

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*

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A Newsletter from **CLEARKEYGOLF**.....June, 2010

## **The Golfers' Formative Vocabulary A Monster in the Game...Talking a Talk that Doesn't Walk**

For some time now we have focused considerable attention on the thinking process needed for golf. In contrast to the need, however, an insidious problem is evident. For a very long time, golfers have been exposed to a mental "virus" in the form of perpetual devotion to *conscious* mental activity that behaves more like an implant than a sunburn. It's a deep seeded conditioned imprint, not a surface application of talcum powder that dusts off as one goes along. Golfers typically are inundated with *conscious detail* concerning how to motivate and manipulate body movement that is swing-related. They are implored to give rapt attention to what they are doing while they are doing it - to concentrate on it. In process, they have learned their conscious "apps" so well that they literally shrink-wrap their ability to engage their own natural motion and flexibility when they have a club in hand, moving it toward a meeting with a golf ball.

Why? Because the conscious mind is not the source or seat of action. That responsibility is innately assigned to the nonconscious. However, the conscious lesson has been drummed, with such sanctified determination for so long, in fact, that golfers are seldom aware that they are caught up in trying to control every motion they make while they are making it. For some that is registered in "Too much of a good thing," ("over-cooked") and for others it comes by way of "Too little of a good thing" (restrained). Either way, there are stumbles, glitches and frustrations that follow as consequences from either of those excesses. Remarkably, we often point, and have done so many times, to that irrevocable issue face-to-face with golfers. The imperative regularly receives an accepted, affirmative acknowledgment, only to be followed by the player continuing in the same way, as if nothing had ever been said. Golfers have trained themselves to hear without understanding, and to see without grasping the vision, leaving them to wonder what happened when a shot does not come off as desired. In fact, if a shot does come off exactly as planned, which happens a lot less often than an unplanned result, there is a show of surprise. That totally indicates that beneath the noise of conscious thinking lurked an expectation marked by doubt, sold many times over to the nonconscious headlined by a tentative rumination implying, "this might not go well." Our conscious mental centers are binging on speculation and our nonconscious reservoirs are filling up with experimental and trashy guesswork, and left with no way to manage the excess. There is plenty going in and not much coming out. Our 3% conscious activity is whitewashing the technicolor walls of the 97% nonconscious, frequently leaving serious puzzles.

So what's really causing the problem? the issue? And what is the remedy?

Research, courtesy of Lane Romero-Reiss, has confirmed that - " *The conscious brain is volitional, meaning it is controlled by conscious will, it sets goals and judges the results. The nonconscious brain is servile, meaning it sets no goals of its own. It executes the goals it is provided with. It doesn't judge the merits of results, only whether they match the given goals. The conscious brain perceives past and future, and the nonconscious brain has no concept of time.*

*Everything is happening now as far as it is concerned. The conscious brain has a very short-term memory span, about 20 seconds for most people. The nonconscious brain remembers everything it experiences, forever. Conscious impulses travel at speeds of 120 to 140 MPH, while nonconscious impulses travel at more than 100,000 MPH!"*

That translates this way. Our conscious minds are planting weeds and dandelions and we keep wondering why the grass and flowers aren't growing.

For whatever reasons, most either miss or screen that out and dismiss the vital knowledge that the conscious mind is like the keyboard on your PC. That's the part of us that creates input (or commands) for what we need or want to do. But the conscious mind is not where the action is. The action comes from nonconscious storage, which works a bit like the programs installed on the PC. (Of course, you must have installed a program. No need to instruct the nonconscious if the program does not exist). We don't see the guts of any installed program since it is not consciously visible. We only see the icons that open and start the action (program). We don't even know all the bits and bytes it took to create a program, even though we can make it work with the click of a mouse. And we often install programs we don't need and can't use. The programs we think we are building for golf are so fleeting and scattered in the building process that what does get through to the nonconscious may be installed only by accident or default, unless we are fully aware of how the formation and installation process works (see the 32 Ball Drill). Even when a habit (program) is well formed, players are prone either to ignore or distrust the building process or simply to disregard it as trivial, again because it isn't visible and they can't "see" it, so the habit stays in its locker. Otherwise, surely a player of Tiger's caliber, for instance, would not miss the green from 83 yards as he did in the AT&T on his way to a 73. And Davis Love, with all his skill and years of experience would not look like a 10 handicapper shooting a 78 in the same round, to name a couple. There are others you might review from the last round of four or five recent PGA event "melt-downs" as well.

Consequently, like a river that has overflowed its banks, the frustrated complaints from the general golfing community keep wondering why it's so hard to get "it" from the practice tee to the golf course, and why "it" worked yesterday and not today, and why the 7 iron works OK but not the 5 wood, and maybe a new set of clubs would help, or perhaps just a new instructor, or a better course to play on, or a rest break from the game, or finding a new training aid, or figuring out why gloves keep wearing out in odd places, or use the tee-it-higher approach, or some other of the hundreds of conscious notions and "tips" attached to the only observation to be made following a poor, faulty, undesirable result - signaling anything upon which to cast the blame. So all the bold boasting about developing one's game never quite adds up to the goal that was sought. All the while, that scrappy kind of thinking is leaving a cloistered imprint on the seat and site of action - the nonconscious - and its 97% is being scuttled, tripped and trapped into a confused delivery system. The conscious mind does not deliver. It only calls in the order. Delivery is the business of the nonconscious and it does not judge the commands you give it. It only acts on the commands. And don't forget: you will only be able to retrieve what you have installed, so that needs to be formidable.

The first remedial step lies in recognizing the priority of the nonconscious mind - the one that has frightened players when mentioned (unnecessarily) and led to the use of blinders to pretend it isn't really there. The denial, of course, is a defense against the fear, both products of a nonconscious that has been poorly instructed and managed. Until the members of the entire golf nation recognize the priority accompanying the nonconscious mental resource that deals with 97% of the action, relief of any lasting, stable dominion will not come into play, at least not with reasonable consistency. That means that we must see and hear the sound and significance of the nonconscious. Getting to that point is a bit like solving the riddle of whether sound is attached to a tree falling when no one is around to hear it. We suppose that there is so much mental flooding from the conscious mind that we don't believe there is such a thing as nonconscious anyway, no matter what scientific expertise finds and reveals.

Nevertheless, research findings insist that we are so often driven to deal with everything in our games on a conscious level that unwittingly we block the passage ways to the nonconscious where our actions are stored, so either the needed habits for play go unfinished in formation and/or distorted by faulty conscious command, or are left unavailable by conscious rambling when we need to retrieve them.

*"We have speculated that humans might have the same capacity to acquire habit memory ('as persons with conscious memory loss due to injury or disease'), but that this capability is ordinarily obscured by our excellent capacity to learn by conscious memorization,"* said Larry Squire, Ph.D., professor of neurosciences, psychiatry and psychology at the VAMC and UCSD.

So a monster is alive and well and roaming through our minds. We keep memorizing the commands (consciously), but there are insufficient programs installed in the nonconscious to perform what the command called for. Meanwhile the normal short term of conscious recall allows all those things we thought we learned yesterday to disappear before we can use them the next day, compounding the doubt we derive from unfinished business. (Ever hear anyone say, "I was playing so well, and then the wheels came off?") Furthermore, notice that the prevailing conscious mind-set concerning how to provide commands becomes entangled in a way that cannot be honored by the nonconscious, producing what is called a "blue screen" in PC language, or a little like what happens when one hits the wrong icon and loads an unwanted program. In golf, the command function typically goes to waste as players demonstrate the conventional belief that one's pre-shot should be "routine," not only in form, but in function and content. In short, that it just plain wrong. The "icon" you select needs to match what you intend doing on your PC. Same goes for your golf game. Pre-shot planning is only effective when one has a clear picture of what is desired along with a well supplied set of habits in nonconscious storage and knows how to provide the commands that bring the habits into play when needed with a minimum of conscious thought and a maximum of nonconscious release. That is accomplished in golf by tapping the clear key "icon" for the automatic process after you have given appropriate commands in pre-shot for an installed program that meets the demands of the shot at hand.

Against that framework, the "wallpaper" golfers put on the screens of their games is typically made up of pictures formed by words and phrases like "grind, mentally tough, control your emotions, control the club face, control yourself, control your game, don't think, visualize the target, see it, feel it, hit it, be aggressive, relax, smooth it out, tempo-tempo-tempo, concentrate, stay calm, peak your performance, hit it pure, take dead aim, be dead solid perfect, shoot at the flagstick, crank your tee shot, blister it"... and while you're at it, "take it easy and have fun"!!

As if all that were not enough, here come the ads and on course comments from the experts on TV, as seen and heard in times and places like the 2010 US Open, not all said by the same person or immediately following each other: "One piece of equipment I trust for every shot - my golf ball" (It's a good thing "it" knows what to do). "He is the toughest mentally because he has 31 victories" (Haven't you always wondered what toughness was made of?) "That could have been averted" (hindsight pointing to the "bad shot" someone just made). "He has to learn to trick the mind," (just like you should do when they are wheeling you into surgery following a heart attack).

Those were topped off by a classic indication of "no clue" coming from Golf Channel commentators who were laughing because Graeme McDowell (during the Open) was practice-putting with one hand and using the other hand to hold his cell phone while on a call.

That last one gets the Double Connexion's "Sublime-to-Ridiculous" prize for the most outstanding comment illustrating how mentally bereft golfers often become when they think they know everything they need to know and are really dialing in the wrong area code. If that commentator knew how the conscious and nonconscious mental faculties were aligned and how they work, together and independently, that message would never have been delivered in earshot of a million TV observers. The even sadder part is that the commentators were laughing about it, and

most viewers probably laughed along with the message since they didn't get it either. Golfers are so thoroughly and hypnotically programmed in their conscious minds that they simply have no way to evaluate that kind of statement. As this was being written, Peter Kostis was saying (regarding a missed putt), "He was bitten by the tentative bug," (and if you stop and examine that statement, whatever does it mean? What is a "tentative bug" and where does it come from and how do you manage or prevent it?)

So in case you haven't got it yet, what Graeme was doing was exactly what the clear key does for the golfer both for building habits and playing with them. It gets the knowledgeable player past any little glitches coming from failure to remember more than a few seconds consciously. The informed player knows how to construct and retrieve habits by getting them from the conscious level to the nonconscious storage vault. McDowell may not have known what he was doing either, but the phone conversation was distracting his conscious mind so his nonconscious could be free to do what it is inherently designed to do. That's what most golfers are not doing unless they have committed themselves to the automatic process with full understanding and appreciation of their mental resources. It may not be as simple and easy as you would like, but it is similarly as vital to golf as all the pieces and parts being in place for space travel before the astronauts blast off from Cape Kennedy.

The "Big But" remains...you can keep on doing what you always did and keep on getting what you always got. The game will go on and the players will keep on playing with or without going for the full ride. We don't know if it's just a rationalization or if it's really true as players often protest: "I love the challenge of the unexpected and the thrill of searching for new and better ways to play. It's the thrill of the chase that keeps me in the game." "The more the pressure, the better I like it." If any of those are more than rationalizations, then perhaps we should simply ignore all the questions that keep coming and saying otherwise. That would allow those who care about relevance, authenticity and cooperation with natural reality to focus on their own success and end their concern to benefit those who only care about hiding their fear and mental vacancy from themselves and others.

There is no call to be afraid of your nonconscious mind. You use it daily in a thousand ways without ever noticing - walking, eating, driving, typing, fretting, worrying, laughing and crying. What's so threatening about enlisting that same resource to play your golf more effectively.....? It's a gift you have had since your day one. You don't have to wait for it. Take it out of its box and use it. Need help with the wrapping? Check in with us.