



Don't Worry, Be Hardy

By Fred Schafer, MS, CFT www.fredstrikes.com

The dictionary defines hardy as being in robust and sturdy good health; courageous, intrepid, brazenly daring, audacious and capable of surviving unfavorable conditions.

In studying successful centenarians, researchers have uncovered “the hardiness factor.” A successful centenarian is a person who has lived to 100 years and is still independent. The factor that distinguishes them from others is how “hardy” they are.

Hardiness is a word from the plant world used to describe a plant’s ability to survive adverse conditions. As we enter 2009 year facing unfavorable economic conditions, it will serve us well to increase our hardiness factor.

People ranking high on the hardiness scale have a sense of control over their lives and make a positive difference. This is a result of their commitment, control and attitude toward challenges.

While others are withering, hardy people instead increase their commitment, are actively involved, and see what others call problems as challenges to learn, grow and overcome.

To thrive rather than survive, consider planting “hardiness seeds” in the various areas of your life. These areas are identified in the world of wellness promotion as physical health, mental health, relationship health, career health and spiritual health.

Take five minutes every day to plant a “seed” in each one of the five wellness areas. Just think, to hit all five areas takes only 25 minutes, less time than it takes to watch a TV sitcom.

For example, to improve your physical health, do five minutes of chair squats or go for a five minute walk. For mental health, read a biography of an inspiring person for five minutes. To improve a relationship, take five minutes to listen to your child/spouse/friend. To improve your career, listen to a CD on leadership for five minutes. To grow spiritually, “workout” your faith by reading, studying or meditating for five minutes each day.

This simple system has helped many of my clients increase their hardiness and thrive through storms as they developed habits that improved their results, health and hope.

Start planting these seeds today. Over time, you will likely devote a little more time to each of the five areas and especially the ones needing the most attention. Eventually you could be standing taller, stronger and even more successful throughout 2009.

(Note: This article by Fred Schafer originally appeared in the California School Business magazine's August 2008 issue.)