

Has Disbelief Slowed Down Your Response?

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Situational Awareness is Vital to Decision Making

A sound sense of situational awareness is vital to decision making. A person must be able to take a broad assessment to recognize and consider all of the factors for the given situation and understand the immediate and long-term impacts of all the potential outcomes. Normalcy bias, a tendency to respond to threat warnings or disastrous happenings with disbelief or minimization, skews people's view of what is actually happening.

“Normalcy Bias” Skews Our Judgment

We assume that if what is currently happening has not occurred in the past, it will never occur and therefore is not happening now.

Normalcy bias has been described as “one of the most dangerous biases we have”. People with a normalcy bias tend to interpret warnings in the most optimistic way possible, seizing on any ambiguities to infer a less serious situation. Consequently, they underestimate the likelihood of events like an accident or disaster affecting them, and downplay its potential adverse effects on their lives. These individuals can't cope with disaster once it occurs.

Common response patterns of people include Denial, Deliberation and Decision. For example, have you ever been involved in or witnessed a high speed car accident? At first, you just can't believe that the disaster is happening. It takes time for the brain to process information and recognize the threat as real.

In the Deliberation phase, you have to decide what to do. You have never mentally prepared for this scenario and you don't have a plan in place. Add to this the effects of life-threatening stress on the body (e.g. tunnel vision, audio exclusion, time dilations, out-of-body experiences, or reduced motor skills) and you aren't able to think clearly and react accordingly.

In the Decision phase, you must act quickly and decisively. Failure to do so can result in further injury or death. The faster you get through the Denial and Deliberation phase, the sooner you can make a decision and take action. [See *The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes – and Why* by Amanda Ripley.]

Preparation Helps

The best way to mitigate normalcy bias is through mental preparation and planning. It is fairly straightforward to contemplate how natural disasters or accidents could unfold and what you could do about them. Planning would even include preparation of supplies and training to effectively deal with a disaster.

Preparing for a Political Disaster

What is uncommon though is a major shift in political control from one of freedom to a far more authoritarian/totalitarian control. Most individuals will believe things really aren't changing or that transgressions are temporary and will go back the way they were.

Solution

A strong defense to mitigate normalcy bias during times of political turmoil is to begin with a healthy situational awareness of events occurring around you even if they haven't occurred before. The more one can uncover truth and see what is really occurring, the more likely one can join with others to plan and take action to prevent further co-opting of freedoms.

When the government views itself as superior to the citizenry, when it no longer operates for the benefit of the people, when the people are no longer able to peacefully reform or elect their government, when government officials cease to act like public servants, when elected officials no longer represent the will of the people or serve with integrity, when the government willfully manipulates the truth and cannot be trusted, when the government routinely violates the rights of the people and allows violence against the citizenry, when government spending is unaccountable and unaccounted for, when the judiciary act as courts of order rather than justice, and when the government is no longer bound by the laws of the Constitution we must act quickly to acknowledge it, speak and act.

Understanding normalcy bias and preparing for what is happening to us politically and quickly moving from denial to deliberation and finally to decision (action) to prevent a totalitarian regime may be the deciding factor in whether freedom prevails.