

POSITIVE MENTAL IMAGERY

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*Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly*

CONFIDENCE

by Joan King

The mental parts of the game that golfers most want to improve are the four C's; confidence, control, consistency and concentration.

Golfers believe that they will gain confidence when they play well. This is true, but success is hard to hold on to, and as it slips away, so does your confidence. True confidence comes from believing in yourself and in your ability to improve. Champions continually strive to improve. They keep their focus moving toward success and learn from their mistakes.

Hilary Lunke is the new US Women's Open Champion. Hilary is by her own admission a short hitter off the tee, but she conquered the 6550 yard Witch Hollow Course at Pumpkin Ridge, Oregon all week with her stellar game play. She had been working on her game and in the Monday 18-hole play-off, it wasn't where she wanted it to be. She was unable to reach some greens with a fairway metal.

Hilary trusted her short game to bring her through all of the momentum changes that occurred several times during the play-off. Hitting only 9 greens, she had 23 putts, one putting 10 times in the first 11 holes. Her exemplary mental game is a good example of having the confidence to win a major championship. She said, "I didn't need other people to believe in me, but it was important that I did."

FOCUS ON THE SOLUTION, NOT THE PROBLEM.

Focusing on your weaknesses, keeps your attention on the negative and leads to low self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence.

Self-confidence remains when you aren't deterred by a missed shot, or not having your "A" swing. You are able to let it go, remain calm and focus your energy on the next shot. A good example is Annika Sorenstam's offline shot hit under the stands on the 72nd hole. She was confident enough to take as much time as she needed to be clear about her options and how she was going to play her next shot. Would you have handled this situation the same way, or would

you have been in a hurry to get out of there and move away from the feeling of embarrassment?

USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK TO DEVELOP CONFIDENCE

Developing self-confidence begins off the golf course. *You must believe before you can achieve.* As your confidence builds, you move from “I’ll try it”, to “I think I can do this” to “knowing” that you can hit the shot, or break 90 or whatever you desire. As you focus your attention on believing in your ability, you move toward your goal and become more confident as your skills improve.

This state of “knowing” is accomplished by constantly reminding yourself of what you do well. Think about it often. The more you think about creating what you want, the easier it becomes. When you focus on your swing fault or game weaknesses or *why* you can’t hit a shot, it becomes difficult. Focus on your strengths.

Your self-image and self-confidence are formed by the verbal, visual and feeling images in your mind. World class golfers constantly repeat their positive self-talk. They use these images to practice over and over again in their minds as if it was the real situation, until the image is automatically accepted.

PLAN FOR IMPROVING CONFIDENCE:

1. At the end of every round, write down what you did well in that round.
2. Write down what you can do better.
3. Write down how you are going to do it.

BODY LANGUAGE FOR CONFIDENCE

1. Practice your setup so that you feel the athletic stance that prepares you for a smooth balanced takeaway.
2. Breathe deeply through your abdomen to relax your body.
3. Feel and visualize your smooth, easy, effortless swing.
4. Walk with your head high looking straight ahead. Walking with your head and eyes down will promote negative self-talk.

AUTHENTIC SELF

Your “authentic self” is where you live consistently with your desires, your dreams, and your gifts. Your “fictional self” denies who you really are and is defined by your environment and the world’s expectations. When you change how you look at your golf game your performance will change. To become a winner you must have confidence in yourself, in your ability, and have a desire to enjoy what you are doing.

It is important to realize that everything you do on the golf course is for your benefit and enjoyment. When you decide to let go of the pressure by trying too hard and letting go of the compulsion to win, you can begin to enjoy playing. This is your game and the first responsibility is to yourself.

1. Believe and visualize your ability to play the game well.
2. Believe and see yourself improving.
3. Think positively and see yourself building on your positive efforts.
4. Compliment yourself often. See the good in all things.
5. Act like a champion. Act as if it is impossible to fail.

***WINNERS SEE WHAT THEY WANT TO HAPPEN;
LOSERS SEE WHAT THEY FEAR MIGHT HAPPEN.***

IF IT WORKS, DON'T CHANGE IT!

All golfers are familiar with the thoughts that occur when they are playing well. They become defensive and try to protect their lead, or score which puts the focus on how to avoid mistakes rather than on playing well. The old sports adage, "Never change a winning game, always change a losing game" applies here. Once you get your momentum going, it is important to maintain it by doing the same things that got you to that position.

WHEN YOU KNOW WHAT IS WORKING, DO MORE OF IT!

Stick to your game plan even though you are playing outside of your comfort zone. Be patient and wait for the good things to happen. This is not the time to play aggressively. Overconfidence can cause you to try and hit low-percentage shots. The strategy of Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods is to play conservatively on Sunday and let the other players press to catch them. Play your percentage shots; the shots you know you can hit at least 50% of the time. Play smart golf.

AFFIRMATIONS

- **I AM more confident in my ability every day.**
- **I AM enthusiastic about playing golf.**
- **I AM confident I can recover from my mistakes.**
- **I AM enjoying learning to improve my golf game.**
- **I AM a winner!**

Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance!

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Joan will be giving a workshop, "*Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance---Use Hypnosis to Play in the Zone State*" at the world's largest hypnosis convention next month in New Hampshire. Here's your chance to learn about hypnosis and much more. Log on to www.ngh.net

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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.

