

Mental Toughness – the end of an era!



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Up until quite recently Mental Toughness was a kind of vague and intangible idea that people would talk about, but nobody could really define it; “the voice in the back of your head that tells you to keep going”, “ability to perform under pressure”, “the ability to resist, manage and overcome doubts”.

Even if the notion of Mental Toughness has probably been around since almost the dawn of time with words such as fortitude, perseverance, hardiness, grit, resilience, attitude and character used to describe it; no one could describe exactly what it is, how it could be measured or how it could be developed.

Today, we are at the end of an era; today there is an international acceptance of what Mental Toughness is, a benchmark system to evaluate one’s level of Mental Toughness and concrete actions that help the development of Mental Toughness.

Psychologists classify Mental toughness as “a narrow plastic personality trait” and describe it as “how individuals deal mentally with stressors, pressure and challenge”.

Mental Toughness is invisible, it’s in that part of our personality, along with our beliefs and our values, where it can’t be seen, it’s among the 80% of the invisible part of our personality, the visible 20% being essentially our behaviours

– what we say and what we do.

What can be seen is the impact of Mental Toughness on what we say and do – our words and our actions.

Mental Toughness has somehow managed to get itself a kind macho, testosterone & muscles image and often conjures up a picture of an invincible terminator with the emotions of a plankton; however, it applies to everything that people do, in all walks of life. It is not just for elite athletes or the special forces.

Today, we know that Mental Toughness is made up from four “pillars”, each with two “foundations”

The four pillars are Confidence, Challenge, Commitment and Control and the foundations are:

Interpersonal Confidence and Confidence in one’s abilities

Risk Orientation and Learning Orientation

Goal Orientation and Achievement Orientation

Life Control and Emotional Control

Today, we know what Mental Toughness is, and we know how to measure the foundations.

The MTQPlus is a psychometric measure that evaluates the solidity of our Mental Toughness foundations by exploring “how we think” – a key driver for behaviour and emotions.

The MTQPlus is a normative measure, with the results for an individual being compared to a global norm group. This provides both the ability to “take a photo” of our Mental Toughness and reliably assess change and growth in Mental Toughness over a period of time.

This photo of where you are “today” in terms of the foundations of your Mental Toughness provides the basis to

identify how YOU can have an effect on your “future” level of Mental Toughness.

The starting point is understanding which of your foundations need reinforcing; is it your lack of emotional control that is letting you down? Is it your reluctance to take risks that is letting you down? Is it unclear objectives that is letting you down? Or maybe it's a combination.

Maybe you need to concentrate on clarifying what it is you want to achieve, maybe you need to take short excursions outside your comfort zones, maybe you need to break down what it is you want to achieve into smaller “chunks”.

We are all only as strong as our weakest foundation(s) and it is by both capitalising on your strengths and developing your weaknesses that you will increase your overall level of Mental Toughness.

If you are curious to know more about Mental Toughness you can take a look at more articles here www.boblarcher.com/category/mental-toughness/.

And, if you would like to measure and start developing your Mental Toughness, do not hesitate to contact me at boblarcher@boblarcher.com.