

Importance of Targets

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Ahhh. The target - the *future location* of the golf shot about to be hit. As innocent as the word, "target," appears to be, unfortunately it leaves a lot to be reckoned with. It has been the "victim" of the progressive experiences, mostly of players and others looking for how to translate the business and concept of goals - which are always future - into the game of golf. Without being able to directly pin it all down, the progression went something like this. First there was only passing reference to "targets." Then the subject became more specific and gradually loaded up with an escalating mandatory insistence upon its importance. Somehow, the "importance" factor was attached to result - if you got a good one, you were said to be target oriented and focused. If you got a bad one, you obviously must have lost your target focus. Oh? Or is there something here not completely understood?

Notice how good and reasonable that sounds - so we all bought into it. And let there be no question - targets have to be in the mix for success, but the question becomes: "Where in the sequence do they belong?"

Certainly it does not sound like the word "target" is required to be related to the future. If we leave it at its intellectual definition as a word, there is no argument. However, when the word become associated with dynamic experience there really is no way to separate it from the human system's connection between the awareness of anything that is "not yet" (the future) and the non-discriminatory function of anxiety that is triggered by "not yet." Intellectually we can all say, "It doesn't have to be that way." And we'll go with that, as long as a player only wishes to succeed in having an intellectual concept, is content with ignoring human systemic elements that are not optional, and is willing to be exposed at a vulnerable level to a multitude of potential mishaps - that is, vulnerable to a point of reference that is not prepared to defend itself - not that those mishaps are bound to occur, but they can and typically do.

The reason all target orientation is in the future lies in "hasn't happened yet." The reason that is an issue is that the human system is non-discriminatory and is not swayed by our intellectualization aimed at an issue which lacks understanding, and that inevitably carries the undertone of, "I hope I'm right about this." The human nervous system (autoimmune) goes by its own drumbeat that does not change for anyone at anytime (that's why it is consistently reliable and trustworthy, given for our protection, and making it possible always to measure by its basic positioning in human experience. It will never ever behave capriciously and let us down). We didn't create it. We can't change it, and the Creator is not going to, at least based on any request we can make.

Part of the "target issue" that has become a core concern for golfers particularly, comes from an innocent, but typical, human lack of awareness about how the non-conscious mental function works, and so we don't hear or notice the

presence of doubt in this. If you feel you must have a mental “sticky” with the target in it while executing, the undertone to that is, “If I don’t the target might go away or, I might miss the shot, or I would be defaming the instructor who told me to do it.”

The “kicker” for understanding, as we see it, lies in the word “resolution.” No matter what is going before the shot, it remains “unresolved” until the ball comes to rest at its destination, whether that is the same one you chose or not. That means that every act with a future in it (and every act has a future in it) is “unresolved” until it has come to rest. “Unresolved” by its nature, contains doubt, possibly even fear, and a measure of uncertainty. Those are ingredients that trigger anxiety. And we’ve probably said enough about the connection between anxiety and physiological changes.

We have no desire to suggest that one cannot play golf while engaging the mind with a target orientation. We are simply saying that is an approach that is vulnerable to glitches, misses, yips, poor execution, and other missteps. But that doesn’t say such things WILL happen and that simply reinforces fears and doubts about unfinished business. We have scrambled our way through just enough of that “stuff,” for so long that we are fooled into following the line of least resistance. So we say to ourselves, “What the hay - it’s too much trouble to go that next step, and besides, I’d have to give up control to go there, plus build an effective alignment habit, and get used to something new, and I’m not doing so badly this way.” In other words, we amateurs, and members of every tour, have mesmerized ourselves into settling for mediocrity in execution. Oh we have not settled for mediocrity in our goals, just in how to arrive at them.

Having said all that, all we can do is point to the natural, persistent, permanent, unalterable place of the future in human experience and show its relationship to the triggering of anxiety. The future is dynamic. Even though it may be connected to a hole in ground into which you wish to insert a ball, making it seem fixed, it is definitely not static as far as the future and anxiety are concerned. The future always carries “unresolved” as part of its baggage. Now the only contention may need to be the size and weight of the “suitcase.” There may be more weight to a trial by jury than worrying about your neighbor’s dog. Going to the dentist may affect some more than others, so all those variables would need to be considered.

Thing is, most people are not going to stop, look, listen and decide about each one of those every time one of them rears its head. We maintain, however, that it is vital that we all know how that works, and then we don’t have to make all those stops and we will get caught short much less frequently than we will if we THINK the future is not eloquent in our experience, so it’s not necessary to consider it.

Targets ARE important. Since they are “static” in geographic position (which is different from “static” vs. “dynamic” in the human system), we do need to focus

on a target – but only DURING *pre-shot planning*, and BEFORE *we begin walking* to the ball. We have no idea, other than as related to the foregoing, why we have fallen into the belief that we won't be able to remember, for the 6-13 seconds it takes to execute, "Where did that danged target go? It was there a minute ago." We do know, however, that, in the face of "unresolved" action, if we want to keep anxiety at bay, we have to set our conscious minds on a neutral frame of reference. We do that, with what we call a clear key. You can call it whatever you wish and if you can find a neutral way to occupy your mind so that attention to the future and the past are kept still for about 14 seconds, you will be in business with a great deal more reliability than has been the case without that. (The allied issue, of course, refers to the automatic principle which is a bit beyond the scope of this particular discussion).

Players are going to continue playing a lot of golf without what we're talking about and that is quite OK with us. If they are satisfied, that's likely what is most important in the long run. We think we'll stick with the better scoring result we get and the less energy consumption (loss) that accompanies doing it with clear keys. And we can all keep saying "To each his own."
Cheers.