

**PRAISE FOR *ADVERSITY QUOTIENT: TURNING
OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITIES***

"Solid truth, well-packaged. Dr. Stoltz has built a highly usable model that creates significant and sustainable change in people's lives. This is a breakthrough application that provides people a healthy and effective approach to building personal resiliency."

Phil Styrlund, Divisional Vice President, ADC Telecommunications

"Every person on earth should apply these principles. Paul Stoltz has found the missing ingredient for improving and succeeding in the workplace and at home. I will live by the wisdom in this book and teach it to my children."

Niel Campbell, Principal Hardware Engineer, Microsoft Corporation

"Paul Stoltz has written the enduring guidebook for the twenty-first century. In it he provides exceptional wisdom for personal and professional success. I place this book on par with *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*."

Stephen Burrill, Partner with Deloitte & Touche LLP

"In an era of uncontrollable, unforecastable change, we at Mott's believe that speed in managing change can give us a sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace. Paul Stoltz and his AQ theory have allowed us to adopt the position with our managers that "not managing change is considered failure of duty!" Finally this scientific practice process shows us how to help people understand and, more importantly, cope with change and adversity."

Jeff Black, Vice President of Sales and Consumer Marketing,
Mott's

"There is an urgent need for this book. The fresh information, grounded research, and practical tools within its pages are essential to anyone wishing to raise his or her effectiveness. Read this book to become undaunted in the face of adversity big or small."

Jim Williams, President, Options for Organizational Effectiveness

"An unusual insight into how to jump start yourself and your organization."

Edwin Russell, President and CEO of Minnesota Power

"It's time to test your AQ—and Paul Stoltz's timely and important book will show you how."

Dr. Eric Soares, Chair, Department of Marketing, California State University, Hayward

"Beyond climbing through adversity, AQ is about how we can live better lives. Full of wisdom, common sense, and insight, this book should be available in the seat back pocket of every airplane today."

Richard J. Leider, Partner, The Inventure Group, Author of *The Power of Purpose* and *Repacking Your Bags*

"The expanding global economy, combined with the "do-more-with-less" thinking in today's right-sized corporations, makes AQ one of the best leadership instruments available to your management team. I recommend the AQ philosophy when you are in search of (and in need of predictors of success for) those who are at their best navigating the rough seas of today's matrix organizations."

R. Todd Rossel, National Director, Human Resources Management Solutions and Services, Deloitte & Touche LLP

"In AQ, Paul Stoltz presents a compelling argument for the need to redefine what it takes to succeed. AQ is both a measure and a philosophy. As a measure it brings together research of cognitive psychology, psychoneuroimmunology, and neurophysiology to form a composite picture of how we approach adversity and why. As a philosophy, AQ represents a way of reframing our lives. AQ is a logic for moving forward, for becoming more than we are, and for taking control of where we are going."

Dr. Gerald Pepper, Professor, Department of Communication, University of Minnesota

"A valuable, much-needed book! A real contribution to the field of leadership and change. The book provides a creative, fresh approach to overcoming adversity through well-grounded, tightly-organized, and current research, as well as inspiring stories and information."

Dr. Margaret Hatcher, Director, Northern Arizona Leadership Institute, Northern Arizona University

"AQ is a must read for anyone interested in raising their own performance potential and should be mandatory reading for all professionals, managers, and all motivators of teams, institutions, and corporations."

R. Martin Kenney, President Emeritus, Notre Dame College,
Canada

"AQ provides a practical, easily learned, and highly effective tool to change self-defeating thought patterns. AQ gave me a sense of perspective and control over what's important to me. My leadership team is better able to work through barriers and move rapidly to solve problems. The result is increased productivity and satisfaction."

Conny Frish, Forest Supervisor, Kaibab National Forest

"Dr. Stoltz's approach addresses the critical element in dealing with the problems of the inner city."

Rod Hohl, CFO, Southwest Leadership Institute

"Dr. Paul G. Stoltz is a "Climber" whose work on raising one's AQ has given me a most valued gift toward achieving my personal and professional goals. I consider Paul Stoltz a leader in his field with a message and a method that really works!"

Daniel S. Dubrava, Regional Manager, Raynor Manufacturing

"This seminal book should be of interest to managers, executives, educators, and scholars. Dr. Stoltz shows us how a person can thrive in spite of the adversity of our ever-changing environment."

Dr. Alfred Raisters, Honorary Consul, Consulate of Latvia

"In a world preoccupied with quick fixes, Paul Stoltz offers paths and pay-offs for facing and surmounting adversity. In AQ, 'turning lemons into lemonade' is not a cliché, but rather a recipe for a rich and rewarding life. Paul's work is a creative application of hard science to the soft science of individual and societal potential."

Joel Hodroff, Founder, Commonweal, Inc.

"Paul Stoltz grabbed my attention and wouldn't let go. You don't read this book; it reads you. You don't pick this book up; it picks you up. AQ is a work of breadth and depth, one of the rare examples of psychological research transformed into practical wisdom."

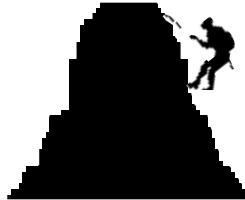
Dale Dauten, columnist, nationally syndicated by King Features

"IQ may have been a way to get the job, but AQ will keep you there. Stoltz shows us what, why, and how to sustain and succeed in this downsized decade and the next century. I have worked with leaders, managers, and staff in corporations on six continents. Regardless of country or culture, I have found AQ to be a better indicator of personal balance and business success than anything else."

Bailey Allard, President, Allard Associates, Inc.

ADVERSITY QUOTIENT

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TURNING OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

PAUL G. STOLTZ, PhD



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*To my bride, the true talent in the family,
without whom this book would not exist,
for elevating the human spirit and
providing a daily example of the Ascent.*

FOREWORD

For too many, hopelessness is defined very early in life. Too frequently, what might have been never gets a chance. What determines our ambition over time? What is the unique factor in each of our lives that will determine where we set our sights? And what forces will cause us to move closer or further from their realization? What can we do to alter the outcome? Dr. Stoltz's work helps us to seize control of our destinies, to understand and permanently improve our own ambition and motivation, and to lead a meaningful life.

Now more than ever there is an urgent need to identify, grow, and become full contributors in work and in life. This book provides the long awaited answer to the question, "What does it take to make an extraordinary contribution over a lifetime?" It pinpoints and teaches the behaviors and characteristics that differentiate extraordinary people from those who settle for less, or do not participate at all. No message could be more timely.

Paradox rules the day. On the one hand is the promise of technology to improve our lives. On the other hand is the disheartening societal discord, a growing economic gap between the classes, relentless competition, and largely unmet human needs.

For some of us, technological advances offer improvements. But for many of us, it just doesn't work out that way. Despite the gains in information technology, the burden of striving in modern society and assimilating increasing levels of information has become overwhelming to a large portion of our population. A pervasive sense of hopelessness is too often the result. Old cures fall short.

Adversity Quotient, or AQ, is at once a powerful theory, a meaningful measure, and a honed set of tools for persevering through challenging times. It will provoke you to rethink your current

formula of success. Yet, current challenges require more than new thoughts. Graspable, useable, and effective methods are a must.

What determines your drive to live and contribute purposefully? Consider ambition and volition to be plotted on a bell curve. The implications of where you are on the curve are profound. On the low end are those who show little if any effort. In the middle bulge ride the majority who do enough to get by, but fall short of their full potential. On the high end are the 10 percent of people who pioneer change and advancement for the remaining 90 percent. For the first time, AQ unravels this mystery of human motivation and empowerment, infusing us with the fundamental hope, principles, and methods for a rarefied life and career on the front of the curve.

The thoughtful, systematic improvement process contained in these pages pertains as essentially to organizations as it does to teams, families, communities, and individuals. Each will benefit from the three-point process of discovering, measuring, and improving their individual and collective AQs.

Organizational leaders are given a new way of defining, pinpointing, and developing top performers. They are provided with a sustainable path, map, and compass for pursuing a culture of perseverance and achievement, and with it a new notion of managing change.

Teams are given a refreshing and essential understanding of participation, contribution, and interpersonal dynamics. AQ quickly becomes an integral part of any high-performance team's vocabulary and norms. Through the AQ model and methods, families and communities learn practical approaches for turning hopelessness around while fortifying their members with enduring strategies for greater purpose and fulfillment.

Ultimately, this book is about hope for human (one) and humanity (all). With that hope comes the doing and the ability to *aspire*. I believe this work represents the clearest and most succinctly expressed hope any of us has, individually and collectively, to live more fully, starting today.

DAVID PULATIE
Senior Vice President
Motorola, Inc.

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PART ONE

**THRIVING IN THE
AGE OF ADVERSITY**

C H A P T E R

1

A large, bold, black number '1' is centered on the page. To the right of the top of the '1', there is a small silhouette of a person climbing a rock face, with a rope visible. The person is positioned as if they are ascending the right side of the number.

A New View of Success

Deep within humans dwell those slumbering powers; powers that would astonish them, that they never dreamed of possessing; forces that would revolutionize their lives if aroused and put into action.

Orison Marden

It is an area about the size of a garage, a rugged throne of rock and ice jutting nearly six miles up toward the heavens. Above the jet-stream itself and higher than most airliners fly is the pinnacle of Mt. Everest, the mountain of all mountains.

As the place on earth that is closest to the stars, climbers are lured by its magnificence and the sheer challenge. Yet, there are no guarantees. Only one in seven who attempt the summit ever make it. Close to the summit storms blow through at 100 miles per hour pounding their victims with triple-digit wind chills, and zero visibility. Every climber dies a little, fighting a losing battle against cachexia. Above 18,000 feet, cuts never heal, the body depletes, and the air is so dry a cough literally fractures ribs. To climb through such adverse conditions is the ultimate test of a human being.

On Friday, May 10, 1996, 31 climbers from five expeditions reached the summit. Suddenly, a ferocious storm took hold, stranding many of the climbers. Within hours, some of them would live,

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others would die. Among them was Doug Hanson, a postal worker from Renton, Washington. When the storm hit, Hanson laid down. It is extremely dangerous to lie down on your descent. Few ever get back up. Some time during that frozen night, Hanson submitted and died.

Hanson was not alone in facing the harsh conditions of the mountain. Elsewhere on the route to the summit another climber, Beck Weathers lay unconscious in the snow. During the night, a rescue team found Weathers and determined it was impossible to save him. It was too dark, the trail too treacherous, and Weathers was too far gone.

However, a few hours later, Weathers stirred something deep inside himself that saved him from his icy doom and awakened him to his grim situation. According to *Newsweek*, Weathers reported, “I was on my back on the ice. It was colder than anything you can believe. My right glove was gone, my hand looked like it was molded of plastic.”

Weathers had every reason to give up. He had taken on the mountain and lost. He lacked supplies, his team, shelter, and any probability of survival. But, confronted with his end, Weathers somehow triggered the inner resolve to take on a mountain bigger than he had ever climbed before. Frozen, exhausted, alone, and barely alive, Weathers would have to somehow move, stand, and navigate the treacherous journey back to Base Camp, a speck in a wilderness of white. A deep sense of purpose spurred him to action. Lying there in the snow, he said, “I could see the faces of my wife and children pretty clearly. I figured I had three or four hours to live, so I started walking.” To Weathers, the next few hours seemed like centuries. Knowing rest meant certain death, he somehow kept moving.

It became light and Weathers stumbled upon what looked like a blue rock. Fortunately, it was a tent. His team hauled Weathers inside; his clothes were so stiff with ice they had to cut them away. They put a hot water bottle to his chest and gave him oxygen. No one expected Weathers to survive. Due to the unexpected adversity brought on by the storm, others with greater skill, even world-famous mountaineering guides such as Scott Fischer, would die.

In fact, Weathers’ wife had already received a message that her husband had died, only to find out hours later that he had



somehow lived. None had accounted for that element inside Beck Weathers that enabled him to survive against such insurmountable odds while so many others perished. *Would you have survived?*

THE ASCENT—REDEFINING SUCCESS

Life is like mountain climbing. Fulfillment is achieved by relentless dedication to the ascent, sometimes slow, painful step, by slow, painful step.

Scaling the mountain is an indescribable experience, one only fellow climbers can understand and share. Amid the relief, satisfaction, and exhaustion is a sense of joy and peace as rarefied as the mountain air. Only the Climber tastes this sweet success. Those who stay encamped may be justified, as well as warmer and safer, but never will they feel “on purpose,” as alive, as proud and as joyful.

Success can be defined as the degree to which one moves forward and upward, progressing in one’s lifelong mission, despite all obstacles or other forms of *adversity*.

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF HUMAN EFFECTIVENESS

Why do some people persist, while others fall short or even quit? Drawing from scientific research, this book answers the most fundamental question of human and organizational effectiveness. The question takes many forms:

- Why do some organizations thrive on competition, while others are crushed?
- Why does one entrepreneur beat unfathomable odds, while others give up?
- Why do some parents rear children who are good citizens in neighborhoods riddled with violence and drugs?
- Why does an individual beat the odds, overcoming an abusive childhood when most do not?

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- Why does one inner-city teacher positively impact students' lives, while the rest of the faculty barely get by?
- Why does one laid-off aerospace manager spring to action and reshape her destiny, while her counterparts fall into fear and depression?
- Why do so many gifted or high IQ people fall far short of their potential?

Every day we see people like Beck Weathers, who, despite seemingly insurmountable odds, somehow keep going. While others are pounded down by an incessant avalanche of change, these individuals are able to consistently rise up and break through, becoming more skilled and empowered as they go. Adversity doesn't create insurmountable barriers. Each hardship is a challenge, each challenge an opportunity, and each opportunity embraced. Change is a welcome part of the journey.

If, like Beck Weathers, you are the kind of person who would fight back and somehow find a way to continue where no possibility of success appears to exist, *this book explains why*. It is a vital resource to fuel even greater success and substantially strengthen you as a leader.

Unfortunately, when faced with life's challenges, *most people stop short* before they have tested their limits and contributed their utmost. If you have stopped short, this book explains why. More importantly, this book explains how to gain the power necessary to permanently improve your ability to climb through adversity.

Some individuals simply quit. If you feel you are in this category, this book is also for you. It will provide you with new insights and tools for strengthening your fortitude and resuming the climb.

It is far more important to know how to deal with the negative than to be "positive."

Martin Seligman, *Learned Optimism*

WHAT IS AQ?

This work builds upon the landmark research of dozens of top scholars and more than 500 studies from around the world. Drawing from



three major sciences: cognitive psychology, psychoneuroimmunology, and neurophysiology, Adversity Quotient embodies two essential components of any practical concept—scientific theory and real-world application. The concepts and tools presented here have been honed over years of application with thousands of people from organizations around the world. You will read about their challenges and successes.

The result of 19 years of research and 10 years of application is a major breakthrough in our understanding of what it takes to succeed. Your success in your work and in life is largely determined by your *Adversity Quotient (AQ)*:

- AQ tells you how well you withstand adversity and your ability to surmount it.
- AQ predicts who will overcome adversity and who will be crushed.
- AQ predicts who will exceed expectations of their performance and potential and who will fall short.
- AQ predicts who gives up and who prevails.

AQ takes three forms. First, *AQ is a new conceptual framework for understanding and enhancing all facets of success*. It builds upon a substantial base of landmark research, offering a practical, new combination of knowledge that redefines what it takes to succeed. This new knowledge is explained in Chapter 3.

Second, *AQ is a measure of how you respond to adversity*. Unchecked, these subconscious patterns are yours for life. Now, for the first time, they can be measured, understood, and changed. You will calculate and interpret your AQ in Chapters 4 and 5.

Finally, *AQ is a scientifically-grounded set of tools for improving how you respond to adversity*, and, as a result, your overall personal and professional effectiveness. You will learn and apply these skills to yourself, others, and your organizations in Chapters 6 through 9.

The combination of these three elements—new knowledge, the measure, and practical tools—is a complete package for understanding and improving a fundamental component of your daily and lifelong ascent (see Figure 1-1).

FIGURE 1-1 AQ Defined



Beyond the Individual

AQ begins with, but goes *beyond* the individual. You will discover that the theory, measure, and tools presented in this book can be used to enhance the effectiveness of:

- Teams.
- Relationships.
- Families.
- Organizations.
- Communities.
- Cultures.
- Societies.

As you will discover, AQ can be used readily in your family, relationships, and organization. Chapter 9 provides knowledge and tools for creating a high AQ organization or climbing culture. AQ



AQ Predicts

- Performance.
- Motivation.
- Empowerment.
- Creativity.
- Productivity.
- Learning.
- Energy.
- Hope.
- Happiness, vitality, and joy.
- Emotional health.
- Physical health.
- Persistence.
- Resilience.
- Improvement over time.
- Attitude.
- Longevity.
- Response to change.

will strengthen your effectiveness as a leader while enhancing the effectiveness of those you lead. In a time where entitlement is at an all time high and responsibility an all time low, AQ redefines accountability and how to take ownership for a situation.

AQ in Organizations

Your AQ underlies all other facets of success. At dozens of organizations in a variety of industries including Abbott Labs, Kaibab National Forest, Boehringer Ingelheim, W. L. Gore & Associates (makers of Gore-Tex), Deloitte & Touche LLP, Minnesota Power, ADC Telecommunications, and U.S. West, my clients and I have demonstrated that those with higher AQs enjoy a host of benefits including greater performance, productivity, creativity, health, persistence, resilience, and vitality than their low AQ counterparts.

Leaders at Mott's discovered that AQ predicts how people respond to change. At First Data Corporation, a group of leaders and I found that AQ predicts who will overcome adversity and who will be crushed. At Deloitte & Touche LLP, AQ predicts who will exceed expectations of their performance and who will fall short. AQ is used to develop professionals capable of rising to the ever-increasing demands of their clients. At Minnesota Power, AQ is used to help

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leaders break through the adversity of change, reducing the costly transition stage, and speeding the change cycle. Facing the volatility of their industry, ADC Telecommunications uses AQ for competitive advantage, using it to help their top sales executives persevere on an ambitious track of nonstop, double-digit growth. In a growing school district, AQ was used to help teachers develop the resilience and fortitude to teach with meaning and purpose. Within the Kaibab National Forest, AQ is used to ready the workforce and its leaders for the rigors of fulfilling their ambitious vision. Maricopa Community College used AQ to develop staff who thrive under the “do more with less” demands of the workplace. At a high altitude Olympic training complex, AQ was used to predict a swimmer’s ability to spring back from any setback or defeat. Regularly, AQ is used to help individuals strengthen their ability to persevere through life’s daily challenges, remaining true to their principles and dreams, no matter what occurs.

The Role of AQ in Leading Self and Others

Leadership begins with an inward journey. In the following pages, you will further your journey as you gain new knowledge for surviving and thriving through adversity. But leaders need followers.

In the current times of chaos and change, it is not enough to lead. As a leader, it is your responsibility to make sure people have the *capacity* to follow through challenging times. The following chapters will provide essential information, tools, and strategies for measuring and strengthening this capacity in others.

You will also learn to create a more resilient, agile, and high performance organization. Chapter 10 will coach you on how to create and lead a high AQ climbing culture.

Accountability and Responsibility

Parents, leaders, and team members alike constantly struggle with two questions:

1. Why won’t some people take responsibility for solving problems and for their actions?
2. How do I instill this sense of ownership in others?



If you struggle with these issues within yourself or with others, this book will provide you with a new theory for enhancing ownership and accountability.

A Global Predictor of Success: AQ versus IQ and EQ

The standard predictors fail. Without a doubt, some people are more gifted in life than others. Some are blessed with superior intellects, specialized aptitudes, considerable physical strength, caring families, strong communities, and unlimited resources while others are severely lacking in these areas. Yet despite these blatant advantages, why is it that so many obviously gifted individuals fall short of their potential while others, with a small fraction of the same resources and opportunities, rise above their circumstances and exceed all expectations? This is a central question of success.

IQ isn't enough to succeed. Consider the outdated thinking about the traditional measure, IQ, or Intelligence Quotient. This genetically-influenced, scientifically-measured aptitude was long thought by parents, teachers, and employers to be the definitive predictor of success. However, the world is rife with examples of people with high IQs who do not fulfill their potential. We've all known brilliant people who have contributed far less than others who have more moderate intellectual endowments.

Take the extreme case of Ted Kaczynski, under investigation as the alleged "Unabomber." Kaczynski had all the indications of a high IQ. He was standout smart from youth. He sprinted through high school, not bothering with his junior year. A *wunderkind*, he entered Harvard at age 16 and graduated at 20. He went on to complete his master's and Ph.D. in math at the University of Michigan, then to teach at the world's premiere math department at the the University of California at Berkeley. Teaching was the closest Kaczynski came to making a meaningful contribution to society. Yet, he quit his teaching position after two years.

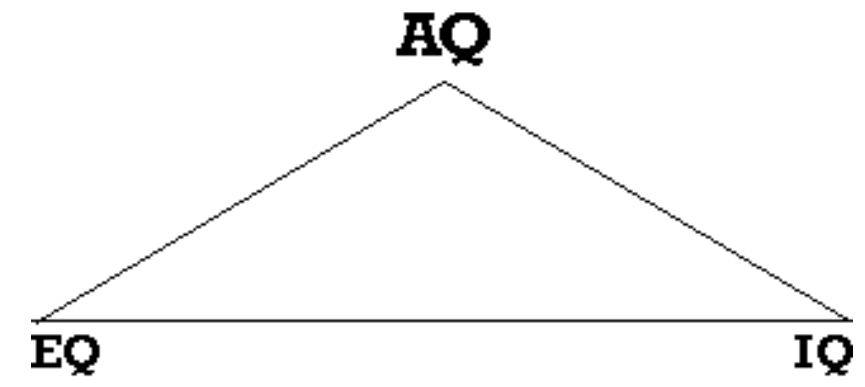
Raised to develop his mind, Kaczynski never developed his social skills or emotional intelligence. All the way through school he was virtually invisible, socializing with no one and forming no enduring bonds. "Ted had a special talent for avoiding relationships by moving quickly past groups of people and slamming the

door behind him,” says Patrick McIntosh, one of Kaczynski’s suite mates in college. Townspeople in Montana described him as socially removed. In college, he earned the nickname “the Hermit of Harvard.”

Although Kaczynski demonstrated great ingenuity in allegedly creating and planting his bombs while evading the law, he was socially inept. Rather than contributing to the betterment of the world, he may have used his one strength—his intelligence—to kill three people and injure 22. IQ clearly falls short as a predictor of success.

Intelligence is redefined. In his bestselling book, *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman insightfully explains why some people with high IQs flounder while many with modest IQs flourish. Goleman introduces a scientifically grounded, expanded notion of intelligence, providing strong evidence for the concept that, in addition to an IQ, we each have an EQ, or Emotional Quotient. Your EQ, which remains a *hypothetical* measure, reflects your ability to empathize with others, postpone gratification, control your impulses, be self-aware, persist, and interact effectively with others. Citing several examples, Goleman argues convincingly that, in life, EQ is more important than IQ. As with IQ, however, not everyone takes full advantage of their EQ, stopping short of their potential despite their valuable skills. Because it lacks a valid measure and a definitive method of learning it, emotional intelligence remains elusive.

FIGURE 1-2 AQ—The Global Predictor of Success





Some people possess a high IQ and all the aspects of emotional intelligence, yet fall tragically short of their potential. Neither IQ nor EQ appear to determine one's success. Nonetheless, both play a role. The question remains, however, why do some people persist while others—perhaps equally brilliant and well-adjusted—fall short and still others quit? AQ answers this question (see Figure 1-2).

To understand the role of AQ in continuing to climb where others quit, we must first define the mountain and the three categories of response to its challenge more precisely.

THE MOUNTAIN—ASCENDING TOWARD SUCCESS

Never measure the height of a mountain, until you have reached the top. Then you will see how low it was.

Dag Hammarskjöld

We are born with the core human drive to *Ascend*. By Ascend I do not mean floating in a lotus position into the clouds while methodically chanting your mantra. Nor do I mean simply moving up the corporate ladder, buying a house on the hill, or accumulating wealth. Although, these may be rewards for your Ascent. I use the term Ascend in the broadest sense—moving your *purpose* in your life forward no matter what your goals. Whether your Ascent is about gaining market share, getting better grades, improving your relationships, becoming better at what you do, completing an education, raising stellar children, growing closer to God, or making a meaningful contribution during your brief stint on the planet, the drive is imperative. Successful people share the profound urge to strive, to make progress, to achieve their goals and fulfill their dreams.

The core human drive to Ascend is our instinctual race against the clock to accomplish as much of our mission, written or implicit, as we can in the little time we're given. Whether or not you have a formal statement of purpose, you feel this drive. If you don't believe me, just watch what happens to people who experience an unexpected remission in their cancer or who narrowly escape death. Their instant reevaluation of their lives and "what really matters" often results in profound changes in behavior.

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These individuals dedicate newfound energy toward the *important* things in life—things related to their purpose.

The Ascent is not just limited to the individual. Every organization and work team tries to move forward and upward. Total quality programs, growth initiatives, reengineering, restructuring, tapping the power of a diverse workforce, reducing cycle time, eliminating waste, and enhancing innovation are all efforts to ascend a mountain plagued by avalanches, inclement weather, and unforeseen crevasses.

If we share this core human drive to Ascend, why then, do we not see the mountaintop overcrowded with peak achievers and the base of the mountain unpopulated? Why is just the reverse true?

To answer this question, we need to examine what occurs in three types of people whom we encounter along our journey up the mountain. These individuals have different responses to the Ascent and, as result, enjoy varying levels of success and joy in their lives. We can readily spot these people in our organizations, in our relationships, at high school reunions, in our children's schools, on the news—in all walks of life.

The Quitter

Without a doubt, there are plenty of people who choose to opt out, cop out, back out, and drop out. These are the *Quitters*. Quitters abandon the climb. They refuse the opportunity the mountain presents. They ignore, mask, or desert their core human drive to Ascend and with it much of what life offers.

The Camper

The second group of individuals are *Campers*. These people go only so far, and then say, "This is as far as I can (or want to) go." Weary of the climb, they terminate their Ascent and find a smooth, comfortable plateau on which to hide from adversity. And there, they choose to sit out their remaining years.

Campers, unlike Quitters, have at least taken on the challenge of the Ascent. They have gained some ground. Their journey may have been easy, or they may have sacrificed much and worked



diligently to get as far as they have. Their partial Ascent may be viewed by some as “success” in the final, conclusive sense of the word. This is a common misperception among people who view success as a specific destination, as opposed to a journey. However, although Campers may have been successful in reaching the campground, they cannot maintain success without continuing to Ascend. It is the lifelong growth and improvement of one’s self that *defines* the Ascent.

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Tennyson

The Climber

I call the people who are dedicated to the lifelong Ascent *Climbers*. Regardless of background, advantages or disadvantages, misfortune or good fortune, they continue the Ascent. They are the Energizer™ Bunnies of the mountain. Climbers are possibility thinkers, never allowing age, gender, race, physical or mental disability, or any other obstacle to get in the way of the Ascent.

Quitter, Camper, and Climber Lifestyles

Quitters, by definition, lead compromised lives. They have abandoned their dreams and have selected what they perceive to be a flatter, easier path. The irony, of course, is that as life wears on, the Quitter suffers far greater pain than that which they attempted to avoid by not climbing. Without a doubt, one of the most gut-wrenching, agonizing moments a person could face is looking back on a life poorly lived. This is the Quitter’s fate.

*For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, “It might have been!”*

John Greenleaf Whittier, *Maud Muller*, 1856, Stanza 53

As a result, Quitters are often bitter, depressed, and emotionally numb. Alternatively, they may be mad and frustrated, striking out at the world around them, resentful of those who Ascend.

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Quitters often are heavily into substance abuse. Be it alcohol, drugs, or junk TV, Quitters are looking for a mind-altering, numbing escape.

Stephen Covey, Roger and Rebecca Merrill, authors of *First Things First* explain how effective people spend their time—usually, on areas important (that is, related to their purpose) to them, but not urgent. Ineffective people live in a world of meaningless but seductive time wasters. This is where we can find a disproportionate number of Quitters. Subconsciously or consciously, Quitters are escaping the climb while ignoring their full potential in life.

You need not wait until the end of life to learn that the people most afraid to die are the ones who know they never really lived.

Ah, to come to the end of one's life and realize one has never lived.

Henry David Thoreau

Like Quitters, Campers lead compromised lives. The difference is in the *degree*. Weary of the climb, they say, “This is good enough,” unaware of the price they will pay. Campers may feel quite content with the apparent trade-off between sacrificing *what could be* in order to hang onto the illusion of keeping *what is*. They generally feel quite justified in ceasing the Ascent in order to enjoy the fruits of their labor, or, more accurately, whatever view and comforts they have earned through their partial Ascent.

As they set up camp, Campers often refocus their energy on filling their tents with material goods that make them as comfortable as possible. By dedicating their energy and resources to the comforts of the campground, the Camper foregoes the progress such energy and resources could create, if properly directed.

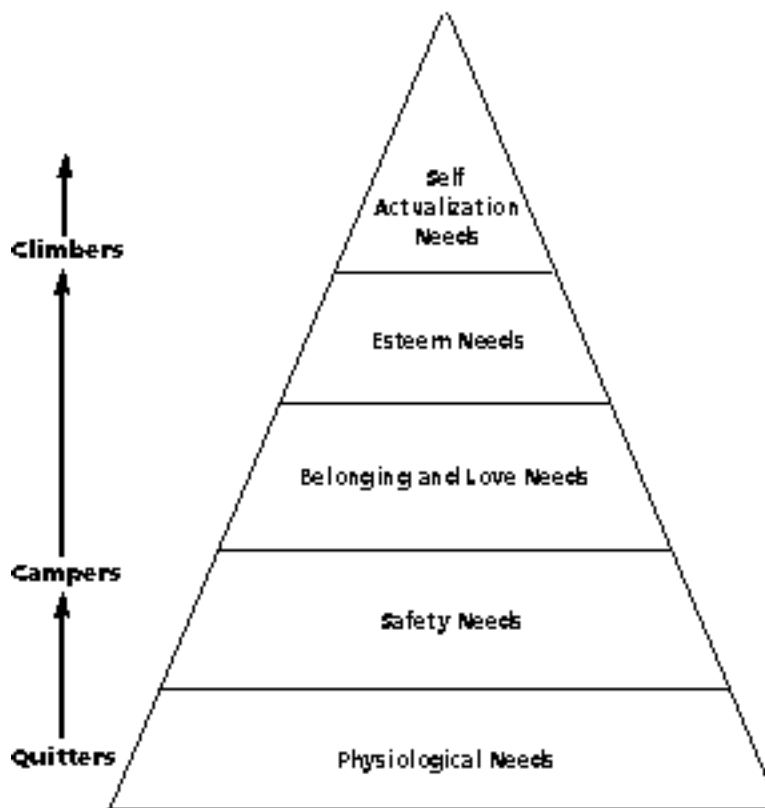
While we never hear someone define success as comfort, we meet so many who *believe* as if it were their ultimate goal. These are the Campers. Campers create a “comfortable prison”—a place too cushy to risk leaving. Here life is not everything it could be, but it is just good enough. I meet an awful lot of Campers and see daily examples of comfortable prisons in the organizations in which I have consulted. Campers have decent jobs with good pay and benefits. However, their days of excitement, learning, growth, and creative energy are long gone. Life appears easy; they know what to



expect, and the moments of anguishing over anything are long gone—except for the gnawing realizations that many of their dreams have passed out of existence unfulfilled and that constant change threatens the campground.

Campers are *satis-ficers*. They are satisfied with sufficing, rather than striving. Think back to psychologist Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Figure 1-3). Campers have succeeded at achieving their basic needs—food, water, security, shelter, even a sense of belonging. They have traversed the base of the mountain. By camping, they have sacrificed the top of Maslow's Hierarchy—

FIGURE 1-3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



self actualization, the peak—in order to hang onto what they have. As a result, Campers become strongly motivated by comfort and fear. They fear losing ground, and they seek the comfort of their cozy little campground.

Of these three types of people, *only Climbers live life fully*. They feel a deep sense of purpose and passion for what they do. They know how to experience joy, recognizing it as a gift and reward for the Climb. Knowing that the peak may be elusive, Climbers never forget the power of the journey over the destination.

Climbers know that many of the rewards come in the form of long-term benefits and that small steps now can lead to sizable advances further up the mountain later. Climbers embrace the challenges they inevitably face.

The famous story of Thomas Edison, who took more than 20 years and 50,000 experiments to invent a light, durable, efficient battery for use as an independent power supply, tells of someone questioning his route. “Mr. Edison, you have failed 50,000 times. What makes you think you will ever get results?” To which Edison replied, “Results? Why I’ve gotten a lot of results. I know 50,000 things that won’t work!” Edison, too, was a Climber, who shed light on the true meaning of persistence.

Climbers often have strong faith in something bigger than themselves. This faith buoys them when the mountain is overwhelming and intimidating, and any hope of advancing is fiercely challenged. It is the Climber’s faith that somehow things can and will be done despite the negativism of others who have determined that a certain route is impossible. I’m sure the Wright Brothers would have had a few words to say about believing in the impossible.

Like Beck Weathers on Mt. Everest, Climbers are persistent, tenacious, and resilient. They keep plugging away at the Ascent. When they reach a formidable overhang or a deadend, they simply reroute. When they tire and cannot go another step, they reach deep inside and press on. The word *quit* is not in Climbers’ vocabularies. They have the maturity and wisdom to understand that sometimes you need to go backward in order to move forward. Setbacks are a natural part of the Ascent. As a result, Climbers brave life’s hardships with genuine courage and discipline.



Climbers are also human. They sometimes grow weary of the climb. They may have doubts, or feel lonely and bruised. They may question their struggles. Sometimes, you can find them hanging out with the Campers. The difference is that the Climbers are there to rejuvenate, refuel, reenergize for the Climb ahead, while the Campers are there to stay. To Climbers, the campground is a base camp. To Campers, it is home.

Quitters, Campers, and Climbers at Work

By definition, Quitters do just enough to get by. They demonstrate little ambition, minimal drive, and sub-par quality. They take few risks and are rarely creative, except when it comes to avoiding big challenges. Minimally invested in their work, Quitters are the dead weight of any organization.

As a result of their partial Ascent, Campers, unlike Quitters, show *some* initiative, *some* drive, and put forth *some* effort. They will work hard on anything that helps them better secure what they already have. They do what is required. Most Campers will not knowingly risk being fired for their performance. This is part of what is so difficult and costly about being a Camper. If you know one, he or she probably falls short of his or her true abilities, yet does enough to stay safely employed. However, in a day and age when performance capacity and degrees of perfection mean everything and organizations strive to become “best in class,” anything less than one’s best detracts from the results, if not survival, of the whole organization. It is that baseline of satisfactory performance that keeps the Camper employed and the visionaries who are striving to create ultimate performance frustrated.

Campers can show moderate creativity and take some calculated risks but usually they play it safe, demonstrating creativity and risk taking only in areas that pose a minimal threat. Camping, by definition, precludes taking the kind of wholesale leaps of faith that can bring about significant change. In an era when thinking out of the box has gone from a luxury to a survival skill for most organizations, the Camper’s penchant for preserving the box may prove costly, if not fatal.



What happens physically and intellectually to a person if he or she camps in one place too long? Atrophy. The longer one camps, the greater the atrophy. Over time, Campers lose the ability to climb. And as they atrophy, they feel increasingly threatened by those Ascending. Campers may also lose their edge, getting slower and weaker, showing a gradual decrease in performance and results. As time goes by, they come to the cold realization that by attempting to stay in one place, *they ultimately lose ground.*

Unlike Campers and Quitters, Climbers embrace challenges, and they live with a sense of urgency. They are self-motivated, highly driven, and strive to get the utmost out of life. Climbers are catalysts for action; *they tend to make things happen.*

Because Climbers are dedicated to growth and lifelong learning, they feel a strong kinship with the Japanese principle of *Kaizan*, or continuous improvement, being instilled in many organizations. Climbers do not settle for title or position alone. They constantly seek new ways to grow and contribute.

Former President Jimmy Carter's mission is to use his skills and talents to help those less fortunate than himself. While most Presidents retire into relative obscurity, he has chosen a different path. Since losing miserably to Ronald Reagan in 1980, he and Rosalynn continued with their mission of helping others through the Carter Center, by fighting illnesses in Africa, overseeing contentious elections in Third World countries, building houses for the homeless, and negotiating peace around the globe. Many argue that Jimmy Carter is having a greater impact now than when he was the leader of the most powerful nation in the world. He has created this impact by continuing in his Ascent, by continuing to learn, grow, and apply himself to the Climb. He could have quit or camped. He had reached a place higher than most ever dream, but his Ascent will continue until he dies. Regardless of his political setbacks, Jimmy Carter remains a Climber.

Climbers work with vision. They are often inspirational and, as a result, make good leaders. Mohandas Gandhi, the spiritual leader of India, had no formal authority when he overthrew British rule. It was his undying dedication to fairness and freedom that made him the reluctant leader of an entire nation. His devotion



to the Ascent continues to inspire the world. Climbers find ways to make things happen.

Quitter, Camper, and Climber Relationships

Relationships are at the heart of all that we do. Perhaps the greatest opportunity for fulfilling one's potential lies in creating a lifelong, synergistic partnership with another person. Such an accomplishment requires intense faith, dedication, commitment, vulnerability, and emotional fluency.

Quitters are not necessarily lonely people, for they have little difficulty finding others who are more than happy to share wasted time or to commiserate about the climb that could have been. Together they nurture their helplessness or build deep cynicism about "the system" and the world that is passing them by.

Quitters also tend to shy away from the deep challenges of true commitments. Their lives may be filled with acquaintances, with few if any genuine friendships, except those built upon a shared resentment of the mountain and all it represents. Quitters lose out in the richest areas of growth and fulfillment—deep, meaningful relationships.

In an effort to be satisfied, Campers sacrifice their individual potential, even in relationships. They tend to seek and successfully interact with other Camping buddies. They may have ventured into commitments that resulted in unbearable pain. Because of their scars and accumulated wisdom, Campers learn to pick satisfaction at the price of fulfillment. Their marriages are likely to reflect the years of playing it safe, offering little room for the discomfort and risk of growing the relationship into increasingly new and more enriching dimensions. They will only go so far, and in so doing, lose much.

Climbers, on the other hand, are not afraid to explore the boundless frontier of potential that exists between two people. They welcome meaningful commitments with potential climbing partners. They recognize the power and rewards of a true marriage of souls. Climbers understand and embrace the raw risk that ultimate vulnerability represents. As a result, Climbers may experience the



lowest of lows that comes with the ending of a relationship in which both parties have deeply invested. However, they also may enjoy the highest of highs, or the unbridled ecstasy and rich fulfillment that accompany the highest forms of love.

Like conditions on the mountain, Climbers' relationships will not be easy—sunny, and pain-free all of the time. However, the commitment to advance, to move forward and higher transcends the challenges and fears that will inevitably arise. Climbers accept these challenges and continue to strive for the highest connections with another human being.

How Quitters, Campers, and Climbers Respond to Change

When consulting with executives about change, the same statistic always seems to rear its ugly head. At a recent meeting with a senior executive for a worldwide semiconductor manufacturer, my client complained, "Whenever we introduce a change, we can generally predict that around 20 percent of the people will jump on board, no matter what it is. Another 60 percent kind of hang back, playing the game of 'wait and see.' The remaining 20 percent reject the change out of hand, regardless of what it can offer." Generally, these are the Quitters. They react to change with the classic fight/flight response. Quitters tend to either resist the change and sabotage any chance of its success, or they will avoid it and actively steer clear.

The 60 percent that hangs back describes the Campers. Because they are motivated by fear and comfort, Campers have a limited capacity for change—especially big change. They may support some modifications (upgrading the computers at work, for example) to their campground, but, over time, they may passively or actively resist bigger transitions (such as restructuring the organization). Campers who want to preserve their hard-fought comforts and the predictability of their world, dig in. This is much easier than re-summing their Ascent. The collective caution exhibited by Campers can be enough to bring a vital change effort to its knees.

At best, Campers will be uninspired participants in significant change. They may welcome, even forward, acceptable variations to the ways things are done, as long as they do not rock the foundation



of their controlled existences. At worst, Campers will actively undermine the organization's success, recognizing the genuine threat to their hard-earned status quo.

Change sometimes forces Campers to rediscover the lost joy of climbing. Despite the obstacles, however, dedicated and focused Campers can—once again—make the Ascent.

Climbers are most likely to embrace, if not drive, positive change. They thrive on the challenge change represents and welcome the opportunity to move forward and up in any endeavor. In fact, Climbers are typically the people you can count on to help make change happen. Climbers know that change is an inevitable reality on the mountain. A favorite saying about weather in the high country is, "If you don't like the weather, blink and it will change." An inability to adapt to and capitalize on change will destroy one's ability to Ascend. Climbers *thrive* on change.

Quitter, Camper, and Climber Language

Predictably, Quitters are adroit at using the language of limitations. They are quick to find ways things cannot work. They use words like "can't," "won't," "impossible," and phrases like, "We've always done it this way," "Who cares," "It's not worth it," "Well I tried," "It's not fair," "This is stupid," "Here we go again," "I'm too old (fat, skinny, tall, short, stupid, dark, light, weak, male, female, etc.)," and "I could if I wanted to." I'll never forget a retired sales manager whose favorite response to the question "How are you doing?" was "Every day above ground is a good one." What linguistic creativity Quitters show comes through in the excuses and responses they manufacture.

You can find the roots of compromise in Campers' language. They use expression such as, "This is good enough," "What's the minimum needed to do the job?" "This is as far as we need to go," "Things could be worse," "Remember when . . . ?" "It's not worth it," "In my younger days . . ." Campers can be heard rationalizing why the Climb isn't all it's cracked up to be—why it should be avoided.

Climber language, on the other hand, is filled with possibilities. Climbers speak about what can be done and how to do it. They

speak of action, growing impatient with words that are not backed with deeds.

Lou Holtz, Notre Dame football coaching legend, has no tolerance for excuses or inaction. Holtz had a miserably poor childhood. He was a social misfit with a terrible lisp. He feared public speaking so violently that he would skip class on days of oral presentations.

One day he learned the power of setting goals. He set 107 goals, including dining with the President of the United States, rafting the Snake River, meeting the Pope, skydiving, coaching Notre Dame, winning Coach of the Year, and winning a national championship. Today, as of last count, he has accomplished 98 of his 107 goals. Holtz has earned fame as a man who creates the capacity to win and talks about what can be, not why it can't be.

You can hear Climbers like Lou Holtz say, "Do right," "Do your best," "Don't flinch," "What can we do to make this happen?" "There's always a way," "The question isn't if, but how," "Just because it hasn't been done doesn't mean it *can't*," "Lead, follow, or get out of my way," "Let's do it!" "The time to act is now." Climbers drive toward results, and their language reflects their direction.

Quitters', Campers', and Climbers' Contributions

Quitters lack vision and faith in the future. As a result, they see little reason to invest the time, money, and heartache required to improve themselves. Quitters, therefore, deliver little; they make minimal contributions. As a Quitter's life goes by, his or her contribution capacity actually shrinks. Whatever potential was originally sacrificed, will dry and wither on the vine like unharvested fruit. As a result, Quitters may experience the anguish of a life un-lived or they may be entirely numb to the possibilities that once existed. Either represents a tragic end.

Take note: Quitters are not always found in the bowels of society, buying cheap bottles of booze in the wee hours of the morning from the corner convenience store. They can be found in most walks of life—in our schools, organizations, families, and in our streets.

Certainly many who benefit from our government programs are in genuine need and may be physically and/or mentally incapable of achieving financial self-sufficiency. However, there is a



growing wave of resentment toward those who are capable of becoming self-sufficient, but simply choose not to.

Yet, not all Quitters deserve to be harshly judged. Many really want to reenergize their climbs and deserve our heartfelt sympathy, if not empathy. You probably have had moments when you wanted to high tail it back down the mountain. I am a firm believer that the first step to transforming Quitters is to hold them accountable for decisions, and help them recognize they have the power to *choose not to quit*.

Campers do not breathe the rarefied air of ultimate achievement and contribution. While they probably have racked up some significant accomplishments and recognition—plaques, awards, and maybe even the gold watch—Campers, by definition, do not reach their full potential. The same can be said for their contributions. Campers stop short in learning, growing, and achieving!

According to the Torah (the Old Testament), “Deeds of giving are the very foundation of the world.” Today, more than ever, our lives need to be about contribution. Douglas Lawson, in his book *Giving to Live*, offers compelling evidence that contributing to others enhances the length of our lives, our immune functions, our spiritual well being, and our mental health.

Of the three kinds of people I have identified, *Climbers contribute the most*. Climbers come the closest to fulfilling their potential, which continues to grow throughout their lives. Climbers enlarge their capacity to contribute through a lifetime of learning and improvement.

The fact is, in today’s highly competitive world, a team of Climbers can virtually blow away a whole organization of Campers. We have watched giants like IBM and General Motors stagger while smaller, more agile, focused, and determined companies eat their market share for lunch. Fortunately for IBM and General Motors, they were able to reignite the Climber instinct and continue their Ascent.

Likewise the historically agile Microsoft was caught standing still. The more scrappy Netscape headed by Jim Clark, former chairman of Silicon Graphics, Inc., and Marc Andreessen, the technical genius and visionary behind NCSA Mosaic, developed the revolutionary, award-winning software browser. Netscape exploded into a



multibillion dollar company literally overnight. The larger-than-expected response turned the heat up on Microsoft, testing its ability to continue the Ascent or settle into camp. With the aggressive, multimillion dollar launch of *Explorer*, its version of a web-browser, Microsoft is behind, but it is back on the path. Today Microsoft is poised to become the largest company in existence, early in the twenty-first century.

Climbers will take the risks, withstand the challenges, overcome the fear, maintain their vision, take the lead, and tough it out until the job is finished.

Quitters', Campers', and Climbers' Capacity for Adversity

Let's face it, no one can promise that life is fair, although many assume it should be. Quitters have little or no capacity. That's why they quit. The good news is that Quitters are not predestined to always see the mountain from afar. With help, they can be brought back, and their core drive to Ascend re-ignited.

Campers may have weathered considerable adversity to earn their spot on the mountain. Unfortunately, it is adversity that eventually leads the Camper to weigh the risks and the rewards and abandon the Climb. Campers, like Quitters, have a limited adversity threshold, finding powerful reasons to give up the Ascent. Campers operate on the belief that after a certain number of years or amount of effort, life should be relatively free of adversity. The price of the Climb is significant, but so are the rewards. Permanent Campers pay the immeasurable price of never knowing or accomplishing what they could.

Climbers are not strangers to adversity. Indeed, their lives have been about facing and overcoming an endless stream of adversity. Climbers do not, therefore, continue the Ascent because they experience any *less* adversity than Campers and Quitters. Quite the contrary. Climbing is akin to swimming upstream. It demands unending energy, sacrifice, and dedication. In fact, many Climbers come from disadvantaged backgrounds, or worlds submerged in adversity. As we read about the common traits of entrepreneurs,



we learn that they usually have faced significant adversity at some time in their lives. Climbers understand adversity is part of life—by avoiding adversity, one avoids life.

Every year *Success* magazine publishes stories of the year's greatest comebacks and entrepreneurs. Common to their tales is the powerful obstacles and setbacks these individuals faced along the way. Steve Jobs, one of the founders of Apple Computer and more recently of Pixar Studios, is a classic example. Jobs started Apple with a powerful vision of putting computing power in the hands of the common citizen. When he was forced out of Apple, Jobs was wealthy and a legendary folk hero. He had every reason to quit trying. Instead he started Next, a rival computer company which lost to the cut-throat competition of the hardware industry. Next is now providing a new operating system for Apple computers while moving into software and internet applications which are expected to help the company rebound.

Jobs' next big hit came with his formation of Pixar Studios, the makers of *Toy Story*, a landmark animated movie. On the day Pixar went public, Jobs was worth over \$1.2 billion. Along the way, all he had to do was round up funding, hire the best people, convince the world that this was a world-class animation studio, land major contracts, and take his company public. In creating Pixar as a state-of-the-art computer graphics producer, Jobs envisioned something before it existed and then he was relentless in making it happen. Jobs' success is directly tied to his ability to face and overcome adversity long after others would have given up. These are the indicators of a high AQ. Jobs' latest efforts are meant to help Apple reclaim its position in the computer industry. It should be interesting to watch.

THE ADVERSITY DILEMMA

Perhaps the most significant effect of facing greater adversity is what I call the *Adversity Dilemma*. This is similar to a dilemma faced by the pioneers who explored and homesteaded the American frontier. As winter approached, the weather grew colder. As the

temperature dropped, the more calories were required for survival—yet, the less food there was to survive the cold. There was an inverse relationship between cold and food.

This same relationship exists between adversity and Climbers. The worse the weather, the fewer Climbers remain to attack the challenge. In practical terms, the more difficult the situation, the fewer people there are who are capable or willing to resolve it (Figure 1-4). As a leader, parent, or concerned citizen, you no doubt find this phenomenon alarming. Consider the decline in registered voters over the last two decades.

There may be no greater threat to our future livelihood and survival as a species than the epidemic of quitting and the commensurate loss of hope that is provoked by a mounting wall of adversity. Giving up and losing hope results in greater adversity for all, since whatever challenge existed has now become worse, and even fewer people are willing to attack the vertical wall now confronting them.

This relationship between hope (belief it will work out), helplessness (the belief that what one does will not matter), and adversity is depicted in Figure 1-5. Notice that *AQ* is the determining variable in whether one remains hopeful and in control through

FIGURE 1-4 The Adversity Dilemma

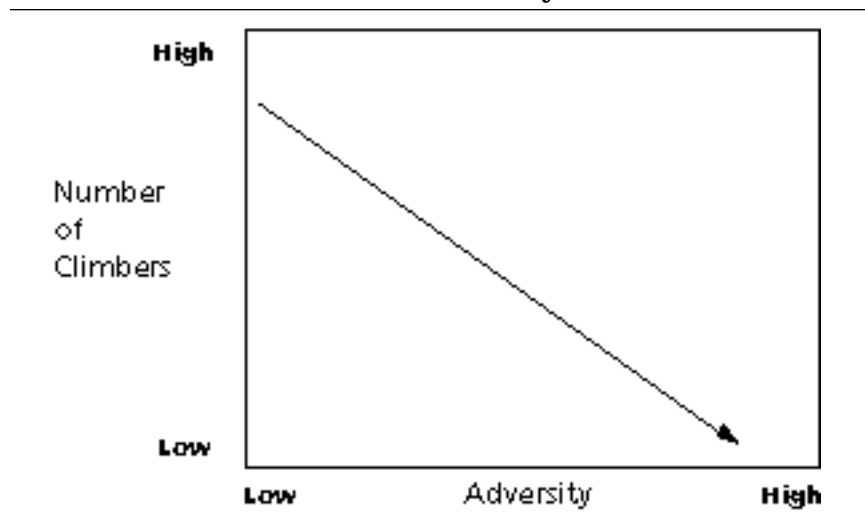
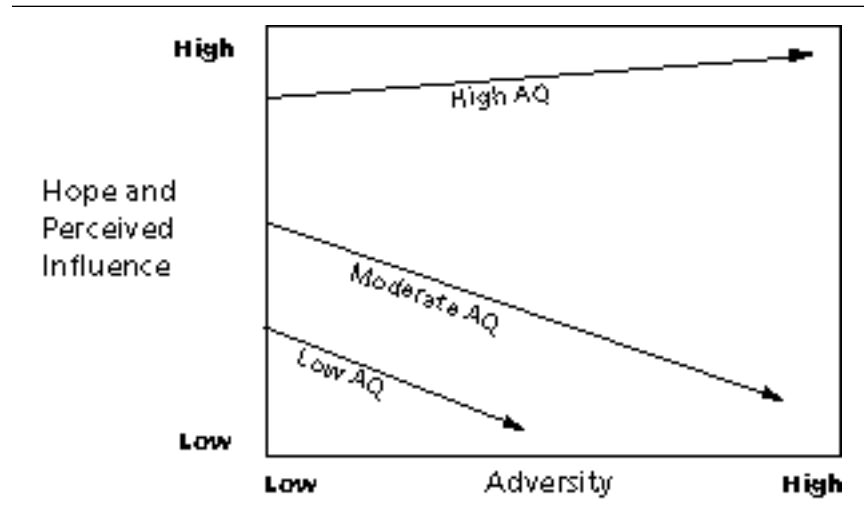




FIGURE 1-5 AQ as the Determining Variable in Hope and Control



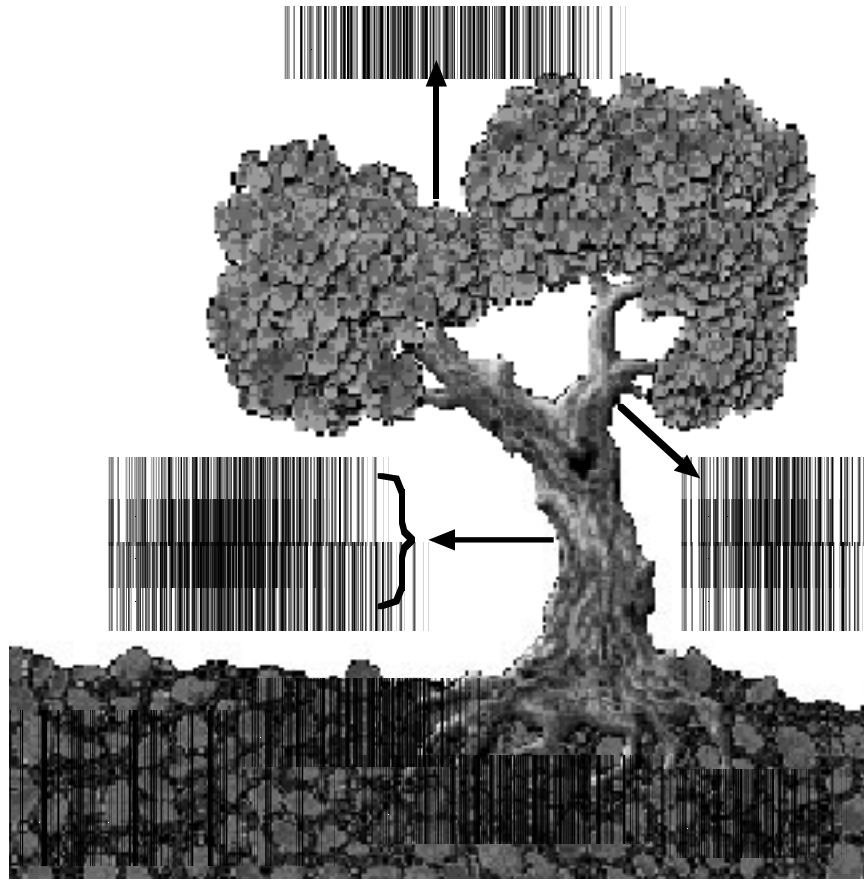
difficult times. The ability to climb through adversity is determined by your AQ. Consider the role AQ plays in your overall success.

THE TREE OF SUCCESS

Once when scaling a rock, I came across a lone pine tree proudly jutting from the granite. I was so taken by the power of that tree and its ability to withstand the bitter cold, relentless winds, and scorching sun to flourish in a place on the mountain where no other tree could grow. What gave that lone pine the power to thrive amidst adversity?

Most of us know what it takes to succeed. Like the tree, we are given varying amounts of the essential ingredients for success. The truth is, however, if individuals have a relatively low AQ and therefore lack the ability to withstand adversity, they will remain stunted in their potential. On the other hand, given a sufficiently high AQ, people can, like the tree, flourish on the mountain. A new, integrated model, the Tree of Success (Figure 1-6) clarifies

FIGURE 1-6 The Tree of Success



the foundational role AQ plays in unleashing all aspects of our life-long potential, no matter how hard the wind may blow.

The Leaves: Performance

The leaves of the tree are labeled performance, referring to that part of us that is most visible to others. You can readily see a person's output. Because it is most visible, this is what is most frequently



evaluated or assessed. Be it for a promotion, friendship, a date, a marriage offer, or a job, we are constantly assessing and evaluating other people's performance and results. Yet, your performance does not grow out of thin air. Leaves must grow on branches.

The Branches: Talent and Desire

The first branch refers to what I call *the resume factor*. A resume describes your skills, competencies, experience, knowledge—what you know and are capable of doing. I refer to this synthesis of knowledge and ability as talent. The majority of training dollars are spent building talent. Yet, if you were interviewing job candidates, and you ran across one with a stellar resume, would you automatically hire that person? Probably not.

That candidate must also display what I call *the interview factor* or desire. Desire describes the motivation, enthusiasm, passion, drive, ambition, fire in the belly, spark in the eye that we seek when hiring someone. You could have all the talent in the world, but without desire, it would all go to waste. You cannot be great at anything difficult without the desire to be so. Would you hire a person who lacked desire? Of course not!

You need *both* talent and desire to succeed. Yet, these, like the branches on a tree, do not grow out of thin air. For this reason, we must focus on the trunk issues.

The Trunk: Intelligence, Health, and Character

What is *intelligence*? For many people, it is equated with traditional measurements such as IQ, GPA, or SAT. Howard Gardner, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, is one of many researchers who has expanded our entire notion of intelligence by showing us that intelligence has seven forms: linguistic, kinesthetic, spatial, logical-mathematical, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

You possess all forms of intelligence to varying degrees. Some are predominant. If you are like most people, your predominant intelligence affects which career you may pursue, which classes you may have chosen, and which hobbies you enjoy. Regardless of

which form is strongest or weakest, it is clear that your intelligence will impact your success. It is a trunk issue.

Your *emotional* and *physical health* will also affect your ability to succeed. If you are seriously ill, the disease can detract substantially from your focus on the mountain. Your ascent can be merely a battle for survival or a daily struggle to maintain. On the other hand, emotional and physical vigor can greatly enhance your ascent. For these reasons, health is a trunk issue.

Character has gained great attention thanks, in part, to the writings of Stephen Covey (*Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*), Poor Richard's Almanac, William Bennett (*Book of Virtues, The Moral Compass*), Laura Schlesinger (*I Can't Believe You Did That: The Abdication of Courage, Character, and Compassion*), and many others. These authors remind us of some fundamental laws of human civilization, as described by Aristotle nearly 2400 years ago and in the Old and New Testaments. Fairness, justice, honesty, prudence, kindness, courage, generosity—all are essential to our successful and peaceful coexistence. One might argue that a society without virtue is no society at all. Character is a trunk issue.

The Roots: Genetics, Upbringing, and Faith

All of the factors just discussed are important to your success. However, none of these can grow without the root factors. Consider genetics. While your genetic heritage need not *determine* your destiny, it certainly influences it. In fact, there is a recent burst of research indicating that genetics may underlie far more of our behavior than we may be willing to admit.

The most famous study of the genetic influence on behavior was the Twins' studies at the University of Minnesota. The studies tracked hundreds of sets of identical twins separated at birth. Even though these twins were bought up in dramatically different environments, the similarities were astounding.

In one example, a set of twins reared separately discovered each other for the first time after forty years. Their similarities included:

- Both were named Jim.
- Both had named their dogs Toy.



- Both took law enforcement classes.
- Both had similar hobbies.
- Both had first wives named Linda and second wives named Betty.
- Both had named their sons James Alan.

Similarities found in studies of other twins included favoring the same foods, using the same gestures, demonstrating the same mannerisms, choosing similar careers, marrying similar spouses, some spouses with the same names, liking the same music, dressing the same, gravitating toward identical hobbies, using the same colognes, looking identical. These studies showed that much of what we consider to be choice is influenced by our genetics. More recent research indicates a genetic link to mood and level of anxiety.

The second root factor keeps many a therapist in business. Without a doubt one of the most popular subjects of discussion while enjoying a hot cup of java with friends is one's upbringing. I was sitting with a group of safety and facilities managers recently. The conversation was classic.

"My parents never gave me the female subservience script that my friends received," explained one manager over lunch. "So I just did what all my male friends did."

"My father was into the 'Daddy's little princess' thing," said another. "He never let me get dirty or tough. Now I'm paying for that every day of my life."

Like genetics, your upbringing can influence intelligence, the formation of healthful habits, character development, and the resulting skill, desire, and performance.

The third root factor is *faith*. A common trait among business and political leaders currently and throughout history is a deep and abiding faith in something or someone greater than oneself. M. Scott Peck, in *The Call to Community*, considers this faith to be pivotal to the survival of our society. No matter what "brand" one's faith may be, a substantial portion of highly successful people share this root factor.

Herbert Benson of Harvard University, a pioneering researcher into the role of faith in health, argues that "Our genetic blueprint

has made believing in an Infinite Absolute part of our nature.” According to Benson, praying affects epinephrine and other corticosteroid messengers or stress hormones in the body leading to lower blood pressure, more relaxed heart rate and respiration as well as other benefits.

World leaders like Vaclav Havel and Nelson Mandela cite faith as an essential element of the survival of our societies. Business leaders more openly discuss the spiritual health of their organizations and cultures. Whereas few books on spirituality could be found in the business section of the bookstore a few years ago, today there are many. Books like *Jesus as CEO*, *Handbook for the Soul*, *The Soul of Leadership*, *The Path*, and *Seven Spiritual Laws for Success* are on many bestselling business book lists. Faith is a compelling and essential factor in hope, action, morality, contribution, and how we treat our fellow humans.

ADVERSITY QUOTIENT

Good timber does not grow with ease; the stronger the wind, the stronger the trees.

J. Willard Marriott

As you read these paragraphs and consider the diagram in Figure 1–6, you may be thinking, “Well, this is my life’s work! All I need to do is strengthen my faith, overcome my genetics, decode my upbringing, fortify my health, develop seven forms of intelligence, hone my character, and I’ll constantly improve my talent and desire, resulting in a thick canopy of performance.” Right? *Perhaps.*

Even given all of these factors, there is no guarantee that a person, or tree, will stand strong when faced with the winds of adversity. If that tree is planted in sand, it will topple. If it is anchored in rock and nourished with the essential resilience, it will bend, but never fall.

Your AQ determines whether you, regardless of all other factors I’ve mentioned, will stand strong and true, continuing to grow when faced with adversity, or if you will be crippled or destroyed. AQ is the nutrient rich soil, the key, foundational factor of success



that can determine how, if, and to what degree your attitudes, abilities, and performance are manifested in the world. Like the composition of the soil in your garden, AQ can be enriched and strengthened. It is here that we can begin to truly grasp the practical implications of AQ.

Fortunately, unlike genetic traits, your AQ is *learned*. Carol Dweck, a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois and one of the foremost researchers on emotional development, has conducted studies that indicate that your response to adversity is formed through the influences of parents, teachers, peers, and other key people during childhood.

In studies that examined how children respond to the adversity of failure, Dweck discovered that, early on, teachers influence girls to attribute failures to their lack of ability whereas boys are taught to attribute failure to a lack of motivation—a far more temporary and adjustable cause. Fortunately, these patterns can be interrupted and permanently changed; you can rewire your brain for success.

By discovering, measuring, and applying AQ to our world, we can understand how and why some people consistently exceed the predictions and expectations of those around them. It makes sense that those who cannot prevail over adversity will suffer on all fronts, while those with sufficiently high AQs are likely to persist until they succeed. They will reap benefits in all areas of their lives. This is why some people are able to stay motivated even in the most adverse conditions. *AQ is what separates Climbers from Campers and Quitters*. When the going gets tough, Quitters give up and Campers entrench, while Climbers dig in and ascend.

All the talent and the desire in the world will go unrealized when undermined by a low AQ. Rather than focusing your attention on and committing any further resources to gathering more intellectual gear, it is time to fortify yourself for the climb ahead. The remainder of this book will guide you through the knowledge and skills you need to substantially and permanently boost your AQ.