



*Newsletter July 2006
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*Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly*



Play “In the Zone” with Joan

Ed. Note: Joan will be teaching a two-hour workshop, "Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance---Use Hypnosis to Play in the Zone State" at the National Guild of Hypnotists, the world's largest hypnosis convention, on August 11th in Marlborough, Massachusetts. Here's your chance to learn about using hypnosis and much more, to improve your golf game and your life. For more information about this exciting international conference, go to www.ngh.net

SMILE YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS

Have you noticed how Phil Mickelson is always smiling on the golf course? He owns one of the “secrets” to maintaining an even emotional level (PMI Archived Newsletter, March 2000, “*Mental Arousal*”) and a positive attitude that keeps him playing well.

After withdrawing from the ING Par 3 Shootout after losing the US Open, Phil said, “It’s always about having fun, and I didn’t think it was fair to the event to act like I could have a lot of fun right now.”

When I was in Sweden eight years ago attending Pia Nilsson's 2-week "Coaching for the Future" seminar, I learned this valuable secret. The Swedish Golf Federation's training program teaches their junior golfers to maintain an even disposition by carrying a picture of something or someone they love in their pocket. It could be a person or a pet. In my case it would be one of my grandchildren. When a golfer misses a shot, or is struggling, s/he would then take out the picture and look at it. As s/he looks at the picture and feels the love warming his/her heart, the automatic response is one of well-being, and a smile occurs naturally. The smile is a trigger and announces to the rest of the body to produce endorphins. As you know, endorphins relax and calm your body. Easily and effectively you are back in your natural arousal state to perform at your highest level.

Your conscious mind that likes to criticize, judge, analyze and rationalize will not be pleased with this result. It would rather try and figure out how to fix the missed shot than release the painful emotions of anger, fear, or embarrassment by a simple smile. Anger will trigger the flight/fight response and your body will automatically produce adrenalin to stimulate your body into action. Unfortunately, this is the opposite emotional state in which we play our best. Feeling fear, humiliation, embarrassment keeps us feeling victimized. When we smile we tap into our personal power so we no longer feel like a victim.

Anger is a secondary emotion that covers up another feeling, the feeling of fear. People express anger in different ways, all of which can all be seen on the golf course. Some people laugh, some people cry, some people go into a rage and bang their clubs, and some people stuff the anger deep down inside themselves. Sarcasm, like rolling your eyes, is anger that comes out sideways.

In golf it is important that you feel your emotions and let them go quickly so they won't come up again at the wrong time. Most of the time we get angry because things don't go our way. We feel afraid that we have lost control of the situation and feel unworthy.

A recent survey showed that 70-90% of our population feels stressed in our everyday lives as well as at work. Today's fast paced lifestyle is putting a toll on us. It doesn't have to be that way. Golf should be one place where you can relax and enjoy playing outdoors in the beauty of nature.

Playing golf can be stressful. (PMI Archived Newsletter, November 2001, "Stress") Stress can be created by the indecision of picking the right club. Hitting over hazards can be stressful. Trying to play to your handicap or reputation can be stressful. If you find yourself thinking in this way, you should stop and consider whether the threat is real or if you are just being too hard on yourself. It is important to learn how to deal with stress before your adrenal

glands release epinephrine and adrenalin into your blood stream which then increases your heart rate, increases your blood pressure, elevates your blood sugar level, tightens muscles, and reduces your fine motor skills

There is always another way to look at a stressful situation and diffuse the pressure. In NLP we call it reframing. The situation doesn't change, but your perception of it does. It is like putting a new picture frame on an old picture.

You hit a shot over a bunker to a flagstick in the front of the green. It falls short and imbeds in the sand under the lip of the bunker. Amid the frustration and disappointment, remember why you love the game of golf. It is a game where there is one-half inch between perfection and disaster. Do you love it only when the half-inch works in your favor? If so, you will be frustrated and angry often on the golf course.

It isn't what happens to us on the golf course, or in life that determines our happiness so much as the way we react to what happens.

Train yourself to play as Phil Mickelson does. Smile at every shot, and let it trigger the release of endorphins which produce a general sense of calm and well-being. Then you will be in the perfect arousal state to hit your next shot.

Laughter and smiling come naturally to infants. Children laugh 500 times a day and adults laugh about 50 times. When my grandson was 11 months old, we went to the mall to go Christmas shopping. He smiled at everyone and everything. I watched as his smile transformed the people around him. They smiled back at him. It was infectious and everyone around him was in their natural state of joy. When you smile you get a new perspective of dealing with a situation. If your ego won't let you smile on the golf course, inwardly or outwardly, the game will be work instead of play for you.

Humor builds self-esteem if you can laugh at your humanness. Humor can take the tenseness out of a situation. Humor is a universal language. Humor is a natural diversion. I think that is the reason so many jokes are told on the golf course. Players who maintain positive self-talk enhance their confidence and feelings of self-worth. Know that miss-hit shots do not reflect on you as a person. What does reflect on you is your reaction to them.

Train yourself to use this mental tool on the golf course. When you are down, think of someone or something you love, and watch your spirits lift automatically. Your body knows that a smile means happiness and success.

"Smile, it's free therapy." -- Doug Horton

Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance

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