

POSITIVE MENTAL IMAGERY

*Newsletter March 2003
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Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly

MENTAL LESSON PLAN 5

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*

Lesson 4 in February 2003: *Overcoming Fear*

Lesson 5 in March 2003: *Changing Limiting Beliefs*

This mental training is to prepare you so that you are in the best *state of being* that you can when you are standing over the ball getting ready to swing. 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*.

March 21st is the first day of Spring. Spring is when golfers' thoughts begin to turn away from winter activities and there is a longing in the heart to get to the golf course. The good thing is that over the winter months you have had time to forget all of the self-defeating thoughts that you created last summer. The mental game of golf is about learning how to *get out of your own way*.

You have probably seen a farmer's field in the springtime where the earth has been plowed, overturned and ready to accept the seeds that will bring forth the harvest. You have probably also seen a field that hasn't been plowed and is filled with tall weeds. If seeds were sown into this latter field, they would not have a very good chance to be nourished and grow. In the same way, you need to remove the mental weeds, cultivate and nourish your mind with the right thoughts for maximum performance.

The mental weeds are the performance interfering thoughts of *limiting beliefs* such as self-doubt, fear of failure/success, anxiety, and self image.

To play up to your potential you must use positive thinking to:

- Believe in yourself.
- Believe you can improve.
- Believe you can create your own success.

LIMITING BELIEFS & ATTITUDES

You have heard it said that golf is 90% mental. The mental game of golf, and the game of life, is 10% about what is happening, and 90% about how you react to it.

- What you believe will help or hinder your performance. You have a choice on every shot regarding the attitude you will apply.
- What you believe is what you will produce in your life and in your golf game. There are beliefs that limit us and there are beliefs that empower us.
- You are not your beliefs. You can change your beliefs anytime you wish.

Begin to question the thoughts you have that limit your performance. Is your perception of a final four-foot putt for the championship easy or scary? Pros that are winning never think about missing. Because of their limiting beliefs of themselves, amateurs begin to think about missing shots and putts when they are under pressure.

One of the best places to start looking at your inner self is your attitudes and beliefs. In a UCLA study it was found that 90% of the thoughts people thought yesterday are the same ones they are thinking 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 examples of limiting beliefs that sabotage players' games that I hear are:

- I don't play as well in tournaments as I do other times.
- This is not my kind of golf course.
- I'm not good at hitting my fairway woods
- I can't get over the water on that hole.
- I don't expect to get better because I am getting older.
- I can't hit the ball off the first tee.
- I always screw up after a few good holes.
- If I start off badly I am done for the day.
- I always play this hole badly.

- I couldn't find my 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. What you think in your conscious mind is translated into a picture and feeling in your subconscious mind which then acts to make it become a reality. The unconscious mind doesn't alter the message. It believes it just as you stated it. It doesn't know the difference between negative and positive. Use the awesome power of your mind to create what you do want instead of reinforcing a limiting belief because of self-doubt. What the mind sees, the body tends to do. Your body is only a robot, controlled by your brain/mind.

Your life is the direct result of your previous and present thoughts, desires and emotions. Begin to notice what you are saying and thinking and you will notice that you are automatically doing a lot of negative thinking. These thoughts create mental pictures which your body then develops into reality. Your mind can create positive empowering pictures just as easily as negative ones. Use the power of your mind to create for yourself what you do want for your golf game, not what you don't want.

If you do not plan your day, or plan your strategy for a round of golf, it will be planned for you. Your life, for the most part is the product of your deeply embedded conditioning of subconscious desires. If you don't like the results you are getting in your life or in your golf game, determine what your beliefs are that drive your behavior.

Here are some examples of positive beliefs and the positive consequences that resulted:

Did you notice what is painted on Wendy Doolan's golf bag? It says, *"Anything is possible"*. Wendy just won the 2003 LPGA season opener Welch's/Fry's Championship.

When Karie Webb was asked about her chances of defending her Office Depot title, she said, *"Some people say it's harder to defend a tournament, but I think it's the biggest advantage you can have. You've got better memories than anyone else in the field."* She won by 5 strokes.

Henry Ford said, *"Believe you can or believe you can't. Either way you will be right."* One of the reasons Ford was so successful was that he walked around his plant and congratulated his people on doing something right.

Christopher Reeve stated, *"To balance anything in life, you have to begin with a positive mental attitude. A large part of accomplishment is deciding to do it no matter what, even if you have doubts on a given day. I never knew how powerful the human mind was until age 42, when I had my accident."* Paralyzed since 1995, Reeve continues his acting and directing

career, is a political activist, runs his foundation and is a husband and father.

Limiting beliefs will keep you from achieving your potential. You are not your beliefs. You can change them any time you want. Decide whether your daily beliefs are self-defeating or self-empowering. Golfers play golf because it is a challenge. Challenge yourself to change your limiting beliefs and behavior to achieve the success you want.

"If you want to know the past, look at your present life. If you want to know the future, look at your present." --- Buddha

Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance!

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"In the month since taking your workshop my handicap has gone down 4 strokes. I am extremely pleased with my progress and attribute it to my increased confidence and improved visualization. Thank you I am more relaxed on the golf course, my attitude is more positive and I am having more fun." ---GH, Female Amateur Golfer"

"I use the PMI tapes all interchangeably and love them. They make me more relaxed and focused. My attitude is more positive, I am more relaxed, having more fun while playing, and I lowered my handicap 3 strokes." --- SB, Female 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.

