.* Life happens. The most motivated begin questioning the membership, and things fall apart.

Something I suggested if moving beyond the range to other areas where you'll find like minded people. *And keep in mind, like minded does not mean agree with you 100%.* You don't have to agree lock & stock with everyone you meet, you just have to recognize a common need and a common end state. Churches should go without saying as the first stop. You'll find people that both live in your area and have similar beliefs. But even that can run the risk of being one dimensional, and it's good to expand those horizons. For example, if sustainable living is an arrow you're looking to add in the group's quiver, search out many of the primitive skills gatherings that are becoming very popular. You'll find a lot of knowledge from people who do this as a hobby, so they're naturally motivated to find others who are interested and usually enjoy teaching their passion. If communications is where you're weak, the absolute same can be said of amateur radio clubs. With anything, show up with an open mind, a closed mouth, and a will to learn, and you'll be fine. Once you make friends inside of those hobbies, you'll build the bonds for a more sustainable group.

Another suggestion if you're looking for people of a political slant is get involved with political activities. This is a controversial one for a lot of people for a lot of reasons, but the fact is, the local parties are made by the people who show up and at the local level, there's a reason they're showing up. It's also fact that people associated with the Libertarian Party are going to be, on at least some level, like minded more so than Republicans. And even if, like above, you don't agree completely with everything being said in conversation, do not overlook the value of those people's motivation for being there. It's the same motivation that would keep them involved in a preparedness or survivalist circle long after the range bunnies have called it quits.

Last, keep it casual and keep it on task. Of the groups I've either worked with or have had contact me, a good number fall into the trap of being overly serious and it eventually bites them. You have to remember to smile- leave the seriousness to the feminists. My favorite

memories from the Army were the times I was laughing with my buddies, both good times and bad. But I also remember always hating the guy who never smiled. There's a time to be serious for sure but most often a more laid back and casual approach is going to keep the best of your people around and checked in. You really shouldn't have to talk about doom and gloom all the time. We get enough of that everywhere else- if the whole point is surviving, then why would you talk so much about it? If it's not fun more often than not, your people are gonna find reasons to call it quits. Just like how you can't expect to agree with someone 100% of the time, *and that's ok*, nobody really wants to hear the same old stuff about the globalists, NWO, Bohemian Grove etc. from you. We already know all that. People already get that from other places, and even if they didn't, they probably don't want to exclusively hear about it from you.

With all of these things in mind, once you've met folks in those other places, then invite them to the range for some fun. It's building proficiency in addition to other skills they've already mastered and bring to the table, not the other way around. For me at least, it makes a little bit more sense and you're much less likely to lose them along the way. Keep it simple, keep it laid back, and it'll remain solid.

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*If you're interested in training, be sure to check out the schedule for the first half of 2019.*

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