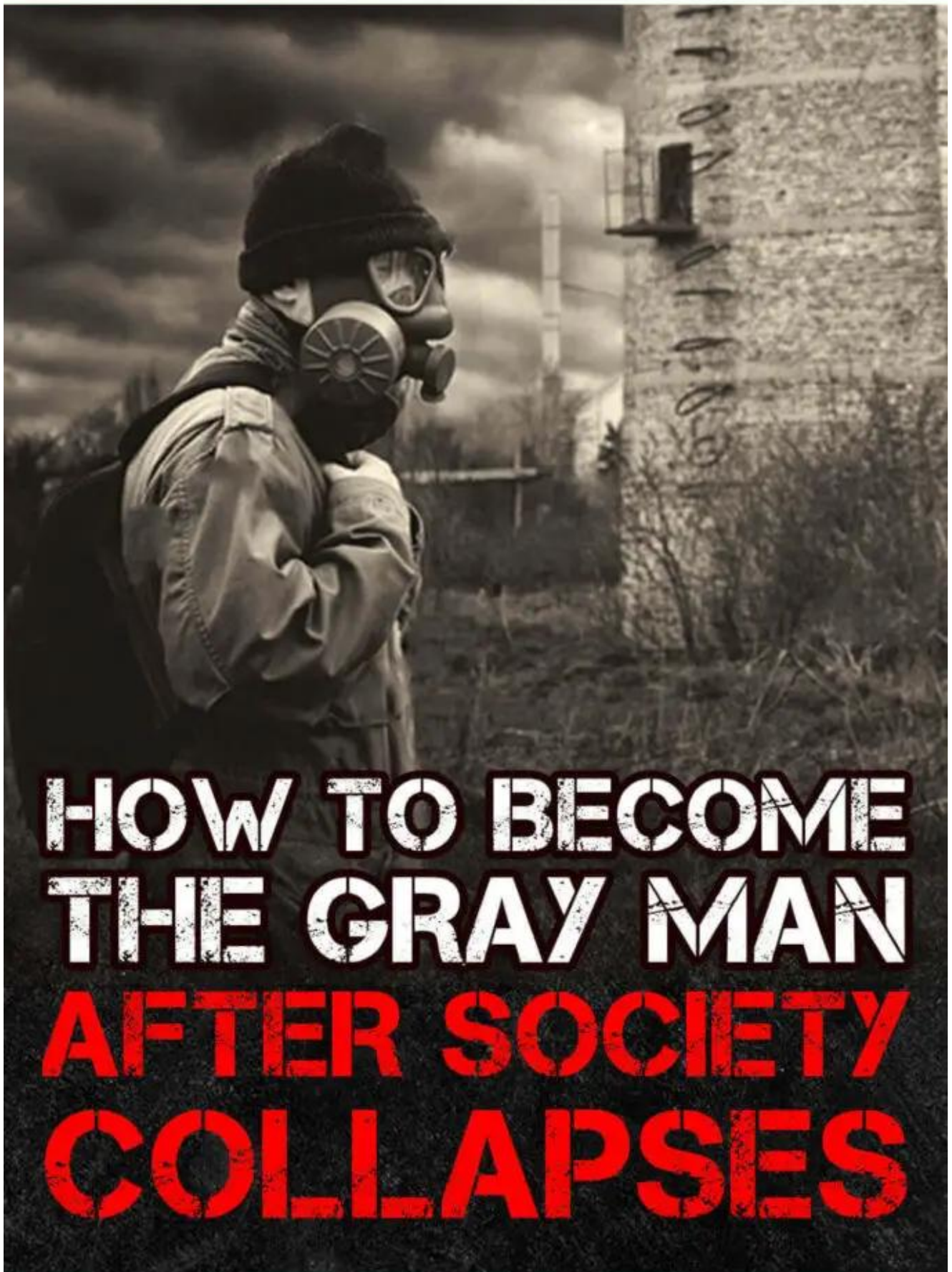


How to Become the Gray Man After Society Collapses

Estimated reading time: 15 minutes



HOW TO BECOME THE GRAY MAN AFTER SOCIETY COLLAPSES

The concept of the “Gray Man” has been [written about](#) and discussed for quite some time. It’s essentially assuming an identity defined by clothing, behavior and other actions that are not uniquely noticeable at any given time. This ability to not attract attention makes it easier for anyone to avoid conflict, confrontation or the unwanted attention of people with criminal or violent intent.

It’s a behavior path that many [people living in dangerous neighborhoods](#) in many large cities already pursue. They make a conscious effort to blend in without attracting attention to themselves. In a time of societal collapse when local law enforcement is overwhelmed the danger of the streets may make the worst inner cities look tame in comparison.

That’s the time when the gray man concept becomes a matter of everyday survival rather than an occasional choice.

Want to save this post for later? [Click Here to Pin It On Pinterest!](#)

Characteristics of the Gray Man

Clothing

It sounds like the gray man should dress in gray clothing and while that’s a bit simplistic; it’s close to the truth. [Any clothing should be neutral](#) in color without attracting attention. Avoid intense or vibrant colors including hunter orange or any other color that makes you stand out in a crowd.

Curiously, you should avoid camo as well unless you’re living in the wilderness where that kind of attire makes sense. Camo in an urban setting is a telegram that you have a prepper disposition and it may make you a target either because you may have other gear that is valuable or you invite unwanted and undeserved anger or fear.

The same goes with tactical gear. Wearing a tactical vest may make you feel secure but it's another telegram that you're different and it will once again make you stand out in a crowd. It's fair to assume that anyone wearing any degree of tactical gear has various tools, equipment and even weapons on their person. That may make you feel safe but for some it can make you a target of opportunity.

Dress for the weather

Having a hoodie up over your head in the blistering heat of August doesn't make a lot of sense and people will notice. The same goes for wearing sunglasses at night or on an overcast day. We all have a pretty good idea of what to wear and when and if someone is wearing something that doesn't make sense for the weather –everyone notices.

Clothing Accessories

This includes hats, gloves, satchels, purses, backpacks and anything else you wear or carry with you. Avoid wearing or carrying anything flashy, colorful, sophisticated or expensive. This includes jewelry that can make you a target for robbery; colorful scarves or hats that make you stand out, and even high-end backpacks, purses and satchels that look valuable or highly useful.

Keep things simple and low key. Think in terms of old duffel bags and rucksacks. Stick with neutral colors and avoid wearing jewelry. Carry [what you need to survive on the streets](#) but keep it concealed and low-key. You want to look like someone who has nothing of value or of little use.

And while you're at it, take frequent showers but lose the perfume and the deodorant. Smells both bad and good will make you stand out.

Behavior

This may be more important than any decisions about clothing and accessories. Here are some standard recommendations for gray man behavior:

- **Don't make eye contact.** Any eye contact invites conversation and possible confrontation. Be aware of who's around you but as you approach them avert your eyes.
- **Avoid loud or boisterous behavior.** You could be the invisible man but laughter, shouting, loud talking, running, even abrupt or extreme hand gestures or any other unnatural body movements will make you an object of attention. Keep a low profile and avoid making noise and movements that are out of the ordinary.
- **Keep any conversation to a minimum.** Conversations are inevitable but keep it simple and to the point. Don't volunteer information about your health, preparedness, the location of your home, your destination or any other specific information about your movements and intent. Conclude any conversation quickly and politely and move on.
- **Blend into the crowd.** Don't isolate yourself in a crowd but don't get too close. Move at the same speed as everyone else. Moving faster or slower makes you unique. That's not the idea. Just go with the flow and if everyone starts running, run with them.
- **Avoid a look of over-confidence.** At a time of societal collapse it's no surprise that people seem uncertain and sad. Someone walking down the street like they're on top of the world is a telegram that you have done or have something that makes you just a bit too secure. That's noticeable and could make you a target for someone curious to find out what you have that's making you so happy. They may also think you're crazy.

Situational Awareness

This is about assessing the environment around you including what's ahead and what's behind. Part of it is being aware of the people around you. Do this with your peripheral vision as much as possible to avoid that eye contact. If someone seems erratic or appears to be a potential threat, slowly and calmly change direction and avoid them.

But it's not just about the people around you but the physical environment. If you're walking at night and are approaching a dark alley, make sure you step away from the buildings towards the street so you can get a peek into that alley before you pass. Any obstructions on your path to anywhere can give someone a chance to shield themselves from your view and surprise you for any reason.

Another aspect of situational awareness is the route you take to anywhere. Take the time to plan alternate routes to any destination. If you're aware of a trouble spot or encounter one enroute, pursue your alternate route. If all alternate routes become problematic, backtrack and return to your starting point. Regardless of how gray you try to be some situations are unforgiving regardless of your level of stealth.

And don't forget to look up, particularly if you're walking past tall buildings. If you want to have situational awareness you need to consider every aspect of the situation.

Avoid crowd gathering points.

Unless it's necessary, avoid places where many people are gathered. This could include grocery stores, police stations and fire departments, hospitals and pharmacies. It's possible many of these locations may be closed but if they are open they will no doubt attract a lot of people. If you don't need to be there find a way around them.

Don't be a cell phone zombie.

We see it all the time: someone walking down the street with their face buried in their phone texting, talking or just watching something other than what's around them. That's a really bad idea for a gray man. It not only distracts you from situational awareness but you're showing off a possession that may be highly prized in a time of societal collapse. Keep that phone in your pocket and only use it where you can't be seen.

Become a stealth transporter.

There are going to be occasions when you need to get out and about and travel to a grocery store (if they're open), maybe a farmer's market or a barter market. The key is to get there and back without losing the things you have in your possession while you travel.

This is particularly problematic in a societal collapse because common conveyances like automobiles may not be running either because of gas shortages or the basic lack of a vehicle. As a result, people will be carrying or pulling belongings in small wagons or carts. A lesson from third world nations where highway robbery is common is to disguise the value of any goods transported.

One common tactic is to load a wagon with valuable fruits and vegetables, and then cover them with a tarp and a top layer of leaves, dirt, grasses or anything else that looks to have little value. Most people observing someone carrying or pulling a wagon of debris will pay little attention.

This may be a good tactic for transporting canned goods, hardware or ammunition for barter at a barter market. Covering the valuable barter goods with a topping of charcoal, firewood, or even leaves will have little appeal to even the most desperate thief.

The Gray Family

Much of what's been written about the gray man seems to assume a lone-wolf mentality. For the lucky few who only have to think about themselves the overall task of survival in any environment is easier. Unfortunately, most of us don't have that selfish luxury.

We not only have to consider our spouses but children and sometimes grandchildren as well. In a time of collapse it's not unusual for families to band together. Now you have kids, grandkids, parents and grandparents and maybe brothers and sisters to think about. What's critical is to think about how to keep your family gray.

- **Try to avoid traveling locally as a group whenever possible.** Sure, there's safety in numbers but kids and elderly or disabled family members don't make things easier. It's often best not to travel alone but make sure that anyone who heads out for any reason knows how to keep a low profile and identifies when they estimate they will return.
- **Introduce your family to the "gray" concept.** It doesn't make any sense to keep a low profile when all around you defy the concept. Gently introduce the idea to kids and make sure any adults in the room know the fundamental principles. You can't be everywhere with everyone all the time and it helps if they understand this basic survival skill.

The Gray House

Most of the time, [most of us will be home.](#) It could be our regular home or a new home at a bug out location. Regardless,

the [place where you live](#), eat, sleep and do everything else should be as gray as your appearance out in public. Here are a few things to consider:

- **If there is a power outage** and you have the resources to [generate your own power](#) –be careful. You don't want every light in the house blazing with light while the whole neighborhood sits in the dark. Keep the blinds closed, keep lights away from windows and try to make your house blend into the darkness of every other house on the street.
- **Don't fill the streets with the aroma of your cooking.** At a time when food may be scarce and some people are starving it's not real smart to advertise an abundance of food at your home. Try cooking in ways that don't create significant aroma and smells. Boiling is one idea.

It's also possible [you'll be cooking outside if](#) the power is out. Cooking with LP gas might limit the odors you get from charcoal and wrapping foods in foil or cooking in a [pressure cooker](#) could seal in any give away food aromas until you open the pressure cooker indoors.

Foods cooked in saucepans briefly may also reduce the food aromas or you can simply eat some foods cold if they are already cooked or canned.

- **Stay in the house.** Don't go outdoors unless you need to. You don't want the house to look abandoned but it's a balancing act. Anytime you are outside you may be inviting someone to stop by for any reason. That's not a good idea unless it's a neighbor or someone else you really trust.

- **Create Stealth gardens.** It makes sense to have a garden when food is scarce but keep any garden behind the house, a fence or out of sight. Even in the best of times some people lose their harvest to late night poachers. In the worst of times you just don't want to invite the problem.

One solution is [bucket gardening](#). You can bring the buckets indoors at night or even [grow your bucket garden indoors 24/7](#). An outdoor garden allows you to grow more so don't skip it, but indoor gardens whether in buckets or hydroponic can supplement your food supply when food is hard to come by.

- **About those solar panels on the roof.** It makes sense to put solar panels on a roof. But that may be a very bad idea when the grid is down for the long haul. Everyone can see solar panels on a roof and solar panels will be a prime target for any number of thieves. A roof is no barrier to a ladder and a determined thief in the middle of the night.

One option is to keep them indoors at a southern facing window, or at least on the ground in a fenced-in backyard where they can be pointed towards the sun but not easily seen by any passersby.

- **A fence is a good idea.** It should be a solid fence at least 6 feet tall. That's a common type and height in many neighborhoods. It will not only keep most people out of your yard but keep things in your yard and around your house out of sight.
- **Don't leave anything outside.** This is especially true for tools, equipment, anything that has any value in a crisis. You want the appearance of your home to be

boring and not stocked and prepared. Here again, you don't want it to look abandoned but keep the yard and outside areas clean and clear. And if you have a good store of water in barrels, keep them in the basement or at least in the garage or somewhere else out of sight.

- **Don't tell the world you're a prepper.** If everyone in the neighborhood knows you have a basement full of stored food and a garage filled with water barrels you will quickly become a target. They might be very polite and hat-in-hand at first but after you say no a few times that will change. [Keep your preparations to yourself.](#) Sometimes you have to become the gray man long before you need to.
- **Park and lock your cars in the garage if you can.** It's bad enough that no catalytic converter is safe these days but after a collapse, car thefts, break-ins and even theft of car batteries and gasoline will be all too common. If you can, get the cars in the garage or maybe even consider parking in the backyard if you must. Many urban dwellers will have fewer options but a locking gas cap and a locking car hood are worth thinking about. And it goes without saying that you should at least lock your car doors if outside. Now if only someone would invent a lock for a catalytic converter...

The Gray Car

This isn't about painting your car gray but certain vehicles can attract as much attention as an over-dressed person bedecked in jewelry. You can only go so far with the gray car idea, but a Humvee with multiple spare tires hanging on the sides with 5-gallon jerry cans of gas and coolers on the roof-

rack could make for an inviting target.

The same goes for any other vehicle with a lot of gear on the roof. This is a tough one especially if you're in the middle of a bug out but try to think of ways to make your vehicle non-descript and unexciting. Here are some random thoughts:

- **Anything you have to strap to the roof** or [carry in a trailer](#) should be totally contained or covered with a waterproof tarp and strapped down and ideally crisscrossed with padlocked chains.
- **Tinted glass on windows is a consideration.** If somebody is not sure who or how many people are in a vehicle they may hesitate before determining that it's a target.
- **Anything attached to the side of a vehicle** like spare tires, gas cans, tool boxes or anything else should be securely locked and securely attached to the vehicle.
- **Avoid bumper stickers or tags** that express any point-of-view whether political, ethnic or geographical. Your license plate will identify your state but the less you reveal about yourself and your ideas and beliefs the more anonymous you remain.
- **Boring is better.** Exotic cars and high-end SUV's attract attention. If you're in the market for a new or used vehicle, dare to be boring.

The Gray Internet

It's possible the Internet will still function even after a societal collapse. It's another place to consider the gray man concept. It's all too common these days for many people from politicians to billionaires to toss out controversial and divisive opinions. The fact of the matter is that there are [many witnesses to social media](#) and if you are trying to keep a low profile, stay cool on the Internet. Here are some ideas for a gray Internet experience:

- [Use a VPN](#) for any Internet access. It will keep you protected from outside prying eyes.
- **Use an anonymous name** for your email account.
- **Consider an avatar** or fake picture for any profile picture.
- **Think twice about what you share.** There is so much out there about companies collecting biometric data from posted selfies to personal information.
- **Review your browsing history daily** and delete the history and especially any cookies attached to your browser.
- **Install antivirus software** on any computer, tablet or phone. [AVAST is free](#) or you can subscribe to a service.

And Finally... The Gray Dog

Beyond the general concerns some of us may have with kids, grandkids and grandparents trying to keep a low profile when we're out and about is the challenge of the family dog. Dogs bark. That's a good thing in the middle of the night when someone unknown is walking through your backyard but for anyone trying to keep a low profile –leave the dog home if you can.

There are some [breeds of dog](#) that are less likely to bark but even then, it's in their nature to be inquisitive and naturally protective of their owners. If you're looking to get a new dog for any reason and wonder which dogs bark the least or keep the lowest profile, here's a few to consider:

- [Cattle dogs also known as herding dogs](#)
- [Bernese Mountain Dog](#)
- [Cavalier King Charles Spaniel](#)
- [French Bulldog](#)
- [Bulldog](#)
- [Basenji](#)

- [Borzoi](#)
- [Scottish Hound](#)
- [Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier](#)
- [Shiba Inu](#)
- [Australian Sheepdog](#)
- [Shih-tzu](#)
- [Imaal Terrier](#)
- [Saluki](#)
- [Rhodesian Crested Dog](#)

It May Be a Permanent Way of Life

Until society recovers and some semblance of law and order returns to the streets the gray man will be a critical behavior for anyone trying to avoid conflict or confrontation. In time it will become a habit and our best hope is that it becomes a habit that we eventually remember, but no longer need to just get home safely from the farmer's market.

Like this post? Don't Forget to [Pin It On Pinterest!](#)