



The Paramedic Mindset Interview Study

Discussion

Current teaching methods and practices operate by instilling knowledge and skills in a controlled environment. However, the majority of work and emergency situations occur in an uncontrolled environment involving natural human biological responses. The goal for conducting this quantitative analysis was to analyze key elements used by high-performing, successful people to control their physiological arousal and perform under pressure.

Paramedics, in particular, are taught how to perform medical interventions and to develop a sound knowledge base for the emergency medical profession. However, what is missing is the ability to apply the knowledge under pressure. Understanding the critical components to perform when the stakes are high and the correct decision-making is essential was what this research was trying to uncover.

In this study, we transcribed the 15 interviews and performed a text analysis to search for common themes and subjects. Through a combination of qualitative questioning and interviewing a multitude of high-performing people, I was able to discover some interesting findings.

I was surprised to find that the key attributes to possessing poise under pressure were more based on the individual's well-being than experience or preparedness. The top four common themes among the experts were: breathing techniques, exercise, continual learning, and skill and training. Out of 15 interviewees, 11 mentioned that they use breathing as a way to control their arousal and bring down their heart rate, and I would argue that all 15 do so on some level. Breathing has been shown to be one of the most effective psychological skills we can possess. Several previous studies have shown this to be true.

Exercise was the second most common theme among all the experts that I talked to on the podcasts. All interviewees were clearly fit and healthy; they prioritised exercise throughout their daily routine and emphasised its importance. Exercise also played multiple different roles for interviewees; they used it to maintain a minimum standard of fitness but also to help unwind and let go of stress as a means to detach and recharge. The majority of the interviewees who mentioned exercise as a key characteristic exercised outdoors. They found peace and energy in exercising in the environment, amongst nature.



The third most common theme among all the interviews was continual learning. Continual learning and challenging oneself played a critical role in all of the interviewee's own success and lives. They saw adversity as a way to improve and learn. They all admitted to going through difficult times and failing on multiple occasions. What they did to overcome the failings was learn, adapt, and improve. Their career progression may have looked like the stock market, going up and down constantly, but over time, over ten or more years, that line kept creeping up.

Furthermore, 9 out of the 15 interviewees highlighted fervently the need to master fine motor skills, mentioning it 34 times overall. This reinforces the fact that even if you learnt all the teachings in this book, without sound theoretical knowledge and possession of the fundamental skills necessary for the particular field you work in, psychological skills wouldn't help. The experts I talked to all possessed a solid foundation of knowledge in their chosen field, and used psychological skills to turn the knowledge into high achievement.

This informal analysis of my podcast guests' interviews is not peer-reviewed and is therefore limited in its use. Despite this, through listening to the podcasts, you can hear what they have to say for yourself.

Overall, the interviewees all possessed a strong resilience to adversity, and encouraged challenging situations. They were passionate about their profession or mission. They set goals that were difficult to achieve, but not unachievable. They were prepared for any situation by having a high level of problem-solving and adaptation skills.

Most importantly, they had a paramedic mindset. They were motivated by a strong belief in themselves to reach their goals. They didn't make excuses or blame others. They controlled what they could control. Finally, they had positive self-talk. Throughout their lives, they have shown great courage and taken action.

I hope you enjoyed listening to the interviews as much as I did.

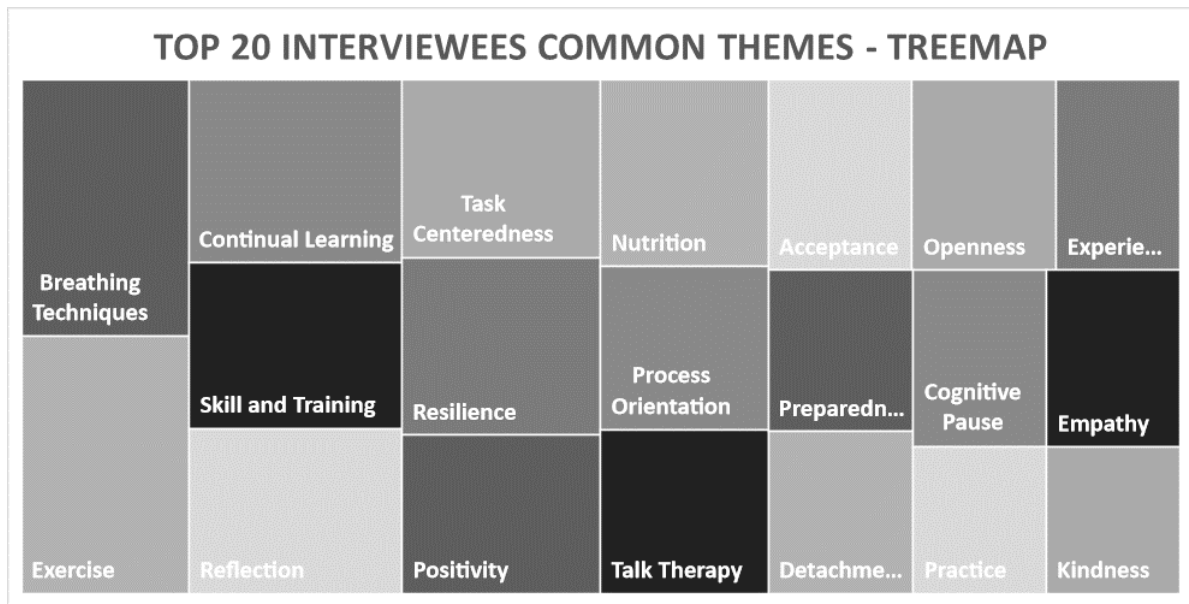


Figure 21. The top 20 common themes mentioned by guests are listed in the graph above. Going from left to right, the themes are listed by highest frequency of mention to lowest occurrence. Breathing techniques, exercise, continual learning, skill and training, and reflection were the five most common themes, as shown in this graph.