

Automated: [00:01](#) Welcome to "Prep Talk," the Emergency Management podcast. Find out what you need to know about preparedness, get all the latest tips from experts in the field, and learn what to do before the next disaster strikes. From the Emergency Management Department in the city that never sleeps, here are your hosts, Omar Bourne and Allison Pennisi.

Omar Bourne: [00:26](#) Hello everyone. Thank you for listening. I'm Omar Bourne.

Bushra Mollick: [00:29](#) And I'm Bushra Mollick.

Omar Bourne: [00:31](#) And you are listeners, and we thank you as always for joining us and we thank Bushra for joining us once more.

Bushra Mollick: [00:39](#) I'm always happy to be back, and we want you to come back as often as you can. So feel free to add "Prep Talk" to your favorite RSS feed. You can also follow us on social media, on our Twitter @nycemergencymgt, Facebook or Instagram sites.

Omar Bourne: [00:54](#) On this episode of Prep Talk, we're talking about mentorship. Now, a few years ago in New York City, Emergency Management introduced the mentorship program to highlight foundational skills in the agency and to provide a road map of opportunities for newer employees, but also for employees in general.

Bushra Mollick: [01:14](#) Absolutely. And that's right Omar. Today, we have two special guests to talk about the benefits of workplace mentorship programs. But before we dive in, it's time to give our listeners the latest hot topics in the Emergency Management field.

Automated: [01:29](#) Here's your "Prep Talk" situation report.

Bushra Mollick: [01:34](#) This is the situation report. Let's get started.

Omar Bourne: [01:38](#) Bushra and our listeners, our first story comes from Gov Tech. Could climate change lead to stronger hurricanes? Some scientists think so. Scientists from the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans suggest that climate change will lead to fewer, but stronger storms, by the year 2100. Research also shows that future hurricanes will come with even more rainfall because warmer air can hold more water, thus creating even more damage per hurricane.

Omar Bourne: [02:10](#) Now, regardless of whether or not your city may face few storms in the future, here is a friendly reminder that the Atlantic hurricane season is just around the corner. It begins

June 1st and runs through the end of November, so make sure you have an emergency plan. If you're in New York, you can visit nyc.gov/knowyourzone to see whether or not you live in one of this six hurricane evacuation zones. For more information about hurricane preparedness, you can call 311 or visit nyc.gov/knowyourzone.

- Bushra Mollick: [02:50](#) That's right, Omar. According to a new report released by the Centers for Disease Control and prevention, measles cases in the United States have reached a new high at 704. More than half of those infected by the highly contagious disease were not vaccinated. Measles can be fatal for babies or young children. Public officials are urging the public to get vaccinated. Complications from the disease include pneumonia, swelling of the brain, and premature birth.
- Bushra Mollick: [03:18](#) The current number of measles cases is the highest recorded after the disease was declared eliminated in the country in the year 2000.
- Omar Bourne: [03:26](#) Thank you very much, Bushra. In other health news, health officials have rolled out the first approved vaccine for malaria. Now, the RTSS vaccine is designed to help young children in Africa. Malaria is one of the top fatal diseases for children worldwide, but children in Africa are most commonly affected.
- Omar Bourne: [03:48](#) A child or infant dies of malaria every two minutes in Africa and some children can have up to six bouts of the disease in one year. Children in Malawi have already begun to receive the vaccine. Children in Ghana and Kenya will receive the vaccine later this year. And that is it for the situation report up next we have two special guests from New York City emergency management.
- Bushra Mollick: [04:14](#) But first, here's a public service announcement from New York City Emergency Management and the Ad Council:
- Ad: [04:21](#) Open calendar. What's my schedule looking like? Next Thursday you will be caught in any emergency flash flood between park and first street.
- Ad: [04:29](#) What? No, no, that doesn't work. I'm busy then. Decline. Decline.
- Ad: [04:34](#) Disasters don't plan ahead, but you can. It starts with talking to your loved ones about making an emergency plan. So, don't wait. Communicate. Get started today at nyc.gov/readyny or

call 311. Brought to you by New York City Emergency Management and the Ad Council.

- Automated: [04:53](#) You are listening to Prep Talk, The Emergency Management Podcast.
- Omar Bourne: [04:58](#) That's right. You are listening to Prep Talk and we are back. As we mentioned earlier, we are discussing mentorship. Joining us are Jen Pearsall, Interagency Training Coordinator here at New York City Emergency Management, and Robert Cohen. He is the deputy director of The Emergency Operations Center Unit, also from New York City Emergency Management. We thank you both for joining us on the show.
- Jen Pearsall: [05:27](#) Thanks for having us.
- Robert Cohen: [05:28](#) Thanks. Great to be here.
- Bushra Mollick: [05:30](#) So Jennifer, let's begin with you. What does your role as interagency training coordinator entail?
- Jen Pearsall: [05:36](#) A little bit of a lot of different things. So, I help coordinate emergency management programs as well as professional development trainings. I work with subject matter experts to build or improve trainings that are already out there. Then I support the Urban Assembly School for emergency management with curriculum and activities, including running our high school internship program; and of course, running the mentor program.
- Bushra Mollick: [05:59](#) That's awesome. Thank you so much.
- Omar Bourne: [06:01](#) Rob, can you share a little about your role as deputy director of the Emergency Operations Center Unit?
- Robert Cohen: [06:10](#) Certainly. So, a lot of my work follows capacity building processes that we try to implement here in New York City Emergency Management in the Emergency Operation Center or EOC Unit. This involves supporting our staff and staff from partner agencies and private and nonprofit organizations around the city who might come in to work in the EOC when there is an emergency.
- Robert Cohen: [06:31](#) We want to make sure that they understand their responsibilities and feel confident performing them and have the tools and the resources that they need in order to do that. We also oversee and coordinate the City's after action reporting

processes. So, we look at what went well and what we want to improve next time there's a crisis, and we have to bring our partners into the EOC to help coordinate the response to it.

- Omar Bourne: [06:54](#) And for our listeners, picture a huge room that can hold over 100 people-
- Robert Cohen: [07:05](#) 136.
- Omar Bourne: [07:05](#) 136 people in the EOC as we love to call it. During a major emergency, we're all hands on deck. We have partners from different City agencies, nonprofits, private partners, they're all there sharing the information, and we're coordinating that so that we know what's going on in every sector so that we can readily and speedily respond to an emergency. So, that's what the EOC looks like. Very high energy and high paced place, especially during emergencies.
- Jen Pearsall: [07:43](#) I was going to say our EOC has been featured in a few shows also because it really perfectly sort of embodies everyone working together towards one singular goal.
- Omar Bourne: [07:53](#) Jen, you mentioned a professional development. You always go also mentioned the emergency management school that we have here in New York City. I want to talk a little bit about the mentorship program, which began a few years ago. What led the agency to begin this program? What made it a priority?
- Jen Pearsall: [08:15](#) Yeah, so as people kind of move up or retire, the institutional knowledge is not always necessarily being passed on. So, we really want to create a program that would help allow that knowledge to be passed on from unit to unit, from person to person. Not just your day-to-day role, but especially your activation or your EOC role.
- Jen Pearsall: [08:36](#) We wanted it to be a more personalized way of learning than just a training to be.
- Omar Bourne: [08:40](#) Right.
- Jen Pearsall: [08:40](#) So, that's kind of where this came up from and we wanted to give staff an opportunity to have a sounding board as well. Someone that they can go to who can call them out or help them up, those type of things. And then, it really became a priority, not in the initial year, but after the initial year. Once people saw the value of it and saw how much it worked.

Omar Bourne: [09:05](#) Right. And this is accountability at work, really. Right?

Bushra Mollick: [09:09](#) Yeah. I mean, I'm actually really excited because for those of you who don't know, I've already met with Jen to be a mentor this year. So, this next question actually happens to be for you, Jen. So how do you go about choosing mentors and mentees and what does that process like?

Jen Pearsall: [09:24](#) Yeah, so, those are really the first two steps of this four-step process and a nine-month program. So I send out an email or the training unit sends out an email requesting people to be mentors and mentees. So, it's a completely voluntary program. No one is forced to join, which is the nice part. People want to be a part of it. People want to be engaged and help out.

Jen Pearsall: [09:45](#) And then, I meet with each mentee individually and each mentor individually. With mentees, I focus on what are your goals, where do you want to be? Where do you see yourself within the agency? For mentors, where have you been? Where are you now? What skills do you feel good with?

Jen Pearsall: [10:01](#) And then for both, what is your meeting style? What is your learning style? So I can find people that would match in that way as well; because sometimes you have people who want a full on agenda, and then you have other people who just want to walk and talk and have that sounding board moment.

Omar Bourne: [10:17](#) Wonderful. I have another question for you, but I don't want Rob to feel left out. So Rob, I know you have been a mentor. What has that experience been like for you?

Robert Cohen: [10:30](#) Certainly. So, I've had a great time in the mentor program and I've had the opportunity to serve as a mentor for a couple of my colleagues. I think a lot of the points that Jen is making really resonated with me is like, "Yeah, these are people who are talking about their goals and their aspirations as a professional in this field or in their careers more broadly in general."

Robert Cohen: [10:51](#) It's very exciting to get to be a sounding board and to have to think internally about some of the answers that I would give if someone had a question about career development opportunity that was before them or project that they were trying to get started with a group of people that they haven't worked with before.

Robert Cohen: [11:08](#) I find it very enjoyable as a mentor to provide answers to those and at times also challenging, still enjoyable, but challenging to

try and figure out what the best pieces of advice to provide that will enable this person to grow and kind of think through these questions that they're faced with answering themselves. It often makes me, although in a mentor capacity, feel a little bit uncertain sometimes about like, "Ooh, what's, what's the best way to explain this? What would I do in that situation?"

- Robert Cohen: [11:38](#) Which is a lot of fun. It's a lot of fun for me and a lot of times, I try and empower, I guess is the right word, empower other people to figure out what the best course of action is going forward. I don't see it as like a supervisory responsibility, I don't tell people what to do. You kind of talked through these challenges with them and let them learn and develop and figure out their own steps to move forward on them.
- Omar Bourne: [12:00](#) Do you ever get nervous that you know the advice that you're given may or may not be the right advice to someone else? How do you work through that process? This is for both of you. How do you work through that process in your mind as a mentor that whatever you are going to tell this person, they may take that into consideration?
- Robert Cohen: [12:23](#) Sure. Sometimes the advice was, "Let's go here for coffee" and then they got the person's order wrong. This is not the best advice of where we should go for this particular session. But anyway, the point is I think when I'm offering advice to people, I do sometimes feel like, "Hmm, I went home and I thought more about this and I don't know if that's the right step. I feel like we should involve this person as well."
- Robert Cohen: [12:47](#) Sometimes I second guess, and if it's really an issue, I'm like, "Man, I don't know that I quite gave this person a full answer. I'll reach out and say, 'Hey, I want to talk for another couple of minutes. I had another idea on this particular topic.'"
- Robert Cohen: [12:59](#) I think other times, I'd explain it as advice and would also ask the other person, what do you think? What are some things that you're thinking about in this process as well? That is to say, I want to make sure that I'm supporting someone else's ownership of what they want to do as opposed to imposing what I think they should be doing instead.
- Robert Cohen: [13:16](#) So, I see my role as advice and counsel, but not as, "You should really follow this." But that said, I wouldn't shy away from it. If I give advice and I'm like, "Eh, I don't know if that was the right thing to say or not," I'll go back to the person and say, "Hey, let's chat again."

Omar Bourne: [13:31](#) Right. And that's key and that's what being a good leader is, is that you can go back and say, "You know what? Maybe we need to revisit my answer or my suggestion. There may be another course of action here."

Robert Cohen: [13:43](#) Sure, sure, sure.

Omar Bourne: [13:46](#) Now, Jen, you also mentioned that the mentorship program is a nine-month program broken down into four steps. So can you explain those steps for our listeners?

Jen Pearsall: [13:57](#) Yeah, so the first step is that employee signup. It's again, completely voluntary. The second step is that I meet with each person, which we went over a little bit. The third step though is that I match them. So when I'm matching them, I'm looking at their goals, their desires, where they want to be, but I'm also ensuring I matched them with somebody outside of their entire division.

Jen Pearsall: [14:16](#) So, there's no weird lines if they want to get feedback on how they could have handled a situation if they want to talk about, "How do I ask for a raise from my boss?" or if maybe, they're interested in another unit. It's nice to have somebody with an objective opinion that's outside of your division, that's outside of your reporting line. And then lastly, we host an orientation where we set expectations, provide resources, and give a timeline of events.

Jen Pearsall: [14:43](#) So, it's a nine month program. So, we do an orientation in the middle. We have some sort of activity, at the end there's a potluck, just debrief. And then partway through, usually around month two and seven, I meet with all the mentees together, and then all the mentors together so that they can talk through how's going from one mentee to another. And then, for mentors, what resources have you been providing that I could provide?

Omar Bourne: [15:07](#) Wonderful.

Bushra Mollick: [15:07](#) I'm really looking forward to that potluck.

Omar Bourne: [15:14](#) Of course you are. I'm not surprised by that comment.

Bushra Mollick: [15:15](#) No, no, no. I mean obviously food aside, I think also with what Robert just said with him being a mentor, I feel like it's a time for personal growth for everybody involved, and I think that's what I'm really excited for it.

Jen Pearsall: [15:28](#) Yeah. We have not just from the new people, it was really originally meant as a program for like newer people coming in, but now I'm finding as we're going into whatever year this is now, I think our fifth or six year is, we're having people who have been here a while and now they're going into their first leadership role here, and they want now a mentor to help them navigate that aspect or navigate, "Okay, well I'm now a boss over people that were my colleagues. How does this work?"

Bushra Mollick: [15:56](#) That's awesome.

Omar Bourne: [15:57](#) And what I like about this discussion and conversation is what we use often, Bushra, the only science term that I know and you probably know as well symbiosis, right?

Bushra Mollick: [16:07](#) Yeah.

Omar Bourne: [16:08](#) I love when we can just use this word, but that's what this is. The mentor learns, but the mentees learning as well. They learn from each other, it's a symbiotic relationship and everybody grows. Everybody wins.

Bushra Mollick: [16:25](#) Yeah. There's no really lose-lose situation here. Everyone is taking something away from it.

Omar Bourne: [16:30](#) Yeah.

Bushra Mollick: [16:30](#) So, I know we talked to Robert about him being a mentor, but as somebody who is a huge part of this program, what was it like for you when you were a mentee? What did you learn and if you could share your experience with us?

Jen Pearsall: [16:42](#) Yeah, it was pretty fantastic. Our Deputy Director of Training, actually is the one who created this program. So, I remember sitting in the seat having her asked me the same questions that now I ask other people, which is pretty neat. She really listened and paired me very well. I was looking for a sounding board who could also call me out and was very direct. I didn't want anyone who'd beat around the bush. I wanted somebody who had operations experience in New York City.

Jen Pearsall: [17:06](#) I'm from Oklahoma, but I have also deployed to Louisiana and a few other places and I've done some stuff up here, but wanted more of a New York City mindset or viewpoint of this stuff. And then, I was also debating about going back to school. So I was hoping to have someone, not just an operations, but also has

done the school. Actually because of some of our conversations, I am now in my first semester of Grad school because of that.

Bushra Mollick: [17:27](#)

Oh Wow. Congratulations. That's awesome.

Omar Bourne: [17:30](#)

Yeah, congrats.

Bushra Mollick: [17:31](#)

So Rob, I know that you were a mentor before, but now you're sort of switching the role and you're going to be a mentee. So, what made you want to be a mentee after being a mentor?

Robert Cohen: [17:43](#)

It's a very interesting question and I kind of talked a little bit with Jen about this when she was involved in matching people in this process as well. What is it that I want out of this experience to be different from what it's been previously? And for me, there's a couple of skills that I went in to my conversation with Jen to talk about my interest in improving, and what I wanted to get out of this.

Robert Cohen: [18:06](#)

It was a couple of tangible improvements in my own personal skills. So, I'm interested in developing a skill set to lead teams of people in solving problems during an emergency or helping to create processes, training processes, learning processes after action reporting processes. And although I've had the opportunity to do a bunch of those myself and I've loved it, I haven't had as much opportunity in coaching other people to do these processes as well.

Robert Cohen: [18:33](#)

So, I wanted to learn a little more about coaching people on these more complex or longer term projects that involve teammates from lots of different places around the agency. So, I'm very interested in whoever my mentor will be. I don't know. I'm excited to find out and having that person help me from their experience and their perspective, figure out what my areas for improvement are in that field, and how I can best accomplish those.

Omar Bourne: [19:01](#)

So last year, there was a leadership panel. This was for the last cycle, both Jen and Rob, you guys were there. What were your takeaways from this leadership panel and how it kind of worked for the program? Jen, I'm going to start with you.

Jen Pearsall: [19:18](#)

Yeah, it was actually really cool. We had one person from private, one person from a public organization, one person from another agency, and then Paula from our own agency who's been both the mentor and mentee several years. She was on

the panel. I just kind of asked them a bunch of different questions and it was really great.

- Jen Pearsall: [19:38](#) I think what I took away from the majority of it is that people really want to hear other people's perspective, both in the agency, out of the agency. They want to know the next step as well as 10 steps from now.
- Omar Bourne: [19:51](#) Right. I like that. Rob, how about you?
- Robert Cohen: [19:54](#) Yeah, for me as an attendee, I thought the panel was exceptionally well put together, had people from different fields of expertise that came in as well. And that was, to me, it was really valuable to listen to people who have served in mentor roles in some field that's totally different from my own, and is not really something I'm familiar with.
- Robert Cohen: [20:14](#) One piece of advice in particular that really stuck with me was that big projects will have big changes, and I don't remember who it was that that said that, which is a little disappointing to me, but I was like, "Hmm. I was like, this is very interesting." I think the point that that this person had explained was really successful projects generally have a lot of buy in, and buy in comes in many different forms.
- Robert Cohen: [20:38](#) And trying to tweak a project to get it to a point where you can corral a team together and get them to buy in and get them to say, "Yeah, this sounds really big, but this is something that I'm on board with and it's something I'm going to help with," will require a little bit of changes to your ideas and your proposals.
- Robert Cohen: [20:54](#) And that's something that I took to heart and I really was like, "Hmm. Okay, if this is a big project and I want it to succeed, there's going to be some changes to it," and I get that and I value that and I'm like, "Okay, this is a good mentality for me to have going into some big new project," and that that stuck with me from that panel. I was like, "Wow, that's, that's good."
- Jen Pearsall: [21:13](#) I feel like that's a great piece of advice because I remember it. It serves sounds similar to something that I'd heard before, and I think this is a pretty common saying, you have to make yourself uncomfortable once in a while in order to personally grow. Right? Because I think most often, people sort of have this one way of doing things and sometimes you realize, especially when you're working in a unit with different kinds of people in different kinds of personalities, if you want something to work, you have to think outside of the box.

- Bushra Mollick: [21:38](#) Can both of you actually share some of the benefits of mentorship overall?
- Robert Cohen: [21:42](#) Sure, absolutely. I'll start with that. And then Jen, I'm also really curious to hear what you have to say too. But for me, I think there were two things. One personally is learning to trust someone that I hadn't known particularly well previously. It's learning to trust in the sense that they're comfortable sharing about a challenging experience that they might be having and they want your advice or the other way around; me trusting this other person to say, "Oh, you know what? I'm going to do the best I can to offer advice."
- Robert Cohen: [22:12](#) If I'm in a mentor position and this person trusts me and I trust them to make sure that whatever we're talking about isn't going to become an issue or become more public than that person wants it to become or vice versa. If I'm in a mentee role, I want to learn to trust my mentor. So, that's something that I'm really excited about for being a mentee here is learning to trust someone who is new and knows an awful lot more about what they're doing than I know about what they're doing. So, I'd be very curious to learn from that person.
- Robert Cohen: [22:41](#) And it's also, secondly, it's an opportunity to meet and work with someone that you don't normally work with. I think like Jen had mentioned a little while ago, these people in mentor-mentee relationships are not paired within the same division. That is to say, it's not people that usually work together all the time. So, it's an opportunity for me to interface with and learn from someone that I don't usually get to work with on a normal basis. So, I'm excited for both of those and I think they're both really strong benefits of this mentorship program.
- Bushra Mollick: [23:11](#) Oh, that's awesome. Jen, do you have anything you want to add?
- Jen Pearsall: [23:13](#) Yeah, I mean the overall professional development is the big thing, and we talked about passing on institutional knowledge, but there's also the team building. I like to think especially in the EOC when we're activated, because you may not necessarily know the people you're working side by side with.
- Jen Pearsall: [23:27](#) Even though we're a relatively small agency, if they're not a unit that you work with on a regular basis, you just may not be as close with them. Where through this program, you might be paired with somebody that's on your EOC team or in the same role, but on a different team and they can really start guiding

you in that regards and helping you build that EOC knowledge and confidence.

Jen Pearsall: [23:50](#) I've talked to so many people who they get done with this program and they're like, "Wow, this actually helped me in the EOC and that wasn't even one of my goals," which is kind of cool.

Bushra Mollick: [23:59](#) That's awesome.

Jen Pearsall: [24:00](#) Yeah.

Omar Bourne: [24:01](#) What advice would you give to an organization that's interested in starting a mentorship program or anyone who is looking to be a mentor or someone who is looking for a mentor, so they are a mentee?

Jen Pearsall: [24:18](#) So, I've got something for each. So for organizations, go for it and encourage your leadership to be mentors. People are looking not just for the next step, but those in the next step are looking for the long term game. And allow anyone to sign up. Not some special requirements, but anyone who wants to be a mentee should be able to be a mentee. As for mentors, you are going to be a better mentor before you feel you are a one.

Jen Pearsall: [24:43](#) A lot of people think that they are not ready to be a mentor, they don't sign up for it. And then I give them a nudge like you two and say, "Hey, have you thought about being a mentor?" And magically, they say yes. So, you're going to be one before you feel like you're one. As for mentees, if you don't have a formal program, ask someone to be your mentor. What's the worst thing that's going to realistically happen? If they say no, then you ended up exactly where you started, but ten to one, they're going to say yes.

Robert Cohen: [25:13](#) I think mine, Jen, are are similar to the advice that I would have offered to an organization is exactly the same as yours, except usually yours is more succinct and more accurate than mine, but go for it. That's generally good advice. I think for me, generally speaking as a mentor or mentee, there are two things that I'd encourage someone to go in with, two pieces of advice I would say.

Robert Cohen: [25:35](#) To go in with a skill that you want to improve. Whether you're a mentee that could be working with your mentor. In my case, as it will be, to get better at developing a team of people to go through after action report in EOC capacity building processes.

And if you were a mentor, the skill could be, "I want to get better at providing honest and meaningful feedback in a way that's nonthreatening," and those are skills that anybody can enter a mentor-mentorship relationship with.

- Robert Cohen: [26:01](#) And then the second, I think is a little less concrete, a little more general, which would be like a challenge that you want to talk about or it's a tough project or a question about career growth in general, and it's not like a real concrete skill and you're not really sure what the issue is, perhaps, but it's something you want to talk with the other person about and kind of suss out what the problem or solution could be together. So, I would say to go in with those things, like a skill that you want to improve and the idea that you want to talk to someone about.
- Omar Bourne: [26:32](#) Jen, I really liked your line, "You're going to be a mentor before you feel like you're one," right? Because you don't realize that you can influence someone without even realizing that you've done so. So, that's really good advice. If you have any self doubt, don't think you can't do anything, just do it. Just make it happen.
- Jen Pearsall: [26:52](#) Yeah, I think it's also important to remember that sometimes you might even find mentors not in your workplace. Right? Because I have some from college, former professors, who've really helped shape my career and they've given me advice and a lot of the things that they've taught me, I hope moving forward I can teach other people. So, I think this whole program in itself is just really integral for growth I feel in a lot of different places.
- Omar Bourne: [27:16](#) Yeah, definitely. Any last, any last words before we wrap up this segment?
- Jen Pearsall: [27:23](#) Join your mentor program if you have one.
- Robert Cohen: [27:27](#) What she said, yeah.
- Omar Bourne: [27:28](#) And if you don't have one, think about really implementing this either in your organization or a local agency here in New York City, if you're another emergency management agency across the nation. Wherever you are, make sure that you implement a mentorship program because what you've heard here today is tangible evidence that this works and it benefits everyone. So, make sure that you sign up.

Omar Bourne: [28:01](#) Jen, where can people find more information about our mentorship program here in New York?

Jen Pearsall: [28:08](#) So, we have one article on domestic preparedness, but you can also email our training academy at nycemacademy@oem.nyc.gov.

Omar Bourne: [28:16](#) Wonderful.

Automated: [28:25](#) If you don't know, now you know. You're listening to Prep Talk, The Emergency Management podcast.

Bushra Mollick: [28:29](#) It is Rapid Response time and if you're a first time listener, it's simple. Omar and I will ask our guests a few questions and they will give the first answer that comes to mind. Let us get into it.

Automated: [28:41](#) It's time for "Prep Talk" Rapid Response.

Omar Bourne: [28:45](#) It's Rapid Response time. Rob, this first question is for you. What is one emergency item you cannot live without?

Robert Cohen: [28:56](#) A snack.

Bushra Mollick: [28:58](#) Sounds like me.

Omar Bourne: [29:00](#) Again. Yes, yes, yes. Right.

Robert Cohen: [29:01](#) Well my Go Bag, it's in my desk. Snack.

Omar Bourne: [29:04](#) Whoa, what type of snacks or are we talking about?

Robert Cohen: [29:07](#) I like granola bars or like fresh fruit that doesn't go bad quickly, like an orange for example.

Omar Bourne: [29:13](#) We've taught you well here.

Robert Cohen: [29:14](#) Yeah.

Omar Bourne: [29:14](#) That was a great answer.

Robert Cohen: [29:16](#) Something healthy and something filling. Right?

Omar Bourne: [29:17](#) Good answer. Jen, how about you? What emergency item you cannot live without?

Jen Pearsall: [29:22](#) Power strip because then I always have some place to charge my phone. If you bring the power strip, you get to charge your phone.

Bushra Mollick: [29:29](#) That's true.

Omar Bourne: [29:30](#) I like it.

Bushra Mollick: [29:31](#) Alright Jen, let's start with you for this one. What is the best advice you've ever received?

Jen Pearsall: [29:36](#) Always think, "What's the worst thing that could realistically happen?" Whether it's to take a leap on or to ask somebody a question. Like realistically, no one's going to be pointing their fingers at you and just starting to laugh. So, go for it.

Omar Bourne: [29:50](#) See, I like that because I tell people all the time. I'm going to ask the question. I'm either going to get a yes or no.

Jen Pearsall: [29:58](#) Yeah. Yeah.

Omar Bourne: [29:58](#) Who cares?

Bushra Mollick: [29:59](#) Yeah. And there's no such thing as stupid questions. Right?

Jen Pearsall: [30:02](#) Yeah, no. My JROTC instructor told me that in ninth grade when none of the guys are asking people to dance because they were too scared. He told them, he's like, "You just have to go for it. You just have to ask. What's the worst thing that's going to happen? The girls aren't going to literally go, 'Oh, my God, hahaha at them.'"

Jen Pearsall: [30:20](#) So, after that I took that piece of advice and everything I've done since then.

Bushra Mollick: [30:25](#) Oh, wow.

Omar Bourne: [30:25](#) There you go.

Bushra Mollick: [30:26](#) Rob, how about you?

Robert Cohen: [30:27](#) Mine was that you can learn something from everyone. I think that it probably came from my grandmother, learn something from everyone. And to me, I think it means you can find something really cool in basically every person you meet and they have some life experience or some skill or some story to share that you can learn from. And to me, that sat with me. I

was like, "Oh, I can find a way to learn something from this person."

- Omar Bourne: [30:54](#) We all have something to share. I like it. Now, what's your favorite saying or proverb? Jen, we'll start with you.
- Jen Pearsall: [31:02](#) An old Japanese proverb, "Nanakorobiyaoki" means if you fall down seven times, get up eight. It's something that was said in my dojo growing up since I was seven. You've got a lot of a wealth of knowledge from people growing up. I like it.
- Bushra Mollick: [31:15](#) Wait. Can you clarify for me what "dojo" means exactly because I don't know.
- Jen Pearsall: [31:19](#) A dojo is a place of studying for martial arts.
- Bushra Mollick: [31:22](#) Oh, wow. That's incredible. Rob, how about you?
- Robert Cohen: [31:27](#) My favorite is "measure twice, cut once."
- Omar Bourne: [31:31](#) I like that one. So, I've been saying lately, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." That's the one that my mother and my grandmother used to say a lot. There from Barbados, that's a very popular saying in Barbados. So, bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- Bushra Mollick: [31:51](#) I guess I could think of one, but it's not- I mean, it's something that my mom would always tell me and it basically means never think too highly of yourself because even the folks who are in the highest positions can fall. So, it just basically means that always be conscientious of where you came from, be humble. And if you are interested in hearing what that sounds like, it's [inaudible 00:32:14]. My mother used to say that to me all the time.
- Bushra Mollick: [32:17](#) So, this question is for both of you. Jen, we can start with you. What is currently on your playlist?
- Jen Pearsall: [32:23](#) So, I may listen to podcasts. In addition to this one, and some other EM ones.
- Omar Bourne: [32:29](#) Of course. Of course. We wouldn't have it any other way, Jen.
- Jen Pearsall: [32:31](#) In addition, I also listened to the Chris Hogan show, The Daily, The Minimalist, and the Craig Groeschel Leadership podcast.
- Bushra Mollick: [32:39](#) Awesome. Alright, cool.

Robert Cohen: [32:41](#) And mine, there's two I was mentioning to Omar before, one is maybe slightly embarrassing or on their exclusively, or drive my wife insane, and the other one, we actually both like. There's a group called Beta Radio, which we love. They're like a folk rock and kind of soft rock group, and then the other is one of my favorite opera singers, Beverly Sills, performing various Arias by Vincenzo Bellini, which I love to listen to and I think it's great.

Omar Bourne: [33:08](#) Your wife is not a fan of it?

Robert Cohen: [33:10](#) Not as much, not as much. It's often loud and kind of early in the morning, but I think it's a lot of fun to listen to.

Bushra Mollick: [33:17](#) That sounds like a great way to start your day.

Robert Cohen: [33:19](#) I like it a lot.

Bushra Mollick: [33:20](#) What is your favorite meal? Either of you can go first, whoever can think of your first-

Jen Pearsall: [33:25](#) Dessert.

Bushra Mollick: [33:25](#) Dessert?

Jen Pearsall: [33:26](#) It's the whole thing.

Bushra Mollick: [33:27](#) Well, what kind? What kind of dessert?

Jen Pearsall: [33:28](#) No, just all of them.

Bushra Mollick: [33:29](#) Give me the juice, Jen.

Jen Pearsall: [33:30](#) Every single one of them.

Bushra Mollick: [33:31](#) Okay.

Omar Bourne: [33:31](#) Okay, there you go.

Robert Cohen: [33:33](#) I wrote dinner.

Bushra Mollick: [33:37](#) Wow. We have some-

Robert Cohen: [33:38](#) I see you want something more specific than that.

Bushra Mollick: [33:38](#) I mean, do you have a specific kind of dinner?

Robert Cohen: [33:40](#) They're, I mean, I love Thai food.

Bushra Mollick: [33:43](#) Are you a Pad Thai kind of person or a Pad See Ew?

Robert Cohen: [33:50](#) I'm a Pad See Ew person, which is like the noodles and brown sauce. It's really good.

Bushra Mollick: [33:51](#) Yes, which is that tamarind sauce. How about you, Omar?

Omar Bourne: [33:53](#) For our listeners, Bushra, you can tell is a foodie.

Bushra Mollick: [33:55](#) You know what we should do sometime? We should do an MRE taste test for a podcast, but that's thinking ahead. For what's your favorite meal? What's your favorite MRE?

Omar Bourne: [34:05](#) Oh, now you have to explain to our listeners what an MRE is.

Bushra Mollick: [34:08](#) Why don't you go first?

Omar Bourne: [34:12](#) Meals ready to eat, and basically it's a microwavable meal that you can pop in in an emergency to to get something to eat. And then the last question, sum up the work that you do in one word, Rob.

Robert Cohen: [34:28](#) Build.

Bushra Mollick: [34:30](#) Okay.

Omar Bourne: [34:30](#) I like that.

Jen Pearsall: [34:31](#) Engaging.

Omar Bourne: [34:32](#) Engaging. Both wonderful answers. Thank you both for being here today.

Jen Pearsall: [34:37](#) Thanks for having us.

Robert Cohen: [34:38](#) Thank you, this was great.

Bushra Mollick: [34:39](#) Thank you.

Automated: [34:42](#) That's this episode of "Prep Talk." If you like what you heard, you can listen any time online or through your favorite RSS feed. Until next time, stay safe and prepare.