

How Do I Handle Stress and Adversity?

Hardiness is a personality characteristic that enables individuals to take stress and adversity in stride. It is based on how we approach and interpret life experiences. Understanding hardiness is useful in predicting how someone maintains her sense of well-being under difficult circumstances. In other words, hardiness is a measure of the internal processes that lead to resilience.

To determine your level of resiliency—and how it determines your ability to handle stress and adversity—read each statement and choose the response that most accurately describes your thoughts or feelings. Record the corresponding numeric score for each response. And remember that there are no wrong answers.

1. **What happens in life is mostly controlled by ...**
 - Fate or chance (0 points)
 - Personal choices (1 point)
2. **When something bad happens to me ...**
 - I tend to think about it over and over (0 points)
 - I am able to put it behind me and move on (1 point)
3. **When I am feeling stressed ...**
 - Most everyone around me can tell (0 points)
 - Only those whom I choose to tell will know (1 point)
4. **I am comfortable expressing my ideas because others usually are interested in what I have to say.**
 - Agree (1 point)
 - Disagree (0 points)
5. **Working hard every day ...**
 - Is silly because the managers and owners reap most of the rewards (0 points)
 - Is the best way to get ahead (1 point)
6. **When a task has me stuck and the deadline is approaching, I will ...**
 - Seek the advice of others (1 point)
 - Work harder and faster (0 points)
7. **Changes in routine or procedures are ...**
 - Frustrating (0 points)
 - Exciting (1 point)
8. **What happens tomorrow depends mostly on ...**
 - Those in charge (0 points)
 - What I do today (1 point)
9. **I have spent most of my life doing things that are worthwhile.**
 - Agree (1 point)
 - Disagree (0 points)
10. **People who are wealthy ...**
 - Are luckier than most others (0 points)
 - Have what they worked for (1 point)
11. **I tend to become very self-critical and blame myself when things go wrong.**
 - Agree (0 points)
 - Disagree (1 point)

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12. **When I have something unpleasant to do, I ...**
 - Stick to it until it's finished (1 point)
 - Procrastinate (0 points)
13. **Getting ahead depends on ...**
 - Knowing the right people (0 points)
 - Working hard (1 point)
14. **I handle unexpected problems better than most people.**
 - Agree (1 point)
 - Disagree (0 points)
15. **I am more energized when ...**
 - Things are predictable and scheduled (0 points)
 - Things are spontaneous and unpredictable (1 point)
16. **It's almost impossible for me to get things changed at work.**
 - Agree (0 points)
 - Disagree (1 point)
17. **In a crisis I ...**
 - Wait for someone to take charge and join in (0 points)
 - Usually take charge yourself (1 point)
18. **When I am sad or afraid I ...**
 - Keep it to myself (0 points)
 - Have someone I can talk with (1 point)
19. **If a friend or co-worker offends me or makes me angry, I ...**
 - Try to ignore it (0 points)
 - Try to talk it out with him or her (1 point)
20. **Most days, I find that life is ...**
 - Predictable and not too exciting (0 points)
 - Interesting and exciting (1 point)
21. **I believe that a Higher Being has a plan or good purpose for my life.**
 - Agree (1 point)
 - Disagree (0 points)
22. **Most truly successful people ...**
 - Were born with special abilities (0 points)
 - Were average people who learned how to be successful (1 point)
23. **When I make plans, I'm sure that I can make them work.**
 - Agree (1 point)
 - Disagree (0 points)
24. **It is hard for me to change a friend's mind about something.**
 - Agree (0 points)
 - Disagree (1 point)
25. **I avoid trying to learn new things when they look too complicated or difficult.**
 - Agree (0 points)
 - Disagree (1 point)
26. **When someone is in emotional distress and in need of comfort ...**
 - I am comfortable providing such comfort (1 point)
 - I am uncomfortable providing such comfort (0 points)

27. **When there are problems at work I tend to ...**
 - Hang back and follow the lead of another (0 points)
 - Offer suggestions to improve the situation (1 point)
28. **It's a good day at work when ...**
 - Nothing bad happens (0 points)
 - When I am faced with an interesting challenge (1 point)
29. **Being active and learning new things are encouraged in my family.**
 - Agree (1 point)
 - Disagree (0 points)
30. **Life would be better if ...**
 - I had fewer responsibilities (0 points)
 - I had more responsibilities (1 point)

Results

Total your score. If your score is:

20 to 30 points: You are highly resilient. Indicators of resilience include how we perceive and value ourselves, our sense of purpose and adaptability, our influence on the world and those around us, and our passion and excitement for life.

When faced with crisis or a vexing problem you engage, not retreat. You see the possibilities in difficult situations that others often miss. You are comfortable with who you are, believe that there is a purpose for your life, and seldom let past mistakes weigh you down or keep you from pursuing your goals. You have at least one special relationship in which you can trust and confide when the going gets tough. You feel that your opinions count and that you can make a difference. Under stress you adapt and somehow manage to maintain your sense of well-being.

Although you handle stress and adversity well, if you ever have difficulty coping and want additional support, you may benefit from contacting your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

13 to 19 points: You are moderately resilient. Indicators of resilience include how we perceive and value ourselves, our sense of purpose and adaptability, our influence on the world and those around us, and our passion and excitement for life.

You like working and living in an environment that is more organized and predictable, but when faced with crisis or a vexing problem you take it on rather than retreat. You are tough minded so you look for ways to improve difficult circumstances. You have at least one relationship in which you can trust and confide when the going gets tough but you are just as likely to keep your feelings to yourself. You believe that your opinions count and that your life has a purpose.

Under stress you endure, buckle down and keep going. Still, if you ever have difficulty coping and want additional support, please consider consulting your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

0 to 12 points: Your resilience is low. Indicators of resilience include how we perceive and value ourselves, our sense of purpose and adaptability, our influence on the world and those around us,

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and our passion and excitement for life. Resilience is the result of numerous factors and life experiences so it tends to change as our experiences change.

You dislike change, which makes you less resilient to the effects of stress and pressure. You perceive that those in power call the shots so you quite often look to others to solve problems. When faced with a crisis or complex problem you tend to avoid dealing with it directly and may seek relief by some means of escape—healthy or unhealthy.

Under stress you may need the support of others to help keep things in perspective while you endure the troubled times. Take heart—millions of others are in the same boat. When faced with a stressful situation, please consider consulting your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for help.

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