



PAUL G. STOLTZ, Ph.D.

True Grit: *Inspiring Resilience & Optimism*

Dr. Paul G. Stoltz, founder and president of PEAK Learning, kicked off Common Ground's 2011-2012 season with three talks on adversity and mindset. Dr. Stoltz is creator of the Adversity Quotient (AQ) Method of measuring and enhancing human resilience, designated by Harvard Business School as a "global best practice." Dr. Stoltz's AQ Method is currently employed by Fortune 500 companies and leading business schools. He discussed ways for parents and educators to adapt AQ techniques to enhance learning, optimism and performance in their homes and schools. Dr. Stoltz is the author of several international bestsellers, including Put Your Mindset to Work and The Adversity Advantage: Turning Everyday Struggles into Everyday Greatness. For more information, check out www.peaklearning.com.

On AQ (Adversity Quotient) and IQ: Dr. Stoltz has developed a test to scientifically measure how individuals respond to life's ups and downs, both those imposed by the outside world and those generated by internal worries and anxieties. A high AQ rating indicates that a person possesses a high degree of positive resilience. A low AQ rating indicates that he or she is easily frustrated and, therefore, more vulnerable to stress. Studies consistently have shown that a high AQ score is a more accurate predictor of future success than a high IQ score. This finding helps explain why some extremely intelligent and talented people never reach their full potential and why some moderately gifted individuals may succeed beyond all expectations. Intellectual prowess and talent are important, but in the end, mindset trumps skill set.

On what AQ predicts: Research has shown that AQ affects a broad range of factors that influence performance and quality of life, including learning, motivation, optimism, happiness, creativity, hope, energy, diet, physical health, emotional health, persistence, engagement in work, number of sick days per year and even longevity.

On AQ and kids: Children with high AQ scores "learn and retain more" than those with low AQ skills and are more likely to become "planners and problem solvers." Although genetics and environmental factors influence how all humans respond to

adversity, habitual response patterns can be permanently improved through positive coaching. In other words, we can make lasting changes in our AQ scores, or our ability to respond effectively to life's challenges.

On teaching “response-ability”: The ultimate goal of AQ training is to learn to respond optimally to whatever happens, the moment it strikes. Instead of bemoaning life's setbacks, the most successful people learn to *harness* adversity. Dr. Stoltz argues that adversity can provide the challenge, the kick in the pants, that helps us grow.

On CORE skills of AQ: The most fundamental way to build resilience in ourselves and others is to utilize CORE, a scientifically grounded tool that focuses on four questions designed to help one respond optimally:

- **C – Control:** What facets of the situation can I/you/we influence?
- **O – Ownership:** How can I/you/we step up to make the most immediate, positive difference?
- **R – Reach:** What can I/you/we do to minimize the potential downside? To maximize the potential upside?
- **E – Endurance:** What can I/you/we do to get past this situation as quickly as possible?

On the wisdom of letting children fail: Adversity is a great teacher, says Dr. Stoltz. Parents should think twice before rushing in to solve their children's problems. Young people need to understand the consequences of their actions and how to effectively deal with adversity before leaving home. Overprotecting children cripples them, making it more likely they will fall into a lifelong pattern of learned helplessness.

On balanced parenting: No matter what the concern – grades, sports, deadlines, applications – if the parent cares more about the outcome than the child, “it's all over,” says Dr. Stoltz. Children with over-involved parents tend not to take responsibility for their own decisions and actions. Thus, they never discover who they are or what they are capable of accomplishing.

On a winning mindset: Today's children need more than terrific AQ skills to lead a successful, meaningful life. Dr. Stoltz says they also need the bedrock values of a “3-G Mindset,” which he groups into three main categories:

- **Global:** Being open-minded, flexible, adaptable, curious, collaborative
- **Good:** Being kind, honest, trustworthy, loyal, dependable, compassionate
- **Grit:** Being resilient, focused, tenacious, determined, growth-oriented