



# Geared for Success

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## How Hardy are You?

In the constantly changing workplace of today, leaders are expected to demonstrate resiliency in their thoughts, actions and behaviors. Being able to bounce back from difficulties enables leaders to press forward and face future challenges. Key characteristics that leaders possess can enhance or undermine their resilience and adaptability across a variety of situations.

The concept of "hardiness" was first introduced by Suzanne Ouellette Kobasa in 1979. In her *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* article, Kobasa explained a model for understanding resilient stress response patterns in individuals and groups. These traits for psychological hardiness are understood today as "a generalized style of functioning that includes cognitive, emotional and behavioral qualities." Research shows that hardiness is consistent and levels over time and across situations. However, hardiness is also influenced by social and environmental factors - which means it is not a fixed trait.

Hardiness is a way of functioning that influences how people interpret the world and make sense of their experiences. There are three characteristics that make up hardiness: Challenge, Control and Commitment. Understanding each characteristic is essential to determining how they contribute to overall resiliency. In fact, leaders high in hardiness not only seem to remain healthier, but also perform better under stress. With hardiness, leaders take control of their emotions instead of suppressing them.

The Hardiness Resilience Gauge is an assessment which measures the three characteristics that comprise hardiness: Challenge, Control and Commitment.

- **Challenge** - Seeing change and novelty as exciting and as an opportunity for you to learn and grow.
- **Control** - Having a sense of self-efficacy and the belief that you can influence outcomes in your life.
- **Commitment** - Being engaged and seeing all parts of your life as interesting and meaningful.



Challenge is an enthusiastic embrace of change in your life. This characteristic represents people who are open and curious, willing to try new things and interpret new situations as an exciting part of life. They are typically flexible and have go-with-the-flow attitudes. When a mistake is made, they take responsibility and decide how to apply lessons learned to improve yourself in the future.

Control is the belief that people have significant impact on events that happen in your life. They approach new situations with confidence that your actions will help dictate the outcome. When the unexpected happens, they quickly refocus and turn attention to what you can do to regain control.

Commitment is having a strong sense of purpose in your life and the belief that the things people do are exciting and stimulating. People with this characteristic are constantly striving to reach full potential, have a strong sense of curiosity and immerse themselves in everything that they do.

Once you are aware of the characteristics of hardiness, as a leader you have choices for developing behaviors and actions that leverage them. Some key strategies that can help you achieve a path of hardiness are:

- **Embracing change** - Purposefully incorporating variation into your routine
- **Reframing Failure** - Interpreting failure as an opportunity for growth
- **Pursuing Passions** - Determining what makes you energized and happy
- **Practicing Gratitude** - Reflecting on the good you have in your life
- **Being Mindful** - Paying attention,

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**"Do not judge me by my success,  
judge me by how many times I fell down  
and got back up again."**

Nelson Mandela

## How Hardy are You?

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being engaged and in the moment

Successful leaders aren't always the most intelligent or best educated. Instead they use their emotional intelligence in resilient ways. Understanding your hardiness provides you with a starting point for developing strategies that shift your

focus for better outcomes, growth and meaning in your work.

Resource: The Hardiness Resilience Gauge Instrument, MHS; Kelly McDonald, Ph.D., Research Scientist, MHS.

Note: Jan Hovrud is certified to facilitate the Hardiness Resilience Gauge for training, coaching and train-the-trainer certification sessions. Launch Date: Nov 30, 2018.

## Lighten Up Your Next Staff Meeting

Here is a fun and light way to start your next staff meeting. Bring in the following candy bars: Krackel, Mr. Goodbar, Special Dark and Hershey. Have your team members each select one of the candy bars. Announce that you have been doing extensive research on the connection between personalities and candy bar selection. Then, share the following:

- **Krackel** - These people are full of life and fun. They like to laugh and don't take things too seriously.



- **Mr. Goodbar** - These people always follow the rules and are definite goody-two-shoes.



- **Special Dark** - These are deep, mysterious people that we may never truly know.



- **Hershey** - These people are All-American, patriotic, like baseball, apple pie and cookouts.



Resource: Lisa Autry, Training Facilitator

**"Sometimes I get the feeling that the two biggest problems in America today are making ends meet and making meetings end."**

Robert Orben

## Targeted Coaching Questions for Results

How well are you coaching your team members? Research shows that most employees don't feel like they are getting enough coaching or coaching from which they can benefit. Coaching skills are critical for leaders to develop and use. Staying on track with specific guided questions will deliver more impact and help your team members build skills for the future.



In the book, [The Coaching Habit - Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever](#), by Michael Bungay Stanier, the author outlines seven essential coaching questions that can change the way you converse with your team members.

1. **The "Kick Start" Question** - Ask "What is on your mind?" This question directs the conversation to what is most important on the employee's mind. Further focus the conversation by using the 3 P's-Projects, People, Patterns to ask about pressing issues.
2. **The "AWE" Question** - Ask "And what else?" The single most effective coaching question because it enables the employee to candidly discuss what is on his/her mind in a wider way.
3. **The "Focus" question** - Ask "What's the real challenge

here for you?" It helps you address and understand the feelings the employee is having.

4. **The "Foundation" Question** - Ask "What do you really want when this is over?" Also, called the Goldfish Question-Since it can cause people to react by staring at you with their mouths open and searching for an answer. This question gets the employee to think of outcomes.

5. **The "Lazy" Question** - Ask "How can I help you?" It can also be asked as: "To make sure I am clear..." or "To help me understand better..." This requires the employee to make a direct request of you.

6. **The "Strategic" Question** - Ask "If you are saying yes to this, what are you saying no to?" Go back to the 3 P's-What projects should you delay? What people do you need to connect with? What habits do you need to break? The Strategic Question helps to clarify boundaries.

7. **The "Learning" Question** - Ask "What was most useful for you?" or "What was your valuable learning moment in this situation?"

Enriching your coaching skills will enable you to better support and assist your team members.

## Pushing Through the Boundaries of Your Comfort Zone

A coachee once said to me: "I have missed out of a lot of opportunities in life because I wouldn't get out of my comfort zone." This comment has stayed with me over many years. Our comfort zone is a powerful behavioral space where activities and behavior fit a routine and pattern that minimizes stress and risk. It is a place where we feel mentally secure. The benefits of being in the comfort zone include: low anxiety, reduced stress and regular happiness. You typically don't experience stress and pain there because you don't face challenges that demand more of you.

Our natural tendency is to stay in a neutral, comfortable state. However, in order to maximize our performance we need to leave the comfort zone and enter a space called "optimal anxiety". In this space your mental productivity and performance can reach its peak. When you have reached this level, you feel challenged, making the most of life and goals driven. Many of your best and most profound achievements have been made while in the optimal anxiety space.

Advantages to getting out of your comfort zone are many. In the article, "The Science of Breaking Out of Your Comfort Zone (and Why You Should)" the author, Alan Henry outlines



reasons for the importance of pushing yourself:

- **Increased productivity** - Going outside your boundaries helps you to hit your stride sooner, get more done and find smarter ways to work.
- **Ability to deal with new, unexpected changes easier** - Taking risks enables you to practice uncertainty in a controlled, manageable way.
- **Face our weaknesses** - Challenges help to surface what we must overcome or leverage to be successful.
- **Enhanced creativity, innovation and inspiration** - By going out of your comfort zone, you must seek new skills, be open to new ideas and educate yourself.
- **Welcome challenges in life** - Having a mindset of letting new challenges into your life and making meaning of them, helps us to feel fulfilled.

Ambitions, dreams and goals make life worth celebrating. Going out of our comfort zone provides us with opportunities to expand ourselves and do great things. We have choices every day to go beyond who we are and what we can accomplish. Why not push back the mental blocks that stop us from really making a difference?

**You have to be willing to leave your comfort zone to discover what you are capable of."**

J. Marie Novak

## Jumping Transition Hurdles in Your Career

Building a career in leadership involves having the capabilities to adapt and flourish in new work environments. In a study at the Harvard Business School General Business Program, in leaders with an average of 16 years of business experience had experienced 5.5 promotions, changed bosses an average of every 1.5 years, worked for 2.4 companies and made 1.5 international moves. In other words, change is a critical element in the quest for higher level leadership.

In the article, "The Eight Toughest Transitions for Leaders", by Michael D. Watkins, the author identifies the types of career moves most leaders face.

- **The Promotion Challenge** - understanding what success looks like from a different position in the hierarchy. Common issues include: focus, delegation, developing leadership competencies and demonstrating patience.
- **The Leading Former Peers Challenge** - Being effective while altering existing relationships and establishing authority in a new role.
- **The Corporate Diplomacy Challenge** - Moving from a position of authority to one in which effectiveness is influenced by building alliances.

- **The On-Boarding Challenge** - Joining a new organization and having to adjust to the new culture, organizational politics and building your team.
- **The International Challenge** - Leading in an unfamiliar culture without established support systems and knowledge of everyday practices.
- **The Turnaround Challenge** - Being placed in an organization that is in trouble and determining strategic ways of saving it.
- **The Realignment Challenge** - Confronting an organization that is in denial about the need and urgency for changing to avoid crisis.
- **The Business Portfolio Challenge** - Leading an organization in which different parts are in different states of performance.

In each of the transition challenges, leaders need to exercise the emotional intelligence competency of Reality Testing. Reality Testing provides a clear reading as to what is actually happening. It brings with it your ability to identify and address problems. Finely tuned Reality Testing helps leaders read the climate of the organization, as well as, the emotional environment happening around you. To use Reality Testing, be observant, ask questions, step back and use your own emotional self-awareness to determine the temperature of an organization.



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### **Integrity-Nothing Else Matters**

"When you sacrifice your integrity, you erode your most precious leadership possession. People will forget and forgive any judgement error that you make, but integrity mistakes are forever."

David Cottrell, author

The first question most people ask themselves at work is: "Do I trust my boss and the other members of the management team?" Trust is a by-product of integrity. Leaders are asked to be honest, respectful, responsible and credible. Without integrity, leadership rings hollow. Research shows that when leaders abuse their power and lack integrity, it results in employee stress, decreased job satisfaction and turnover. When experiencing this type of leadership, employees may retaliate against the organization through theft and lost productivity.

Integrity is the foundation for leadership. Does it matter what the leader's vision is if s/he does not show integrity and honesty to the team? Does it matter how you communicate if people don't trust you? Everything the leader does counts and is noticed by his/her team. To instill an environment of integrity in your leadership remember to:

- Keep your promises.
- Speak out for what you think is important.
- Err on the side of fairness.
- Admit mistakes.
- Show respect and regard for others.
- Act on misconduct of subordinates.
- Keep facts and figures honest.
- Use funds appropriately (e.g. traveling, purchasing, etc.).
- Respect other people's time.
- Keep personal information confidential.
- Great leaders understand the value of demonstrating integrity. Sometimes integrity takes boldness and courage for you to uphold. Just remember, the outcome is deep respect from others.

Resource: BHI-"Leadership Integrity-Executive Summary"

### **Is the Stress Doctor Needed?**

Do you need to make an emergency call to the stress doctor? Is stress spreading contagiously around your office? Turns out you can actually catch stress. According to Heidi Hanna, Ph.D. and author of Stressaholic, "Seeing someone else in a stressed state can impact our own hormonal and nervous system responses as if we were experiencing their stress firsthand." The research further shows that second hand stress is more likely to spread when you have emotional ties to the anxious person-a colleague, friend, partner, etc. And, the more expressive (e.g. loud talker, hand gesturer, etc.) the person is, the more contagious their emotions.

So, how can you build up your immunity to second hand stress? Here are some easy, quick ideas:

**Change your Focus** - Find a way to block out the stress. Headphones, looking at pictures of your family/friends, call someone you love, etc. all help to sustain you in a positive way.

**Lead with Positivity** - Concentrate on making the first verbal words you speak positive. Jump start your verbage in a tone that can bring the conversation in a positive direction.

**Just Breathe** - Make mindfulness part of your day, every day.

**Schedule time for yourself** - Make a point of recharging during the day. Listen to a favorite song, go out to lunch, walk around the building, call a friend, do something that brings you joy.

**Exercise** - Exercise sets the tone for your life with big boosts to your brain.

**Control your Technology** - Don't let your technology control you. Be aware of your distractions and how they impact you.

Resource: "Stress is Actually Contagious-Here's How to Make Yourself Immune", by Locke Hughes