

From Adversity Quotient: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities, Paul G. Stoltz, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1997

Two weeks ago you asked me to speak on something that would not repeat anything I had already said during the year. I did so. I wrote **CO<sub>2</sub>RE** and **LEADing** on the board. In effect, all I did was discuss what I had said before but using different words. But these are good words. Stoltz has summarized the best of the research regarding how to develop the mental attitude to allow you to sustain your vision to achieve your dreams, whatever they may be. To really grasp all of the nuances, read the book. But for now, here is the gist of it. To Stoltz, adversity is like a mountain to climb. Three types attempt the climb: **quitters**, who either don't start or who quit soon after starting; **campers**, who climb for a while and then pitch their tents hoping for conditions to change that they prefer, and just keep waiting, and **climbers**, who continue, no matter what, to the top. Stoltz's goal for us: to each develop and nurture as high an AQ behavior as possible, to grow a high AQ culture in every organization or group in which we participate, and to thereby unleash each person's full potential. The key question (p. 281): "How important is it for you to strengthen your AQ and your ability to climb through adversity?" Stoltz builds on the work of Martin E.P. Seligman and others. Seligman's work was in the area of "learned helplessness," which The American Psychological Association considers the Landmark Theory of the Century (his book is Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life). "Learned helplessness" is all about believing that what you do about something does not matter, so why try. "Learned optimism" is about how to change your beliefs so that you can see that it does matter what you try so you therefore try. Stoltz has three key terms:

## **CO<sub>2</sub>RE**

## **LEADing**

## **Vision**

Learn **CO<sub>2</sub>RE** (p. 115) and **LEADing** (p. 154) to create a climbing culture, and develop the **Vision** (pp. 284-5) needed to sustain it. Teaching AQ to others gives them a great gift: the ability to confront challenge after challenge

C = **Control**: focus on what you can control, not what you cannot control

O<sub>2</sub> = **Origin and Ownership** (how did it start; what is your part of the solution)

R = **Reach** (goal: don't allow catastrophising to spill over into other areas)

E = **Endurance** (to reduce how long the adversity will last)

L = **Listen** to your adversity response: high or low?

E = **Explore** all origins and your own ownership of the result

A = **Analyze** the evidence (that you have no control, that it must reach other areas, and that it must last a long time)

D = **Do** something! (act).

p. 155: "The LEAD sequence is based on the notion that we can alter our success by changing our habits of thought. Change is created by disputing old patterns and consciously forming new ones."

Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Recall our discussion of Moses: he had the vision to sustain the pain of growth; his brother Aaron did not. Stoltz agrees. To overcome adversity in a sustained way, you first dream the dream, then make the dream into a vision, and then sustain the vision, hold on to it, don't let it go. P. 287: "AQ is not a quick fix, but rather an enduring formula built on a fundamental truth that life is hard--but how you handle it determines your destiny." Recall our discussion of Frankl: even though life is filled with suffering, guilt, and death, we can deriving meaning from our pain and suffering. Stoltz would agree: because of vision, we know the joy of "life is beautiful: "As long as you are alive, you can ascend." Climb on!