



## Adversity quotient - Need of an hour

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### Abstract

The year 2020 has been a year of trial and tribulation throughout the world. There have been problems galore. These circumstances of uncertainty have highlighted the usefulness of overcoming challenges to cope up with life's struggles in a positive way. The concept of Adversity Quotient, tries to help us deal with hopelessness and depression. Hopelessness is the driving factor that leads to depression. Life is full of ups and downs. You should learn to cope with it. Paul G. Stoltz, coined the term Adversity Quotient. Adversity Quotient is a score that measures the ability of a person to deal with adversities. It is also known as the science of resilience. Stoltz also prepared a tool to measure the adversity quotient of individuals. According to Stoltz, there are three categories of people who are classified as Climbers, Campers and Quitters as per their reaction to challenges.

**Keywords:** resilience, adversity, adversity quotient, adversity response profile, challenges, opportunities.

### 1. Introduction

Every individual faces problems in his life. Name, fame, strength, riches, power does not guarantee a peaceful life. At every step we have to fight a battle within ourselves. One has to prepare himself to face the adversities with patience and hope. When you are not able to deal with the difficulties and problems in life, it becomes the reason for sadness and depression. One who crosses the hurdles of life's challenges is successful. We must know that time does not stand still, it keeps on changing. After difficulty comes ease, after darkness comes light. This hope and positive attitude towards life makes one overcome challenges and directs us towards opportunities.

#### According to psychologists, there are following quotients:

- i) Intelligence Quotient (IQ):  
Total score derived from several standardized tests designed to assess human intelligence. It represents the ability to learn or understand.
  - ii) Emotional Quotient (EQ):  
Capability of individuals to recognize their own emotions and of others and control or adjust emotions to adapt to the environment.
  - iii) Adversity Quotient (AQ):  
It is a score that measures the ability of a person to deal with adversity in life and turning them into opportunities for greater achievement.
- (IQ, EQ and AQ are all needed for success in life.)

The term, Adversity Quotient (AQ) was coined by Paul G. Stoltz in 1997 in his book, Adversity Quotient: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities. Stoltz's book theorizes that more than intelligence quotient or emotional intelligence, your ability to overcome adversity is the most important factor in determining success in life. To quantify adversity, Stoltz developed an assessment method, called the 'Adversity Response Profile'. There are a number of people who have fought adversities in life and have become successful later. None is failure-proof not even successful people. Behind every success there is a lot of toil and grind, setbacks and defeats. Many famous and successful people have fought adversities and emerged victorious. For example - Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey, Thomas Edison, Bethany Hamilton, Jim Carrey, Benjamin Franklin, Franklin Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, Nelson Mandela, J.K. Rowling, Stephen Hawking, Helen Keller, Dhirubhai Ambani, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Dr Abdul Kalam, Narayana Murthy, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, and many more.

#### Negative Outcomes of Adversity

Lack of concentration, memory loss, poor decision-making, depression, worry, anxiety or fear, unpredictability and inconsistency, low self-esteem, over self-critical, lack of energy, ineffective problem-solving, bad work-quality, no interest in work, frequent criticism, negative thoughts, etc

Fortunately 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 study that indicate that your response to adversity is formed through the influences of parents, teachers, peers and other key people during childhood. It is therefore important to make the children ready to face real life challenges.

## 2. Meaning

- i) Quotient means, the 'degree or amount of a specified quality or characteristic.'
- ii) Adversity Quotient is commonly known as the science of human resilience. American Psychological Association defines Resilience, 'as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy or even significant sources of threat.' In general, resilience is the ability to bounce back from hardship and trauma. The more resilient you are, the more effectively you can overcome life's difficulties.
- iii) According to Paul **Stoltz**, 'Adversity Quotient is the ability to handle adverse situations in life.' Adversity Quotient is important to control thoughts over action in order to be adaptive to the changing environment around us.

## 3. Kinds of Adversities

**There are various types of adversities. They are as following**

- i) **Physical Adversity:** Physical disability is the most obvious form of physical adversity. People who suddenly find themselves from being normal to getting disabled, face a greater challenge. Another form include chronic pain, fatigue and obesity.
- ii) **Mental Adversity:** Mental health problems lead to anxiety and depression.
- iii) **Emotional Adversity:** Emotional maturity makes a person face difficulties in life with ease. Feelings should be checked without letting them overcome us.
- iv) **Social Adversity:** How we interact with people is paramount to our success. Being lonely increases our chance of frustration and anxiety.
- v) **Spiritual Adversity:** Faith in some kind of higher authority (God, parents, teachers, elders, etc.) is important to have a healing effect on life's problems.
- vi) **Financial Adversity:** One of the most difficult kind of adversity to face is financial loss. Some more examples of adversities - tackling an illness, completing education, death of a closed one, change in financial state, poverty, taking a loan, divorce, marital problems, etc.

AQ is one of the probable indicators of a person's success in life and is also primarily used to predict attitude, mental stress, perseverance and response to changes in environment. It determines who will give up in face of trouble, who will abandon their family or who will consider suicide.

## 4. Dimensions of Adversity Quotient

Adversity Quotient is composed of four CORE dimensions.

- i) **Control:** how much control an individual has over the adversity. The extent to which someone perceives he can influence a situation and also control his own response to

a situation.

- ii) **Ownership:** refers to the reason for the adversity and the willingness of the individual to assume responsibility and take the necessary measures.
- iii) **Reach:** refers to the extent to which the problem affect other areas of the individual's work and home life.
- iv) **Endurance:** refers to an individual's perception of how long the problem and its effects will last.

Research by Emmy Werner, computes that children with high Adversity Quotient are those with the following traits:

- a) Have an active approach toward solving life's problems.
- b) Tend to perceive their experiences constructively.
- c) Able to gain others positive attention.
- d) Use faith to maintain a positive outlook.

## 5. Types of Adversity Personality

According to Stoltz, there are three different extreme adversity personality types

- i) **The Quitters:**  
Without a doubt there are plenty of people who choose to opt out, back out and drop out. These are the quitters. Quitters get to the base of the mountain, refuse to climb it, say, 'I can't climb' and quit.  
'Man is not finished when he is defeated, he is finished when he quits.'
- ii) **The Campers:**  
The Campers are the most common type, who set up camp once their definition of success is achieved. Weary of the climb, they terminate their ascent and find a smooth comfortable plateau on which to hide from adversity. In other words, they stop at the point where overcoming the next level of adversity isn't worth it for them. And there, they choose to sit out their remaining years.
- iii) **The Climbers:**  
Climber's are the one who can't stop striving for the top of the mountain, no matter what it takes. Regardless of the background, advantages or disadvantages, misfortune or good fortune, they continue the ascent. They do not let anything stop them. 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.

AQ is what separates the Climbers from Campers and Quitters. When the going gets tough, Quitters give up and Campers entrench, while Climbers dig in and Ascend.

## 6. Measuring Adversity Quotient

Dr. Paul Stoltz developed the Adversity Quotient (AQ) to test the unconscious pattern of how people respond to adversity and show how to increase it and thereby help individuals become valuable in life.

Generally in all tests of AQ, the four dimensions (CORE) are examined;

- i) **Control** -indicates as to how much control an individual has overadverse situations.
- ii) **Ownership** -searches the exact reason for the adversity and the willingness of the individual to take necessary measures.

- iii) Reach - indicates the extent to which the trouble affects other areas of the individual's life.
- iv) Endurance - measures as to how long the problem and its effects last in individual's life.

Your success in your work and in life is largely determined by your Adversity Quotient (AQ).

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

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, it can be concluded that in a world full of challenges and adversities, to live a peaceful and happy life, only intelligence quotient and emotional quotient is not enough. A person should have adversity quotient to deal with life's uncertainties. Enhancing Adversity Quotient will lead to success in life and make an individual strive towards being a 'Climber.'

When you focus on problems, you will have more problems

When you focus on possibilities, you will have more opportunities.

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