

PART 2: FIVE HIGH AQ PRACTICES

Making it look easy is the hardest thing in the world to do.

—Sarah Ban Breathnach

The original AQ research was developed based upon research with the top golf instructors in the world as rated by *Golf Digest* and *Golf Magazine*. The expert golf instructors were committed to providing the best possible answers to their clients. This commitment took familiar forms. For example, one of the golf instructors had a personal library of 3,500 books. This curiosity with the world around him underscored his preparation that enabled his communication with others on the golf course. The contribution of AQ was to examine what exactly was lifted from these 3,500 books to provide compelling answers to his clients. More generally, what practices did the top golf instructors use that could be replicated by others seeking to become better communicators?

According to Goleman, expertise is the product of 10,000 hours of focused practice. Not just any practice, but focused practice. The product of the research with the top golf instructors was the identification of five High AQ practices that others could use to improve their answers, their conversations, and communication overall. The five High AQ practices are not a shortcut, but they provide the right path for anyone willing to put in the hours. These practices offer the possibility that anyone can achieve the celestial goal of going from novice to expert communicator, or at least achieve the more terrestrial, but still laudable, goal of step-by-step improvement. I have used AQ to raise my teaching. You can use AQ to elevate your sales, leadership, interviewing, branding, coaching, or any other personal or business priority.

When you raise your AQ, you will know it is elevated because of cognitive and behavioral markers of success. AQ is a skill. Skill development is associated with behavioral markers (accuracy, speed, flexibility, multiple-task performance) and cognitive markers (cognitive effort, phenomenal experience of behavior, and meta-cognitive processes to assess and monitor thoughts and actions).