

We have taken the liberty to add friends with whom we wanted to share our newsletter. As with all transmissions these days, this one doesn't have to be in your inbox. If you prefer not to have it sent every two months, just let us know.

Also, we have elected to provide a URL from which our readers may download the current issue so as to deter anything resembling "spam." Thanks, CGM

One Under Par

Volume 12, number 4

A Newsletter from... *ClearKeyGolf®*....August, 2011

Who Knew What...and When Did They Know It?

What follows here are some direct quotes selected from a book we recently acquired. The quotes will appear in italics. For the sake of a bit of suspense, we'll ask that you review the quotes first without prejudice or presumption. We doubt that you will be surprised, but you may be enlightened. We'll say more about the book later.

The book we were fortunate enough to "happen upon" includes what follows:

If you ask almost anyone if they even heard of "Zen," the answer is usually "yes."...The idea of Zen is popular. But the practice of Zen is not so popular...(since)... relatively few people actually practice Zen – consciously, that is.

With Zen, You are saddled with responsibility for yourself. Zen is based on a spirit of self-reliance.

When you first start practicing Zen...Thoughts fly through your head....The thoughts increase...a million things fly by...

Then, you snap back into where you are, and what you are doing. The more you try to concentrate on one thing the more it slips away. Later when you become experienced, you will not try to stop your thinking. You will let it stop by itself. You will let it go. You will realize that nothing outside of you causes you trouble or anguish or fear or guilt or doubt. When a thought occurs to you, and you spend time thinking about it, it is said that your mind has stopped at that point. This "stopping mind" is the heart of the problem. When your mind "stops" to question or decide or judge – when you are concentrating on that, you lose track of what is still going on.

But the flow does not stop when you do. It just passes you right by....In Zen, an instant is too long for your "stopping mind." When you have guilt or fear or anxiety or regret or nervous anticipation, you are living in the past or the future. You must live now, in the present....

Zen teachings are concerned with the practitioner attaining an intuitive experience. The nature and context of the experience are irrelevant. As long as there is no intrusion by the intellect, as long as the experience is immediate....that is, when there is no mediation by the intellect, this is an intuitive experience. It is understanding without words. It is to apprehend the situation clearly and to see it for what it is, and not what you think it is. The intuitive experience is quick and without hesitation. There is no resistance. The intuitive moment is not instinct. It is spontaneous. But not instinctive. The body is allowed its own wisdom, and is completely free from any mental steering. It is a natural action...

What you have just read are selected portions of the Introduction to the English version of "The Book of Five Rings," written by Miyamoto Musashi about the beginning of the 17th century in Japan. Musashi was a transitional Samurai as the groups of warriors changed their collective movement to an individual, solitary movement, and that time and those conditions found him finishing his career as an undefeated, strongly self-reliant Samurai turning his attention to become a painter and philosopher.

We ask our readers now to go back and read once more what is above, noting particularly that there is only a little difference between what was known then and what we know now about mental management. The sense and meaning of one's own approach to the current game is paralleled and reflected, if only on a continuum, marked by the naturalness of the Samurai as compared with the more "forced" learning that has been necessitated by the ensuing attitudes, values, logic (though often faulty) and determinations of our western culture.

The Samurai was so thoroughly trained and developed that he was able to dismiss the discontinuity between the conscious and non-conscious functions without benefit of research and development. But the rest of us still need a clear key to manage the overextended way in which we have put all our eggs into a sophisticated basket and proudly extolled the virtues of processes that fail to get safely beyond the planning and preparation stages to the priceless moment of truth. Instead, we have left ourselves facing growing roadblocks at the intersection of readiness and action, all the while wondering why it is so difficult to reach our objectives and goals.

In Musashi's words, you may also hear the distant sound of clear keys, which through this nearly 500 hundred-year-old document translates into a reality that has had centuries of recognition lodged in true relevance. In that sense, it also has kinship to the natural character of what Hippocrates gave us in 400 BC, extant today as a resource for identifying and understanding styles of behavior – still accurate. Together these wise men leave us a way to view the substance of this modern game of golf and, when one takes the opportunity to it fullest, can lift the spirit and character of each of those who plays it.

Also reflected here is Musashi's natural awareness of the command center of the conscious mind to the delivery center of our non-conscious motor functions. He knew that one had to let go of conscious command in order to maintain the flow of balanced movement, and he apparently learned that without benefit of scientific measurement equipment. If nothing else, it should make us aware that knowledge and wisdom may not have changed as much over time as we would like to believe, and perhaps allow that recognition to simply shake our overstated air of superiority that is more egocentric than wise.

If it clarifies for our readers the time-worn modern cliché, attributed to Bob Toski, that "You must give up control in order to gain it," you will have begun through your personal pilgrimage, as Elton Trueblood put it, "...to plant shade trees under which you know full well, you will never sit."