

## Survival of women during SHTF

JL is a female member of my [survival course](#) and she asked a lot of woman specific questions about my SHTF experience. I decided to interview women because of that. I can talk about my experience but women live often in different world of feelings and emotions.



I spoke with first woman named Una, now 52 (so in her 30s back then) who took care of her family during that time. I asked JL to send me some questions she had on her mind and she did. If you have more women specific questions write in comments. I recorded interview and translated to English (sorry my English not proper English).

### **Una started to describe her situation**

My first and worst concern was what is gonna happen with my kids, I had two toddlers, and I did not have any clue what is gonna happen, or even what is gonna look like when hell broke lose. We did not want to believe it could happen. We heard the sound of big guns miles away and stories of violence, rape and murder but everything looked so peaceful.

At the beginning, actually right before everything started during my meetings with my friends and colleagues at work we discussed the deteriorating situation, and pretty soon I found myself faced with important decision: is it worth to send my kids to some more “secure” region or to some relatives to neighboring country, or keep them with me, and wait what happens.

I never had question am I going to leave this place, I found it normal to stay in my city, with husband, in my house. Looking back now I know it was big mistake.

If I want to describe my worst feeling trough all of that, it was not hunger, danger, fire, cold or anything like that. It was definitely the feeling of uncertain future, complete absence of feeling that I control coming events, I was helpless and just like a leaf in a storm. Anything could happen.

Anyway I choose to keep my kids with me, still do not know if it was right decision. Survival was tough even at places I planned to send them before everything started. I found out after everything was over.

Anyway they survived, but with some mental trauma like everybody else who survived.

Some of my friends who send their kids through some organization to other countries, had kids getting lost and disappear, and in some cases they found place somewhere else but the kids lost connection with parents. If parents survived they became strangers with each other.

### **How did things start to change in your city?**

Some very new emotions came up during that time, I was watching how city was dying slowly, together with normal behavior of people.

In the beginning people tried to stay together, I mean in the terms of neighbors helping each other. They had “normal” way of communication in the beginning. But as more bloody details, murder, rape and other crime became common trust faded and was replaced by fear.

Slowly people started to move away from each other and there was just us or them. Groups were not open anymore. No more welcoming.

I thought of my self as strong woman before, but that was before being without food and losing normal control of my life. I was teacher before everything, and of course I lost my job just like almost everyone. Nothing worked like it was supposed to work. I did not even have idea to continue to teach my kids at home, or try something similar, to survive took all my energy.

### **Did you have any ideas of how you would survive if you were alone or not?**

I was with my husband and family and I think I would not have survived alone. Not because I'm weak spirited woman lacking will to survive but simply because what I saw and experienced was so different and "out of this world" that I would have not been able to handle it alone.

Being in family or group makes you part of something, if other depend on you and you have other who go through same unreal situation it makes you fight harder. I understand those people who gave up and locked themselves in to die.

### **Did you feel being a woman gave you any advantages or disadvantages?**

For me I think it was better because I was a woman, I mean I was in a way protected from some of the hardest things, like finding food, resources or fighting. Hardest jobs were done by men, it was matter of luck for me. Woman are just more useful for certain kind of job like taking care of kids or wounded or sick people. Woman also have more feelings so some things like using violence does not come easy.

### **Did you realize how bad it would get?**

No, definitely not, many times I thought this can not be worst and then it got worse.

Fighting for survival can reduce people to animal that we all are. Sometimes it was hard to still see that they or we are human. So much that we think makes us human is removed and then there is something very basic and brutal left. It comes as surprise that people can act without emotions like compassion that make us human. Since that time I never thought about humans like before.

### **How did the close people around you treat you?**

I was protected, guarded in a way because I was a woman. It was not matter of some kind of gentlemen thing, I believe it was mostly about fact that I do my part of duties,

like taking care for kids, food, trying to keep things clean etc. When I had to shoot, nobody would tell me: you are a woman you cant do that. Everyone in group had to function and people treat you good if you do.

**What was your situation meaning how many people did you have as support, if any?**

I spent that period in a group with 6 men, 3 woman and 4 kids.

**What are you doing today that prepares you for any similar event or how did that change the way you live?**

I have food in my house for several months, weapons and I am ready to leave everything at the first sign that something similar gonna happen. Everything.

**Did anything happen that you handled differently than you assumed you would?**

I was thinking a lot about that, and whatever I am gonna say it could be wrong. You get into situations that you can not imagine so there was no way to predict what to do. I saw hard man break and weak man be strong. Many people who showed off strength to the outside world before things got really hard were those who broke first. I think they build up a mask to hide their inner weakness.

I broke too but people still relied on me so I had to do my part. I kept myself together but the whole situation left big scars inside of me.

There were quiet and normal people like you [Selco] who managed to come out of all this stronger and who got used to situation faster and without much suffering. Maybe you were born for that I still do not understand people like you.

**Were you concerned about hygiene and feminine body issues or would you say the lack of food water etc caused this not to be a concern?**

How could lack of water etc not to be a concern? It was the opposite.

But over the time we learned that hygiene is not most important thing on the world, as dirty as that sounds. Other things occupied my mind, like with what to feed my kids, or how to make any kind of meal from very few things.

**What did you notice that women did differently to handle the situation, if anything?**

I know for myself that special way of thinking helped me. I just close my self in my own world, I mean with my thinking and worryng, and it helped me. When my husband was worrying about when everything would come to end, and what are the chances for that, or trying to find some useful information about that, my biggest concern was how to make dinner, or to warm kids.

It was not about “men in the house” thing, that he thinks about the big issues and I do not.

I am educated person, but worrying about small, everyday things I think helped me trough all of that, without going crazy maybe. My concern was for example when kid asked me “can you make pancake?” how to answer him and make something that only looked like pancake, and tell him something like “those are special pancakes”. Those were the little missions that kept me from completely losing myself like others did.

**Did anything at all go the way you would have expected?**

Nothing went as expected, actually I did not know what to expect. You can not expect too much when you find yourself in a completely new situation, deadly situation.

I lived day by day without too much hope or expectation, at some point you stop caring. I survived, my family survived, and that’s it. I do not know what happens next time everything goes to hell again but I’m ready now to accept whatever comes. I easily could not be here anymore like many people I know. This stays with me for life so I appreciate every day.

**Did you have a source of spiritual strength?**

I changed all phases, from completely not believing to completely believing and hoping that God will do something. I lost and gained faith many many times in that period. But yes, I think my kids and care for my kids gave me some will and strength to survive and live somehow normally. I think point of taking care for someone is really important in all this.

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I currently work on translating second, much longer interview I did with a woman who survived in a group of only women. Things were harder for them. I will post interview in [members section](#) in the coming days.

If you have more woman specific questions or thoughts share what you think in the comments. What do you worry most about as woman thinking about SHTF?



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