

STEVEN J. STEIN | PAUL T. BARTONE



**Making Stress Work for You
to Achieve Your Life Goals**

WILEY

Praise for *Hardiness*

"If there was only one attribute I could give my children, it wouldn't be good looks, athletic ability, or intelligence, it would be hardiness—a powerful constellation of qualities that increases the likelihood that they will engage in the world (v. shy away), be active agents in constructing their lives (v. helpless victims), and ultimately find meaning (v. unreflective boredom) in everything they experience and do. *Hardiness* is the gift that keeps on giving. Steve and Paul have done a masterful job summarizing and integrating almost fifty years of research into one, easy-to-read, simple-to-apply manual on how to construct a life well-lived."

—Scott A. Snook, PhD, MBA Class of 1958, Senior Lecturer of
Business Administration, Harvard Business School

"I'm rushing out to buy a large stash of this book so I can give it away to everyone important to me—my kids, my friends, the business leaders I coach. Steve Stein and Paul Bartone have created a gift to anyone who encounters stress in their life. The authors provide real-world examples from the ranks of rock stars, to POW's, to laypeople, showing how they used these very tools to overcome great difficulties in their lives and encouraging me to do the same. I appreciate that the book is so well grounded in research, and yet remains so easily readable. Rather than theory, it offers practical advice anyone can put into action for making his/her life more fulfilling."

—Allen Moore, PhD, Global Lead for Executive Coaching,
Korn Ferry

"Highly resilient individuals are a source of competitive advantage. Ensuring that your organisation has sufficient financial capital, sustainable business processes and models, and efficient risk controls and practices to withstand the impact of potentially adverse economic developments is not enough to create a truly sustainable and successful business. This book is essential reading for executives wanting to improve the resilience of their people and themselves. *Hardiness* is full of highly practical tips and techniques on how to do just that! The authors are masters at bringing research and learning to life in a very enjoyable and impactful way through storytelling. My favourite thing about this book is the really thought-provoking questions at the end of each section encouraging us to reflect on our purpose, mindset, habits, attitudes, coping mechanisms, etc. Lots of high-quality reflection and self-discovery!"

—Pedro Angulo, Head of Leadership Development,
AIB Bank (Allied Irish Banks)

"Resiliency has been the topic of considerable research in the military in the years following 9/11. Repeated combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq took their toll on military members and families separated for long periods of time without end in sight. The need to increase resiliency was quickly understood, and programs were implemented to improve the ability of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines and their families to deal with the long-term challenges of combat and separation. Steven Stein and Paul Bartone have brought the topic into focus and provided insights to help leaders understand and promote a culture of resiliency with the goal of improved productivity, health, and the bottom line. It is a must-read!"

—Major General Randy Manner (US Army, Retired),
Executive Coach

"This brilliant book is a go-to guide for understanding how to bring more hardiness into your life to help make work, health, and relationships *less hard*. The authors are among the world's leading experts in hardiness, applying their insights from research and practice with high-performing, high-demand occupations (e.g., first responders, military) to provide the reader with cutting-edge, understandable explanations of how to use an increased understanding of hardiness to turn stress into life success. They offer fresh, riveting, *easy to relate to*, practical

examples that provide striking insights into the hardiness mindset of commitment, control, and challenge. The new, practical strategies on how to develop hardiness in one's life make this book a must-read for mental health practitioners, executives, and anyone who wants a greater sense of hardiness to take on life's challenges."

—Colonel Thomas J. Williams, PhD (US Army, Retired),
Senior Operational Psychologist

"Steven Stein's work on emotional intelligence and this collaboration with Paul Bartone on *Hardiness* is second to none. Building emotionally intelligent leaders who are also hardy and resilient people has been a cornerstone to our work in the development of thousands of leaders from every industry. *Hardiness* is a must-read for anyone looking to enhance their ability to lead more effectively and cope in stressful times."

—Daniel Quinn, Senior Consultant,
Xator's Leadership Foundry

"As a retired US Navy SEAL and now a Team and Leader Development Consultant, *Hardiness: Making Stress Work for You to Achieve Your Life Goals* was an excellent read. It affirmed many thoughts I have had over the years about how people channel stress and why they are successful. Stein and Bartone do an excellent job using data and research to correlate the hardiness components of commitment, control, and challenge to years of experience, education, and assessments. *Hardiness* and its components may be the linchpin development specialists have been looking for to obtain a competitive advantage. I look forward to using *Hardiness* to bring about clarity for my future clients."

—Dr. Chris Auger, LCDR (US Navy SEAL, Retired)

"What a marvelous read! The authors share the essential ingredient to cope successfully with life's stressors. This book truly is a "mental shield"; a must-read for Military Leaders to excel in the midst of stress or change. This book provides data-driven solutions to bring individuals back into their lives and find their purpose. A must-read for all; in my case, the military."

—LCDR Tara M. Smallidge, PhD, MBA, MSC, US Navy, Research Psychologist,
Naval Nuclear Power Training Command (NNPTC) (These views/opinions are her own and
do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Defense or its Components)

"Stress is an unavoidable part of life, and your health, success, and happiness depend on your ability to manage, not avoid it. With convincing evidence, practical tools, and real-life examples, Dr. Stein and Dr. Bartone show how building a harder mindset helps overcome the most difficult circumstances and leads to higher performance."

—Michael Katchen, Cofounder and CEO of WealtheSimple,
a leading financial services innovator operating in Canada,
the US, and the UK

"The concepts in *Hardiness* are powerful, practical, and insightful. In my work leading a global coaching and leadership development practice, I have seen thousands of leaders struggle to cope with stress and know it impacts the organization's results. Fusing solid research with practical and relatable stories, this self-help book is a must-read for anyone that wants to live a happier and more productive life."

—Steve Dion, Principal, The DROSTE Group

HARDINESS

**Making Stress Work for You
to Achieve Your Life Goals**

DR. STEVEN J. STEIN | DR. PAUL T. BARTONE

WILEY

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*To our grandchildren,
Gemma Emery and Micah David (Steven's)
and Hazel Grace (Paul's).
Hoping they grow up in a hardier world.*

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Introduction

As the world changes around us with technology becoming more and more integrated into our lives, our need for human interactions only increases. Many of us are old enough to remember the days when personal computers first came onto the scene. We were promised that they would save us so much time we could start planning shorter work weeks, longer vacations, and sabbaticals. With the introduction of the Blackberry (remember that?) and the iPhone, the workday suddenly extended into our evenings, nights, weekends, and vacation time. We now know that technological innovations don't always work out quite the way their creators thought they would. Nor do they have the anticipated effects.

Not only are we living through a technological revolution, we live in a new age of information. For example, we know more about mental health and psychology now than we've ever known in history. The number of scientific papers being published in mental health alone is staggering. There are currently 525 scientific journals publishing thousands of articles just on this topic. If you search Amazon.com you can find over 60,000 books related to mental health. And these numbers are growing all the time.

Yet, with this explosion of knowledge about mental health and the increased availability of technology, we still haven't been able to take control of our problems. In fact, in many ways, things have gotten worse.

For example, we've seen dramatic increases in the negative effects of stress. Research reported by the American Institute of Stress shows that on-the-job stress is far and away the major source of stress for American adults. As well, it has escalated progressively over the past few decades. Increased levels of job stress, as evaluated by the perception of having little control but lots of demands, has been found to be associated with more heart attacks, hypertension, and other disorders.

Some sobering statistics on stress at work were reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. In one survey 40% of workers reported their jobs were “very or extremely stressful.” Another survey found that 26% of workers reported “often or very often being burned out or stressed by their work.” And a third, Yale University survey, reported that 29% of workers felt “quite a bit or extremely stressed at work.” With regard to our progress in the information/technology era, 75% of employees believe that workers have more on-the-job stress than a generation ago.

Not only do these numbers translate into huge losses to the economy, but they take an enormous human toll. An estimated one million workers are absent every day in the US due to stress. It’s also been reported that absenteeism is estimated to cost large American companies an average of \$3.5 million a year. One large corporation found that 60% of employee absences could be traced to psychological problems that were due to job stress.

What are some of the causes of workplace stress? One survey found the following breakdown: 46% due to workload, 28% due to people issues, 20% due to juggling work/personal lives, and 6% due to lack of job security (American Institute of Stress, 2006) as seen in Figure I.1. How manageable are these issues? In this book we explore ways in which you can better manage yourself

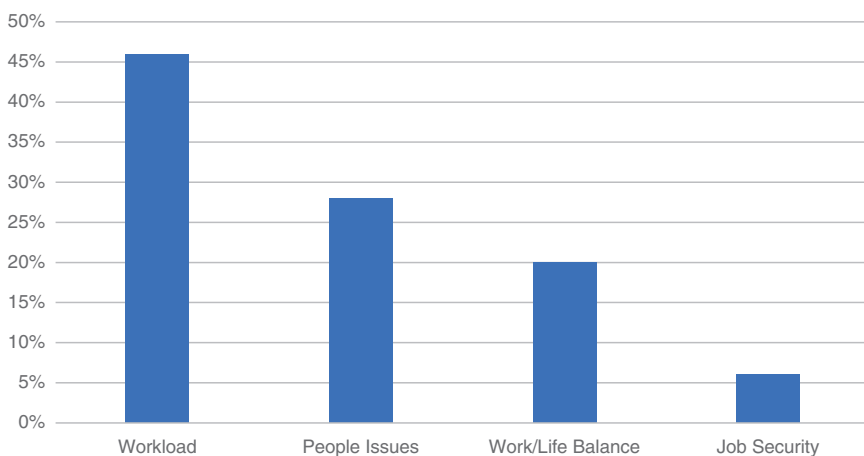


FIGURE I.1 Causes of Workplace Stress

and some of these situations. Our hope is that the information and methods that we provide can help you lead a more fulfilling and less stressed out life.

In this book we introduce you to the new (well, 30 years old), little known concept of hardiness. Hardiness is composed of three facets—commitment, control, and challenge. These facets work together to provide a kind of mental shield, helping people to stay healthy and even excel in the midst of stress and change. We'll be discussing these elements throughout the book.

How did we come upon this concept? Paul did his doctoral thesis on this topic over 30 years ago. After learning about how senior executives reacted in a wide variety of ways to the same news about a merger involving their organization—some got extremely stressed out and others were excited about the challenge—he got interested in this phenomenon. For his doctoral dissertation he wanted to see how stress played out with a working-class group of people—city bus drivers. Sure enough, there are wide differences in how bus drivers react to basically the same stressful situations.

As often happens in psychology, in order to study psychological factors, we need to develop measures that can capture them as best we can. Without validated measures we'd just be talking about theories, ideas, and opinions. While these are all useful starting points, we don't really know what's real until we can measure it and validate it. So, we can give you all kinds of theories about stress and how to manage it, but without documented research, it's merely a set of opinions. Paul continued his distinguished career in the military investigating hardiness, eventually reaching the rank of Colonel and teaching at the West Point Military Academy.

As part of this endeavor, Paul developed a tool to help measure hardiness. In order to understand hardiness and its effects on people, it's important to measure it. The tool was originally called the Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS), which evolved into the DRS15-R after years of research. Now, the instrument has been revised and further improved with large normative samples and greater applicability. The current tool is called the Hardiness

Resilience Gauge (HRG). It is the years of research using this instrument that has helped inform much of what we have learned about hardiness. Many of the studies we talk about in this book have relied on this hardiness measurement tool.

There are many practitioners who have been certified in the use of the HRG around the world. To connect with one of these practitioners, simply contact us at customerservice@mhs.com. To learn how to become a certified user yourself of the HRG, you can contact us at the same email address.

Meanwhile Steven has been involved for over 25 years in establishing and expanding our knowledge in the area of emotional intelligence. Being one of the pioneers in developing and escalating the use of the world's most widely used scientific measures of emotional intelligence (the Emotional Quotient Inventory 2.0 or EQ-i 2.0 and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test or MSCEIT), he has long been interested in factors that lead to emotional health. The hardiness factor, related to the stress tolerance element of emotional intelligence, is a perfect fit to continue this work.

In this book we use many real-life and some fictional examples of people and situations to illustrate our points. For the real-life examples we used people's full names and, when we included their hardiness scores, we obtained their permission. For the fictionalized accounts we tended to use examples of people we've known, but with made-up names and slightly changed details so they wouldn't be recognizable for confidentiality purposes.

We hope that the information, research, case studies, anecdotes, and exercises in this book will help make stress something that works for you (by developing a hardiness mindset) and will help you achieve your life goals.

Steven J. Stein, PhD
Paul T. Bartone, PhD

Chapter 1

Stress: What's All the Fuss?

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.”

—William James (American philosopher and psychologist)

Belinda had been preparing for this day weeks in advance. Her team was counting on her to fly to their head office in New York to present their new plan for the year. It involved a substantial increase in funding and a new direction for their division that would trigger many questions from the senior managers. Belinda could justify the new plan better than anyone, as she was most responsible for putting all the pieces together.

She woke up fresh and alert. She would take her kids to school on her way to the airport. She chose a flight that allowed her some relaxing time in the lounge at the airport. However, after looking out the window, she realized there was an obstacle she hadn't considered. Her driveway was completely covered in snow, and the snow removal guy she hired hadn't arrived yet. She suddenly felt a mild panic. Her heart started beating faster, and her face became a bit flushed.

She counted to five, and then told herself she still had lots of time.

“Be positive,” she thought. She could work this out.

She woke her kids and got them to help her start shoveling the snow in the meantime. The snow was heavy and deep, and the clock was ticking. She hoped school would be cancelled, but

unfortunately, the school district sent a text notifying parents that all the city schools were open.

By the time they got the driveway half cleared, she started getting anxious again, realizing she was losing valuable time. She then decided she would back out of the driveway by putting her foot to the pedal on her SUV with a force that would get her over the unshoveled snow and onto the road. The car suddenly lurched back and got caught at the end of the driveway, with the rear barely on the road. The snow was too deep. Her rear tires started to spin. She wasn't moving.

She began to shift from reverse to forward, back and forth, stepping on the gas each time. She asked her kids to push the car, but it wouldn't budge. They started shoveling again, then rocking the car. She was completely out of breath from shoveling and the fear of missing her flight. She felt like she might faint.

After 10 minutes of panic, she didn't know what to do. Could she leave her SUV partly on the street, should she call a cab or Uber, what next?

Suddenly she jumped out of the car and looked up and down the street for snow removal trucks. Finally, she saw one turning the corner and breathlessly ran towards it, stopping the driver in the middle of the street.

She asked if he'd help out by clearing the back of her driveway with his plow so she could get her car onto the road. He explained that he had dozens of driveways to clear and was already behind on his schedule. Her breathing, at this point, was so deep, she almost fell to the ground with exhaustion. She begged him, telling him she had to make it to the airport and how it was really important. He finally agreed and cleared the bottom of the driveway.

With her kids pushing her back she was finally able to make it onto the road. By now she had lost almost 40 minutes. She dropped her kids off at school and took off to the airport. The highway was completely jammed as the snow caused massive traffic congestion.

Sitting on the highway, she started sweating profusely. Her heart was racing once again. She had to make this plane. She finally got to the airport and decided to leave her car at the valet

parking where she grabbed the ticket from the attendant and ran to the departure gates.

When she got past security and to the gate, she was told the plane was delayed because of the snow. This caused even more anxiety because she knew all the senior team would be there waiting just for her. As she was waiting to board the plane, she got a call from the school telling her that her youngest son was sick and throwing up. By now her hands were sweating even more, and she began shaking. She had to try to reach her mother and ask her if she could pick up her son.

The flight finally took off an hour and a half late. When she arrived, she was able to get a cab and slowly made her way through New York traffic to get to the head office. As she was rehearsing her presentation in her mind and trying to keep calm, she suddenly realized she left behind the handouts that she had prepared for each of the senior team. Now she was in total panic. There was nothing she could do. She never prepared for this many things to go wrong. She now felt completely powerless.

How would you feel after a morning like that? Would you be stressed out, or would it be just another day at the office for you?

Can you remember the last time you were stressed out? Did it involve a major life event—like an illness or death in the family? Was it work or school related—being judged on a presentation, performance review, or exam? Or financial—not having enough money to meet your goals? Or maybe a relationship problem—not being treated fairly by friends who should know better? Perhaps just the everyday demands on your life are enough to stress you out.

How is it that some people are overwhelmed by the slightest disruption or change in their lives, while others seem to make it through catastrophes relatively unscathed? Or that two people, experiencing the exact same event, such as the breakup of a relationship or a serious illness, can react in completely different ways? A colleague of ours, having gone through a similar experience as Belinda's, had a totally different reaction. As Cathy encountered each new obstacle, she saw it as a challenge, something to problem-solve her way through. She wasn't worried about failing, but just kept plowing through each new challenge.

Perhaps getting a better understanding of stress, and how it works, can help us begin to understand these questions. Once we do, we can begin to learn how to better manage the stress in our own lives, and even turn stress into an advantage!

Stress: It's Unavoidable

Stress is a necessary part of life. As the early stress researcher Hans Selye once said, the only stress-free person is a dead one (Selye, 1978). Every day we experience challenges that are more or less stressful, causing our bodies and brains to react in characteristic ways. And although this has been true for as long as humans have walked the earth, modern life only seems to be getting more and more stressful. Novel and changing technologies have shifted the way we live and do business. New systems and approaches are appearing at a fast pace, forcing changes in how many jobs get accomplished (Thack & Woodman, 1994). The internet alone has vastly expanded the information available to us, while at the same time opening the door to misinformation, cybercrime, and loss of personal data (Aiken, 2016).

Jobs and relationships are less stable. Increasing globalization of operations for many organizations means that employees must learn to function and communicate in strange cultures. Changes are coming more often, and futures are harder to predict. At the same time, stress-related diseases and other problems continue to rise, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, drug and alcohol abuse, depression, and, yes, suicide. Stress can make you sick, unhappy, and not a very good employee, partner, or parent.

BAD STRESS, GOOD STRESS: HOW KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE CAN HELP YOU LIVE LONGER

In today's environment, knowing how to cope effectively with stress is more important than ever. Much of the early research on human responses to stress focused on the ill effects of various major life events, such as divorce, a death in the family, or losing your job (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). We hear a lot about the negative effects or the results of "bad stress."

New research, however, is teaching us that not all stress is necessarily bad. One major study, reported in 2012, comes from data collected over a dozen years earlier. Nearly 186 million adults participated in a U.S. National Health Interview in which they were asked dozens of questions about their habits and how they coped with life. These data were later linked to the National Death Index to see if there were any relationships between people's habits and how long they actually lived. While there are many different causes of death, it was thought that by mining such a large database we could at least provide some clues and perhaps connections between people's lifestyles and their longevity.

It may not be that surprising to learn that 55% of the participants reported experiencing moderate to high levels of stress during the year they were interviewed. If we look at many of the people around us, both at work and in our social and family lives, we'd probably come up with a similar finding. Upon further probing, the researchers discovered that 34% described how this stress had negatively affected their health to some extent during that time. So, while over half of the people surveyed were experiencing high levels of stress, only about a third of them felt it was negatively affecting their health in some way.

Later on, the researchers did a follow-up, examining death records and matching them to the people who were interviewed. They made a surprising discovery. Of the people who reported high stress levels, those that said the stress negatively affected their health had a 43% greater chance of premature death. In other words, people who interpret their stress as not having a negative impact on their lives have a better chance of living longer. These researchers went on to find a relationship between people's coping styles with stress and how long they lived, supporting the idea that it's not the stress itself that's bad, but how we manage the stress that's important.

In the words of the study authors, "Stress appraisal plays an important role in determining health outcomes. These findings also suggest that perceived stress and beliefs about the impact of stress on health might work synergistically to increase risk for premature mortality" (Keller, Litzelman, Wisk, Creswell, & Will, 2012).

Many other studies have shown that major stressful events can lead to all kinds of serious illness, from heart disease to cancer. But it's not just the experience of stressful events. Rather, it's how we appraise or think about these events that seems to matter most. For example, a recent study of California women found that those who perceived prior life events as more stressful were at greater risk for breast cancer, as compared to women who experienced the same events but perceived them as less stressful (Fischer, Ziogas, & Anton-Culver, 2018). As the study authors say, "Perception matters."

It's a curious fact that people often respond very differently to the same challenging conditions in life.

PEOPLE ARE RESISTANT OR RESILIENT TO STRESS

Our colleague Cathy, whom we referred to earlier, reacted quite differently to a situation quite similar to Belinda's. Cathy, who is very self-confident, likes challenges, yet she still manages to stay in touch with reality. She knows that not all problems are solvable. Perhaps the flight was cancelled, and there was no way to make it for the meeting. While Belinda might blame herself for failing, Cathy would look for alternatives, perhaps a virtual meeting, or try to reschedule.

Cathy also reviewed the experience, looking for lessons she could learn from it to improve on the next time she faced a similar situation. For example, she would check the weather the night before. She might arrange in advance for someone else to take the kids to school. She might even leave a day early to make sure weather or other factors didn't prevent her from getting to the meeting. She realizes that everyone fails sometimes, but it's what you do with the failure, how you process it, that makes the difference.

Your Body's Response to Stress

Bret and Sally were both getting ready to make a presentation at their company town hall meeting. Bret was going to make his first presentation in front of a large group, discussing the financial results of the previous quarter. Sally, also making her first presentation in front of a group, was going to share the company's

marketing plans going forward. They expected about 200 of their fellow employees to be there. You'd never know they were both going to the same meeting.

"I am so stressed out," Sally said. "My hands are shaking, I have butterflies in my stomach, and my heart is racing. I could barely sleep last night."

"Wow, and your skin is pretty pale. You'd better get a glass of water," Bret responded.

"What about you, Bret? You must be nervous. Everyone's going to be watching," Sally replied.

"Actually, I'm pretty charged! I've been working with these new graph templates, and I found some really funny graphics to spice up my slides. I can't wait to try them out in front of everyone!" he responded, a bit sheepishly, trying to be sensitive to Sally's unease.

How is it that what is anxiety provoking for one person can be exciting for someone else? We find this same thing happens across many areas of life.

While for some, a job loss may lead to depression and ruin, others see it as an opportunity to branch out into some new area. Some people seem to routinely cope more effectively with the changes and challenges of life. In recent years, this has been labeled "resilience" (Layne, Warren, Watson, & Shalev, 2007). What accounts for these individual differences? What makes some people more resilient than others when confronting stressful situations? We'll present you with some of the latest research and provide you with some ways in which you can practice improving your own abilities in this area.

At some level we all know that stress has a physical component. We've all experienced life's pressures and how we can react to them both mentally and physically. Whether it's just a short-term threat or an ongoing number of issues that weigh on our mind, we often *feel* the stress.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT: OUR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

What happens to your body when you go into stress mode? Imagine one of your ancestors walking into the jungle and suddenly

coming across a lion moving in the opposite direction. The sight of the large beast, and perhaps the slightest eye contact, would most likely send an immediate shock to his system.

When the shock first hits, he experiences an acute stress, which triggers his body's hormones to activate his sympathetic nervous system. Suddenly his adrenal glands release catecholamines, including adrenaline and noradrenaline. This leads to an increase in his heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate. His fast heartbeat and breathing help give his body energy to respond. His skin becomes flushed or pale as the blood flow to the surface of his body is decreased so it can go to his muscles, legs, arms, and his brain. As the blood rushes to his brain, his face starts to alternate between pale and flushed. His blood-clotting ability also increases in case he receives any injury that involves blood loss.

At the same time as all of this, your ancestor's body is preparing to be more aware and observant of his surroundings—so he can decide which is the safest way to run. His pupils dilate, allowing more light into his eyes and giving him better vision of his surroundings. His body also immediately starts to tremble or shake, which is the response of his muscles tensing up and being primed for action.

This sudden shock he is experiencing was named the “flight or fight” response by American physiologist Walter Cannon (Cannon, 1915). The idea here is that the shock prepares us physiologically and mentally, as described above, to either flee quickly or stand up to the threat and take immediate action against it—usually physically. Hence, the “fight” or “flight.” Alternatively, it was referred to as the first phase of the general adaptation syndrome (GAS) by the previously mentioned physiologist Hans Selye. Once the threat is gone, it may take between 20 and 60 minutes for the body to return to its prearousal levels.

It's this system that has largely allowed us to avoid predators and survive as a species. However, the challenges our ancestors experienced have significantly changed in today's world. It's only our response to these challenges that has largely remained the same.

STRESS'S LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON HEALTH

Stress, especially when negatively perceived, and chronic, has additional effects on our bodies. The same effects we see in acute stress, such as increased heart rate and blood pressure, over longer periods of time, can produce a chronic wear and tear on the cardiovascular system that can result in disorders such as stroke and heart attacks.

Other effects of being “stressed out” include changes in behavior that have been found to be detrimental to health. These include poor sleep, eating or drinking too much, smoking, drug use, and lack of physical activity (McEwen, 2008). All of these can have direct and indirect effects on your ability to live a long and satisfying life.

POSITIVE WAYS TO HANDLE STRESS

In this book we'll be exploring positive approaches that people have successfully used to handle the stressful situations in their lives. Some of the techniques we present are well documented in scientific research journals. Others have been developed, used, and modified through our collective work across different environments. Our experience includes people from all walks of life and spans military personnel, students, corporate executives, various workplaces (nonprofit, for-profit, government), lawyers, entertainers, athletes (professional, Olympic, and amateur), managers, frontline workers, leaders, homeless people, and homemakers.

**Hardiness Can Make a Big Difference
in How You Cope with Stress**

This is a book about hardiness, something we believe is an essential ingredient that helps people cope effectively with life stressors, and even thrive under stress. While the supporting evidence behind hardiness is based on over 40 years of scientific research, we don't intend to bore you with all the technical details. There is plenty of that to be found in professional books and journals. However, we do include numerous references and an index for the interested reader. Rather, our main aim with this book is to

explain hardiness in a way that make sense to the average reader, and to provide tips and strategies to improve your own hardiness and your ability to deal with the stresses of life.

Over 40 years ago, a University of Chicago graduate student wondered about the different reactions within a group of corporate executives who were going through a major organizational restructuring and downsizing. Suzanne Kobasa wanted to know why some of these executives were getting sick and demoralized, while others seemed to be thriving, all while experiencing the same disruptive and stressful conditions. Later, she published her findings in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (Kobasa, 1979). Her research showed that those executives who developed stress-related health problems were lacking in certain personality features when compared to those who stayed healthy through this stressful reorganization.

Kobasa called this set of attitudes “hardiness.” Not long after that, one of the authors of this book (Paul) extended this work by looking at a blue-collar sample of Chicago city bus drivers (Bartone, 1984). It turns out that city bus drivers have a pretty stressful job, dealing with traffic, time pressures, and sometimes angry and even violent passengers. His doctoral research showed that these job stressors often lead to a range of health problems, such as hypertension, heart disease, and stomach problems. But those bus drivers who are high in hardiness are largely protected from these problems, staying healthy despite the job stress.

Since then, hundreds of studies have confirmed the importance of hardiness as a stress resilience resource that protects people from the bad effects that stress can have on health, happiness, and performance.

Introducing the Three Cs

In the high-hardy person, the three facets of commitment, challenge, and control work together in synchrony, creating a mindset or worldview that is highly effective and makes them resilient in coping with stressful conditions. This constellation of qualities,

called hardiness, is found in people who stay healthy and continue to perform well in life, despite experiencing a range of stressful conditions (Bartone, 1999; Bartone, Roland, Picano, & Williams, 2008; Maddi & Kobasa, 1984).

HARDINESS AND COMMITMENT

People high in hardiness-commitment see life as overall meaningful and worthwhile, even though it sometimes brings pain and disappointment. Hardiness-commitment also includes a striving for personal competence as first described by the Harvard psychologist Robert White (White, 1959). The sense of competence aids the person in making realistic appraisals of novel and stressful situations, and generates increased self-confidence that one can handle adversity.

To be high in **commitment** means looking at the world as interesting and useful, even when things are difficult. These kinds of people pursue their interests with vigor, are deeply involved with their work, and are socially engaged with other people. They are also reflective about themselves and aware of their own feelings and reactions.

Low commitment people are often bored and don't find much meaning in life. They go to school or work or are unemployed with no real game plan or idea of where they want to be in the future. They tend to be unreflective and disengaged, not much interested in their work, themselves, or other people in general. When presented with a challenge, those low in commitment tend to give up easily. Figure 1.1 gives you some examples of how people with different levels of hardiness relate to commitment.

HARDINESS AND CHALLENGE

People high in hardiness have a strong sense of **challenge**: they enjoy variety and tend to see change and disruptions in life as interesting opportunities to learn and grow. They understand that problems are a part of life, and they set out to solve them, rather than run away from them. For these people, taking on new challenges is an interesting way to learn about themselves and their own capabilities, while also learning about the world.