

# Embracing Change Ensures Career Resilience: AQ Online Program Helps HIM Professionals Manage Adversity

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By Paul G. Stoltz, PhD

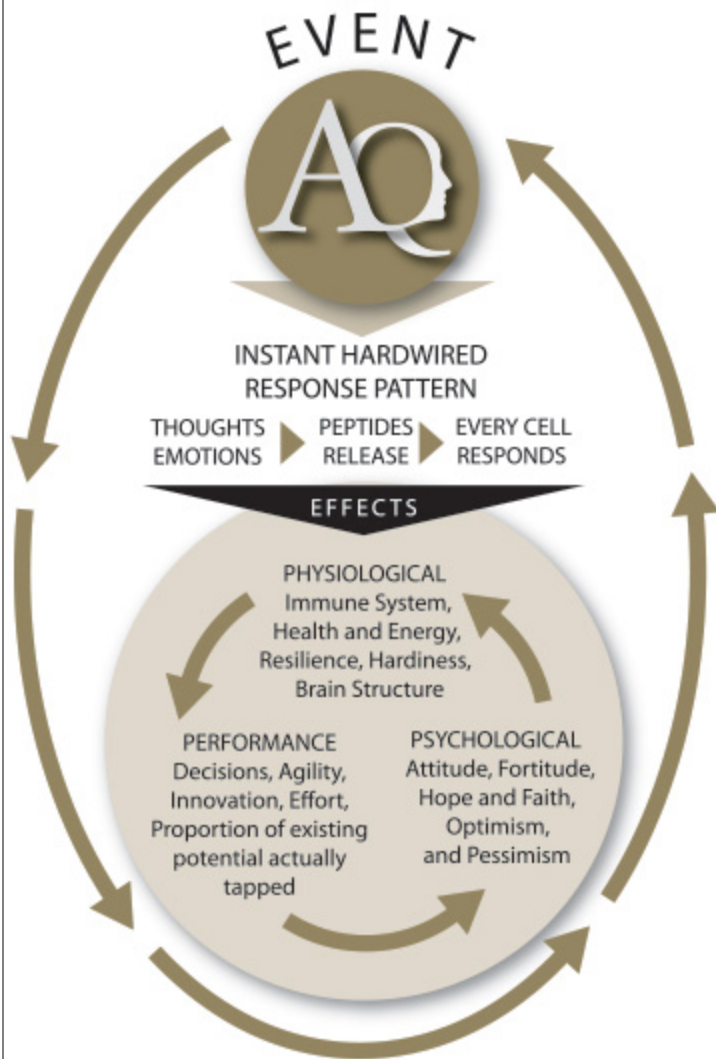
It's the Big One. By all indicators the seismic shift currently upending the healthcare industry-electronic health records, health information exchange, healthcare reform, ICD-10-CM/PCS-scores a 8.0-plus on the Richter scale. Make no mistake, the entire career landscape will be forever and dramatically altered. This leaves individuals with the question of who and what will be left standing when the dust settles.

Many feel change on this scale is dire. Conventional wisdom says it may be a miracle to simply survive-to come out the other side, employed and alive, so you can shout, "I'm still here!" It's easy to fall into the "change is hard, change is pain" trap. According to some change experts that's why people generally dread, suffer through, overtly and covertly resist, and even ultimately reject change. Which is why it tends to be so mucky and painful to everyone involved.

What if, instead, you could convert the draining downsides into possibility-rich upsides? Rather than surviving the storm, imagine genuinely harnessing its force with uncommon speed, agility, and resilience to launch your career, or even your organization, to the next level. The new science of resilience proves you can surf the shockwaves, riding the current uncertainty and flux to end up better off as a result.

A new online professional development tool developed by PEAK Learning, in partnership with AHIMA, is now being offered to help HIM professionals deal with change and adversity, and improve their professional and personal life in the process. This CEU-backed program, AQ-Positive Change, allows HIM professionals the ability to track their "Adversity Quotient" score and take part in professional development activities that raise their bar of resilience and change management. Participants can begin the program at any time.

## The AQ Epicenter-What It Predicts and Affects



Consider how important these factors have become in the new healthcare world, as the health information management profession continues to transform.

**Performance and Productivity**-People with higher AQs typically outperform and outproduce those with lower AQs by 46–320 percent.

**Promotion**-Research with Deloitte shows those with higher AQs tend to be promoted sooner.

**Retention**-Higher AQ people are more likely to stay and persist, rather than quit when the going gets tough.

**Engagement and Enjoyment at Work**-Higher AQ workers tend to be more engaged, and they enjoy their work significantly more, compared to lower AQ workers.

**Energy, Optimism, Happiness, Quality of Life**-All of these factors are measurably stronger in higher AQ individuals.

**Health**-Lower AQ workers have triple the number of sick days, and are sick twice as frequently as those with higher AQs.

**Lifestyle**-Higher AQ individuals report enjoying better diet, more exercise, and fewer prescription drugs compared to those with lower AQs.

**Innovation and Income**-A Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute study shows that higher AQ entrepreneurs generate more innovation and make more money.

**Problem Solving**-Higher AQ individuals solve problems better and faster.

**Learning**-Higher AQ individuals tend to learn and retain more. Even when other factors, like IQ, are factored out.

Note: According to PEAK Learning, each of these findings are statistically significant and derived from independent studies. For more information visit [www.peaklearning.com/about\\_aq\\_studies.php](http://www.peaklearning.com/about_aq_studies.php).

## The Scientific Guts of AQ

PEAK Learning has found you can take more than 3,000 studies from 11 different scientific disciplines and distill them down to two key words: hardwired patterns. This is the mechanism that activates one's Adversity Quotient (AQ). It is the mechanism that releases either depleting or fortifying neuropeptides throughout a person's body.

Think of it like laughter. Chances are that you, like your 7.1 billion planetary companions, laugh your laugh. People recognize your laugh. So-you may not recall-how did that laugh distinction happen?

With the exception of some tonal features, which can be highly genetic based on the shape and size of your voice box, it happened like this. As a young child you roamed the planet like a voracious sponge, paying keen attention to how the influential people in your life responded to life's funny stuff. You picked up bits and pieces of those patterns, without ever consciously deciding, "Mom, I would like 26.2 percent of your laugh pattern."

By around the age of 12, in most people, this pattern firms. And by the age of roughly 16, the response pattern to humorous events-your laughter-becomes hardwired. Research suggests this is also how you form your AQ. Only this time, you are picking up bits and pieces of how influential people respond to life's tough stuff.

Certainly there must be some genetic component to one's AQ. While far from definitive, the research indicates that AQ is at best 10 percent a factor of your DNA. In short, AQ is largely learned, or hardwired, in one's youth. At least until now.

## The Guess Mess

During a study conducted by AQ developer PEAK Learning, researchers gave Olympic coaches a fifty-fifty chance of guessing how well their athletes would deal with a setback. The coaches were wrong 75 percent of the time. The coaches assumed those with the most positive attitudes would be the most resilient. Actually they had it backwards. There are plenty of upbeat positive people who get shattered by adversity. But high AQ individuals-those who respond to adversity the best-tend to be more optimistic and positive as a result. Resilience undergirds optimism.

## The Adversity Continuum

When any sort of adversity hits, big or small, what is your initial, in-the-moment instinct or response? Those looking to raise either their individual or their team's AQ can ask the following question:

When any kind of adversity strikes, what percentage of time do they respond in these five different ways?

1. Avoiding-Doing whatever they can to get away from the adversity. Common tactics include postponing, ignoring, saying "yes" but meaning "no," delegating, or calling in sick.
2. Surviving-Coming out alive, still breathing.
3. Coping-The most common term associated with adversity. Physically, mentally, and emotionally it equates to keeping your head above water. Think of it as treading water, often frantically, to withstand the next wave.
4. Managing-At this level, they are doing something positive with the adversity. The caveat is that it typically takes significant energy, effort, and focus to manage a particular issue.

5. Harnessing-This is where the alchemy is unleashed. Just as alchemists turn lead into gold, adversity alchemists take adversity and convert it into a high-octane fuel that propels them to a place they would never get to without the adversity.

## Measuring and Rewiring AQ

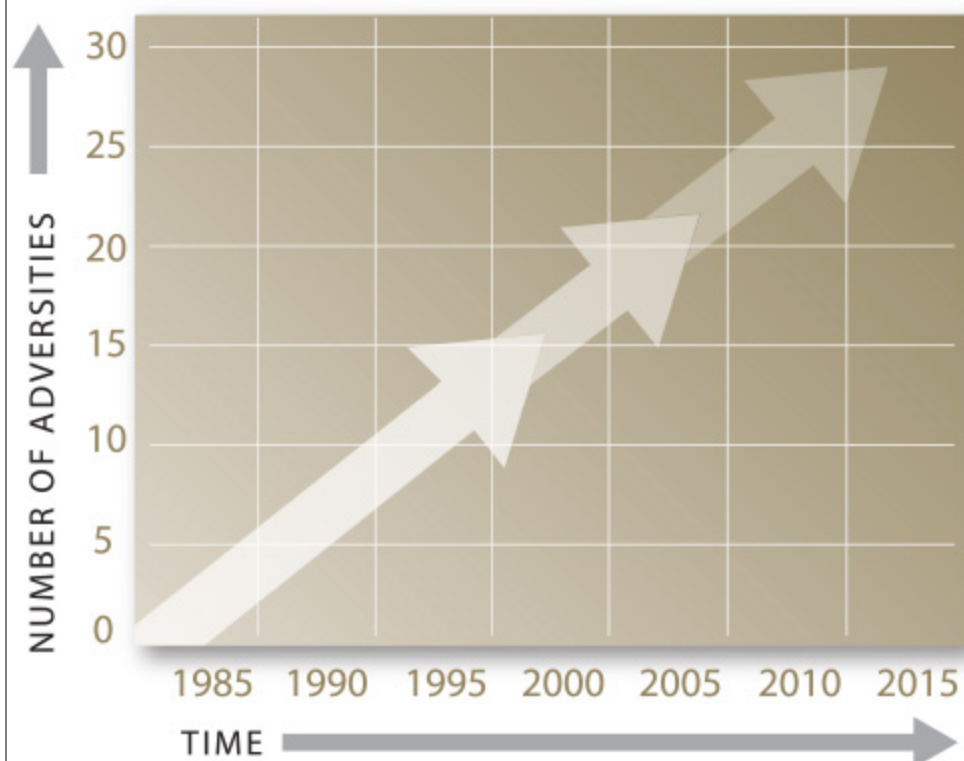
PEAK Learning claims that more than one million people worldwide, across all industries and job levels, have assessed their AQs using the AQ Profile. AQ scores fall on a bell curve, with the majority in the middle, or average, range. The further from average one gets (up or down) the more dramatic the effect it has on one's career and life.

Over the past 25 years, PEAK Learning researchers have honed a series of tools that aid people in improving their AQ. These tools have been included in AHIMA's new for-credit program, AQ-Positive Change.

The average group of professionals that use the AQ tool improve their score by 11–23 percent, which PEAK Learning says is both statistically significant and has a large effect. While live sessions provide significant gains, similar improvements have been demonstrated with the AQ online program, now being offered through AHIMA. For many, those who raised their AQ didn't see it drop after taking the program.

## Global Adversity is on the Rise

Researchers at the Global Resilience Institute have found people perceive they face more adversity each day than they did 20 years ago.



## The Adversity Trend

Adversity is on the rise, according to PEAK Learning's global research findings. Twenty-three years ago, a team of independent researchers affiliated with the Global Resilience Institute formally polled people from around the world on how many adversities, big or small, they faced in just a typical day. People were asked to define the hassles, headaches, problems,

issues, challenges, difficulties, setbacks, obstacles, and tragedies they had to confront in a normal day. The adversity average determined 23 years ago was three per day. Today, based on PEAK Learning's and the Global Resilience Institute's data from several hundred thousand individuals representing 63 countries, that number is 32 per day and rising. The latest numbers show a slight gender gap, with women facing more adversity than men.

PEAK Learning also asked more than 500,000 individuals across all industries to predict the future. A series of questions were presented regarding the future "weather forecast" for adversity.

People were asked: as you look out on the horizon do you see it (healthcare, the world, society, etc.) becoming:

- More predictable or more uncertain?
- Faster or slower?
- Easier or tougher?
- Simpler or more complex?
- More or less demanding?
- More or less stressful?

Nearly every respondent-97 percent-recognized that the "weather" or climate surrounding their world would be intensifying. If true, it means that just hunkering down and waiting for the storm to blow over is not a viable strategy. The only way to flourish is to turn straight into the storm of uncertainty and change, and somehow put its potent power to good use.

#### **Gauge and Grow Your AQ**

Earn four AHIMA CEU credits during the new online course: AQ-Positive Change, taught by Paul G. Stoltz, PhD, an expert on AQ and human resilience. Participants can enroll at anytime. Visit [aq.peaklearning.com/info/ahima](http://aq.peaklearning.com/info/ahima) to learn more.

Paul G. Stoltz is founder and CEO of PEAK Learning, and the author of four bestselling books on the science of mindset management.

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