

Positive Mental Imagery



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*Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly
With Mental Coaching*

Dear Golf Enthusiast,

PMI is pleased to provide this free electronic newsletter, Mental Coaching for Golf to give you information for balancing your mind-body-spirit so you can play golf effortlessly, free from distractions, trusting your swing, confident, focused, and enjoying the game more!

Thanks for subscribing. With your subscription you will receive tips and insightful information at the beginning of each month to help you develop a winner's mentality for your golf game by balancing your mental, physical and spiritual bodies. In the last three issues we have written about setting your goals for Y2K, balancing your physical body with the necessary nutrition for consistent energy, and finding the necessary emotional and mental arousal level needed for consistent, high performance on the golf course.

This month's topic for enhancing your mental game will be about how your beliefs and thoughts impact your success and enjoyment of the game.

Al Geiberger was quoted as saying, "Golf is like life...You can quickly learn a lot about a person by playing a round of golf with them. At the same time, the game teaches you a lot about yourself."

Life and golf are natural processes of ebbs and flows, ups and downs. Life and golf constantly present challenges for us to learn and grow.

Everything that occurs, that has occurred, is occurring, and will occur in the future is the outward physical manifestation of your innermost thoughts, choices, ideas, and determinations about who you are and who you choose to be.

Golf is a metaphor for life because it has the same perpetual challenge of not being able to achieve perfection. Every golfer who has experienced his peak performance wonders what happened when they couldn't sustain that level of great play. It is the cycle that "what goes around, comes

around". Everything in the universe moves in circles. As your golf game improves, the lows of the cycles will be shallower and the highs will be greater. When your game is at a low ebb, that is the time when you are challenged to grow, to learn more and to move toward greater improvement, and bigger successes.

We don't see the world as it is. We see the world as we perceive it. . . Your perception determines whether you see a four-foot putt for par as easy or as scary. Your success on the golf course and in your daily life is determined by the way you perceive and handle the challenges, frustrations, excitement, failure and success. Your golf game is a reflection of your inner self. It mirrors the way you deal with performance anxiety, pressure, honesty, and responsibility. The game will show you how disciplined, focused, relaxed and in control you really are when it counts.

While some golfers have more athletic ability than others, every person can benefit from using mental skills to improve their lives and their golf games. Some of the organizational skills for quality of life and improved golf are; goal setting, making good conscious choices, adopting positive attitudes and beliefs, relaxation techniques, decision making, and enjoying life/golf in the moment.

One of the best places to start looking at your inner self is your attitudes and beliefs. In a study at UCLA, they found that 90% of the thoughts people thought yesterday, are the same ones they think today. So it isn't hard to know what you are thinking and saying to yourself regularly about your circumstances on the golf course. Some of the limiting beliefs that sabotage players' games that we hear are:

"I can't hit the ball off the first tee."

"After I have a few good holes, I always screw up."

"This isn't my kind of golf course."

"I don't expect to get any better because I am getting older."

"I can't get over the water on that hole." "I always play this hole poorly."

"I hate slow greens." "I'm not good at hitting my irons."

"I don't know if I can get my handicap back down."

"I don't play well when it counts."

"I couldn't get any rhythm because the play was so slow."

"I can't concentrate because she talks so much."

Every time you repeat a limiting belief such as one of these, you give it more power in your mind. In golf, as in life, what you think is what you create. Begin to question your beliefs. Is this what you really want to create? Use your awesome power of imagination to practice in your mind what you really want to happen.

When you hear yourself reiterating a negative thought from your past, change the thought in your mind to a positive one. Golfers play golf because it is a challenge. Challenge yourself to change your beliefs and

behavior to achieve the success you desire. Use the feeling that comes up as a cue for you to know whether your concerns are under your control, or out of your control. If you are worried about people or course conditions that you cannot control, replace your limiting thoughts with positive, constructive ones.

For example, if you are anxious on the first tee and usually miss your tee shot because people are watching you, change your thinking to: "I can let go of everything outside of me by letting it become fuzzy. I can focus clearly on seeing my target. I feel my swing tempo. I concentrate on my pre-shot routine to prepare my mind. My first tee shot is easy because I use the club in my bag with the biggest head. It is easy. I can tee it up and sweep through it.. I love to hit the first shot of the day."

To reinforce these thoughts, you can prepare in advance by using mental imagery. Begin by putting yourself in a relaxed state by breathing deeply and releasing all mental and physical tension from your body. Create in detail in your mind the first hole. Mentally create the fairway, trees, bunkers, and yourself on the first tee. Notice that you are affirming your good tee shot with the messages above. Observe yourself breathing deeply to become relaxed and centered. See yourself going through your physical and mental pre-shot routine. See yourself hitting your very best tee ball (from your past experience) by visualizing and feeling your own smooth, easy, effortless swing. See the ball land on the fairway where you planned. Feel the emotion of happiness and success.

Your feelings indicate what you need to notice about yourself. Become a better player by monitoring your negative thoughts that make you uneasy, anxious or tense. Know that these thoughts sabotage your performance. Use your mental energies to focus on the things within your control. You only have control over yourself because you are all you will ever have for certain!

"Watch your thoughts, they become words; watch your words, they become actions;

watch your actions, they become your habits;

watch your habits, they become character;

watch your character, for it becomes your destiny." --Frank Outlaw

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