Primitive vs. New Survival Skills (A guest post by Craig Caudill)

Categories : Wilderness Survival

Survival skills and experts in survival have been around since humans first walked the earth. Old school ways are sometimes viewed as primitive by the new generation of survivalists, while others are rooted in the tried and true ways of their ancestors. It can be difficult to figure out which way you want to focus your energy in your own training.

Don't think of it as being forced to make a choice. Survival is all about doing whatever it takes to stay alive in difficult situations. Some situations may call for the so-called primitive methods like using a bow drill to start a fire, while others may require some of the more advanced survival tools like solar chargers. The key is not to pigeonhole yourself into one way or another. It is all about being flexible. Those folks set in the primitive ways are missing out on some pretty fabulous things like clothing made with breathable material and warm, comfy down jackets. On the same note, choosing to limit your knowledge to the newest methods is also dangerous Quite frankly, gear will often fail us.

I will share with you my own opinion, but please don’t feel like it is the only way. My experiences have led me to realize there are good and bad points to both the old and new ways of survival.

Think of the earliest survivalists in the New World. Native Americans managed to survive in some harsh conditions and have passed along a fabulous skill set that is often used and mimicked in today’s survival training. However, what is not often thought about, is the fact that a lot of Native Americans died because of a lack of food or shelter. Yes, their way of life may have been simpler in one sense, but in another, it was extremely difficult and downright hard.
Early explorers like Daniel Boone managed to live on the fierce range with the help of the skills learned from the Native Americans. While that is great and all, how many other men and women died because they were unable to adequately shelter themselves and find food in extreme conditions?

With advancements in science and knowledge, comes advancement in survival gear. There are some wonderful, life-saving tools available today. Unfortunately, there is the possibility a piece of gear will fail. Then what? This is when those primitive skills come in handy.

We are a people surrounded by convenience. Even for some of the most experienced survivalists, basic things like starting a fire without matches would be a challenge. This is a prime example of why you should be prepared for anything. Knowledge is great, but know-how is even better. Don’t limit yourself by getting caught up in an old versus new argument. Learn all you can from both. It may just save your life one day.

Craig Caudill is a contributing writer for Dan’s Depot, which just may be his favorite modern survival store. He is also the chief instructor at the Nature Reliance school.