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October 19, 2010

## Hard Times Really Are Good For You-- Sort Of

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Posted by [Alisa Bowman](#) at 05:00:00 AM on October 19, 2010

We've all known that person who seems to have pulled a very short straw in the game of life and has suffered one horrific and unavoidable event after another.

And, at least in some cases, we look at such people and we marvel at their strength to go on living.

It begs the question: if something doesn't kill you, does it really make you stronger?

Researchers from the University of Buffalo and University of California at Irvine recently decided to find out. They surveyed more than 2000 people about their lifetime history of adverse events and matched that with measures of mental health and well being.

What they found was quite interesting. It was this: there seems to be a sweet spot when it comes to hardship. Just enough of it makes you stronger. Too much of it does you in. And too little of it causes emotional distress, too.

The people who had just enough hardship were less stressed and more resilient. They seemed to have learned from their past hardships, so they could more easily adapt to current and future hardships.

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### ABOUT THE WRITERS



**ALISA BOWMAN** Alisa Bowman has been a health junkie and health journalist for nearly 20 years. A former newspaper reporter and magazine editor, her articles and essays have appeared in national magazines such as Parade, Better Homes &

Gardens and Women's Health. She runs, adores vegetables and meditates in Emmaus, where her husband and daughter are known to eat Cheetos behind her back. She also writes about marriage at [ProjectHappilyEverAfter.com](#).



**IRENE KRAFT** Irene Kraft has a passion for health and fitness. During her years at The Morning Call, she's been an award-winning nutrition writer, editor of health sections and an editor of Change of Heart, a three-year project focused on reducing heart disease in the Lehigh

Valley. She loves fitness walks with her dog Ranger. And she likes to think her younger son inherited his interest in health from her. He's a cardiologist practicing in the Valley.



**VERONICA TORREJON** Veronica Torrejon, a Morning Call reporter since 2005, has been the health reporter since 2008. A longtime science geek, she worked as a college intern and then research assistant at the USDA Carl Hayden Bee Research Center in Tucson,