

Bartering After SHTF: A Beginner's Guide

I love bartering. I've been bartering since lunch period in elementary school where I would often trade a chocolate milk for a Lunchable pizza. I've bartered everything from CDs to subwoofers to paintball guns to high-end letterpress business cards from Lithuania.

Sure, bartering has its downfalls. Situations like...

- Louis needs a cow and has chickens to trade. How many chickens equal a cow? Are they egg laying chickens? How old is the cow? There are a lot of variables and it is almost never a completely even trade.
- Jennifer needs wool and has beans to swap. Chris has wool but doesn't need beans, he needs corn. So now Jennifer has to find someone with corn who needs beans. This can get very complicated quickly

It's easy to see why every culture has created some form of standardized currency to make these exchanges fair and simple.

Bartering During Currency Failures

Currency could fail for various reasons such as hyperinflation, natural disasters and a general SHTF scenario where the access to hard currency is limited or nonexistent.

In situations like hyperinflation, bartering would simply take the place of everyday currency transactions. Your life will continue as normal, you will simply trade items instead of money.

However, in a situation where access to hard currency is all but impossible, the dynamic changes to where people are worried about just surviving. Items like food, water, and medicine become high commodities in these kinds of situations. These are the types of scenarios you should be preparing for and ready to barter within.

Preparing For Bartering

So what should you do to prepare for these types of situation? It's actually pretty easy to get started.

Bartering is just about trading something of value for something else of value. Price isn't the factor, need and usability are. Just like in the movies where the hero on the run trades an expensive watch for a phone call. That call can save their lives but the watch won't, even though it costs exponentially more during normal times.

Preparing for a bartering economy doesn't have to be expensive and you don't need to hoard rooms full of stores. Things as simple and cheap as canned food, lighters, batteries, bottled water, etc can be worth quite a lot in times of crisis. Many of the items that are great for bartering after SHTF are things you should already be stocking up on in case of an emergency anyway.

Here's a short list of essential items (in no particular order) that will be worth their weight in gold if SHTF:

Short Term

- Lighters
- Water (and water filtration devices)
- Canned food
- Fresh food – fruits, vegetables, meat
- Medicine – antibiotics, bandages, etc
- Flashlights

- Power – batteries, gas generator, solar generator, etc
- Weapons – guns, ammo, etc
- Tools – knives, pry bars, axes, shovels, etc
- Clothing
- Alcohol – disinfecting, fire, cooking, forgetting that SHTF
- Cordage – depends on the situation
- Duct tape

Longer Term

- Seeds
- Animals for food – chickens, goats, cows, fish, etc
- Building materials
- Coffee
- Toiletries – Toothbrushes, feminine hygiene products, soap, etc
- Salt

These lists are in no way exhaustive or complete. I'm sure you can think of plenty more.

The best part is that the majority of these items are inexpensive so next time you're at the store, just pick up a couple extra things. You'll have a decent collection in no time and it'll only cost you a few extra dollars every shopping trip.

Bartering Away From Home

What if you have to leave your home and/or cache of stores behind and can only grab your bug out bag? No worries. Remember that bartering is about trading something of value for something else of value. You can still provide value to someone with a service.

Think about going to your daily job. You're really just bartering your time and skills for currency. The same

principle applies in a SHTF scenario. But, instead of time and skills for currency, you'll be bartering for supplies.

Here are some skills that will be valuable after a disaster that you could be learning right now:

- Repair – small engine, sewing, firearms, etc.
- Medical – Treating wounds, diagnosing rashes, knowing which plants cure ailments, etc.
- Hunting – Can catch game to trade or go on hunting parties for a group
- Building – Carpentry, welding, simple architecture, etc.
- Farming – Crops, livestock, animal husbandry, etc.
- Bushcraft – Shelter, foraging, trapping, fire building, tracking, navigation, etc.
- Cooking/Baking

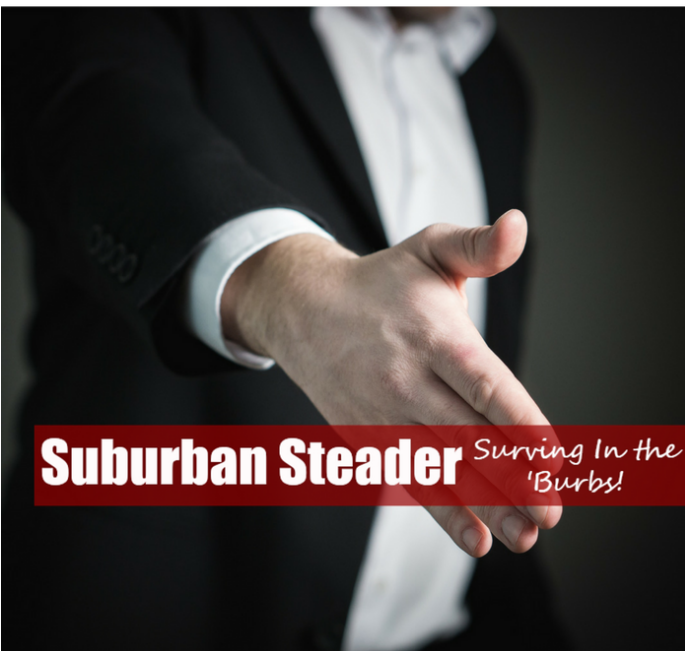
Skill can be traded for one-time payments (fix an engine for a crate of food) or for more long-term scenarios (be the camp cook in exchange for protection and inclusion in the group).

Conclusion

Remember that society existed well before the invention of currency and can do so again without it. Bartering is one of our oldest skills and will continue to be important whether you're trading pudding cups or cans of tuna.



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