

How to be *Hardy* During *Hard Times*



What is Hardy?

Some synonyms might be **resilient, tenacious, sturdy, flexible**. Think of the examples of hardiness in nature. The plants and animals that are the most hardy under the forces of nature will do well and survive. For example, we often think of the oak tree as the essence of strength, but it's the willow tree and the reeds that are flexible enough to survive the storms.

Hardiness Under Stress

Life's stresses can strike at any time! Whether it is in one's personal life or on the job, the storms of life will roll in from time to time. Changes that occur in the workplace can create high stress as a side effect. This stress can have negative effects on the body, mind, and spirit. Fortunately, there are some things a person can do to "inoculate" him/herself from the negative effects of stress. Research by Dr. Suzanne Kobasa has turned up three specific characteristics of people who cope well with their job stress, who have a "hardiness" to resist the negative effects of stress.

The Three C's

Commitment: A sense of commitment to something you feel is important can increase your hardiness. You may be committed to your religion, your family, your work, or a hobby. If you are committed to something your life will feel more meaningful and interesting. Committed people give their "best shot" at what they are doing and are curious about what's happening around them.

Control: Maintaining a sense of personal control is important to hardiness against stress. This involves feeling capable of making important decisions in your life and recognizing that you are in control of your own life. It also involves exerting some influence on your surroundings and on events. People with control approach their decisions with responsibility, optimism, and endurance.

Challenge: People who see life as a challenge rather than a series of problems are hardy. People who see life as a challenge respond to change with excitement and energy. It involves viewing change as an opportunity to grow, to learn, and to develop personally, rather than as a threat.

How Do These Apply to You?

5 Tips

- ◆ **Create *your own* goals** - and ways to reach them
- ◆ **Set priorities for your life** – how to spend time, money & energy
- ◆ **Allow yourself to have fun** – without guilt
- ◆ **Include variety in your life** – broaden your interests, try new things
- ◆ **Commit to continue growing** – in knowledge, wisdom, skills, competence

References: Tips to "Vaccinate" Yourself Against Stress: www.bragg.army.mil/528csc/StressPoint4.htm
Stress Management, A guide for Senior Leaders: www.hooah4health.com/mind/stressmindbody3.htm
Hardiness for Hard Times: www.hardiness.com/hardiness.html
Stress Hardiness: www.lorettalaroche.com/art_II_hardiness.htm