

# Mental Toughness – FAQ's



Seven questions I am often asked about Mental Toughness

## **Is Mental Toughness another fad?**

No, it's probably been around since the stone-age and, in part, contributes to Darwin's theory of evolution.

The Stoics talked, unknowingly, about Mental Toughness with their notion of fortitude – “having emotional power and the ability to withstand adversity”

Mental Toughness has been studied, albeit under other terms (Great Man theory, Locus of control, Resilience, Hardiness ....), since end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and more recently as a subject in its own right with the work of people like Clough, Earle, Sewell and others.

Mental Toughness has always been here and it is here to stay

## **Is Resilience the same as Mental Toughness?**

Not exactly, both resilient people and those with high Mental Toughness, deal with challenges well and bounce back relatively quickly. However, those with high Mental Toughness will proactively look for challenges and difficult situations – they “enjoy” being out of their comfort zone

MT is sometimes referred to as Resilience+ or Resilience++

## **What exactly is Mental Toughness?**

Mental Toughness is a personality trait, it's part of the invisible 80% of our personality. It is an "attitude" (as opposed to a belief, a preference, a value or anything else hidden below the iceberg) and it contributes to how individuals respond to stress, pressure, opportunity and challenge.

### **Is Mental Toughness just for athletes?**

No, Mental Toughness is not a question of biceps & testosterone; teachers need it when dealing with difficult classes, doctors & nurses need it when dealing with people dying and project managers need it when dealing with multi-stakeholder projects

We may not need "extremely high" Mental Toughness, but we all need a certain amount of Mental Toughness to face up to our daily storms

### **Can we "see" Mental Toughness?**

No, it is an attitude, it is in people's heads; what we can see, is the impact of the attitude on people's behaviours; what they say and do – the 20% of the iceberg

Those with high Mental Toughness tend to "thrive" on stress, pressure, opportunity and challenge

Those with low Mental Toughness tend to "suffer" from stress, pressure, opportunity and challenge

### **Can we "measure" Mental Toughness?**

Yes, the benchmark MTQ suite of psychometric questionnaires allows us to see part of what is "beneath the iceberg" and the identify the "typical" behavioural responses associated with low, medium or high Mental Toughness

### **Can we develop Mental Toughness?**

Yes, it is an attitude and attitudes can be changed. Developing Mental Toughness is not an obligation, the person has to “want” to develop their Mental Toughness.

Development is through an aggregation of small changes and it doesn't happen overnight

However, simply by understanding what Mental Toughness “is” and its impact on performance, wellbeing, etc, can help its development

There are simple and practical tools, methods and techniques to help people develop their Mental Toughness

If you have any other questions, or if you would like to explore your Mental Toughness o not hesitate to contact me.