

POSITIVE MENTAL IMAGERY

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Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly

MENTAL LESSON PLAN 4

By Joan King

Since November 2002 I have been outlining a six-month mental golf plan to prepare those of you in non-golf climates for your re-emergence into golf in the Spring. For those of you playing golf now in the warmer climates, it will be a reminder of mental tools to use to enhance your present game.

- Lesson 1 in November 2002: Goal Setting and Physical Conditioning
- Lesson 2 in December 2002: Stress Management and Relaxation
- Lesson 3 in January 2003: Mind Control and Positive

Self-Talk

This mental training is to prepare you so that you are ready to perform at your peak performance level when you are over the ball. At that time you want your mental, emotional, physical and spiritual parts all to be in harmony. Then they act as one and the swing occurs without conscious effort or thought. This is called playing in the zone.

OVERCOMING FEAR

The opposite state of being in the zone is being in a state of fear. Fear is an agitated feeling aroused by an awareness of actual or threatening trouble; an uneasy feeling that something may happen contrary to one's desires.

All golfers have experienced the emotion of fear on the golf course. Golfers express fears caused by everything from the feeling of possible embarrassment or humiliation, to the worry of ruining a good score. First tee jitters, hitting over water, hitting out of a steep bunker, and pressure putts are examples of situations where golfers can get very fearful. The mark of a champion is his/her ability to face the fear and change it by producing a positive thought prior to swinging the golf club.

Here are four ways in which fear can sabotage your performance.

1. Fear distorts your perception and confuses you as to what is going on.
2. If all of your giving (practice and effort) is about getting (winning, results), think how fearful you will become.

3. Fear is a sense of scarcity, a feeling that you aren't good enough.
4. Living with the underlying feeling of fear (no control) is more frightening than playing or living through the fear.

Fear in golf can be caused by:

1. Negative thinking about past experiences; when you remember past shots that you topped/hit in the water/ hit fat/consistently sliced.
2. Worry about the results: when you allow your mind to think about missing a shot, or thinking about your score.
3. Generalizations: when you think your performance up to that point will repeat throughout the round. Making a statement such as, "It looks like it will be that kind of (awful) day" is a self-fulfilling prophecy.
4. Your reputation: when you believe people will think less of you, or not want to play with you when you don't shoot to your potential.
5. Embarrassment: when you believe you are the only one to experience the humiliating feelings of making a mistake in front of other people, and it somehow makes you less of a person.

MENTAL KEYS TO OVERCOME FEAR:

1. Overcome the fear of a particular shot, a particular golf club, a particular hole or a hazard by taking action and doing it. Practice in your mind hitting the shot perfectly, seeing it land on the target, and feeling the joy of success. If possible, go to the course and hit balls in that situation so you have a successful memory to access.
2. Let go of the attachment to fear. Feel the fear and then do it anyway. The fear of embarrassment is worse than feeling embarrassed. Enhance your self-esteem by doing what you are afraid of. "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." --F. D. Roosevelt
3. Believe that when you are upset, you are experiencing some form of fear. If circumstances are beyond your control, let go of the fear and focus on what you can control.
4. Make a conscious decision about what you want to experience. Choose to see the good in all situations, and feel the good feelings as a result of that perception.
5. Most people fear making a wrong decision. The solution is to take a risk and be in control of your life and your golf game. Don't procrastinate about making a decision because that only increases the fear. If the decision doesn't produce the results you desire, use your power of choice to choose again. As you act on your choices, you will become stronger, learn more about yourself, and the truth about what you want and who you are.

Our personal and national security could be jeopardized by the stressful world situation we are in now. As in golf, it now becomes especially necessary for us to maintain inner

peace and live in the present amidst all of the possible "what ifs". Perhaps this story will bring you some solace in our troubled world.

PEACE

"There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for peaceful towering mountains were all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The other picture had mountains too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry storm which fell, and in which a terrifying play Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall.

This did not look peaceful at all. But when the King looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest...Perfect peace.

The King chose the second picture. Why? "Because," explained the King, "Peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."

Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance!

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"I want to personally tell you that your tapes are fantastic! You have been able to take me to another level of golf. You are part of my daily life!

-FP, Amateur Golfer

"You restored my confidence and faith in my golf swing so that I can now swing without thinking. All areas of my mental game are improving."

--JRZ, Amateur Golfer

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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.