

The Survival Savvy Family (Book Review)

Julie Sczerbinki's latest offering – *The Survival Savvy Family: How To Be Your Best During The Absolute Worst* – is different than most survival and preparedness books.

Most are written from a gloom-and-doom, the-world-is-about-to-end point of view. Those books and the skills described in them have their place. I, however, enjoy survival based books which present clear, concise information without fear mongering.

The Survival Savvy Family nails this approach with its instructive, easy to read style.

Set-Up of *The Survival Savvy Family*

Julie – who describes herself as a Coach purse carrying, Go-Bag packing wife and mom – has obviously gone through great pains to lay out the book in a way that allows you to walk through the stages of getting your family prepared for all possible scenarios.

Each chapter has actionable items and clearly explains the reasoning behind her suggestions. The chapters are as follows:

Introduction

This section is a quick few pages that outline Julie's thoughts on preparedness. She begins with asking a few questions:

If my family had to evacuate, where would we go?

*How would we have managed if our **tap water was contaminated**?*

*What would I have **fed the kids** if we were stuck on the Atlanta interstate for ten hours like thousands were **during a winter storm**?*

*What exactly goes in an **emergency kit**?*

A few personal anecdotes roll into a strong reasoning to become prepared as a family. The stories here are the genesis for the chapters to follow.

Chapter 1 – Family Emergency Plan

What you should prepare for and how to create your plan are the main topics in this chapter. Julie hits on some topics that most people don't think of such as:

- Divorced Family Plans
- Plans For Family Members With Special Needs
- Pet Plans

The end of the chapter has a template you can use to start formulating your own Family Emergency Plan.

Chapter 2 – The Emergency Kit

Emergency Kits, Go-Bag, Bug-Out-Bags, GOD Bags – there are all kinds of names for the same thing.

This chapter in *The Survival Savvy Family* talks about how to build one for each member of your family.

Have you thought about what your child's bag should include and shouldn't include? What about extra gear that you may be able to grab if you have time? Are your pets accounted for? Julie addresses all of these concerns.

The chapter concludes with a nifty checklist that you can use

to begin building your own Emergency Kit.

Chapter 3 – Be Ready In Your Pantry

You are fairly well-versed on building a pantry if you've spent any time in prepping or suburban homesteading circles.

Julie's approach is nothing new but she does a good job of calming the new-comer's fears as well as describing a systematic approach to building a quality pantry.

There's even a checklist of non-food essentials that you should make sure are in your pantry.

Chapter 4 – Medical Readiness

One of my biggest fears as a parent is having a medical emergency involving one of my children and not being to act on it. This chapter in *The Survival Savvy Family* has helped alleviate some of those fears by showing me ways to prevent it.

The chapter starts with ways to increase your level of health. She's taking the 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' approach. She then goes into ways to build your medical skill set – including how to teach your kids to handle medical emergencies.

In addition to the skill sets, Julie provides a great checklist for building your Home First Aid Kit and a great template for adding medical history to your Family Emergency Plan.

Chapter 5 – Financial Readiness

You know that financial preparedness is near and dear to my heart if you've spent any time on this blog. Taking care of your finances is the first big step in taking care of your

family.

Like me, Julie is a big fan of setting up an emergency fund and then paying off debt. She even recommends the *debt snowball* approach made famous by Dave Ramsey.

Other topics such as insurance, wills and creating a Grab-And-Go Binder are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 6 – Away From Home

Being safe at home is all well and good, but what happens when you're on the road? *The Survival Savvy Family* goes into great depths in the chapter with sections on:

- Everyday Carry
- Get Home Bags
- Car Preparedness
- Work Preparedness
- School Preparedness
- Safety On Vacation

As usual, there are great checklists at the end of this chapter for building a Get Home Bag and setting up 'survival' kits for different locations.

Chapter 7 – Power Outages

What is the one situation that each of us is almost guaranteed to encounter in our lifetime – regardless of geographic location, age, economic status or social standing? If you said a loss of power, you'd be correct.

In this chapter of *The Survival Savvy Family*, Julie does a good job of how to get prepared for a loss of power. All areas are covered including lighting, cooking, temperature management and choosing a backup power source.

As always, there's a great checklist for making a Power Outage

Kit at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 8 – Be Ready To Stay Or Go

I'm embarrassed to admit that I got a song from the Clash (Should I Stay Or Should I Go?) stuck in my head when I started reading this chapter! That being said, Julie does a great job of explaining when you should bug-out or bug-in.

Including in this chapter are the following lists and templates:

- Making A Busy Box For The Kids
- Emergency Tool Kit List
- Last Minute Checklist For Bugging Out

Chapter 9 – Natural Disaster Savvy

Surviving and handling tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires, floods, severe thunderstorm, and snowstorms are all covered in this chapter of *The Survival Savvy Family*.

Chapter 10 – House Fires

House fires are more common than you might realize and most people aren't ready for them.

Julie goes into some excruciating detail about how to prevent house fires. She also describes how to fight them if they pop up and how to escape from them if they get out of control.

The last part of the chapter is all about creating a house fire evacuation plan.

Chapter 11 – Home Invasions

Is your home security beefed up? Are you sure?

Julie spends a good amount of time talking about door locks, windows, garage doors and sliding glass doors in this chapter. The pros and cons of each are discussed and ideas on burglar-proofing them are also presented.

The topic of vacation comes up as well in this chapter of *The Survival Savvy Family*. Julie spends some time talking about prepping your home for when you're on vacation.

The topic of weapons in the home is also broached.

Chapter 12 – Personal Safety

Personal safety is always a tough topic to discuss because most people want to believe that they are aware of their surroundings.

When it comes down to it, most aren't.

Situational awareness is a topic that is talked about a lot in this chapter as well as ways to defend yourself – both with a weapon and without.

Chapter 13 – Ready Kids Are Safe Kids

The final chapter of *The Survival Savvy Family* is all about your most precious asset – your children.

Abduction prevention, online safety, firearm safety and bullying are all topics Julie is not afraid to broach.

While it's not a dyed-in-the-wool survival topic, this chapter may be the most important chapter for many of us.

Why I Liked *The Survival Savvy Family*

First things first – there's nothing Earth-shattering in this book. Julie doesn't provide the magic pill for being prepared.

What she does in this book is provide rock-solid suggestions in a progressive, mature manner. There are a few things about this book that make it a quality addition to your long-term survival library:

- **Book Size:** Believe it or not, the physical size of the book is appealing. It is 7.5" tall and 5.5" wide which makes it a great pocket reference. Literally, it fit in the cargo pocket of my pants and shorts.
- **Progression:** While she never stated it, I feel like Julie presented the chapters in a natural progression which allows the reader to use this book as a guide to preparedness. Complete all the chapters in order and your family will be in great shape!
- **Checklists & Templates:** This book is awesome for creating documents and kits based on the information Julie provides. The checklists and templates allow you to get started and then modify as necessary. They are going to be key to re-starting my family's preparedness planning.

What I Didn't Like

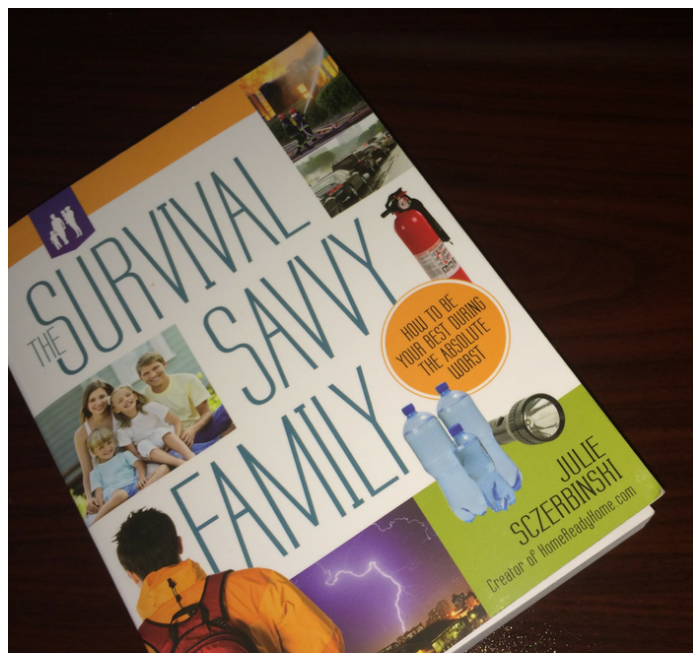
I mentioned that *The Survival Savvy Family* is not Earth-shattering but it is chock-full of knowledge. I think there are certain areas that need a little more breadth to them. For instance, the Home Invasion and Personal Safety chapters are

both kind of weak on what to do if something happens. They spend much more time discussing how to prevent those actions. The book is already over 200 pages (remember, it is a physically smaller book than normal), so perhaps Julie was limited in her ability to add more depth while still covering the topics she wanted to cover.

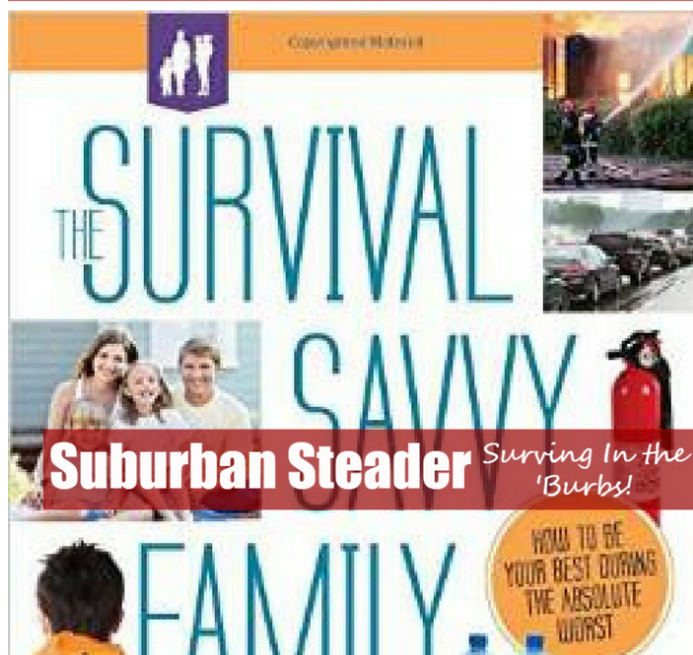
Overall Thoughts on *The Survival Savvy Family*

Overall, I think *The Survival Savvy Family: How To Be Your Best During The Absolute Worst* by Julie Sczerbinski is a must have for your long-term survival library. The straightforward approach and progressive chapters build quite the family plan for preparedness. Following her suggestions and plans will result in a family that is ready to weather any storm. I can't recommend the checklists and templates enough. They will get you over the hump and moving towards preparedness much faster than the information alone.

This book is a great reference manual for home and family preparedness!



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Disclaimer: Julie Sczerbinski supplied a copy of The Survival Savvy Family: How To Be Your Best During The Absolute Worst for me to review. I can assure my readers that I gave it a fair and honest review.