Hurricane Preparation and Aftermath

It is never what you think: Items to review now

Additional book included: Shelters: During and After a Storm with a Discussion on Mental Health Concerns

Dr. Jeanette Gallagher

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Each Storm is Unique

Additional book included: Shelters: During and After a Storm with a Discussion on Mental Health Concerns

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If you are staying; get a sheet, a large black marker and an axe. When you leave your house via the roof and the helicopters are flying overhead, just waving at them will not get you help if you need it immediately.

Axe: to get out of the roof. Warning: if you have solar panels on your roof, do not anticipate staying in your home. They can be projectiles and hurt you, they can weaken the roof and may cause leaks you never had before OR they will not support the weight of a human body that has to sit on them for hours. They have also never reported on the dangers of these panels in storms and you do not want to find out that way.

Sheet and marker: Write on the sheet what you need in two or three words. Example: medical assistance needed, medication needed, water needed or even write that you are ok and want to get off the roof. By communicating this to the helicopter rescue people, they will triage your situation and get you the immediate and precise help you need.

There is nothing worse than helicopters flying overhead and you are waving frantically for help but you have not identified what you need and the rescue people evaluate you by looking at you.

Do not make things worse, get out if you can, and if you don't have what you need and know what to expect.

Here is my experience and all the challenges we encountered.

The past several years have seen increasing numbers of people doing the economic ladder slide. Either you are doing great, or you have had hit after hit and are barely able to surface for air. In the realm of storm preparation, what was, now isn't, what is, is now unstable, and what will be, is now unpredictable.

Hurricane Katrina was a significant blow to the gulf coast. We stayed in the New Orleans area through the storm, and in the aftermath learned that so much of what we previously thought to do in preparation for and reaction to a hurricane were not necessarily the best decisions. We took precautions based on our past behavior and habits, and reacted likewise. After the storm, everyone had a list of 'we should have' items. Learning the hard way produced a new life of survival. Our hearts and souls were so devastated, the wounds will last a lifetime. To this day, New Orleanians still say, 'since the storm;' there is no need to specify what storm, because every person who lived in this area was so profoundly affected by this particular hurricane that anyone you speak to instantly knows you are talking about Katrina. Lives were changed forever, and many more since have lost the fight for life.

Whether you have endured hurricanes before or are a 'storm virgin', we have listed herein thoughts we believe must be reviewed. We are writing about the 'what if' and 'I forgot' to make your experience a little less damaging in the aftermath of a major weather event.

Our manual has spaces to fill in and document your preparation policy. Print the entire book and put envelopes with each page for extra information spoken about. Keep this with you to document during the storm.

Remember, what you believe may be challenged and what you thought isn't. The world has changed and we are listening. Change is stable, life is not.

Be an informed survivor and take care of yourself and your family.

The moment you are under a state of emergency, there are no laws. All bets are off!

It is great to prepare, but practice, and be sure everything is working in order as you have it set up.

Are you looking to shelter in place at all costs? But what happens when all around you is obliterated and destroyed and when everything around you is in chaos?

MRE's are not your saving grace. They are not for children. The gum may be a potential hazard for the GI system of children. They expire, they get hot, they are only for a last resort, and they are not the items to survive to eat for a week or so for your family.

What is in your first aid kit? Look at it, open it up and see what it addresses. Talk with your family about many potential scenarios and see if these are addressed with the items therein. Parents and teens should have CPR and first aid classes.

Did you fill your refrigerator with food to survive? What is the outside temperature? After the electric goes out, what happens to your food stash? So, you have bad food in the refrigerator, and it ruins the unit itself, you say, no problem, I will get a new one, but maybe one hundred people around you may also need one but what if thousands of people also need one?

Know a one hundred mile radius around you to survive.

Is preparation just a material stock pile? What is the capacity of your mental thoughts to survive?

Your back up plan can be a default, but what happens when all the back up plans go out too?

Surviving inside is as bad as surviving outside; you are in your own wilderness in your own home because you have not thought about anything.

It is not just about survival, it is learning about awareness of the world around you and how you can take care of your family when events arise to challenge your perfect norm that you have created as your day to day living.

People have become totally reliable on other people, things and government. They do not prepare for anything in life. They expect and demand a safety net.

What if the earth shook right under your feet? Or the wind and water destroyed life around you?

Create your own safety net, yourself. Teach yourself what you need to know about sustaining yourself without all the bells and whistles of life.

When people do not prepare they are care called disasters, when they do prepare, they are called incidents.

A disaster is when help is needed from outside the immediate area of the occurrence.

An incident is an occurrence outside of the normal.

Why does everything have to be a disaster?

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A material place or a place in your heart

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Introduction

The construction of this book is to propose thoughts and suggestions. There are many areas of discussion and letting you know what problems we have encountered. Throughout the book, there will be statements to note of importance. Read the book from front to back, then go back to the beginning and check off what you know or have already done. Make your own "to do" list. It is very important to involve your entire family. When a storm passes and there are things that were done incorrectly or not done, anger and blame tend to fall on one parent or adult in the family. This burden can be too much, and the stress of a storm will be compounded, therefore inhibiting a positive survival recovery. No one wants to carry a psychological burden that is so heavy it breaks a family or person. We are trying to help ease your stress post-storm by preparing you before landfall, so you can feel supported by making necessary preparations. We are looking to increase the number of survivors by sharing our thoughts, experiences, triumphs, and failures.

See you on the other side.

Prior to the Storm: Preparations and Bits of Wisdom

Pay attention when the media reports, 'storm in the gulf,' or 'storm aiming at the east coast'. Start now, even if you do not believe the storm will come directly at you. Storms change direction on a dime and this shift towards you may shorten the amount of time you have to prepare. Note the estimated time out from landfall for actions.

When you hear there is a storm and it is approaching the far eastern islands in the Atlantic with storm warnings there, begin:

Starting right now, keep every receipt you can: Food, preparation purchases, gas, hotel, anything you spend a dime on. Print this book and use the back of the pages for paper to document as much as you can what you are spending money on. Be sure to note all the purchases on credit cards also. Have cash now. There will be a rush on the banks and you may not get what you need or want. If you do not have much cash, ask other family members for a loan until the storm ends. Just a quick note: when we evacuated to Texas, the toll plaza people waved us on if we showed them Louisiana drivers' license, we did not pay. I hope all tolls in your area will be lifted if evacuation is needed. If necessary, suggest this to local officials. When you hit the tolls, ask if the toll is free before giving your last dime.

Watches and warning: The weather service will give these designations to certain areas of at-risk land. It is important to note when these are issued. **Watch** is 48 hours prior to a storm landfall. **Warning** is 36 hours prior to a storm landfall. These numbers are not always a firm, to-the-minute rule. The cones of possibility are a better indicator of where the storm will go and you can estimate what you should be doing prior. All actions you may take are reversible and may just be a dry run. It is much better to be prepared than not.

You MUST think about this: If you are saying, I have had some hurricane winds in the past during rain events and I did not have major issues. A category three or more has long, sustained periods of high winds and rain. Flooding may occur during the storm or after the storm. The only take away from this statement, every event is different and do not assume.

Homeless people or shelter challenged people: I am putting this first; you must notify social services if you are aware of people living out in the elements or abandoned homes. These people do not have the ability to get the information and take action to protect them. Shelters will be packed to over flowing. If you need a shelter, see if you can go to one a little farther out than where you live. This will free up space in the inner cities for the homeless or those who wander in at the eleventh hour. I will say this many times throughout this book: do not take in those on the streets. Stress, anxiety, mental health issues and drug/alcohol use is dangerous when confined in an unknown space. Withdrawal from the drug of choice can be deadly and should not be in your hands. Leave all this to the professionals.

People with significant medical conditions like Alzheimer's or cancer; please find a family or friend that is suitable to help. Do not go this alone. If you are staying, see if someone can stay with you to help. If you are going, see if the person can be sent on ahead to alleviate the possibility of a crisis in the car if you are evacuating. Ask the person's physician now; are there any medications that can be given to the person to make the evacuation easier? If so, get it filled, even if you do not think you will need it. You may need it if you stay and things go south. There may be sedatives available to calm them in the chaos of a storm.

Shoes: Crazy huh? Nope. Find everyone a pair of closed toe shoes right now and put them at the door. If you go, you must have these if something happens on the road. Flip flops are dangerous and are useless, period. If you are staying, you must have these; injuries must be prevented at all costs. Do not forget the kids. Even if the little ones do not walk much, have something closed on their feet. Essential, do not stray from this.

Insurance!!

Call your insurance agent: All policies must be reviewed. I can't tell you how many times my agent sends me the papers to review and I just put them in the drawer. Don't! Now is not the time to scavenge for the papers, just call the agent. You do not need to have your papers if you evacuate, although it is helpful. Computers and the internet have your records. Your agent can pull up your policy immediately. You do need to have two types of identification, however, so always keep ids handy.

Work stoppage insurance: If you have the option to purchase this policy and you are in an evacuation area, it is recommended. So many people in Katrina relied on this money for their day to day survival. Be sure you have evaluated your coverage carefully, but if you are having a limited cash fund to pay for the policy, just get something. Something is better than nothing. Document where you work, self employed or having employees, you need to have a place to come back to, but if it is not validated, the replacement process is very long. Be sure to carry documents which identify the business as being in your name, such as LLC and TIN papers. If you need to re-entry early to protect your business, authorities will not allow that without documentation. Further, if you can document essential employees prior to the storm and have them on a legal document, it may be possible for them to re-enter along with you. The essential employees must have their own copies of these documents and pertinent identification.

Small business or home office: Document!! By video, every item you own and put this on a business flash drive or cd. If you have stock at your office and it is expensive, check your business policy for limits on particular items. Riders are usually required. NOTE: home owners' policies do NOT cover home business expenses. A small policy is better than no policy. Do not try to pack all your items into your car and evacuate putting your family at risk and squished in the car with all your stuff. Document, back up and take minimal items. You are a parent first and a business person second. Be sure to also have a bill or some business document that has your address on it. If you need to verify the business, identification is required in the form of items that were mailed through the postal service to your address. Old bills and tax records are acceptable.

Note: For those of you who are having home issues: if your home owner's policy has lapsed, the bank or mortgage company will have a forced placed policy. This means the institution in question has

purchased a policy on the property only to cover the value of the house only. Your belongings are not covered at all. The Mortgage Company or bank must notify you in writing if this has occurred. Flood coverage is different. It is paid for one year at a time and cannot be paid in advance. When the policy terminates, you can purchase a new one. Flood should be in effect even if you are in foreclosure proceedings; however you should contact them to see if you can collect in the event of a flood. The mortgage company could go after this payout since they own the mortgage. Consult an attorney in this issue.

If you are living in a house that is not up-to-date on the mortgage, listen. Many homes are in various stages of flux with the economic downturn. You may be delinquent on payments, waiting to hear about refinancing your home, in the process of possible foreclosure, already foreclosed on, or the bank owns the house. You MUST call the insurance company that holds the policy on the house for homeowner's policy and flood insurance. DO NOT waste precious time and try to contact the lender, the banker, the attorney or anyone else about the house. You may get incorrect information and you WILL be sunk if you get hit.

Call the insurance agent or the company direct. Document who you speak with, document day/ time, do NOT speak to a general agent if at all possible. Ask for the owner or a supervisor. They have more to lose if they give you the wrong information, i.e. their job or their business. Be absolutely sure you get a confirmation of the discussion and results in the form of a fax or an email. Tell them you must have an email or a fax and you will hang on to the telephone until you see that correspondence. Do not hang up. You will never get the same person back on the phone.

You want to know when the last payment of insurance was processed, by whom (such as the bank or you), when the next payment is to be made, and is the policy in force. Ask them to email or fax you a document of items covered. You may defer to printing it out and keep the email for future reference when you evacuate. Papers get lost; emails can stay in a file in your email address. Do not put them on your desktop of a home computer. If the computer does not evacuate with you, it may be lost.

If you are delinquent in payments and possibly the bank owns the house or you are in the process of foreclosure, the new owner, a bank or lender may have force placed insurance on the house. The force placed insurance is ONLY to protect the lender/bank for the balance of the mortgage.

You MUST ask:

- Has this been done?
- If so, does it just cover the house?
- What if you have items in the house, are they covered?
- What if the house falls on your items and they are destroyed, who pays?
- What if the house floods and what status is the flood policy?
- Who will get payment FIRST if there is a claim on the house?

After Katrina, the insurance companies issued payments and these randomly went to either the policy holder or the mortgage company. There was no perfect pattern due to the confusion at having this disaster happen for the first time.

- Do not assume the company that you are dealing with has a plan in place and everything will be alright.
- Do not assume they have your interest as a priority if you pay the policy.
- Do not assume that employees always are correct in the information they tell you.
- Do not assume you have the correct information.
- DO what you can to protect yourself as best as you can. Take all steps, even if they seem redundant and if the company says they are useless. You must protect you, period.

Many people have moved out of their homes due to the economy. If you are in new living place and have not checked your insurance; do it now.

Renters of homes: you must have your own policy to protect your things in the home. The person you rented it from may or may not have insurance on the home itself. You must ask them; if the house falls on your things, who is liable? If the house floods due to a poor structure, the owner may or may not have flood insurance and you will not be protected. NOTE: as a renter, you need your own flood policy or rider!! I cannot stress this enough. The discussion of water from the sky, water from a body of water, or water from any other source is a real nightmare.

Renter of apartments: you must have your own policy and all the notes above pertain to you also. Check with the owner of your location. Look at your lease for these notations. If there are no references to these, get documentation for such. Video your belongings, every item should be noted,

open drawers and closets to take a picture. Move things away from windows that are expensive, but push large furniture in front of the window if it is not and can protect you from things flying through the window.

Recreational vehicles: Do not plan on taking such items with you as the roads will be slow and when you get to a hotel, these items are bait for criminals. If you are going to a family member's location, this should be safe. No matter how small or big, these items are only covered by insurance if they are on a special rider. Basic policies have limits for coverage in general categories. ***Video, video, video.*** If you cannot take them with you when you evacuate, try putting a GPS clip on them and you can follow them on your computer no matter where you are in the country. If you have a boat, do not plan to ride any storm out on the boat!!! You may have lost your house or have financial difficulties and the boat is your last possession. Do NOT ride a storm out on the boat. Get a GPS system and go to a shelter or family members home. Authorities will not come for you if the storm gets worse and you cry wolf, little red riding hood is not going to come and see. For every storm there will be those who stay and in many cases, the person who needed the help may survive, but the person who risked their life to go and help, has perished. Try carrying that psychological load for the rest of your life. It is not responsible adult actions to harm others. Another choice may be to load the boat, motorcycles or other vehicles on a trailer and move to a hotel outside the danger area. *Warning here: we have done this in the past and it was a real headache.* So many people who you do not know and an unfamiliar state caused us to stay awake all night to be sure no one stole the motorcycles from the truck. We did this process for two weeks after the storm when we were at the hotel. The stress was seriously not worth it. Either get insurance on them and leave them in a garage, send them out of the area at a family members home or put a GPS on them and go to sleep.

Home improvements: If you have made any improvements in the past several years, chances are, they are not correctly documented in your policy. Example: solar panels, energy efficient hot water heaters or even up graded windows. When it comes time for replacement due to damage and you have not made the policy changes, you will be reimbursed at a lower rate. No matter what you try to squawk about here to get that money to fix damages, it won't happen. Every year before your home owners' policy renews or when you do your taxes, get all your credit card bills and see where the big charges were. They may alert you to things you totally forgot you fixed or purchased in the past year. Items such as televisions, computers, pool pumps, windows, furniture or that nice new painting from a gallery

need to be on the policy prior to renewal and if needed, a rider for coverage. Your agent will not call you every year, but you must call them. In the past, many people have reduced their premiums by reducing coverage. Then when it is needed, you cannot just call the agent and say, 'oops, there is a storm, put back the coverage', oops, no, not going to happen. You will be stuck for the new items.

Owning property or building a structure: Document both of these ASAP with paper verifications and video. If you have property, be sure to film the entire plot. Walk from one end to the other and note trees that may fall on others in the next property. If you are building a structure, document everything from the end of the property to every piece of wood or pipe that is there. You must remove all loose objects immediately, whether you are in the immediate hit zone or just in a warning area. These can be projectiles to other people in the area and that will be a criminal case after the storm. You do not need these headaches. Protect yourself. You may have builder's coverage on your construction, but if you have items in a shell structure and did not add them to the policy, such as appliances, they may not be covered. Also, tools left on the property may not be covered on the basic policy. Never assume, it is seriously an issue for you later if you do.

Take your *most* important items with you when you evacuate if:

- You cannot afford a policy
- You missed the window in which insurance policies can be written
- The owner of your location does not have their own policy
- You have not updated your policy
- You are delinquent on your policy payments

Note: if your policy is delinquent and you have damage that needs to be claimed, it may or may not be the end. Some and I will repeat, some, companies after the storm may allow you to update your payments and then make a claim. Do not count on this as an absolute. If you think you will just threaten them with a law suit so they will accommodate you, think again, they have bigger fish to fry when there is storm damage. You will be a shrimp in the sea and it is very difficult and may be years of fighting them. In the end, the insurance companies usually win these cases and you put out thousands in legal fees. Do your part prior to an event and you will have better results after an event.

Warning!!! When you return to a place you have rented, the owner may have already taken action on the property with disregard to your belongings. Get the process clear with your landlord prior to

evacuating. If you have renters insurance, tell the owners. They should not touch your items until an adjuster from your insurance company can come to the location and evaluate the loss. If, however, the building is at risk to harming others or it is relocated due to a storm, all of your things will be moved and there is really nothing you can do at that point. Do not touch anything after a storm if you are filing a claim with the insurance company. As soon as you are back home, call the insurance agent and let them tell you what to do. If you cannot contact the agent, call the main company. Use this manual to document who you spoke to, when and what they said is necessary. Do not speak to anyone who will not give you a claim number and their name. Ask for a supervisor.

Video prior to the storm! Staying or going, this is absolutely essential. Err on the side of protection. This is the best documentation that you can do in the case of representing your belongings. Be absolutely sure there is a date on the camera and it is updated prior to running the video. Taking pictures is also fine, but be sure to get all the nooks and crannies of stuff you have accumulated. This may take more than 30 pictures for a small area. When you are itemizing your entire home, it can be a daunting task. You may forget what kind of sink fixtures you have when replacing them is necessary. Download this information to cd's or flash drives. Warning: do not put it on your computer desktop. If you are at a different location, you cannot access your desktop from a remote location. While you may have your laptop with you, many people still have large desktop computers with tower components. If you can email the video to your email inbox, you will be able to send a copy directly to the insurance agent when needed. You will also be able to show any other agent in a different state should you evacuate there.

Documentation, be sure to include:

- Everything in your main living room, even light fixtures, flooring, and all small things in the area
- Dining room, light fixtures; open drawers of any furniture there and document, items on the walls
- Kitchen, open all the cupboards, document the appliances, open the refrigerator and freezer
- Bathrooms, be sure to get all the drawers and closets open to document
- Bedrooms, light fixtures, closets, furniture, window treatments, electronics, bedding
- Garage, all items, big and little cost, tools, sports equipment
- House structure, go around the entire house, start at the curb, walk up to the house, walk around it including the grounds, fencing, trees and plants, other outside structures

- Children's toys are also to be noted. Be sure to get all the toys in the garage.

HELP! If you have a camera and have at least an hour, please visit your family and friends to document their property. If they can take care of themselves, look around your immediate area if there are lower income people or elderly or other people who really could use the help. Give a little of your time and help them so they can have that documentation as well. Put the information on a cd or flash drive so they can take it with them. Ask them if there is someone you can email the information to also, flash drives tend to get lost quickly with elderly and kids.

Backup, back up, back up!!! Back up all computers to additional hard drives, such as Click Free or other components for your computer. Regardless of staying or going, do this. Computers are not water resistant, water and humidity can destroy a computer and you will not be able to get your data. Also, if you are evacuating and in a strange place, items can be stolen in a second from your car or place you are staying. Family and acquaintance homes are not immune to stealing anything you put in front of them. Remember, it is their house, they will say 'prove it is yours' in some cases and this may not end well.

Identification!

Two types of identification: check off or highlight what you have, make a copy and keep in an envelope at this page. When you apply for other assistance, they will need these to see the originals but they may be just setting up and not have a copy machine, you can provide a copy. Children must have some type of identification, no exceptions. Have copies of these also.

- Drivers license
- State identification card
- Social security card
- Automobile insurance card
- Automobile owners card
- School identification card
- Birth certificates for kids

Food stamp cards: Take these with you. If you evacuate to another state, in the case of a devastating event, the other state will honor them with no questions asked. Remember, no alcohol and other basic staples can be purchased with the card, just food. If you have a welfare card, take it with you, it will be honored in other states. If you have an expired food stamp card since you no longer qualify for benefits, find it and take it with you. The rules to get food stamps will change in the case of a severe disaster. Many people, who do not currently qualify, may be able to get disaster food stamps to have access to immediate food supplies. If you already have a card, it will be easier and quicker for them to just load on to that card. If you have to wait to have a card mailed to you or receive a temporary card, may delay being able to purchase food. Do not assume you will not be able to get help.

Water, electric or cable bill: Essential!!! Grab any one of these bills from your mail box. It does not have to be the latest, but it must represent your address and name. These are required for FEMA, Red Cross and other registration organizations providing support after a storm.

Children!

You must take at least two or three pictures of your kids with you: Period! Do not stray from this warning. If your kids have slipped away from you, pictures are one thousand times better than words. If there are two parents, each one should have two pictures of each child on their person. Take at least two pictures of the adults in the party with the children. This is ALWAYS overlooked and generally no one sees a need in this. Let me warn you now, if the children are missing, they cannot describe you and you do not want them to be released to the wrong person. A perpetrator can walk up to you if they are young and say, 'oh, my gosh I was looking all over for you' and take them. It is essential for you to remember, these are your kids and it is no one's responsibility to keep them safe but yours. Other people will be busy with other jobs and confusion will be escalated to sheer chaos at the drop of a dime. Do not put names on the children or on their clothing. This is a signal to others to call them by their name and then act as if they own them. Put something under the shirt to identify them if you wish. Putting bows in the hair or hats on the kids usually does not work if these are lost or falling off before the child is reported lost. Have the pictures. While a picture on your telephone is ok, remember, anyone can go up to the kids and take a picture. If you have it in print, you were prepared and you did the print prior to the incident.

School report card and immunization record for children: You would never bother with this, so why are we suggesting? If the storm is devastating, children will not be able to return to their home school. Even if the storm is moderately destructive, schools in the area may not open for an extended period of time. If you have children who are in high school, take these records with you and enroll them in another city or state with family members or if you can get an apartment in another area. Remember, high school kids are the most vulnerable after a storm. A miss of more than two or three weeks being in class and an entire year of school may be at risk. More later in school listing.

Children's special items at schools or day care: If your child has started school already and there is a possibility of a storm, ask them to bring home their 'special to them' items they may have left at school in the classroom or lockers. My daughter had a very special book and other small personal items in her locker. It was a Friday when storm possible in the gulf reports came over the media. No one really thought about it. The idea of no school Monday was great, but the reality of no more school at this school was not. Her school was flooded and all items were disposed of when the school was cleaning up

after the storm. If the kids forget them at school, see if you can get back into the school. Usually someone is there every day until about 6pm on school days. It is worth doing this. Your kids will thank you later.

Children in shelters: If this is the last resort and the shelter is small and with people you may have known, then ok. If it is a big shelter, try to have the kids stay somewhere far away with family. I can tell you this from experience. The shelter in Houston had cots all lined up on the main floor. Food was upstairs. Showers were available and toilets for men and women. Lights out had a distinct time, usually ten pm. There was absolutely no place to go for privacy. If you think you can take your electronics and plug them in and do what you want, think again. They may try to have the people rotate to different areas of the shelter to clean or prevent congregations of people to deter crime. Medical services will be provided on site. This is very important to identify those individuals who have mental health needs or who may be detoxing being away from their drug of choice. Also note, shelters take every precaution to not have drugs or alcohol available for purchase within a certain mile radius. The police and local government have a constant presence. If you have a child with sensitive medical issues, you should alert the shelter administration as soon as you arrive at the shelter. There may be a quiet space or distinct area set up already for them. You must ask as soon as you get there.

‘The storm it is a coming!’

Greater possibility of a storm coming to your area and you live in a vulnerable area: What does this really mean? You do not have to be in a government-designated danger area to be excluded from protecting yourself from danger. Take this advice from people who were never in a flood area noted by the government in flood insurance maps, forget what they predict, weather is unpredictable. The damage is never to the estimated dime; rather it is just devastating to those that are affected.

Be designated at work, your level of essentialness to business: Have a work meeting with all people who are employed on the property and others who support the company. If your company does not suggest this, you suggest it. Many companies do not have this policy in place and the confusion may be too much in the wake of a possible storm. However, it is imperative this takes place. This is usually done with general concerns, work til the last minute, shut everything off and see you on the other side. Well, not really! In a large general meeting have the discussions. You need a place to come back to work, but if the process is jumped and your place in the process is not noted, a company may significantly suffer for weeks or months to get back to normal. Many businesses have failed in the aftermath of devastation. Also, find out if your company can provide you with some documentation proving you work for them and what your position in the company is. This will help with re-entry into the affected area. In some recovery situations, employees of certain companies may re-enter the area before other citizens to help repair infrastructure and have basic services like grocery stores and pharmacies up and running before the general population returns. Some companies in areas regularly threatened by hurricanes even have re-entry car placards to aid in cutting through red-tape after the storm. If you have a small business or are responsible for any employees, see the Business book. (More information in the Recovery book and the Rebuild book to be published later this week)

Hotels take animals!! They do NOT take a farm: If you have a cat or two or a small dog or two, you would have better luck at a hotel. If you have a larger dog or multiple animals, you may be better at a motel. Reason, space, period. Hotels have lots of people in small rooms. Motels have bigger rooms and the option of ground floor is better. Also motels may have land around to walk the dogs. Hotels will not usually allow this. What we found at our hotel, there was a small space outside where animals could go to walk. While this sounded great, by the second day, the area was full of fleas. Not a good thing in a small hotel space. If you can keep the animals in the room you may have better luck. It is time to use a

litter box for a cat and a potty pad for a dog. Word to the wise, do not try to bring in the chickens and the ducks. You may be able to slide a bird or two. **WARNING: do NOT stay at home in the area of a category five for your animals.** Birds have flown away from people's homes in Katrina and now there is an area flush with green parrots. See, they can take care of themselves also.

Find all your hotel reward cards: if you do not have one and make reservations at a different chain that offers perks cards, register now or the minute you arrive at the hotel. Do it at the desk. These can save you money and may also help by offering items you need, like newspaper, breakfast, or an additional night free. Do not assume you need to have a large number of points. Many chains give something the minute you sign up. We had a Holiday Inn card for over ten years, so it was very outdated and did not have any points on it. We showed it at the front desk and got free breakfast for the month we were there. Do not assume you do not qualify, just do it. Ask if they have any type of cards and register then. If the front desk is in chaos, go to your room, register online and then take the membership number to the front desk and have your account updated. To be sure it is activated; ask the next day if your card number is on your bill. Also ask if the internet and phone calls have an additional charge. There are some hotels that offer free internet, but will not have it posted, you have to ask. Either way, get on the internet and access craigslist storm forum. People will start to speak about what is going on there. It is a good place to get updated information about your local area without freaking out about trying to contact other people on the telephone that may or may not be overloaded. Download an app for everyplace you go. Not only does it give you a discount but it can also be a verifier about what you spent and where you traveled to evacuate or relocate.

Use text as much as possible: Calls take up space in the cell phone satellite and may not go through or be repeatedly dropped. Text everyone you know outside of the area to tell them where you are. If the storm is more than expected, someone will be able to come into the area to find you or if you leave, they will have an idea where to start.

Make hotel reservations: No matter if you have money for an extended stay or not, make the reservations. Get two reservations if the direction of the storm is not firmly set. We here on the gulf do not know at times, if we should go west or go east. Dah, GO NORTH! Follow the below rules when making these reservations.

- If you have funds, put this on your credit card.

- If you do not, hold the reservation with an atm or debit card.
- If you do not have cards, find family to plan to stay with.
- If you have no family, sign up now with the 311 process in your local area.
- If they do not have this system in place, pressure the local government to let you know where the shelters are and see if you can preregister.

You must have someplace to run to that is secure. Don't put yourself in the place of 'let's drive and we will stop and get a room'. That will NEVER happen and you may find yourself hundreds of miles out, at a hotel that is not seeing may evacuees and not interested in you. It is important to be in the loop of recovery information that is usually distributed to guests of a hotel in-tune with its guests needs.

Our new reality, people are living in hotels and motels. There may be fewer rooms than previously during storm season. It is also important to know, the people in this temporary housing may have a routine of their own. Crime, available services and perks may all be an issue. Take note and be safe. Do not allow any child, under 18, to go around by themselves. Yes, I know this seems radical, but sexual perpetrators and other criminals may be in the area. A stock of oblivious parents may be a huge problem. So what, the kids get mad and you have a crappy four days, so what. You all will get over it. At least you all will return from the storm. Never assume safety, even if it proves to be safe, all it takes is one problem.

WARNING!!!!!! I CANNOT STATE THIS ENOUGH!!!! When you make a hotel reservation with a card:

All cards will be issued a hold on the funds in the amount of what the reservation would cost. This is devastating if you need the money to get there. You may tell the hotel you need a firm reservation for two nights with the option to extend for seven days or weeks if needed. You **MUST** tell them you are evacuating. It is important they know, so they can designate it on their database and in turn, get in the queue for FEMA to help their evacuees. The hotel or motel must be registered with FEMA. If you are having trouble telling the hotel front desk that FEMA will start to help, tell the hotel owner to call FEMA

and get on the list. We did this in Houston Holiday Inn. The front desk was just as confused as we were. They try really hard to help you out if you need or ask for it.

Be absolutely sure that you put the reservation in the person's name that holds the renters or homeowners policy. It is very difficult to change this option later. The bill must be in the responsible parties' name, no exceptions. If not, the initial amount that will be paid when you are out of your home or apartment will be delayed. If the evacuation time is short, submitting the receipt later to insurance and it is not in the policy holder's name, the company will refuse it. They will make you speak to the hotel and have that changed. This will delay the payment when you return home. We had this happen and it took over two weeks after returning home and State Farm would not budge, they required the receipt have the right name, period.

Credit cards: you will have grounds to dispute the charges if they are over your actual stay. You will have to go through a process and that may take several credit cycles.

ATM/Debit cards: you will be able to dispute charges, but they are hard to get the money back from quickly. Remember, the banks and the hotels, chain or not, are also in a state of disarray. What is urgent to you is not necessarily their first priority; their priority may be getting their business up and running. Then the customer is attended to.

WARNING!!!!! I CANNOT STATE THIS ENOUGH!!!!

When you make a hotel reservation, do not make it for one or two nights if it is a major storm, category 3 or higher, directly hitting your area. A large storm may keep you out of the area for several weeks. Make the reservation for at least seven days. If you make a reservation for two nights and the storm is devastating, you will be booted out in two days if the hotel takes further reservations for your room after the two days. If the hotel has standing reservations for groups or conventions, they may opt to cancel those and take only those who are evacuating. It depends on the distance from the hit area whether they decide to do this or not.

If the storm hits and it is really bad, immediately go to the <u>front desk</u> (do not use the 800 number or calling the chain phone number) and extend your stay for another one or two weeks with a temporary reservation. The front desk has full authority to override whatever the main number may do and if they are in a crisis, they will make accommodations for you. You will not be booted if you do this prior to

others fleeing the areas and calling to get reservations. There is not a policy of 'I am in the room and I am going to stay'.

Note: if you extend your stay and the hotel knows the storm has devastated your home region, they will NOT charge your card outwards for that reservation if you tell them this statement. 'I am in a devastated region from the storm and I have to stay two more weeks until they can assess the damage. Please put my name on the list for FEMA. Is your hotel registered with FEMA?' They are not mind readers and you have to tell them every step. They will then put the reservation in and hold payment. It will in all probability be taken care of by FEMA if the hotel registers with them. Be sure they have and keep checking back until you hear positively they are on the list.

This information will be repeated later in this book and at many stages of discovery and recovery.

Get water now: Do not keep it stored in a hot area like your garage or in closed pantry. It must be kept as cool as possible. If heated, the plastic bottle will leech melting plastic components into the water. You will notice this if you drink it hot or warm. You will not notice this if you drink it cold. Either way, that is not a good thing. Plastic bottles are made from petroleum or BPA and both are not for human consumption in large amounts on consecutive days. These toxins are cumulative and may cause health issues later in life.

Do not fill the freezer: If you fill the freezer anticipating using it slowly on the grill with lack of electricity, think again. Your air conditioning is also out. The house will be hot and the refrigerator will hold items for about 24 hours in a hot climate. Estimations of two or three days are really not a good thing to bank on. You will be setting yourself up for a serious health problem of food poisoning. When it is hot, you are sick and there are no services locally, you will really not be doing yourself a favor. If after a storm that may have you without electric for several days, there is nothing worse than rotting food in a refrigerator. You will not be able to escape the stench.

If you have food growing on your land, pick it now: Flood water will have all kinds of crap and bacteria in it. If you flood, consider your planting season having ended. If you find yourself with too much food, put some in a baggie in the freezer, but others in the refrigerator to reduce rapid spoilage. Either way, get what you can off the land now.

Purchase charcoal capsules: These can be used to absorb some of the components that can make you sick if you eat something unsafe. Warning: you must drink at least five times the normal amount of

water to flush these out. Charcoal will absorb things but it will then lead to constipation if not flushed. Do not give to children or those with other medical concerns. If a child or medically compromised person becomes sick, seek medical help immediately. Dehydration, heat and food poisoning can be deadly.

Spending your last dime on food and supplies: Not a good idea. If you need tons of food, be prepared to stay the course and eat it. You may have a generator to cool your refrigerator and cook your food. Good for some, not for most. Don't run out and purchase a generator if you have not experienced a storm before and are just doing it because everyone else is. They can be dangerous and deadly in the wrong hands. Once you spend all the money on food, if you see the storm getting stronger or a mandatory evacuation is ordered, all the money is gone. A general rule of thumb is: purchase what you would normally per week but leave out the refrigerator items for the last four days.

Dairy turns rancid and there may be no place to discard of it. Do you want that stench around you?

Chocolate melts: Do not get snacks that will turn limp or soggy with humidity or high temperatures.

Crisp items: Be careful to keep in zip lock bag. Humidity will make them soggy.

Unprocessed foods: This is one time I highly recommend to have processed foods on hand. I know, strike me down now. I have lived this experience. Food, no matter the package, will go bad quickly. When hunger settles in, you may be tempted to eat anything. Don't eat food that may be starting to go bad or has been out in the weather at all.

Water kept in reusable bottles: DON'T!! Whatever was in it prior, may be lingering on the bottle lining and breed bacteria. This could be deadly. Do not do it. Purchase water in one use bottles. If you are tempted to reuse water bottles, fill them with water for your car radiator or to flush you toilet after a storm.

Vitamin C packets: Why? Because your diet will be really off balance no matter if you stay in your home or if you are at a hotel. Try getting an orange or fresh vegetable from a vending machine!! I will give perks to the Red Cross. When their food trucks came around, they always had something fresh, either an apple or an orange; kudos to them. Lack of vitamin C can quickly make you sick with constipation (may indirectly increase headaches), sick stomach, bleeding gums (this is not healthy in any state, it is an inflammation that may increase the severity of other medical conditions), and slow healing

process (not good if you are injured and really need to be healing). We recommend Vitamin C packets from Alacer. You can purchase these at your grocery stores, CVS, Walgreens, and other health food stores in your area. At least one packet per day for each person in your house is best. Fasten a packet around a water bottle with a rubber band for each member of the family. One packet, one bottle of water and it will support you better than other so called fortified waters with whatever in them. Stress significantly burns up vitamin C, replacing it is a smart option.

Prescription medications: If you are staying, it is recommended to have at least one month of medication on hand. If you are evacuating, it is recommended to have at least one month of medication on hand.

- If you are receiving medications from a small local pharmacy, when you evacuate, you will NOT be able to access medical information from these sources immediately. Larger chains, CVS, Walgreens, Walmart and others MAY be able to access this information. However, we can tell you from our experience that is not always true. The 'dream reality' of records on line is supposed to be but do not hold to that belief. Remember, if the storm is significant and you are out of your home for more than seven to ten days, support systems will be in place to help you get what you need, if that means seeing a doctor or filling prior medications.
- This is very important to note: if you are out of your home more than ten days and you have a medical condition that requires medication, you really should seek out medical care. Stress and anxiety may alter the effectiveness of the medication and you may need more support or adjustments to your medications. Blood pressure is one example. It is generally higher when in a foreign place that you did not expect. If the help is offered, take it. Be thankful later.
- If your prescriptions are paid for by a private insurance plan, have your pharmacy call the doctor immediately and be sure there are refills. If there are refills, the pharmacy must then call the insurance company to authorize more than thirty days supply.
- If your prescriptions are paid for by a government plan, Medicaid or Medicare, the same process has to occur as above, but it may take a substantial amount of time to have this done. If you run out of time, do not worry, take your bottle and what supply you have when you evacuate. When the storm has passed, many areas will be set up to facilitate medical needs of evacuees.
- If in the past, if you have taken other people's prescriptions for your own use, it will be impossible to refill them. I can tell you as a fact, do not be caught trying to fill others drugs for

you. Also, if you are in a shelter and need help, it will take longer to get medical care if you cannot answer and the medical team does not know what to do.

Option to fly to another location: If you have members in your family that may need extra medical support or may be more comfortable at a stable location, have them fly out at least two or three days prior to a possible mandatory evacuation. Be sure to get a letter from your physician stating the medical necessity and it will help to get you on the top of the list. Better to be on a list than have to explain yourself later. If you require a stable source of electricity for medical devices, you must notify the airlines prior to get a seat. If you cannot leave the area, notify the local government and they will make arrangements for you to be cared for. You will probably have to leave your home or apartment but you will be safe.

Decide now! It is the time to decide if you are staying or going.

Do not wait if you have a medical or socially impacted issue. Example: autism, cancer, breathing issues, Alzheimer's, OCD, addictions, elderly or feel you are unable to leave the house. Get help now from family members, the local government, social systems or private support agencies before the last minute.

Going, going, gone!!
Or
Stuck in the mud and I won't get up!!

Turning your back on what you know and live is very difficult. Turning your back on what you have accrued in assets if you cannot take them is hard. Turning your back on the security of others is also hard. Memories will remain even after the storm of what was.

Believe me, I stayed for Katrina, and if I had to do it all again, I am not sure I could tell you what I would do. No one can make that decision for you. If there is a mandatory evacuation, you really should go. Someone out there knows something that you don't, or it may be something that they don't really know and want to be safe. Either way, a decision has to be made or there is no turning back. Think you can try that in contra flow, think again. Contra flow is when all roadways are outward-bound from the affected area. There are no longer two-directional highways, all roads lead only out on all sides. There will be no way to turn back. Sitting on the side of a remote road because you don't want to go on is potentially dangerous and really dumb. Call it what it is, dumb. You will be passed on by others taking care of themselves. Make a decision, get everyone on board and stick to the ground.

As I stated, I stayed for Katrina. Let me explain, it was not a stupid decision. I had been working across the state of Louisiana for six days prior in the car. I have a pre existing condition: varicose veins and previous history of DVT's over ten years prior. Well, I had severe pain when the evacuation was ordered, but since it did not seem a rush, I went to a local emergency room. If I had evacuated, I may have had an emergency on the road and that could have been deadly in the 36 hours to Texas rush.

It is imperative you know what you may get yourself into if you stay for a category 3 or higher.

No one is coming for you. Emergency personnel will be taking care of other emergencies on a shoestring of employees. Do not put them in a position to decide if helping you or performing a job is more important.

At this point, review the check list for staying and for going. Remember, we compiled these lists after our experience with a devastating storm. Please read with the possibility that many of these issues have

not been corrected or made easier for the aftermath of a storm. You do not need to be frightened but you do need to be in the know. No one will be there at every step to answer every question. It will be hard and it will be a real pain in the derriere. But that will be your new reality.

Since Katrina, there have been many home contractors that use statements which are designed to pull at your heart strings. Words such as never flood again, get your home safe-raise it, make your home hurricane proof are everywhere. While I am not here to comment on the companies, I am here to let you know: homes on pilings float, homes on slabs flood, no home is 100% safe, the comment 'I never had an issue with storms before' may be challenged, and well if I go, so be it. Please note: all these comments are not banking on your safety, only you can. Homes and houses are material things. The contents are just objects. For some people, the idea of a storm washing away all their stuff is liberating, time to buy more stuff. For others, it may be their description of their life and their items define them. Either way, it is important to respect all others.

Staying!!

Once you make this decision, be sure all others are in agreement. I can tell you for a fact, in Katrina, the decision to stay was made off the cuff and assumed. Afterwards, many families were broken up, as a result of the decision to stay put them in harm's way, and it was not pretty. If you decide to send the family away, be sure you have secured your protection and your family's where ever they go.

If you have the availability, get a gps system on your phone and your computer. If something should happen and no one can contact you, they can follow your phone on their computer. Get a pouch and keep your cell phone on a string around your neck. It can be lost in a split second. We were evacuating in the dark of midnight with flood waters high around the car. I had two things in my hands, one a book and the other a cell phone. As I opened the car door, both went into the water. That could be your only life line and it took a bath. You can't call Verizon now to overnight you a phone. If you have the option to do the 'locate my phone' on your iphone, get it done now. You need to contact Apple or your carrier.

Tell more than one person where you are staying. Tell people outside the area and also tell others who are staying where you are.

Have chargers for cell phones that plug in to the wall and plug into the car or truck. It is also very important to have at least two batteries fully charged for the cell.

Have at least four heavy duty, large as possible garbage or leaf bags. These are necessary to put your legs in if you have to wade through water to get to safety or evacuate. If you are carrying small children or babies, have something of this sort or small bags to drop them into. When in boats or other forms of rescue, you do not want the flood water on your person. Reduce your exposures.

Having tons of candles I have NOT found to be productive. They are not safe in closed spaces and are a fire hazard. Besides, when it is dark, you are sleeping any way. Take advantage of sleep time, the day brings heroic efforts to survive the storm. If the storm hits at night, you do not need light. You will be busy making memories to do or not do this the next time.

Batteries are needed for radios. These wear out so fast, no matter what the package says. Getting the rechargeable ones, dah, usually there is no electric so probably not the best choice right now. If you find a radio that can be hand turned to work, that is definitely good, but do not make it the only one you

have. The new solar radios are great but if it is raining for days, there is no sun. Watch when you use the available battery life on electronics. Once the storm starts, there is really nothing you can do but sit and be safe; shut off what you can and conserve the battery life.

If you are staying because you said, 'oh, we have had hurricane force winds lots of times with thunder storms in our area'. Yikes, are you making a bad choice. Yes, they may have been in your area before, but they have not been sustained for a long period of time with a wind that turns the direction of the rain sideways. Regular rain comes straight down; this driving rain will get into nooks and crannies you have never known to leak. You had better believe a nickel size hole can spring a waterfall in five minutes. Water also going under the shingles at different angels sends water under the tarp and soaks the beams of your house. Guess what comes next? You got it: mold and sickness.

Store your water in a cool ventilated area. Hot water in plastic bottles, regardless of what is being declared as safe, it is not safe. Water companies that bottle water state on their safety statements, 'if kept at room temperature, 75 degrees'. Note: hurricanes affect hot climates. There is no such thing as room temperature of seventy degrees.

Eat the perishable foods first. In the heat of the home, foods will go bad fast, as fruits and vegetables left on a counter will rapidly spoil.

Sleep when you can. You will need strength later to see what to do next.

Do NOT allow children to look out the window or open a door during the storm and furthermore, they do not need to walk outside in the eye of the storm. I cannot stress this enough. Something may come right through the window and break it, hurting anyone in its path. You will not get medical support until the storm is over, period. If you open a door to feel the power, you may not get the door closed, then you will be crap out of luck.

Warning! Do not allow children to venture outside and play in ANY water in the yard or streets. The sewer systems back up immediately into the water and the diseases that can be had may be deadly. After Katrina, staph was rampant. After Joplin, black fungus was present. Stay out of all water in the lower part of your building or home, also. Water travels and it has toxins and dangerous bacteria in it. There will be no medical services available during the storm and usually for one day afterwards while they get organized.

If your home begins to rock, get into an interior room and cover yourself with a mattress. I have had relatives survive Hurricane Andrew in a bathroom only. When they looked up, nothing was left. Try doing that for hours on end. Only the strong survive.

Taping windows does not prevent the windows from breaking. The tape becomes wet and it can just peel off. Some tapes that stay on may help with shattering pieces of glass. This is a very basic tactic and not generally recommended. You can put large pieces of furniture in front of the window to block out the possibility of flying glass. Be sure if you have double pane windows, have both shut and locked.

Have a tape recorder or some sort of other taping device to document what happens during the storm. WARNING!! This is not the time to post to Face book, or use your telephone as your main source of recording. See if you can find something cheap, like the old fashioned recorders with tapes. They use fewer batteries and can be used for days.

Do NOT leave any elderly people alone. This is inhumane!! Ask them to come with you to be safe. Many people have medical conditions that do not allow them to be comfortable in leaving their surroundings. Alert medical support in the area, they may be able to assist in getting these people to leave. At times, medications can support this transition. See how you can help. Make it work, their life depends on it. It really should not work for you to wait until after the storm to see the elderly bodies floating by.

As soon as the electric goes off, walk through your residence and unplug all items from the wall. There is one exception: leave a small inexpensive item plugged in, like an alarm clock or radio. If you do not unplug from the wall all items, including computers, there is a potential for electrical surge and the items will be damaged. Do not assume surge protectors will save you from this event. Replacements of all basic items after Katrina were necessary as the electricity caused surges and some fires. If you own a home, flip the switch on your air conditioner or heater. These are big ticket items and will not be replaced in the aftermath with all the chaos. They are considered luxury items.

If you have animal kennels, use them. If the home becomes damaged and there is a wind or water intrusion, the last thing you need is your animal freaking out and running around hurting themselves. They can go crazy in the cage, but you and they will be safe in a contained space. If the home is broken by the wind, animals run out and owners run after them, do not have this happen to you. Take precautions. Just shutting them in a room will not work.

‘Leaving, wave adieu and point your face to the sun’

You are going to be ok. You are going to be ok. Repeat, say this a thousand times if that is what you need to hear. You will be ok. You are doing what you need to do. You are taking care of yourself and your family. You will be ok.

Before you lock the door, empty the refrigerator and freezer. If this is a major storm, everything in it will be spoiled in 36 to 48 hours. Another day of heat and the refrigerator will have to be replaced. After Katrina, the streets were lined with refrigerators taped closed full of stenching food. The smell permeates your nostrils and never leaves. After Gustav, we had emptied the refrigerator and when we came back, there was no food, but the refrigerator was not lost. We just had to clean it lightly and plug it back in. There is a fine line in effective cleaning and dangerously storing food in this environment. Do the proactive thing, when in doubt, throw it out.

If you have large items or valuable items near windows, pull them to the interior of the house and elevate if at all possible. Many times this works, however, if there is a water leak in the home, mold does not discriminate, it will be everywhere. Take items off the walls if they are of value to you. Take all important pictures out of frames and put them together in a safe high area. Be sure they are not shrink-wrapped with thin plastic, it can melt into them and they will be destroyed.

Do not leave a door cracked for the animal left behind; you might as well open the windows and invite the storm over for dinner. Make a choice, take the animal with you or take it to a place where someone can care for it. Since Katrina, many volunteers have made it their goal in life to help save these animals prior to a storm. See if you can find one in your area.

Unplug all items, regardless of what they are for. However, leave one thing plugged in, your home land phone. This is essential to tell you when the electric is back on if you have a phone that also plugs into the electricity for answering phone or such. We used this tactic for Gustav and were back on the road before the other droves of evacuees residing in Texas.

Now, be sure you have a full tank of gas and a bottle or two of water in the trunk for the car radiator. I do not sway from this requirement. Thirty six hours of twenty miles an hour is torture on a car or truck. As we evacuated for Gustav, the cars going by had brakes burning hot and squealing radiators over flowing, cars dried up from lack of gas and flat tires by the hundreds.

If there is one thing I can with certainty predict for you: rarely will the people involved in this evacuation have patience. It went out the window after the first five hours. If you think you can stop and take a break, think again. Once you get out of the line of traffic, it may be difficult to get back in. If you are in a contra flow lane, there is no place to get off. Do not think you can get on the road and get gas later; it's not going to happen. Gas stations have a finite storage of gas. Once it is gone, it is gone. If all the traffic is going one way, gas trucks cannot get through to service stations. In the case of Katrina, people were stalking the gas trucks so they were not on the road unless they had protection. If you are traveling in the day time, do not store gas in cans in the trunk or truck bed. Heat in these conditions exceeds all safety parameters. At no time can you say you will be ok, you are at risk and putting others around you in danger.

Do not plan on getting food or drink until you are about one hundred miles out from the designated storm area or you reach your destination. Since you have hotel reservations, it is still prudent to call the hotel directly, not the 800 number, and tell them where you are in your evacuation process and when you anticipate being there. Remind them not to let your room go as you are trying to get there. Communication with them usually will secure the room no matter what the time you arrive. They understand the process and will be accommodating.

Be sure to have food and drink in the car. This does not need to be a three course meal, nor does it have to be healthy. Just food and drink will suffice. Do not make crazy demands on your kids if they do not want to eat certain items. Just have something they can eat and then rest. Confrontations and demands in a crowded car are the recipe for disaster. Do not do it.

Traffic will be thick. If you are forming a convoy with your family members or adult children driving, be in communication every twenty miles or so. A blaring radio in an adult child's car is really not good when people are blowing horns and stopping suddenly. The last thing you need is a chain reaction. Then, no one will be going anywhere and you have just put the entire process on hold. If the storm should pass too close to you now, you have put everyone on the road at risk. Explain this process to all

your drivers, there are no exceptions. Constantly talking on the phones and texting will cause the same results. Demand they do not perform these actions in a convoy evacuation. When you are in a line of cars or trucks, it would help to put an identifying marker in the front window of each car so when you glance back, you know where you are and if you are out of the line. This is really important as someone may have to exit for an emergency or pull off the road and you may not know until it is too late to stop. We had this happen with Katrina. My husband had truck issues and the road in Texas was dark. He had a motorcycle on his truck and tied it down with a yellow shirt tied to the top. We knew right where he was at all times because of the shirt.

Potty breaks. If you have a van, get a portable potty for the van, bottom line. If you can, speak with others prior, about the need to pee. It cannot be at every exit. Along an evacuation route, bathrooms are filthy, not attended (and do not demand they be so), not stocked, and they may have extensive lines. Teach little kids how to pee between the two open doors of a car if need be. Have at least one roll of toilet paper in the car, not the trunk, for each person in the car. Make it work, be creative. The goal is the hotel and in record time, not a casual saunter. You need to get there and get settled. This can be the road trip from you know where in a minute.

Important topics to review!!

Here we are going to list random notes so you can run down the list. Note: this is not the total list to end all; it is what we found to be important. It may seem unnecessary at the beginning, but it is meant to prevent issues later. Please take note and make your own decisions.

Either staying or going. This is a general running list. You may decide to stay and at the last minute, be told to go and if you did not pass through these items, it may be an issue for you.

Print this book on 8 ½ x 11 paper. Make two copies if there are two parents working separately or quickly. Duplication of actions may take precious time, but it will not hurt you.

Get two big envelopes, if you can, or four smaller ones will do.

Put the pictures of kids and parents and anyone else that lives with you or you are responsible for in the envelope. Also pictures of your animals. Be sure to have two copies of each, one for authorities and one for you to keep if further copies are needed.

Put one electric bill, one telephone bill and one cable bill in the envelope. It does not need to be the current one, but it does have to have the person on the insurance policy. Either way, put them in the envelope.

Start scanning photos if you have a shortage of space to evacuate or you are using public transportation. Email these to other friends or family members or put them on a flash drive and carry them on your person. Even if you are staying do this, water damage will destroy the items.

Scan important papers and send them as an attachment to your email address. You can then leave some items at home if you can't carry. If you are staying, still do this, water damage will destroy them.

Evaluate your animal condition. See if you have all the items listed prior. Do if staying or leaving.

Get water now. Store in a cool place. Water will not be available after a storm for at least three or four days for a moderate storm and maybe a week in a major disaster. You will get small amounts from relief people; however, they do not give you large quantities to store.

Food is always a tricky thing and not everyone will be happy. It can also cause tempers to flare when someone wants to eat and what you have is not on their list. This I have response to because I am not a can eater of food and that is what I had to do. Your refrigerator will stay cool usually for 24 hours with a full freezer and you do not open the door. Note: if you are living in a hot climate, a/c goes out, then the electricity, then refrigerator; your food store is going bad by the second. If you leave, clean out the freezer prior to leaving. When you return and you have to throw out the refrigerator because of rancid food, you may not get one for weeks if you are in a devastated area.

Can opener; this may save your life if you have to eat what is in your house. If you do have cans, put them on the shelfs in your kitchen; keeping them in the cupboards may decrease their safety as the heat will increase in the home rapidly with no a/c. If a can hisses when you open it, do not eat it!

Prescriptions should be carried on your person. No exceptions. If you and your husband get separated, you each have what you need. If your kids need help and you are driving or doing something and cannot get to them, they have access to what they need.

Returning and purchasing items in the store: grocers may not be as frugal as you in disposing the bad or optional bad items. They may put cans and boxes back onto the shelfs and the contents may have bugs that have migrated and cans that were over heated. Items sent in the first load may be at risk, since the method of transportation may be too hot and the storage area may not be safe.

Lighting candles are not really good when it is hot outside. If you have candles on in the night and there are perpetrators out there, it is like a red light to find you. Consider your inside and outside risks.

Cash and no ATM's: if you are using a smaller bank and you have evacuated there is a potential the bank that you are using in your local area is too flooding or damaged. You will not have access to your money. There have been times when the debit card just did not work as the computer systems are not interchangeable and across all banks across the country.

Axe in the attic with a sheet and marker; refer back to the beginning of this book for this story.

So many people are relying on food delivery services these days and they may not have food in the house at all. If elders are getting food delivered daily, they are at a high risk for starvation. Do not allow this to happen.

Sending elders to assisted living or nursing homes or other facilities; what is the first question you should be asking; what is your evacuation policy. If you have an elder in a facility, they are at risk. No matter what they say, they have the risk of no vehicles to remove elders, no place to go and no care people to get them there. Decide with your family what is going to occur here.

Red ant piles float. Do not allow anyone to enter flooded water. It is not a pool to have fun. It holds all kinds of bad stuff. Enough said.

If you are taking an elder with you on the road to evacuate, know the risk. What will you do if they have a crisis on the road, what meds do they have and how do you administer them, and what if a person dies in your car, do you know what to do?

If you are a caregiver for someone, is there a process for the client to be cared for or is it up to you.

If you are in an event, see if there is a system in your area to register with, like 411, to notify others you will need help. If the electric toes out, have a system in place, if the oxygen is not coming, have a backup plan.

Saying that your elders have an alert button and should something go wrong, those services may potentially help them. But those services may go out and no one to help with coming to rescue them. Ask all service providers what their back up plan is and do not ask the person who answers the phone, ask for the company policy and get it in writing. Remember, no plan is ever fail safe.

Are you in an open carry state? You must ask the gun law rules where you are living. You need to know what is outside your door and in people's homes. Once you know, you can make a judgement and choose what you need to do and know on safety. If your neighbor has a militia in his garage, is he your best friend?

Screens on the windows; if you have none, consider what to put up to shelter from bugs in the night. Your windows will have to be open for air and bug bites can really put your health at risk. Also, small

animals will move into your homes for safety from the water; frogs, snakes, alligators, rats, mice, well I am sure you get what I am saying, UGH!

Is there a chemical plant within 100 miles of your area? This is important because all bets go off when there is a crisis and the plant cannot contain itself. There were tons of reports of illegal dumping of toxic chemicals post storms because they just decided to do it. Not going to say more here, but saw so much of this, it was criminal.

Know everything in a 100 mile radius of where you live. Have your kids also know this as they can help drive or may need to get somewhere in a rush. This is vital as cell phone GPS tends to shift when there is a disaster. Cell phones and other GPS electronics may lose signal and you are left with a disaster of your own.

Post to Facebook and all social media every step of your journey. If something gets interrupted in your path and something happens to someone, you can be found.

Ask all nursing homes: does the window open, is there an ex in the attic, how does oxygen get supplied and for how long, what happens when it gets hot, we have seen individual compressors show up at the nursing homes to take care of only one patient as the family brought one in and others die, see who is taken care of first, what happens when the extended family dies prior, who is taking care of the person in the facility and all policies in print. These items are the same for the caregiver, hospice and home helper as they are also responsible for the patient.

Important papers do not have to be on your person, you can scan them into your computer and send yourself the email with everything. Remember, banks also flood and important items in there are not perfectly safe.

Pet records can also be scanned into your computer and no matter where your pet ends up, you can send anyone an email with the information for verification and support. Also, it is essential you take a picture of you with your pets.

If you have an addict in the home and they will evacuate with you, watch what they bring, who they run into and what may be withdrawal. Violence and crime will follow you around. If they have a drug of choice, while you do not want to increase their drug stash, if you have any around the house, put

them in a bag and hang it on your neck. In a crisis and you are on a highway or in a shelter, you know what to do. God bless you all here.

Guns; do not assume that you can take them from state to state and if you evacuate, you cannot walk into a hotel with a shot gun or militia. Do not leave them in the truck or car. Break ins are very common when people that have evacuated and people that need fast money see people who are holding all their important items with them in their vehicles.

All your special things you put into your car, be sure to take them into the place you will be staying. Heat and crime may get to them and take them before you have a chance to get back home.

If you are staying, have a bucket for human waste. Be sure it has a lid. Do not put everything for two or three days down the toilet, it will back up and be all over your living space. There will not be a plumber available for days, if not weeks after a storm. The first day of the storm, you can add a little water to flush the toilet, but do not use the handle to flush, you will have a mess. After 24 hours or with immediate flooding, do not put things in the toilet. Further, keep all the toilet tops closed; there will be sewer gas escaping. Keep all kids and animals out of this area. Keep the door to the bathroom closed.

If you are a smoker or an alcoholic, do not run the risk of an immediate detox and possibility of hurting yourself or others. Know what you need and do not overdose. Do not set a stage of rage and possibly hurt you or others. If you have a child who is partaking in drugs or alcohol, know this ahead of time and prepare. Do not be there with them alone. Do not allow them to leave the home to purchase drugs or other items. Know you may have a potentially dangerous situation on your hands. Do not make the decision to not go to a shelter if conditions are warranted. There may be medical people there to help if a situation arises; just let them know when you arrive.

If you have guns and are staying, be sure you have what you need and be sure you have secured them. If you have a concealed weapon permit, take a picture of it on your phone, scan a picture of it to your email, and keep two copies of it on your person. Items can get lost or grabbed away from you in a scuffle.

If you have a healthcare license, make two copies of the current one. Regardless of the situation, stay or go, make two copies and do the same process noted above. Even if you are a certified nurse

assistant or a dental profession or a mental health person, you will be needed afterwards and must have a license to verify your participation in providing services. This will also allow you early re entry after the storm. Do not miss this option, you will be needed someplace, maybe your place of former work, but it may be someplace else if your work was destroyed or not up yet. Have the papers. Take one set of scrubs and put them in your to go pack. If you stay, have one set clean and set in a plastic bag at the door. Set the license with it.

Have a 'to go' pack done. Read the prior entries for this information. Do not pack your whole house, you will not be able to drive it down the road and it will further be a problem when you get to a temporary place and not be able to leave it in the car. Criminals are everywhere.

Park all vehicles as close to the house or apartment you can. If this is the highest space you have, yes, if not, find the highest spot, but you must look around before choosing this option. Trees, other people's property trees, children's play equipment and anything else that could fly or fall, do not park in that area. If you see it, do not park there. You should have your vehicle very close to the house if at all possible. You may need to use the car or truck charging option and walking outside far in the storm will not be possible.

Have long pants and long sleeve shirts available for all family members.

Have old prescription glasses even if broken or out of date, they can be used if you lose your others.

Get a print out from the pharmacy for all members of the family of all prescriptions filled in the last year. This will help to note the random ones you may need for random health issues. If your children are over the age of 18 and you ask them to get this for you, the pharmacist will not give other people's information to them.

If you have a fireplace, close the flue.

If you have outdoor furniture and a pool, sink these items now in the pool.

If you have outside garbage cans, try to have the garbage picked up or take to a place for disposal. Wash the cans with Clorox and leave them outside to dry until you are ready to leave or the storm starts. Then take the cans into the garage or tie them down outside. Either way, you will not have an invasion of bugs and animals in your garbage if you take care of it before the event.

When you fuel up, be sure to have a gallon of water for the radiator and a quart of oil for the engine. You never know when leaks could occur. Also have electrical tape and duct tape in the car and the home. Radiator leaks can be taped for a few miles to get to safety. Carry an EMPTY gas can in the trunk of the car, however, if you are in a truck, do not carry this in the truck bed, it can be stolen by others in a panic. Put it behind the front seat, EMPTY. You will need this after the storm when you get back to your home, the gas stations will be dry for days. You will need to bring items in that you need for the first few weeks if there was a moderate or severe storm event. Stores are not first on the shopping list to refill them. Food, water, safety and then electric are. Everything else is an added bonus.

Sunglasses or hats are needed for everyone in the car. Sunburn is dangerous if you are sitting on the side of the road and standing out in the elements.

Bug lotion and suntan lotion for everyone if you stay. Open windows and standing water breed bugs. You may be standing in lines to get services, food or supplies. Do not put lotion on children's hands or face. Use a hat for faces. You will not have water to wash a child properly and they will get the product in their eyes. Do not assume the product will not hurt their eyes, assume it will.

Have pump liquid soap for limited washing of hands. Have this in the car when you evacuate and at home if you stay.

Take a bottle of detergent and note where you can wash clothes at the hotel or motel. After a storm, the Tide trucks may come in and help those who stayed launder their clothes, but this will not be immediate, rather several weeks until this process is instituted.

Find public convention centers, parking lots or gathering areas no matter if you stay or go. This is the place where recovery and relief efforts will be coordinated. These are also water and ice staging area. To find a shelter: text 'shelter' plus your zip code to: 43362 (4FEMA). To find a disaster recovery center: text 'drc' plus your zip code to: 43362 (4FEMA). Watch for buses from the county and local police going up and down your street. If you get scared and want to go, you will only have a very short window to flag them down. Make your decision and stick with it.

If you are staying, have two clean ice chests, one small and one large, cleaned and ready. You will be getting one bag of ice per family per day and you will need to make that last. Note: Walmart will not

be open. Ice will be rapidly melting in the heat and do not expect to store it in the freezer or refrigerator. If the refrigerator is off for more than 36 hours, do not open it until several days after the storm and the local government has declared all systems are a go. The water supply to your home may be compromised due to flooding and it will need to be flushed by the water company. After they say it is safe, take your own precautions and flush water sources coming into your home. Do not drink water or cook with it until you feel confident of its safety.

Having electric does not mean the sewer systems are moving and ready for use. Wait for this information to be supplied by the media.

Write all allergies and medical conditions for every person you are responsible for on the back of the photos you are going to have. Be sure to scan the picture and the back of the picture with this information into your email. No exceptions.

WARNING…… LEAVE YOUR ATTITUDE AND DEMANDING PERSONALITY OUT OF THE STORM PROCESS. THIS WILL SERIOUSLY DETER GETTING HELP AND MAY LAND YOU BEING BANNED FROM THE RELIEF AREA.

Conclusion

This book was first published in 2011. The following conclusion was written at that time. Now, here in 2017, all the notes included in this book still stand firm as the storm may change but the events that may occur can still show up.

As I am writing this today, it is the anniversary of hurricane Katrina's landfall here in Louisiana. My gut is tight and I am finding it hard to focus on things to complete today. I have listened to the television speaking about Katrina and using it to compare with hurricane Irene that impacted the east coast of the United States this past weekend. A few things I noticed today regarding Katrina: only one out of many female newscasters wore all black in respect for those who died in the storm, the memorial events in St. Bernard Parish were attended by more people this year than last, the memorials in New Orleans were lightly attended, and yes, Brian Williams of the national news did say it was a day of remembrance for hurricane Katrina, Louisiana, the gulf coast and the events that took place here. Some things I did not think appropriate so many years later were: groups of people still demanding that government make them whole and bring them home, other groups demanding to have services that they claim the storm may have taken away, and still others speaking about how they received so many funds to rebuild bigger and better than before the storm regardless of the condition of the buildings prior to the storm and people still waiting for others to do for them. Now, at this moment, the weather person just stated there is a tropical wave in the Atlantic and if it is named, it will be Katia, the name that is to replace Katrina in the hurricane naming order. Mother Nature does not worry about the names we designate to her effects, nor does she set a bullet to destruct a certain area of the world. Weather happens randomly and we are just in the path. Know when to get out of the path and take responsibility for yourself and your family.

Dr. Jeanette Gallagher experienced Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and shares the experience to help other review what may be an issue for them as each storm is unique but the potential for dangerous situations is a constant.

Her story in brief:

Dr. J left a local hospital emergency room to hunker down in her apartment in Kenner. Since the hospital was in the process of moving patients to the third floor and lock down was in progress, it was time to go home and pray for the best. Her medical emergency was due to a blood clot in her leg from extensive work travel the week before, therefore, evacuation was impossible. Twenty four to thirty six hours on the highways driving ten miles an hour to a place of safety that was unknown was never an option. Dr. J and her family rode out the storm and became blocked in due to excessive flooding in the area.

As conditions began to rapidly deteriorate, no public services, no rescue people looking for us, looters and gun shots were throughout the day and night, it was time after several days to pray hard and drive fast through the water. At times, the car and truck did seem to float along. Water was up to the seats and washing our feet and legs as we drove through it in the deep dark of midnight.

When we returned to the area about three weeks later, shock and horror at what the light of day would reveal. Crushing hurt, pain, sadness and despair were apparent in the people and the place. We too felt all emotions you could possibly imagine. Many days and weeks of driving the area for work and documentation became a process of ritual rather than sharing with others. We took everything in and let nothing out.

As time went along, we were full up, there was no escape, it was time to let out the wave of emotions being held hostage inside us. It was a long year.

We remember visions of death, of people, places and things. Our eyes were bloodshot for months and our guts ached from so much loss. The picture of where the dead may be, the places of holding for those lost, and the cement coffins with numbers in sequence were simply too much to bear. A good stiff drink and prayers did not come close to easing the grip of human beings lost in space and time.

Dr. Jeanette believes that life is an experience and events along the way can take you out or allow you to float along. While there are many different situations with natural disasters, there is always one thing that stands tall; the only thing that matters and cannot be replaced is YOU. Do the best you can to stay safe and help others who may not know as much as you do. Everyone needs help, reach out.

Dr. J has been in many hurricanes and stayed put for all of them. There will be one and she will leave, permanently. Time will show her when.

Volunteering after Natural Disasters

What to know before you sign up and how to take care of yourself during disaster recovery

A natural disaster occurs and you see the pain and devastation on television. What can you do? Volunteer! This is very giving of you and thousands of hands are always needed to support people in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

However, who is going to support you? Who is going to make sure you are not exposed to environmental dangers? Who is going to make sure you get all the information that will protect your health? Who is going to make sure you are safe? Who is there for every question you may have?

You are important first, remember that. You cannot take care of others if you need extra support. If you are at risk, it does not matter how many hours you log in, you are now a casualty of the event.

Do not become the casualty of any disaster. Be educated and make a secure decision before jumping on that bus or convoy.

After a disaster of any magnitude there are risks, know them. If you do not, there will not be people around to help you in the manner you expect or will need.

Learn what to evaluate prior to helping and how to take care of yourself while offering your services.

Be safe.

Discussion

In the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, droves of people came to help. The visions of destruction and pain pulled at many people's heart strings. Thousands of people, all ages, came without being called to help. Regardless of social status, ethnicity, values or morals, everyone came. The flood gates were broken down by the water of Katrina and the waves of people came in.

While humanitarian efforts were ramped up and seen at every turn, many issues were not discussed, nor were they publicized. Other dangers seemed to slither like a snake in the bushes and take their toll many years later. Some covert results are yet to be seen.

What am I talking about here?

- You
- Your safety
- Your exposures
- Your health
- Your mental stability
- Your relationship with the world
- Your relationship with yourself

This may sound 'out of your realm'. You may not understand everything I just noted, but the experience of volunteering will bring all of these 'life changing events' smack in front of your face. You will not be able to see or think until you are safe and secure in what you believe.

Things may occur that challenge your values, morals, beliefs and your upbringing. You may be put in a place to have to come to design what you are willing to do, believe and accept for your life.

Be open as I share several experiences I had with Katrina. While these are not always the norm in all disasters, nothing and no one is created equal. There will be thousands of variations. What I am offering is a world of possibilities. See if that works for you. If not, share help in other ways. If so, take your educated self and sign up when you are moved to without jumping from overwhelming emotions. You can serve much better when your 'house' is in order.

Look, feel, share and be with others that may need your help. See them, for who they are, not just the space in which they stand. Look for the heart and soul and help to support that. In the end we all want the same thing, safety, caring and loving space to flourish. Create.

Shelters: During and After a Natural Disaster

Dr. Jeanette Gallagher

Introduction

The term ‘shelter’ can mean so many things to someone who never had to worry about where they live and how they are protected. Since the economic downturn (2009-2011) so many people are shelter deprived. While you may look at these people and think in your head, ‘oh, I wonder what their issue is’, many people just walk on by when homeless people are around on the streets. I have also had the supreme anger when I was with an acquaintance and the person actually stepped over someone on the street. I will make a statement here and not be politically correct, but someone has to say it: ‘how dare you make any statements about people on the street since life right now is so unstable, it could be you in a second’. Please take care of others around you, regardless.

In this book, I am talking about shelters after a natural disaster in two different contexts, during the storm for mandatory evacuation and living there for a period of time afterwards due to not being able to go back home yet. Natural disasters increase the incidence of immediate homelessness from small numbers to potentially thousands. You will never know what the circumstance or the event but you could be that person on the street. Please note the references for services and rules therein for each situation. Even being in the shelter is difficult, but if you take care of yourself and put your blinders on, the time will pass. Do not however, have the blinders so thick that you do not help others around you should that need arise.

This too shall pass and the sun does come out tomorrow!!

Shelters after the natural disaster

All shelters after any type of disaster are places of refuge, safety and resources. They are a very important piece of taking that first step towards recovery. Use them. Services and supplies have been directed to your area to support you. If you do not use them because you are saying you can be ok without them, please go and reevaluate your belief. If you do not partake of the services because you do not want to be needy, please reevaluate your beliefs. If you do not go to see what resources are available and take what they are sharing with you, you may lose that opportunity later since there is a very short window of access.

We have all been programmed to believe we need to take care of ourselves. Yes, that is true and in the previous books we have stated for you to be responsible for all the people in your care. However, after a disaster your coffer may be very limited and to provide the basic necessities may be increasing difficult.

Share what extras you have, see what other help you need, and speak up if your basic needs are not met.

Many of your past priorities will seem to just fall away and what is really important for life will look totally different after a disaster.

Once you and your family are taken care of, you can get on to the business of rebuilding. You will also be able to help others when you do not have the strain of need. Fill yourself up first, then move to the next person to help.

What should I be thinking about before I go to a shelter: My experience is noted

There are a few disparities between what you are thinking about a shelter and what the reality is. First, when you are told to evacuate, go, find yourself a safe place to stay. Second, if you do not have a place to stay, you can seek out a shelter set up by the local government or FEMA. Third, if you do not make any effort to leave and evacuation is mandated, you will be sought out to go to the shelter. In this case, you cannot tell the people who are coming to get you where you want to go. You go where they tell you to go. This is not a cab service; it is survival space for safety. Fourth, if there are people in the streets and the storm is imminent, the local government may come by and seriously suggest you get into their vehicle to go to safety. In this case, you go to the closest shelter. If it is in the end of the sheltering process, many locations may be already full and you will be dropped off there with no cot or supplies. Again, if you can get there earlier, get there. You will have a space.

Another HUGE fallacy: I will go to the shelter at the beginning of the storm and when the last drop of rain has ended, I will be able to go back home. I also assume the people who brought me here will be outside waiting to take me back home when those golden doors open. Nah! No way, no how; it does not work that way.

After hurricane Katrina, we evacuated to Texas and visited the shelters. We needed services and I signed up to be a medical volunteer. I enlisted to see how the children with autism were supported in these places. I can tell you a little about the shelter and most of them were exactly the same and yes, the children with autism had a corner of quiet to go to but that was all.

On the main floor of the location, be it a dome or other large sport arena, was the spot for all the cots people were sleeping on. They were lined up row after row and taking up every

space there was. There was not more than two feet between the cots. All cots were created equal, no groupings of special people or such. Everyone was your neighbor.

The lights to the entire floor were turned on over head at 6am. If you can sleep with all the mass confusion, bright lights over head and people moving about constantly, you will be ok. If not, try to sleep when you can. There were times the people were not allowed to be in the area of the cots. Remember, this is done to keep you safe from crime, not to aggravate you. If you are a smoker, be aware, the doors are locked at specific times after the storm. The doors are locked prior to the storm and they will not be open until after the storm has passed. You will not be able to go outside to smoke in the eye of the storm. Get yourself together and make a choice, cigarette or safety, sorry.

You had only as much space as under your cot. There were limits on bringing too much in bags into the shelter. Warning: all bags and persons were screened to enter the facility. While this sounds great for your safety, it did have its issues. Many people and things got in that were not supposed to. I will leave that to your imagination. Yes, think outside the box.

While you might think the people in the cots were the only ones in the area, no. The doors were opened throughout the day, after the storm passed and other people came in for services that were offered at the location.

You will be given a cot, pillow and a blanket. Note: they may run out of supplies, blanket and pillow or they may not have cots if the shelter was set up quickly, deal with it, remember, absolutely no complaining. If the numbers of people exceed the cot numbers, the shelter will be shut down to incoming. However, if the storm is imminent, the doors will remain open so that people are not standing out in the storm. Once they are closed, that is it until the end. No exceptions.

That is very important to know. If there were shady people lingering outside the shelter, due to alcohol/drug abuse or if they seemed dangerous, they may make the last closing of the door.

You are responsible to keep yourself and family safe. There was a great deal of police presence in Texas. It is important to note here: if there is an incident on one side of the facility, all the police go there and leave the other areas unattended.

Lines outside the shelter form very early, sometimes in the dark, to see if more beds become available. There were separate lines of people who needed some of the resources offered at the shelter after the storm. Do not believe that the people in those lines are the only ones who evacuated; the locals also came for the partaking. Blatant fraud, but no one was looking and the chaos inhibited them from caring.

Identification such as a driver's license was the only item required. If you do not have one, you need to provide at least one form of identification as presented in the preparation manual. You will have to have something for the children. Be sure you have something, it is required. You want to have it documented you are there with other family members. It is a safety requirement.

Please bring only the essentials with you to a shelter. We will list these now with what to bring and what not to bring. Please also note: if you are going to a small local shelter, some of these may be different, however, after the storm, many large locations will be following these patterns and you will most likely be moved to a large facility. Do not freak out about this, it is so they can try to provide safety for all evacuees. Do not squawk, go.

Items to bring to a shelter

Food: while many provide food later after the storm has passed, the initial location you are in will probably ask you to bring your own food and drink. Remember: no refrigeration, no heat source to cook, no heat source to warm things, no ice, and no place to store your ample supplies. No utensils, no serving items and no extra places to dispose of any items. You should bring: dry food like cereal, dry fruits like fruit roll ups, small individual serving items such as fruit or puddings, crackers, small peanut butter, small jelly, nuts, and baby food. These are a few suggestions. Do not bring in super size items as they will be spilled all over and if not used can draw bugs and other not so good bacteria. Also, I am sorry to say, the food may be a cause of contention amongst the people around you. They may steal and take all of it. Take what you can hold and that is it. You are not feeding an army, just you and your family.

Water: you must bring your own water. I seriously advise to bring small individual bottles. If you bring in gallons, they will spill, stuff can get into the tops and it is not safe in hot weather. While the temperature outside may not be excessively hot, the closed area of the shelter and lots of hot bodies will increase the temperature significantly. If you drink directly from these and your bacterium gets in, the whole bottle will be spoiled and you will get sick. Don't do it.

Medications: do not get caught taking other people's meds. If you bring in other people's meds and visit the medical help at the location, giving them these items will have the medical personnel disposing of them and you will not be allowed to dumpster dive to get them back. Take all your medications and if you have a print out from the pharmacy of all the medications you have taken the last year, this will help medical personnel if you need their services. The medical team may be able to look up your medications at pharmacies, but that will not take place for at least a few days after the storm has passed. You are on your own until then if you do not have documentation and enough of your own supply.

Drink: Do NOT try to get in the doors with alcohol. If you do get in and it is discovered later, you will be banned from the shelters and all their services. That is not a good thing when there is not even a tree to safely sleep under. If you have a medical condition, such as diabetes, you must bring your own drinks. If you have a child, do not expect to bring milk into the shelters. In the immediate before and just after the storm, milk may not be available, later, there may be. Milk quickly deteriorates and it can make you very sick. If it sits around the shelter and starts to spoil, there will be no place to dispose of it and the garbage trucks will not be around for days, if not weeks. They will have other things to do. Dumping it down the toilets will not work either, since flushing toilets will not work if the sewer system pumps or pipes are flooded.

Blankets: just one for each person is necessary. If the electric goes out, you will be hot as heck in a closed up building.

Pillow: limit to one, remember, you have to carry all this stuff, no one will help you and you have a very limited space. It is not like taking your carry on luggage for the plane.

Electronics: cell phone and small laptop, period. Hand held games may be allowed in some shelters. These can cause trouble with peer groups, such as teens and kids. Stealing may occur if items are left in view of others. There usually is not a place to charge items. There may be places to charge your cell phone after the storm. Do not depend or expect these to be there. Expect less and be pleasantly surprised.

Shoes: it is very important that all people have closed toe shoes in a shelter. Why? Lots of people in closed spaces and disease can be spread. Limit dirt and other things being transferred to you and your sleep station. Also, if you do not, your dirty feet will be in your bed.

Showers: they are not available until after the storm and you are moved to a large facility. They will be very limited, well used and not cleaned after each person. Think about that before you leap.

Toilets: they are always available before, during and after the storm. However, when the electric goes out and the local services are not online, toilets don't work. Things will back up. It will get nasty. Do not allow children to use any facility alone, regardless of their age. You are responsible for your family and you do not need to have any other social issues or crimes rendered on your family. Bring at least one roll of toilet paper for two people in your party. Do NOT bring the ultra soft, the squishy kind, get Scott thin paper only. It will deteriorate easily and not cause a situation that will need a plumber. After the storm, plumbers are getting bankers pay and go to the highest bidder.

Paper towels, writing utensils, writing paper, games, or anything else you could think of, will NOT be provided at the shelters prior to the storm and during the storm. If you find a shelter that does provide a few items, that is fabulous. However, the shelters do not know how many people will be in residence and they do not have the means to stock pile supplies just like you, items are scare. As soon as the storm passes, FEMA and other faith based groups will start to get their wits about them and see where the situation stands. Just afterwards, PRAY and PRAY hard, the cavalry will come and help.

Do not bring candles or other items that can be lit or burn. Do not bring strong smelling items, you are in very close quarters, it will not go over very good with the person next to you. Avoid confrontation at all costs. What could start as a squabble between two people could end up as gang warfare in close quarters. Just don't do it.

The Storm

As the storm beckons at the entrance to the shelter, the administrators will stick out their necks and see if there are any stragglers around the building and bring them in. The doors and windows will then be secured. Do not panic, just think of it as a time to use all your belongings as a pillow and try to rest. Generally storms always seem to be most active at night. While this is not a rule, it seems to be a popular time.

While the storm is going over head, you may hear lots of banging, pounding rain, maybe thunder, and hear a lot of whistling as the wind gets forced into small cracks in the structure. You may see pieces breaking on the inside of the shelter, do not worry too much, and just move quietly away from them. Usually if one piece falls, there may be others. Keep to the interior of the building. Usually there will be bathrooms, closets and kitchen facilities on the interior of many large buildings. Do NOT allow anyone you are responsible for to go anywhere in the shelter alone. NEVER!!! Remember all the stories coming out of hurricane Katrina, DON'T DO IT! Even if the person is your wife or mother, DON'T DO IT!

As the eye of the storm goes overhead, you will hear a deep peaceful quiet. There may be some residual water and trees falling, but the sense of energy battering the building will ease up. Do not go outside at this time. You may want the kids to run around, or you need a smoke, or you are just inquisitive, don't go out!! No one can tell you how big the eye of the hurricane is right above your head. It may be two miles across the center, the weather man can state on the television, however, if you at the edge of the circle, it could be feet. Once the door is opened for anything other than the end of the storm, it is hard to gather up a person who may have ventured outside, which is an issue. Stay put until the very end of the storm and the administration states it is over. Once you lose your spot, you may not get it back and if you leave things around your area, someone can lift them. Oh, well, don't say you heard the rules and just 'thought', do not 'think', 'do'. This is not place for executive

decisions by Indians who think they are Chiefs. Sit and do what you are told, period. Be safe.

After the eye has passed, the wind direction will shift by 180 degrees. If it was out of the east before, it will now be out of the west, if it was out of the north, now the south, get it? If you were on a safe side of the structure, the safe side may now be the other side. Be alert, notice if water or air is leaking into the structure. If so, move to the interior of the building. If water begins to leak from the middle of the roof, go to the edges, the walls of the structure. If the roof falls from water in the middle, the roof usually comes down into that point of water dropping. Keep looking all around when you are awake and hearing noises in the building structure. Remember, it will end, just it will take time, and right now, you are not in charge, time of the storm is. Sit and be patient.

When you hear the all clear sound and they open the doors, do not immediately rush out of the shelter. There may be electric wires down, the outside may be littered with glass, there could be many other things outside that are very bad, so let the administration or police from the shelter investigate first. You do not want the children to see some things that may be outside that door. Take your time going to see, you're not going anywhere any time soon. If there is significant damage outside, you will probably be there for a few days. If there is minimal damage outside, then it may be 24 hours or so. The police and other protective services are the first to examine storm damage. You will not be able to access public transportation for a few days. You will not be able to drive your car around on the roads to 'see for yourself' the damage for at least one or two days if slight to moderate damage. If extensive damage, you may not have a car outside anyway, so sit down and chill.

After the storm

"It is a time to reevaluate what is important in your life and pray. It is a time to center your family and breathe. It is a time to be happy you are alive. It is also a time to smile and hug each person you can. If you see a person to your left and to your right, reach out, touch them on the shoulder, hug them, hold them when they cry and look into their eyes and see their pain, we are all one. Let go of the holding in emotions, it is the time to cry, to shake, and to share and be still. Whatever is outside that door, everyone will have an experience that would crack any heart to weep. Pave that road with compassion, caring and sharing of yourself and everything. There are no haves and have not's here, just people. Do your part to warm the life sun. I am counting on you!!"

~ Dr. Jeanette Gallagher, August 25, 2011

Short stay at the shelter: two days or so

As soon as the administration at the shelter declare the storm is finished, the doors will be opened and you may be allowed outside in the immediate area for assessment. It is very important to note here: you are not the first person to evaluate the area; it must be the officials at the shelter. Your safety is their only concern and they strictly adhere to the rules.

The order of re-entry after a storm:

- Local government and the National Guard
- FEMA and Red Cross
- Electric, water and other essential structure company personnel
- Urgent medical healthcare professionals
- Medical/hospital professionals
- Grocery store and pharmacy upper management
- Essential employees of the companies listed above
- Food vendors and other employees for the companies above
- When the electric, water and sewer are on, in a moderate to severe storm, you are then let in

By no means does this process happen at every storm, but it does happen when there is mass destruction.

This process is still happening in moderate storms, but you may not notice it since there is so much other chaos. Also, in some storms, there are so many people who do not leave that it is hard to decipher who stayed and who was just let back in. If you are in a shelter and they tell you the area is tenuous, stay at the shelter until they can positively identify the conditions at the location you are going back to. If you leave the shelter, you may lose your

place if you have to come back after accessing your home. This is the general rule, however, in chaos, remember, all rules get broken. It is just the really big ones of safety that they adhere to.

If you have to stay at the shelter another night or two, believe it is in your best interest. The officials do know best because they have seen what you may have not yet seen. Take their word for it and relax. At this point, the Red Cross or FEMA will begin to bring food and drink to the shelters. They 'should' and I use that word loosely because I can remember all too clearly what happened with Katrina, be doing this within 24 hours of the end of the storm. If however, there are significant emergencies that must be taken care of, they use the priority scale. If there is something that would cause further damage or safety issues, that is the fire they have to put out first, no exceptions. We were flooded in and did not know what was going on in the city and when the helicopters went over head, they just waved to us. We took that as sign things would be ok. Nah! They never came back to help us. They had bigger fish to fry and we did not know that it was a crisis at the dome and convention center. We did not know that for several more days.

These days, they too will pass very quickly as the rush of information and chaos take over every thought and action. Get out your book here and write all over the pages so you do not lose information that you will need later. Write down what time they told you the storm was over. Also document what is being said every minute of every day until the time you are safe back in your home. Telephone numbers, contact people, and countless other statistics will be given to you at a very rapid pace. Be prepared. They will not have the time to baby everyone and talk slow. Help others around you if they are stumbling in this documentation process. If you miss something, ask the others around you. The one saving grace after Katrina, the people would find out information and when they talk about it you can ask them to share. Many did and that is essential with so limited information getting to the people. Remember also, most information may be good, but there also is just as much information that is bad. I always talk about the gossip girls who start one phrase and pass it on. By the time it reaches the tenth person, it is so far from the original statement it is unidentifiable. Listen, share and be responsible with information.

When you are released to see your home, may you be blessed with loving thoughts and prayers from everyone who sees the disaster areas on their televisions. Take a breath and hold your heart. No matter the state of affairs at home, you are still cared about and help will be on the way. Just ask. Just be calm and just know you do matter.

Long-term shelter living

If the storm has produced a significant amount of damage and you are not allowed to return yet to your home, there will be large shelters opened up where food can be cooked and a few minimal survival services can be accessed. They may be: additional electric sources to charge equipment you may have, food and drink, showers, toilets and child/baby safe areas.

Once you are able to have access to a computer, go to: www.googleearth.com and you may be able to see your home on the screen. While this process worked for some, it was not perfect and we spent weeks trying to see our home on the computer. It did not work for us. It should also be noted, towers that hold communication wires and other pertinent local gps information was destroyed in Katrina. Sometimes we could not get information that was correct or precise. I can remember when we went to a family member's home in Plaquemines Parish in Louisiana to see how their home made it through the storm and we were looking around, a man stopped us asking where an address was. It just happened to be the family member's home that he was looking for and the man was an insurance adjuster. Well he followed us down to the location and the home was not there. It had been picked up, turned around and smashed down on the levee a little ways down the road. So again, what you think may not be. Be open and attentive when returning to areas of destruction.

Once everyone is set at a shelter with the basic needs met, there will be armies of people coming into the shelters to start helping with other needs. These could include healthcare services to relocation airline tickets. Ask for any services you may not see and need. Wants may not be addressed at shelters. I will list what services will be provided after the storm if it is anticipated that returning home right now is not possible. While these are generally available, they may not be accessible at every location. If that occurs, you may be bussed to other shelters to receive this help.

Registration: first, register with FEMA, no matter what. Help comes in so many ways through FEMA that you never know what help you may get: from upfront hotel payments to later rebuilding money. Register, regardless of your income, marital status, money in the bank or if you are on social services. It is the first place to have it documented you were affected by a storm. Later FEMA will need these numbers to document their process of sending money back to your local area for general infrastructure rebuilding. It is now six years after Katrina and the area is still getting and spending money for infrastructure.

Register for Red Cross: this process has many benefits. You may get a small amount of money to help with immediate food and shelter. The process of registration is needed to know where the greatest need is to direct their other food trucks and medical support staff.

Call your insurance agent or company: you must do this as soon as possible. If you are out of your home, had a mandated evacuation order and sustained substantial damage to your home other than just flood, you may be able to receive a check for immediate living expenses. It will depend on your policy but thousands of people got those checks within the first week after Katrina. I actually ended up in a hotel in Texas and I called a local insurance agent from my renters' policy company. He asked me a few questions and hand delivered the check to my hotel within four hours of my telephone call. While that is not the case for everyone, it just happened to be my experience. I have State Farm Insurance. I say that because I have only good things to say about them. Other people have very bad things to say about other companies and it is rightfully deserved. It is a fallacy that your insurance company has your best interests at heart. They are a business, just the same as Walmart and CVS. They are in the business to make money, not lose it. Keep that perspective and you will be ok in the process of recovery.

Baby/children supplies: these are always provided in an extended stay shelter almost immediately. Do not panic so much because they know the most vulnerable person in the storm aftermath is this population. If you have children and the news in not good, try to have them stay with family members. While this may seem hard to do, it really is in the best interest of the children. You as the adult can handle whatever comes down the pike

and can make amends quicker to bring the family back together. There will not be services to help with children/babies if the devastation is severe in a large area.

Airline tickets: yes, if you have a serious medical condition, child/baby, or have a chronic disease and need constant medical care, you will be allowed to speak with airline reservation people at the shelter. In Katrina, my daughter was given a paid ticket to go to my brother's house in Massachusetts where she could attend ninth grade. Knowing the schools and other facilities were damaged at home, this was the best thing. She was flown out the next day. You do not have to reimburse the airlines. It is called supportive care and you do not have to wait for flights. They get you out pretty quickly since more airplanes will be sent to the area to make this happen. If the children and babies are too young to fly alone, the parent can also go and all are issued tickets.

Food stamps: this is where everyone registers for them. I would suggest everyone sign up for these. Money and work after a storm is so limited that if help with food is being given to you, accept it. If you have previously been on food stamps, your card will be loaded as usual with the regular amount. If you evacuate to another state and have a food card, the state you have evacuated to will accept them.

Medicaid: if you have a card previously for healthcare services, you can use that card where ever you are now. Many times that card is really not needed because if you evacuate to another state or have flown there by the above method of airline relocation, the state you go to will pay for your immediate medical services. At all extended long-term shelters, local healthcare professionals will staff a clinic inside the facility to evaluate the people who are staying there. If you are staying at a hotel in the area and have evacuated, you can come to the shelter for healthcare services. All you need is a driver's license with the address where the damage has occurred for verification.

Power of attorney: if you send any family member away until it is safe, be sure if they are a minor, to have someone at the shelter write you up a power of attorney letter. This is necessary should the child or other person require help in another state. The possible delay to get to a parent may be seriously delayed and not good in a medical crisis.

Additionally, if the parent leaves and a minor child stays in a certain area for some reason, get that power of attorney, regardless. If you are taking care of an elderly person and you are their sole caretaker, sending them to another location for care and safety also requires a power of attorney to go with them. Pay attention and make sure to dot the I's and cross the t's.

Clothing and other personal items: these will be provided by the truck loads after a storm. Just wait and do not use your last dime to purchase items that may be provided. While many people do not want to be needy and take donations, it is absolutely essential you take the help. When it comes to arguing with the insurance company or others to get your past life back in place, no one has the money nor do they have the ability to do it without help. This is accepting help from those who are giving. You are getting help but you also are helping them feel good by accepting.

If the storm has wiped out an area or the area is going to be inaccessible for an extended period of time, further accommodations will be made for the next short term process. There are several options noted here.

Hotels and motels are open to taking people on an extended lease for days to weeks if needed. If this process is instituted, FEMA will be (usually) helping to pay for that stay. If possible, FEMA will also find or support movement into short term apartments if your home is majorly affected.

Returning home the day the evacuation is mandated - to the day the ban is lifted, is the period of time the insurance may potentially be paying for hotel stays. It does not mean your home has air conditioning, electric, or any other services you may have come to expect as minimal living requirements. If your home is not good for you to stay there, FEMA may kick in and help. These statements are so in flux when there is a storm that I am only noting as what in the past occurred. There are no steadfast rules as the scope of the event dictates more what will be available rather than basic rules. This is why I again suggest: listen, hear, share and search out information that will help and support your

needs. You really have to take care of yourself because the authorities are overloaded and need to do what they have to at any given moment.

Conclusion

While shelters are not the best in creature comforts, they do serve the purpose of safety and supportive services in a central location. If your home was affected, I feel your pain. If your entire area of living, including work and social systems are affected, I know the hurt. If you do not know what to do next, I know that question. I know the angst; I know the overwhelming feeling of loss and despair. I do. What I will tell you, it is time to think about what you really want out of life. Please read my statement I quoted prior in this book. I mean it, I live it and I pass it on. God bless and if we can help, please take the path of asking listed in the beginning of the book. Everyone is important. Please do not feel you have to go it alone. There are many people who have hearts breaking and want to help. Ask.

Addictions and Mental Health

Natural disasters are not the friend of anyone with anxiety, PTSD, mental health issues, addictions or some dependency on any substance.

What I write here are just a few situations I have seen play out prior, during and after a natural disaster. I can tell you it negatively affected all people around the person who needed help and no one came out of it feeling they did a good thing.

The United States does not have a system in place to support anyone who cannot take care of themselves in a disaster. They say they do, but I am here to tell you, they don't. Prior to a storm and during the storm, you are pretty much left on your own to figure out what you need to do if you need help. Yes, if you register with 411 in your area, they will assist you in getting to a shelter but it is very important to note; they are available to only transport you, no services are available. It is really up to you to take care of yourself.

The mental health concerns of people have been under cover for far too long and the numbers of people who need help are increasing by the minute. So what are we to do?

Shame, guilt, fear, panic and paranoia are all constants at some time with these situations in many people who seek help, suffer in silence or just keep running so it does not catch up with them. The running creates an unstable and unrooted situation of the body, mind and spirit.

If you have a person in your home that has a situation with various issues that are managed or not, you still need to evacuate if necessary and you still are going to be affected as your normal day is now changed. Be prepared.

I would never tell you to bring alcohol or drugs to a shelter or hotel or other family's home but what I will tell you is that you cannot leave a person in your family or someone you are caring for out in a storm.

Yes, all of these places DO accept people who have these issues. Yes, there are signs all around about bringing these items into the shelter. Find a shelter that is 'of last resort'. You WILL be allowed to enter, no questions asked.

The first goal of the shelter is to house humans in a place out of the elements, period. After the storm, they worry about who is in there at that time. NO one will be turned away.

We always hear about people dying in storms and we say we have not done our job, we did not convince them to leave, they had animals, or whatever the excuse they used to get you out the door; truth is they had an issue they could not take with them, their mental health and addictions.

If you are currently in a crisis situation, do what you need to do. Go where you need to go. Figure it out afterwards.

We have seen many alcoholics who had a bottle in their hand walking up to the door knowing full well they were going to be there for a day or so and they knew they had to get to a place of safety. Guess what they did; they stood there and drank the whole bottle until every drop was gone, entered the door and passed out for the duration of the storm. Is that what we want, a person to take themselves to the edge because WE can't handle what is going on with them?

If there is an addict, heroin or other potent street drugs, they will not be going to jail if they show up in a shelter. The shelter is not a place of jail, it is protection only. Yes, there are cops at times and security, get past that concept. Do what you need to do. Realize they are there to keep all people safe, even the small kids and mothers and elderly. Thank them for being there and helping everyone.

Is there an immediate answer to how help can show up when the most vulnerable people appear at the door in a natural disaster, I think not. We do not wish to jail everyone, we do not wish to put them 'away' somewhere, and we do not wish for them to die in a storm or in the shelter.

How can we help? We will fix that later. Today, here are a few things to think about. I am NOT recommending you DO all of them. What I am doing is sharing things I have seen so you can make your choices and think about how to create something for all people in your family and their safety. This is probably the most difficult situation to be in. I get it, I did it. I involved in all aspects of support here, I can share if you need personal help, privately.

When a storm is pending on the horizon:

The person with an identifiable concern can start to feel very out of control and very vulnerable. The safety net they may have in place can be distorted or disassembled as people shift around and are not able to be available for anyone and provide care or support.

The family may feel they cannot stay in the house with a person who is unstable or may cause them harm so it puts a great deal of pressure on the family. The way everyone might be dealing with this situation currently could be avoidance, denial or sheer ignorance.

What happens now when a family does not evacuate and the reason is because someone is causing them to not be able to?

The panic in a family can appear to have many different sources and addressing them quickly is rarely possible. The best thing to do is figure out to do for keeping everyone safe.

If it means to go, then that is what is needed. Leaving a person behind because they are causing issues in the family and the potential problems that may appear could scare the hell out of you, but could you live with having that person die or end their life?

Be sure to have as much medication with you as possible. Take all crisis meds with you and have a stash. Do not allow the person who needs help to carry the meds, have an adult carry the items on their person in a sack around their neck. The reason is to make sure one person is responsible for assessing the situation and knowing what to do. If the stash is around the neck, it is not forgotten in clothes that are changed or set down in a purse or case. Have it around your neck, period.

What to do if the person who is having concerns is an addict? If it is alcohol, the time to have the person over the edge is not in the best interest at this time. Assess the situation and keep the person is a state that you see fit, I am sure you can understand what I am saying. Keep in mind, alcohol is not allowed in the shelters and alcohol may be hard to get in certain states or cities if you evacuate. It is also important to note that if you go to visit relatives, let the people know ahead of time that you need help. Do not take your family to a relative's home and create a crisis, it could really be very bad for everyone. Remember, a natural disaster is NOT the time to create a detox situation as there are no health professionals available to help you. DO NOT GO THIS ALONE!!!

If the person is having a drug addiction, legal or not, find their stash; you know what to do here. Make the best decision for our family. It will never be the right decision, it is not a perfect scenario, and the world will not change in a second and your happy family comes out the other end. Face what is going on head on and do the best you can.

If you are in a shelter, seek out professional help as soon as you get there, IF and ONLY IF, you are ready to take on the next step of releasing control and having them take over. These services are rarely available until AFTER a disaster, during a storm it is sit down and wait things out. Find a corner and just be still.

If you need to go to a hotel, do not leave other family members alone with the person who needs help. Also, do not allow the person who needs help to stay alone, be a shadow.

Warning: do not allow stash or meds to be in the hands of the person who needs them. If by chance you have taken an elder along with you and these items are around, the elder may get their hands on them also and it would not be good. Also, your kids may not know what items are problems as you have been very good at keeping them hidden. Now all the issues, drugs, and problems are out on the table for all to see. Keep as many people safe as you can.

If you have elders with you and they have oxygen tanks for medical reasons, keep these out of the hands of all people in your unit. Abuse of oxygen is a potential and kids may think it is cool and try it out. You not only will have a potential abuse issue or medical risk but you may run out of oxygen and now your problems just got bigger.

This is probably the most difficult time for a family unit and yes, all will be tested beyond their limits. It is also to remember, it may be life limiting for someone in that unit. We get pushed to make change but when a safety net is not there, we fall through.

While this may be hard to hear, if a situation does start up within the case of evacuation, shelters, post disaster or lack of stash, do not allow your entire family unit to be destroyed. Do what you can and get help as quickly as you can.

There is a lot of support out there. Please contact Dr. Jeanette via her email at the end of this book. Privacy and support can be available, just ask.

About the author

Dr. Jeanette Gallagher, ND is a Naturopathic Physician, author/radio host and has experienced many hurricanes first hand. Being in the healing profession, she felt the deep sadness and grief of people after each event. Her own experience touched her to the core and she shares the experience on her radio shows as it has been imprinted in her life.

She is available to be a guest on your radio show or to share more information to people who wish to ask questions that are coming up for them.

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