

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 3.**

*A Newsletter from ... **ClearKeyGolf**.....June/July, 2011*

### **Now Hear This.....**

*How to Sound Authoritative and Mislead Listeners While Your Do It...*

While tuned in to the last round of the AT&T at Aronimink, won by Nick Watney, it was impossible to miss the star-studded comments of one, (or more) of the announcer/commentators doing the broadcast, when in rapid succession he (or they) were heard to say, "Somebody must have flipped his switch and put him on automatic;" followed by, "He has a perfect attitude for golf;" and "He's in 100% control of it ."

Some will not like our assessment of such commentary, since we know that the "defenders of the faith," typically outnumber those who look forward and try to find ways through the smoke and fog of the past. Hopefully, it will not be too painful to bear with us through this scenario. If you are offended by challenges to the status quo, you are certainly free to go no further here.

Those first-paragraph comments, or their parallels, have been heard many times, so it isn't important in this discussion to point to the player being commented upon. It is only vital to notice how easily many are influenced by sounds that appear reasonable, even when they are not. What we observe here boils down to a "three-bagger" of unsupportable interpretation of something that clearly is either not understood or is so thoughtlessly repeated by those mesmerized by what they think they know, that the "halo effect" takes over and seriously affects general perception. In other words, it is a subtle form of irresponsible brain washing. Sadly, if you listen to the tone of voice produced by the commentators, there is the unmistakable sound of euphoria – as in being pleased with themselves for being so clever. And another nail is driven into the plank of hoof-in-mouth disease. The message is rarely direct, just undeniably suggestive, much like pharmaceutical advertising, minus the small-print side-effects. So in case you ever wondered where poor information comes from, you can start with the voices of those furnished with the power of media allowing anything that isn't a swear word, and even some of those are allowed now. Most significant is the way in which what is said and how it is said cements notions of conventional wisdom, undisturbed by evaluation, for generations, leaving many, if not most, lost in a wilderness of incomplete images or half-truths, long since transformed into a table of commandments sanctioned by default.

It's not as though Aronimink announcers provided any brand new revelations. We doubt they even intended to add more cement to the blocks in our heads that keep us at the bottom of an ocean of convention. With simple innocence, they produced one more prime indication typical of parroting any unexamined supposition that has been around for decades, unchallenged and subsequently allowed to be memorialized by cliches that do nothing more than reinforce a notion that might as well have said, "All we know about the game is set in tradition and conventional wisdom." It's bad enough that any cliché can become a public statement, repeated in media and exchanged among golfing buddies, thus contributing to ingraining the "articles" constituting the unofficial "laws of the game." One only need visit a golf forum or two to see the residue of that mountain of misinformation in the naive statements and questions bravely placed for all to see. It is supercharged by psychological coaches and consultants worldwide, who keep saying the same things in the same order, albeit with different words, but the lock-step is fully evident. Or you can simply watch a few professional tournaments and see "the best" in the world slip and slide a bit, and silently wonder why they are so inconsistent (though few dare to mention such things aloud). So if you, the reader, do not mind slipping into your thinking cap, you may be able to take more than passing notice and for a moment grasp the sense of a bit of literary liberty taken with John Magee's famous words here, in order to "Slip the surly bonds..." of tradition.

As soon as someone in "authority," a position regularly given to, and taken by, the media, says something that

implies one can “flip” a switch to find “automatic,” that draws listeners right out of any possibility of getting there, but left frustrated by absence of a way to know what that really means or how it works. Clearly, the person saying that does not know either, or he likely would avoid use of a metaphoric “light switch” to reference such a complex process. It is not only improbable, but impossible, that “automatic” in human experience and behavior works like a light switch, but don't tell the hypnotherapists. Even more dismaying is what such facetious regard does to something so critical to elevated game performance, thus allowing players to go on and on trying to find out what “peak” performance really is, and how to get to it. So they join the rush to the book store to find the latest on “mental toughness.” Ahhhh, the vision of perfection...How do we love thee!

Now take the two words “perfect attitude,” and what do you get - an impression that there must be such a thing, if we can just find it. In the first place, there is no such thing as “a perfect attitude.” There is only yours and the one that belongs to each other person alive and breathing. Attitude is highly variable from day to day. It is a result either of success or failure. It is not a human trait, but a product of experience. You can have the “greatest” attitude in somebody's book, but it will not buy you a loaf or bread, bottle of wine, or an excellent golf shot. It surely is helpful to prepare the necessary ingredients to foster a sound attitude (and there is a lot more to that than simply calling for it to come forth, because it is likely to come fifth and be disqualified). Who can argue against being able to enter into an activity with a positive mental framework, but that does not do the work. It can support it, but it will not do it. So now we have two strikes against misinformation and a second question mark concerning the infallibility of conventional wisdom.

“He's in 100% control” may be the most subtle and least understood in this litany. Control always signals that conscious effort is being enlisted to produce a result. That's anathema to a golf swing, but it is, by far, the major belief, and attempted action, driving golfers to launch assaults on themselves and others on their way to “excellence” in their games. (Control your swing, control your emotion, control your club face, control your ball flight, control your setup, control your posture, control your alignment, control your pace, control your thinking, control your temper, which taken in multiples will force a need to control the intake of some headache remedy or to try to stop short of a case of beer in the 19<sup>th</sup> hole).

“Control,” by its nature, tends to be manipulative, throttling, chokes action and stimulates anxiety. “Management,” by its nature, is flexible, unrestrained, enables free release of action and prevents negative effects from anxiety (or as most prefer to call this universal, involuntary, apprehensive state - “nervousness”). We are free to choose - either we take whatever the tides bring in and try to “control” that flow, or we engage the necessary steps to plan and manage all available human and natural resources, in harmony with the traits we own, the laws and the rhythms of life, and our personal capacity for mental and physical development and activity. If you choose the control route, which is the one most solidly entrenched in traditional golf wisdom, the only readiness needed in a round of golf is the fortitude to deal with the frustration and doubt that are predictable consequences of attempts to control results because that leads to fundamental mismatches in the pace of consciously located thought processes providing commands vs. non-consciously located action processes that deliver the goods. (This writer regularly laments the desolate notion carried by most, as a cross of destiny, that silently certifies the belief that only the conscious mind counts for anything, linked with a fear of the non-conscious that hides like a terrorized child, robbing players of the benefit of reality).

We have said it many times before: those mismatches, marked by absence of familiarity with the whole mind and mental prowess, in our thought processes, contain the origins of our stumbles, glitches, missteps and poor results, which would be greatly diminished at the hand of understanding the non-conscious. Here we see what happens when the workings of the automatic principle not only remain unexplained in the media, but subjected to what amounts to the subtle ridicule of clever joking. And no one explains how automatic actually works in relation to both of our important avenues of thinking – especially the part about our ideas being in one location and our action in a different portion of the brain. But, no matter, the notion of “control” has long since been on the list of golf commandments, and shows no signs of being either compared or contrasted with what it means to manage oneself and one's game.

**Our take: *the downside may be in the majority, but it is not the only side.***

On the upside are some notables like three young men who participate in the Western Australia Cricket Association and are coached by a professional well acquainted with the automatic process and its implementation. As the most recent season concluded, his three proteges claimed the three top trophies for bowling, batting and fielding, all having learned the value of clear keys. (Do you suppose that might have “attitude” in it?)

Even though it is no longer a surprise to us, it is almost hard to keep current with the regular outstanding performance of LPGA teaching professional, Karen Davies, of Carefree, AZ, who recently won her regional championship for the Teaching Division for the third time and has two national championships under her belt, headed for a third in August, since having mastered the automatic principle and process that allows her to play consistently, confidently, and focused, with a well managed game that produces both enjoyment and satisfaction (Could “attitude” be missing there?)

Earlier this year, we had a note from an up and coming amateur who is also a talented tennis player. She reported considerable forward development with her golf game and just happened to mention that she played an entire tennis match without missing a single first serve. She is another who manages herself and her games via the automatic principle and process and is no stranger to clear keys in two sports. (Anyone for an “attitude “ question?)

All that puts us in mind of two California golf professionals. One won the N. Cal PGA championship after he was 50 (not the senior event, but the main event) using his well-traveled clear key, (“When the going gets tough, the tough turn pro”). And the other, who a few year back, won the N. Cal Darts championship using the same clear key he had adopted for his golf game.

What do all those have in common? It is certainly not reliance on an attitude, a target, or result. The successful players have not wasted their energy trying to increase confidence as a standalone. They have learned how to practice in a way that organizes and builds the skills they need, followed by having a systematic way to turn those skills into trustworthy habits. It is in owning the knowledge and skill, turned habit, that brings each one the confidence in their ability to perform effectively. Their confidence is not given to them. It is an earned by-product of their knowledge and skill, led by how to do it and how to prevent interruption in their actions. Guaranteed – You can have either the knowledge or the skill (habits) and still not succeed because both are required. You may be the best in the world with one, but if you do not have both, you will not be rewarded with confidence. But having both means that confidence comes as an unrequested benefit.

These brief illustrations do not count the ones that show up publicly keying successes resulting from applying our automatic principle, apparently even without knowing they are doing it. (It would take a complete, isolated study to present the difference between “something that works,” but lacks the trusting and respect to be repeated, and something that works, accompanied by knowing how and why it works, which can be repeated with confidence).

Perhaps the most recent and dramatic of those unintentional episodes came from a Johnson&Johnson TV commercial showing a male nurse administering an intravenous solution for a child, while both sang together. They do not indicate what the singing accomplishes. The average viewer may think it clever or even cute, but miss the principled benefit in blocking the child from the anxiety of the moment, while limiting any discomfort. That alters the attitude.

Take a short trip back to 2009, and hear NBA player Dwight Howard's own words during the NBA Playoffs: *“For some reason, when I pick out a song and sing it at the free throw line it helps me not think so much about shooting them. I had a dance song in my head all last night, so I had that going on when I was at the line. Hey, whatever works, right? They were playing all kinda krunk music up in Cleveland, and it was helping me take my mind off my form. I gotta come up with some song for Tuesday in Game 4 to keep it rolling.”* We don't know if he did that again, but it seems clear that he really didn't understand what he had in his possession.

And if you ever took pains to observe Karl Malone at the foul line, it was clearly visible that he followed the same format each time he took a foul shot, which included visibly moving his lips while he executed. It's a safe bet that he was saying something to himself not unlike what we call a clear key, and he came closer to recognizing the advantages. (How was his attitude?)

A friend just sent us the following clip from a YouTube by golf instructor, Don Trahan:

*Tempo is so important in the golf swing. It's what we depend on to be consistent, to hit one good shot after another. We got a great comment about tempo from Bill, a 67-year-old 6 handicap who has been playing golf since he was 10. He likes the “Blue Danube.”*

*Come again, Surge? We all have our own ways of establishing swing tempo. Bill discovered early on that the melody of Strauss' classic piece fit the tempo of his swing perfectly so he hums as he swings. Since he says he's never been above a 6 handicap some of you might want to start humming too."*

Trahan apparently didn't get it, but it appears Bill did.

The best case for all is to clean up one's corporate evaluative process, by learning to tell the difference between what comes first, what comes last, and what goes in the middle to permit an effective result, and how to respect the order and resourcefulness of one's non-conscious mental activity while managing the conscious activity of the declarative mind that does all the commanding and none of the action. That rests on a finished foundation, not one that is only a tongue-twisting cliché.

An absent foundation is the prime reason players typically cannot recall from one day to the next what they learned the previous day, leaving them little but a succession of question marks. That's the origin of the need to rush to the range before playing to see if one's swing survived last night's sleep, that is, if they can get out of the driveway without practicing driving first.

Do we need a moral here? If so, it is vital to pay attention and get over the part of the past that hasn't just died; it's a part that never was alive. Perhaps seeing that would be a start toward filling in the spaces left vacant by the soothsayers that apparently only know how to "get ready" (be prepared) and/or pick up the pieces when "get ready" fails, but can't quite comprehend and complete the cycle or collect the 200 dollars for actively passing through the "GO" part – you know – that fourteen second window required for unhindered shot-execution. That will still be there when you get to the course, ready or not.