

POSITIVE MENTAL IMAGERY

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

PATIENCE by Joan King

If you have been reading these newsletters for awhile, you have probably realized that the game of golf and the game of life are about how you see yourself in the world. For example, if you reacted to reading the words “*game of life*” by thinking that it isn’t a game and life is instead very serious, you will probably have the same attitude towards your golf game.

Patience is a quality that frequently eludes us. We want what we want when we want it. When the time is right, we do get what we want, but the waiting period sometimes deters us from believing that it will happen. For example, most golfers remember when they broke 100 or 90 for the first time. They desired it, planned for it, practiced for it, and the harder they tried the more they missed the mark. They had lots of chances but then missed the mark by scoring big numbers on the incoming holes. With patience, you will accomplish what you want at the right time, in the right place, in the right way. Patience can be acquired by learning to let go of self-will, expectations, and trying to make things happen.

“Whoever is out of patience is out of possession of his soul.”

---Jonathan Swift

The Greek origin of the word *patience* is pathos, which means “suffering”. Suffering can be translated into anxiety, heartache, discomfort and fear on the golf course. Life is full of ups and downs, both physical and emotional. In our search for the perfect round of golf we need to realize that we will not be able to escape all “suffering”. This is why we need patience. It is a form of love. When we suffer the ups and downs and still have faith something good will come of it, we are living out our love. By using this patience we will surely find success.

Patience has to do with control. Most of us have patience when things go the way we want them to. We lose our patience when we perceive that we have lost control of the situation. Stay in control by hitting each shot as if it is the most important shot you will hit in that round. In a four hour round of golf it is important to have the patience to wait

for the many, many opportunities to score well, and not let yourself be distracted by an occasional missed shot or big number on a hole.

“Patience is needed with everyone, but first of all with ourselves.”

–Saint Francis de Sales

When the situation calls for patience, acceptance and resolution, how do you acquire and practice these qualities? Disassociate yourself emotionally from the problems you encounter, and don't allow yourself to become involved emotionally. Be more objective and focus your attention in the present moment.

If we really stopped to think about it, we would be astounded to discover how much of our time is spent trying to avoid the missed golf shots that cause us to feel embarrassed, humiliated, or less than we know we can be. Mistakes teach us, make us work harder sometimes, and help us appreciate success. When we accept mistakes and stop exhausting ourselves trying to avoid them, we will be free to live life more fully and without so much worry.

A pair of morning doves is building a nest in the fig tree outside my patio doors. I marvel at the patience and determination and skill they have in putting this nest together one stick at a time. They search for a small twig, carry it in their beaks and then place it on top of the others. Yesterday, a strong wind came through and broke the partially built nest apart. Half of it is now hanging below the fig tree branch it was resting on. I didn't see the birds get angry and yell at the wind or at their ability to construct a solid nest. They just patiently repaired the damage one stick at a time. Instinctively they know that building a nest is their necessary place to create new life.

It is the same in golf. There are so many distractions happening during the four hour round that mistakes are inevitable. When you remember what you desire, what you really want to accomplish and stay with that desire, you will have the patience to continue on to your goal. The secret to enjoying golf and the secret to enjoying life is to focus all of your attention on what you are doing in the present moment. Enjoy creating each shot just as the birds enjoy placing each small twig into their nest.

Here is a list of some of the opportunities in golf where patience will help to improve your score:

1. Learning a swing change
2. Practicing your mental and physical skills
3. Letting go of results
4. Using slow play to give you extra time to decisively prepare your mind
5. Letting go of other golfers' behavior that annoys you
6. Letting go of distractions on the course
7. Monitoring your arousal level so your swing doesn't get faster during the round
8. Mentally recovering from missed shots
9. Moving off a plateau you have been on for awhile

10. Finishing your backswing
11. Pausing momentarily at the top of the backswing to change direction
12. Focusing your eyes on the ball during the golf swing
13. Feeling your swing tempo
14. Feeling the lag time in the downswing
15. Picking an intermediate target on every shot for correct alignment
16. Executing the same pre-shot routine every time
17. Concentrating on finishing the last three holes well

How do you become patient on the golf course in this hurry-up, accomplish more--in less time world that we live in?

Step #1:

Remember why you play golf. Stay in the present and have fun with each shot.

Step #2:

See the good in every shot. Know that every mistake gives you an opportunity to learn.

Step #3:

Look around at Nature and see how nothing is accomplished in a hurry, except for possible destruction.

Step #4:

Learn each new part of the game completely before moving on to the next step.

Building a golf game requires patience. Practice each new mental and/or physical skill until you *know* it without having to think about it, even though you *think* you know how to do it on your own. Patience is the most important asset you bring to learning the game of golf—the willingness to allow each new skill its own time and proper place.

***“Only with winter-patience can we bring
The deep desired, long-awaited spring.”***

---Anne Morrow Lindbergh

All trees have different root systems. A pine tree grows rapidly and has shallow roots that spread in every direction. A maple tree grows slower and its roots go deeper searching for moisture deep in the earth. In stormy weather with the wind howling through its branches, the maple stands strong due to its deep root system. The pine tree with its shallow root system cannot withstand storms as well.

We often want things immediately. We want to play golf well, but only if we can learn it fast. We want to play golf well right after taking a lesson without practicing. We get impatient when we don't hit shots the way we would like to. And sometimes when our golf games don't start off well on the first couple of holes, we give up.

But the permanent things in life take time to develop. If you want your golf game to resist the storms we all encounter, you must allow time for it to develop and grow within you. In the meantime, you can marvel at how much you can learn from the world around you.

Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance!

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--George Barrett

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--Barbara Shaffer

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If you have a question or need help with your mental game, email Joan at Positive Mental Imagery, info@mastermindgolf.com Also, please share with us how this website information has helped you improve your performance.

