
THE GOLF WHISPERER

INNER GAME COACHING

BY WADE PEARSE

SECTION I

**THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MENTAL GAME
DEVELOPMENT**

Foreword

Bobby Jones once said, “If golf is worth playing, it’s worth playing well. The Golf Whisperer is for the golfer who shares this opinion. It is comprehensive and explains the fundamentals of golf’s inner game more succinctly than anything I have read.

Playing great golf requires several things. In my opinion, it begins with a dream or an earnest desire to be the best you can be. This passion sets the journey in motion. The golf swing and basic strokes can be viewed as some highly complex and technical series of movements to be studied for a lifetime.

This opinion may lead a player to know more about playing golf but not allow him to play better. Why is this? Human beings have a tendency to interfere with their own ability to perform and learn by making the game too complex both physically and mentally. Truly great players learn to view golf in all of it’s complexities in a rather simple, basic, and effective manner.

The fact that human beings interfere with their performances is a universal truth. It happens in all arenas of life, whether it is golf, music, business, or any other endeavor. Human beings are forever getting in their own way. What exactly does this mean? To answer this question one has to enter the inner game. I don’t like to break the game down into a physical or mental game. It implies there are two games and two non-integrated parts of our being. The last time I checked my brain was still located inside my physical body.

However, it is this thinking part of us that truly can get in our way. We tend to think about things we shouldn’t and not think in ways we should. Wade Pearse has written a masterpiece on the subject of the inner game and the power of the mind to allow us to reach our goals in golf. He integrates mind & body and has you playing from your imagination, not logic and over analysis, which is rampant in modern golf.

I have read many books on sports psychology and count many well known men in that field as personal friends. Nothing I have read matches The Golf Whisperer system for its’ thoroughness & brilliant insights. Wade explains more than just inner game concepts. He teaches precepts that transfer into your game and does so succinctly and powerfully. Wade explains how you can use your mind to work for you, rather than interfere with your performance. It is a book to be read carefully and thoroughly.

As you read, certain chapters will jump out at you and you will say “Ah ha, that describes me.” I particularly like his presentation on the various golfing personalities and have found that every champion I have coached was entirely different. They all had to be coached in a different manner.

The chapter about goal setting is profound in its truth. Anything the mind can conceive and believe can be attained. Any dream that can pass through one’s screen of logic and is earnestly desired will be attained... if the person is willing to do the physical and mental training that is required.

I’ve seen players set some ambitious goals as a twelve or thirteen year old and then years later see their dreams come true. It’s amazing how powerful the mind truly is in the achievement of human potential and Wade’s training material delivers the keys to tapping yours.

Minding Your Game isn’t designed as a quick read. It is a thoughtful and thorough presentation of practical ideas, precepts and mental exercises that must be learned and implemented through

repetition, just as with the physical game. It is a textbook, versus some four hour anecdotal sports psychology read typical in the publishing world today.

Learning how the body moves, watching others perform, rehearsing, and repeating over and over will allow you to play without swing keys. Learning how the mind works and what you can do to not get in your own way is a process requiring repetition and training, too.

The goal in both the outer and inner games is not how many ideas you can add, but ultimately, how many you can discard. Playing to your true potential, finding your natural game, and being the player you desire to be depends upon this. Yes, golf is a difficult game, but the human body and mind are far more complex and able to achieve whatever you can allow yourself to dream. If you can believe this is true, then why not DREAM BIGGER? This is how I challenge my players.

Minding Your Game is the best inner game instructional book I have ever read in over thirty years as a golf professional. If you will set this book on your bedside table and read one chapter at a time and then allow yourself time to contemplate Wade's brilliant work, improvement will be a certainty.

You can become the player of your dreams once you can learn how to let your mind work for you, rather than against you. There has never been a champion who did not have a strong mind and possess the ability to control his thoughts and his focus.


Wade Pearse offers brilliant insights into how one should go about minding their golf games. This is an invaluable resource for anyone serious about becoming a great player and it can help in other areas of your life, as well.

How well do you wish to play? This training course will certainly provide invaluable insight and I wholeheartedly recommend it to you. Golf is definitely worth the effort of playing well and this program will absolutely help you achieve this goal.

Bobby McIver

=> Long time Coach of Scott Verplank Top 25 All Time Money Winner on the PGA Tour & US Amateur winner - Only player in 2007 President's Cup to go undefeated in all his singles matches.

=> Bob McIver is the only coach other than Harvey Penick to have two students become First Team All Americans in the same year



1	Preface	4
2	Introduction	6
3	The First Tee.....	8
4	The Four Stages of Learning	11
5	Imagineering a Better Game.....	17
6	Distinctions.....	23

It is designed to allow you to use each section independently and integrate its contents individually once you have a core understanding of the entire book first.

The purpose of this book is to provide you with specific techniques and inner processes that will allow you to play your very best golf. It will become natural and effortless to step into a well designed pre-shot routine and swing from a place of confidence and clarity. Not the hurried, unfocused stabs at the ball many of us experience.

When we appreciate the simplicity of the game, integrate a few highly effective cutting edge mental game strategies, and practice basic golf fundamentals, we will be playing the best possible golf we can play with our given skill level.

My intent for writing this book is to be your one-on-one coach, educate you on how to properly apply the strategies I teach, and to guide you, step by step, toward playing the best golf you are capable of playing..

The journey inward provides you with limitless opportunity for not only improving your golf game but the exploration of your own potential as a human being.

Here are some questions I'll answer and show you how to experience:

- What would it feel like to shoot my personal best and play at that level as a habit?
- How do I step to the first tee calm and relaxed with no jitters?
- What does it mean to play in the zone and how can you make it a reality, not a fantasy?
- What do I need to do to peak in important tournaments?
- How do I keep a clear focus when the pressure is greatest?
- How can I deal with my anger on the course?
- My putter has gone ice cold and I'm missing cuts. If I don't deal with this now I might have to consider leaving the tour and getting a job as a teaching pro. What can I do!?

There are dozens of scenarios that will receive attention in the coming chapters. You have taken the first step in showing your commitment to yourself by purchasing this mental game training course. I appreciate and value this commitment.

It's my commitment to you to transfer the skills in this book into your game and be your coach along the way. And we'll do it in a way that is filled with ease, coupled with inspiration and enthusiasm!

So let's begin your inward journey and prepare your mind to release its power.

Time to tee it up!

3 The First Tee

*Golf is a game where we yell fore,
take a six and write down five.*

In the beginning was the word, and the word was fore! This most certainly is the word of choice at local municipal golf courses and many private courses, too. Yet we mature as players and as our game progresses more colorful 4 letter words permeate the fairways of these hallowed grounds.

Ahhh, such a wonderful game indeed. One we love to hate and hate to love. It brings so much frustration and anger to so many and yet lures each of us into a dream of a golfing promise land. Longing for that one pure shot. That one perfect putt. That one decent round to justify the mind numbing frustration we trade for it.

There's the rub. Golf is a mirror and it reflects back to us exactly what we habitually think and feel about ourselves and our game. This reflection can change from game to game yet it is still *you* that is being reflected.

To make real changes in your game a new mindset is required. A mindset that embraces every possible perspective you can notice about the game. This mindset must be inclusive, not exclusive. Meaning it allows you to see things in many ways, not just one.

In psychological terms it is known as requisite variety. Requisite variety states that whoever has the most flexibility of perception and communication determines the outcome of any given situation.

What does this mean to your game? When you can perceive multiple frames of reference in your game then your mind is free to choose how to respond, not simply react robotically.

So how do we develop this mental skill? Is it really possible to play with the ease of an Ernie Els? (rumor has it Ernie is so relaxed and casual that sheep count him when *they're* trying to sleep!)

The answer is simple: through repetition of specific mental techniques. By rehearsing various scenarios in your game before you play. The approach to the development of the inner game that I promote is big on internal preparation. There's a saying that goes, "opportunity favors the prepared mind". I agree and you will too.

You will have the opportunity to view and experience your game in many ways. Not merely one habituated pattern you might be accustomed to. The game has so many nuances within it that are impossible to notice when your mind runs within the same old patterns.

It's like playing a CD of the same song over and over and over again. How boring is that? How can we expect to play to our potential if all we do is run the same old internal patterns and see things the same way we did last round, and the round before that?

Are you serious about developing your inner game? Do you want to learn how to build a rock solid inner game that stands up to any and everything the game throws at you?

It all begins with understanding some basic fundamentals of the mind and how it operates, then aligning ourselves with its power. The key is to work with the natural tendencies of the mind, not against them. Makes sense, right?

Seriously, how long would you spend trying to push a river? What's that? You wouldn't even try? Well then why are you using your mind against itself when you play golf? The mind is like a river. It flows in one direction so you had best learn how to swim with the current. If you insist on going against the current, feel free. But resistance is futile...

Your brain is hardwired into certain patterns. You have habituated these patterns over time to the point where you don't even have to think about them anymore. Aha! Key number one has already appeared and we're only on page 9.

What? You don't see the key?

The fact that the mind loves habits and runs in grooves is an asset to your game, not a liability. As long as you know how to run your brain. You are going to learn to benefit from the mind's natural tendencies and put your absolute best game on auto-pilot. Sound good?

So when people talk about habits as being "bad" they're misinformed! Habits are extremely powerful allies to your inner game. Why resist nature, right? Use it. Nothing is inherently good or bad. It's our interpretation of things and the meaning we apply to them that determine their effect on us.

While most people attempt to fight with themselves and wrestle their inner demons into submission you will calmly adjust yourself with the powerful forces of the mind and work with, instead of against them.

There is one basic belief I want you to consider using. It literally changed the way I perceived the game. Everything I did as I taught myself how to swing revolved around this principle. It is a principle which will shape your inner game and be the foundation of how you use your mind.

"Golf is a movement toward a target"

The mind is a target focused mechanism. When it is fixated on a target it will do what it deems necessary to reach it. No matter the cost. As we'll see this has both good and bad consequences to your game. Bad only if you continue to try and push the river. Good if you join forces with nature, build a sturdy raft and ride the rapids!

Everything you'll do with your mental game will be built around this mindset. Eventually you will embrace this as a mindset that guides your inner game toward mastery.

It will be the compass for your mind. If you ever feel lost while you're learning this material or while you're out playing golf just reach for this compass and everything within and around you will align itself to this belief. You will be back on target.

Think about it. Your swing is a movement toward a target. Your body rotates and moves the clubhead down and through the ball and on toward where you want the ball to go. After you hit you begin to walk toward your ball, your target while walking. With each shot you orient yourself to

move the ball toward another target. Finally, when you're on the green you roll the ball into the ultimate target; the cup.

This mindset, and this is exactly how you should look at it, is a philosophy that magnetizes everything you do and learn in the game. It galvanizes your understanding of the principles and strategies in this course. I strongly encourage you to take this to heart. Refer to it as often as possible until it becomes yours, until it becomes a part of you.

It has transformative powers. Right now you might think this is overstating things but this will change. Along with your scores...

Peak Performance Principle - *Golf is a movement toward a target*

Ok, now let's get a handle on the four stages of learning in the next section. This will prepare you for how to make your way through the material that follows.

4 The Four Stages of Learning

*The mind is like a parachute,
it works better when it's open.*

There are four fundamental stages to the learning process. Many people get stuck in certain stages, yet because they're unaware of these four stages of development they don't even know that they might be stuck.

This section isn't isolated to only golf so the conversation is a little wider. As mentioned in the introduction we begin with the overview and the building of your mindset as a peak performer.

Once you appreciate that there are certain natural responses to any learning you won't get caught in any one stage for too long. By understanding this you can cut yourself some slack while acquiring these new mental game skills. It will help you stay the course.

Stage I – Unconscious Incompetence

This is the first phase of learning. This is the stage where we don't even know that we don't know something. We are unaware that we lack knowledge. Needless to say, this is the least empowered place one can be!

This is the stage that people who didn't buy this training course are at. Of course I'm not suggesting this is the only book on this subject with serious value. Yet if someone is a golfer and hasn't fully explored the mental side of golf and assumes it doesn't really matter then they don't even know that they don't know.

Whenever we're unconscious of something's existence or its affect on us this means we don't know that we don't know. Many of us lead very ignorant lives yet we cruise through life seemingly unaffected by our ignorance. This is the stage where the saying "ignorance is bliss" speaks from.

The well worn cliché which states "what you don't know can't hurt you" is absolute lunacy. What we don't know can kill us! Take influenza. Hmm, maybe if I don't know about it while it sweeps through my town I'll be ok ... yeah, that's a good strategy. And maybe if we don't know we have a deadly disease it won't hurt us ... yup, that makes sense.

When it comes to your golf game this couldn't be more true. It is what you don't know that's killing your scores, as you'll learn. This is why developing your inner game is so important.

Stage II – Conscious Incompetence

In stage II conscious learning actually begins. We are aware that there is something we don't know. We admit we know that we don't know.

Every "how to" book ever bought was purchased because of the influence of this stage. Golf magazines filled with swing tips are consumed daily by a ravenous golfing public eager to satisfy the hunger stage II creates. Golf training aids, videos, playing lessons with the pros and the Golf

Channel have their existence thanks to stage II. And of course I pay homage to this stage as it is also why you bought this course.

Some interesting things occur at this stage. In fact this particular stage is where most everyone gets stuck. Although it's really only the first phase of actual learning, far too many people just can't seem to find a way to move to the next stage. There are many reasons for this.

People can experience frustration when learning something new and having to constantly confront their lack of skill or knowledge. As you read this recall a time when you were learning some new swing tip for the first time. Do it now.

Maybe it was something you read and were trying on the course. Perhaps it was an actual lesson and you were working on it during and after the lesson. Make sure you have a memory of one of these learning moments before reading on.

Ok, notice what you were thinking and feeling. Were there any uncomfortable sensations? You probably felt some frustration. Certain things just didn't feel right. Maybe the new grip felt odd. As you practiced you followed the instructions and gave it your best. Yet as the days passed you just couldn't seem to make it work, whatever it was.

It became increasingly difficult to commit to the new technique because you weren't seeing results soon enough or consistently enough. Does this sound familiar? Welcome to the experience of Conscious Incompetence. Knowing that we don't know is uncomfortable and can be frustrating.

No-one enjoys this state for extended periods of time. Some people have a very low learning threshold which promotes a desire to give up too soon. Others have a high tolerance for the internal tension caused by stage II. You have heard the term instant gratification before. Those with a low tolerance for internal discomfort are the group that seeks instant gratification.

While satisfying short term desires might provide temporary stimulation, it rarely encourages long term commitment to new learning. Mental toughness is not in this group's vocabulary. Those who can live with the internal challenges of acquiring new skills are willing to delay gratification for the long term benefits that properly applied knowledge brings. This is you.

Our early education system has within it a predisposition toward making us feel inadequate and frustrated at knowing that we don't know. We are taught things in school and then tested on them and when we don't do well we are made aware of it. This only confirms what we were already aware of – that we know we don't know!

It removes our innate desire to learn new things. I want you to really get this point. This will have massive impact on your game and any learning you do in the future.

If you associate too much discomfort, frustration or pain with the process of learning (whatever the learning may be), you will either consciously or unconsciously move away from that learning.

Let's look at some early childhood experiences in school. Maybe you were in a class or taking a course that you weren't too switched on about. One you didn't much care about. You are unlikely to tap your full potential in that state of mind.

Sure enough you fail or merely do just enough to pass. I can speak from personal experience as this is how I treated many of my classes in my early education. Since I wasn't truly engaged in the process of learning I seriously limited myself from experiencing what I was capable of.

More often than not people will use less of their personal resources if they are learning something they're not interested in, or are reminded how poor they are at it.

Now follow me on this ... you, as well as every person, has these experiences. You get feelings that make you think less of yourself or at the very least make you feel uncomfortable.

In any given moment we will naturally do what it takes to survive. Psychologically, emotionally or physically. Therefore, whatever we experience as pain is perceived as a potential threat to our psychological and/or emotional survival. We will move away from this pain. We will lose our innate desire for learning new things.

Just think of the impact this has on your life! If this goes unchecked, which is exactly what happens to the bulk of the human race, you will end up avoiding learning new things altogether. Ouch.

You will unconsciously associate the frustration, discomfort and pain of previous learning to any future learning. And there is no way you want to be reminded of being ineffective or stupid!

This is truly one of the sadder, yet completely avoidable, experiences we can have in our journey to becoming an effective and thriving person. It is critical we understand that it is natural to feel discomfort during the early stages of learning. *This is how we learn.*

Don't get stuck in the feelings that accompany knowing that you don't know! To put it in a more positive way, make sure you focus on the joy of learning something new and the satisfaction you'll have once you've learned it and have acquired new skills.

Understand that it is only temporary and know that stage III is just around the corner!

Stage III – Conscious Competence

Now you arrive at the stage where you know that you know something. The learning is becoming installed. Knowing that you know something builds confidence. Yet let's not get caught in this stage either as is often the case when we acquire a bit of knowledge. A little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Many of us become puffed up with a false sense of self-worth simply because we know something others don't. It is clear our society values knowing versus not knowing. For many obvious reasons.

You know how to swing the club. How to make a smooth putting stroke. How to see with your mind's eye and visualize success. This is where you'll be after applying the tools in this course. This is where the fun begins as you'll begin to experience the benefits of your efforts. Your game will improve along with your satisfaction.

Stage III is where we experience the conscious recognition of what we're learning. This is where you get the "aha!" realization. It is so important that we get to this point in our learning. It is here that we get that rush that accompanies learning something new. We feel that sense of bliss that comes from really understanding something important to us.

Yet it is easy to get stuck here and believe we've "arrived". While certainly our confidence has justifiably increased, our egos need to remain in check. Just because we know that we know doesn't mean we have attained wisdom. Mastery is found in the final stage of learning. The stage very few people ever reach.

Stage IV – Unconscious Competence

This is the stage of mastery. You don't have to be conscious of what you know. You just know it. You don't even have to think about it. You don't need to be conscious of your knowledge.

You have developed to the stage where you can simply experience the benefits of having made your way through the three previous stages of learning. You have earned access to the ultimate state. This is where the zone lives. Peak performance, playing with ease, cruising on auto-pilot, playing in the moment and the state of flow, these all live here.

Yet most people will never make it to stage IV. They just have not wired into their nervous system an acceptance of the discomfort that stage II, conscious incompetence, causes. And those who do learn how to adapt to it sometimes can't get past stage III, conscious competence, and let go of the grip their conscious mind has on their knowledge and their game.

It is important to relax our mind and allow this natural learning process to take place. Following is a saying I made up years ago that sums things up for moving from stage III to IV;

***Life is like sand in a tightly held fist,
the harder you hold on the more you lose ...***

Wade Pearse

Golf is much like this. Have you noticed? An open hand holds more life...

There is power in letting go. It frees enormous amounts of energy that is being expended while struggling to hold on to our conscious knowledge. Being attached to and identifying ourselves with our conscious mind is the ultimate learning trap. A real game killer!

To reach the state of "flow" we must learn to let go. An open hand holds more life than a closed fist...

A man was strolling along a high cliff casually taking in what views he could still see as darkness set in. A little too casual in his attention and not being able to see in the enveloping darkness he slips on the edge of the cliff and falls. Quickly and in panic he reaches out his hand to clutch at anything he could grab!

Fortunately his hand met an outstretched branch and he hung on for dear life. Petrified, he hung there and began to pray. "Please god, help me. What should I do?" To which he would hear a soft reply, "trust me and let go."

What!? Let go? I'm hanging from a branch 100's of feet from the ground! The night moved on and his hand grew tired even as he changed hands to rest each one. Desperation was setting in as his prayers only led to the same response, "trust me and let go".

It was becoming clear he could no longer hold on and he began to accept the inevitability of his situation. One last time he prayed and received the same reply as always, "trust me and let go." He was too exhausted and mentally fatigued to continue so with resignation and an acceptance of his fate he let go of his grip.

Thud! Huh? He fell only 5 feet and landed on a ledge that stuck out from the cliff below him! Had he listened to his self directed prayers and just trusted and let go he would have avoided all that needless suffering and fear.

Learning to let go is a difficult thing for most people. Take some time to explore your thoughts and feelings around letting go. When you can do this, your golf game will move to a magical level and allow you to fully enjoy each moment. You won't worry about scores and outcomes while you play.

Without question there exists a fundamental fear of the unknown. Most people prefer the "devil they know versus the devil they don't". Even if the one they know is causing their misery. Many people will refuse to embrace the fullness of who they are. Yet this is the key to playing in the zone and to entering stage IV. Make the effort!

From a competitive standpoint one could also say it is fortunate for you and I that most golfers will never reach stage IV. Their lack of mental discipline places them at a disadvantage that they aren't even aware of!

The benefits of making your way to stage IV are vast. This is where true inner power lives. It's the world of effortlessness. When you watch a world class musician play a piano it seems so graceful and easy. The unconscious has all the training and years of practice integrated and makes the fingers gracefully dance across the keyboard while the conscious mind merely directs the attention. Can you imagine trying to consciously place each finger on the right note while you're reading a piece of music! Not a chance.

Their learning and practice has become unconscious. Watch your favorite golfer swing the club. A thing of beauty isn't it? The rhythm, tempo and balance all in harmony.

This is one of the gains you'll receive by using the material in this book.

A little story to close this section.

A centipede was strolling along the road when a toad hops gleefully beside him. The toad stares in amazement at the centipede with all his legs. "Gee, I only have 4 legs. So easy it is for me. I hop around. Hop, hop, hop."

The centipede simply smiles. The toad, needing to satisfy his curiosity, asks him, "how ever do you walk with so many legs? How many legs do you have?" The centipede replies' "I'm a centipede, I have 100 legs."

The frog continues his query, "Wow that is so many legs! That must be so hard to manage each one and make them work together just so you can walk. However do you do it!?"

To this the centipede began to think and really pay attention to the act of walking. "Maybe the frog was right. After all it is a lot of legs," he thought. The centipede began to stumble and promptly fell into the ditch...

When you reach the stage of mastery and your unconscious has integrated what you have learned, the burden of conscious thought is removed. You can just enjoy the experience. If you attempt to unravel a high level process such as this what you're doing is bringing the "experience" of your knowledge down a stage. Back to the stage of conscious competence once again. What was once a completely effortless and natural process becomes undone! Like the centipede you feel like it must be relearned.

This is a critical point that we'll return to in various ways throughout this book. Many pros have moved gracefully through these stages and arrive at a stage of personal mastery. (I didn't say they mastered the game, no-one has). Then they want to "learn how to play better" or to "take their game to the next level".

Just ask Ian Baker Finch, or Greg Norman or a list of other great players. They reach a place in the game like winning a major championship and for some reason believe that the game that got them there isn't good enough and requires some changes!

Ok, sure there are benefits in looking down the road always and seeing that some refinements could assist them in playing at a high level for longer. Yet more often than not they take their unconscious competence and unravel it. Now they've unwittingly returned to the stage of conscious incompetence, the "I know that I don't know" stage. This is the conscious mind stage where swing mechanics and consciously applied learning takes place.

Greg Norman admitted he did exactly this in order to win some majors. He felt he needed to make changes to his game to take his game to another level. Well he did take his game to another level. Unfortunately it was 3 levels below where he was!

At this point you are aware that there are many things you don't know about the mental game. So you're consciously incompetent. This means you can now truly learn!

As you use the strategies and numerous exercises in this book keep your mind on the target. Stage IV. You will know when you're there. I assure you! And of course I will guide you all the way. I'll keep you from losing sight of the long term goal and I won't allow you to get stuck in stage III where virtually every golfer remains.

Open your mind and prepare for a new mindset from which to play your game from. Remember, the mind is like a parachute, it works better when it's open! Keep it that way...

5 Imagineering a Better Game

*It is not what we're looking at that matters,
it's what we see.*

I want you to burn this statement into your brain: *The unconscious mind doesn't know the difference between a real and an imagined event.* It accepts everything it receives as if it actually happened to you.

Whether you physically experience something in the external world or merely imagine you are experiencing something, your unconscious mind doesn't make a distinction between them. Imagine right now that you're cutting a lemon open. See it squirt. Now cut a big wedge and put it in your mouth. Taste the lemon rolling over your tongue.

If you're like most people you can taste the lemon and probably felt saliva increase in your mouth as you placed the imaginary lemon on your tongue! Your unconscious received the instruction through your conscious mind via your eyes reading the words. And you "experienced" tasting a lemon. As far as your unconscious is concerned this was actually happening to you.

Dr. John Milton, a University of Chicago neurologist, researched brain activity. He found that brain activity during the "imaging" phase is exactly the same as the brain activity during actual physical movement.

In other words, when someone is visualizing doing something and when someone is actually doing that something, the brain is displaying the exact same activity.

If you imagine you are experiencing something and use all your senses while doing this (sight, sound, feeling, smell and taste) your unconscious receives this as an experienced reality.

Think about this. By willfully directing your imagination to a desired end, you can create very real and powerful states for your unconscious to receive. Once received it files them away for future reference. This is exactly what you'll be mastering. You'll design and rehearse peak performance states, among many other strategies, and fill your unconscious with powerful and effective images of personal excellence.

Just imagine you're camping. You're with a friend in a tent in the deep woods. You hear something just outside your tent. They sound like footsteps. There's rustling in the leaves. Bears are common in these woods and you instantly imagine it's a bear. "Yup, it's a bear!", you say to yourself. Your heart races. You want to crawl under the covers and hide. A lot of good that will do!

After being virtually paralyzed with fear your friend manages to grab the flashlight, peek his head outside the tent and look in the direction of the sound. Aha! It was only a mouse! All that fear over a mouse.

But before some light was shed on the situation your reality was that a bear was outside your tent. At that moment that's what was real to you. Your unconscious mind produced a survival response

based on the images in your mind. There was nothing real about what you imagined but it certainly was treated as real by your mind and nervous system!

We do this everyday. Some days more than others. It can be said that many of our thoughts are merely hallucinations of something with no real clear evidence. Yet regardless of their accuracy or relationship to your outer reality, they produce internal responses and affect your state and therefore directly influence your actions. So necessarily your end results reflect these original hallucinations.

For example, you cook dinner for your girlfriend and she agreed to be there by 6:00. It's now 6:15. Then it's 6:45. Still the door doesn't open to show her walking in. You begin to wonder what's going on. First maybe worry. Then you sprinkle a little anger into it. Then you recall your last argument when you accused her of cheating on you.

7:00 rolls by. Now you're fuming and a wave of jealousy floods your body. You are convinced she's shacking up with some guy. That %\$#(^&%@! That's it. It's over you tell yourself. Whenever she finally shows up I'm breaking up with her you convince yourself. I don't deserve to be treated this way. After everything I've done for her and how good I've been. How could she do this!?

I can't believe she ... jingle, jingle, the doorbell rings. You storm to the door and open it ready to unload on her. She lifts her head and you see tears in her eyes. She's holding a damaged tray with some cinnamon rolls from your favorite bakery. She went out of her way to get them. As she was driving away from the bakery she got in a car accident and the cinnamon rolls got tossed out the window. Dazed from the accident the first thing she did was go and find them so she could make sure that you got them. She knows how much you love cinnamon rolls.

Ok, how would you feel now? You were hallucinating a scenario and your nervous system was getting amped up. Your behavior was about to dramatically affect your relationship. All for nothing. Yet whether what you were imagining was real or not, your experience in those moments waiting for her were very real. Your entire being was enrolled in the story.

While the above may seem extreme it does serve to remind us how an unmanaged mind is a dangerous thing ... As a wise man once said, "the mind is a great servant but a poor master". Isn't it encouraging to know you have the opportunity to put it in its rightful role, as your servant?

Peak Performance Principle:
The mind is a great servant but a poor master.

Make it serve you!

The act of imagining events works the same way for positive results as well, which has incredible implications for your golf game.

You can find countless examples that illustrate how our imagination has more power over our actions than logic ever will. It was Émile Coué who said, "When the will and imagination are in battle, imagination always wins".

Phenomenal results have been achieved by applying a structured mental practice routine.

Many years ago a study was done to verify if performance could be measurably enhanced by using visualization techniques. Some of you may be familiar with this study yet it is worth a quick review and is very appropriate for every reader to know.

A group of basketball players was separated into three separate smaller groups. The study was to last for only one week.

- One group was asked to practice shooting free throws. To physically shoot hoops.
- The second group was asked to stay home and sit and visualize making successful free throws with no physical practice.
- The third group was instructed to split their practice time in half and physically shoot free throws for the first half of their practice sessions and then visualize successful free throws for the other half.

At the end of the week they had each group all throw free throws and find out which group sank the most balls.

Guess which group had the best results? It wasn't the group that practiced only. It was the group that practiced and visualized during their practice.

But what was really surprising about the results was who was second. It was the group that only visualized. The group that physically practiced had worse results than the group who never tossed a ball and only "saw" themselves doing it!

This simple study began years of steady research and application of this process into my game and the games of my clients.

Peak Performance Principle:
*What we see on the screen of our imagination is
a preview of life's coming attractions.*

I'm telling you right here and now that the difference between the winner and the loser in any match or tournament, when things are on the line, is that the winner has a rehearsed self image that believes in victory. *Even if they've never won before.*

One person has a subconscious mind that is full of images and sensations of what it's like to hit the great shot. To drain that putt when it matters most. To come from behind and snatch victory when it looked the most bleak and unlikely.

While another player becomes uncertain of themselves in critical situations and struggles to channel their nerves.

Their attention gets scattered and their routine breaks and they become unglued.

The player that has won many times has an obvious advantage over someone who hasn't. The reason isn't only the obvious. A winner has internal images and sensations that the unconscious mind makes available in pressure situations. This is the key.

Yet when you spend enough time and practice designing peak states into your unconscious, your self image as a golfer becomes transformed. You will inevitably create results that reflect this self image.

Let's take two hypothetical players. One does no visualizing and only practices and believes it is the swing that causes success. They focus on good fundamentals and solid mechanics to carry them through to the win. Maybe consulting a mind coach on a whim now and again because it's the "in" thing to do.

The other player practices as well, plays the same amount, yet spends as much time as he/she has available seeing themselves holding a trophy after a tournament.

Feeling the deep sense of satisfaction that accompanies a well earned victory. Visualizing solid shots traveling on a desired trajectory. Putt after putt rolling in the hole. Really sensing how it feels to perform at their best and achieve their goal.

Who do you feel is most likely to excel and attain victory? I know who I'd be betting on. A person with a pure belief in themselves and a deep sense of what it feels like to win has a measurable advantage over a player who relies only on their conscious learning and physical skills.

I think most everyone understands that in professional sports the best of the best all use their minds in a way that others don't. Why do you think Tiger wins so many events? Not because he's the most skilled, although he may very well be.

His skills came into being because of his inner commitment to an ideal. An inner focus on winning everything in sight. He has known it since he was barely able to swing a club! His self image is of being not just a winner, but a conqueror. In order to become the most dominant player in the world his unconscious had to manifest for him all the resources, people, tools, and supportive environments that would ensure the fulfillment of his ideal.

This is how the process operates:

- A deep inner conviction to a vision, ideal, goal
- Focused and sensory rich images repetitively displayed to the mind of the fulfillment of the ideal/vision
- A strong self image forms and evolves
- Behaviors/actions extend from the self image, constantly adjusting to this self image as it evolves
- Results reflect the actions which stem from this evolving self image
- Beliefs about yourself emerge that reinforce the vision, ideal, goal
- The cycle repeats itself reinforcing each step along the way.

Every night you go to bed, just prior to sleep, you're going to visualize success. Among many exercises you'll do your goal will be to habituate the feeling of playing at your peak. Through mental practice and repetition you will be designing a new, more powerful, golfing self image that becomes the foundation of your game and your potential.

You will then learn to immerse your inner senses into your swing. Whatever level of skill you are at is irrelevant. You'll learn to develop a keen awareness of your swing and its nuances and come to appreciate its uniqueness. To view your idiosyncrasies as a strength instead of a weakness.

Isolating each area, from the take away to the top of the backswing to impact and the follow through. This will be your practice! All the while you'll imagine yourself winning matches and games with buddies. Making cuts on tour. Seeing yourself receiving the winner's trophy. You'll fill yourself with the feeling of victory.

You'll learn to play rounds in your mind against friends and colleagues or any opponent you choose to imagine. You will practice experiencing yourself sinking putts and making amazing shots.

I have played thousands of rounds of golf in my mind. I would see myself shaking hands with my opponent and hear him say, "nice playin'. I couldn't catch you today. Well done". I would do this while lying in bed, all at the golf course within my mind. Only we are going to take things A LOT further than this. You're going to change the way you experience the game.

Here's a great example that illustrates the power of constructive visualization.

There was a prisoner of war held captive in what was known as the Hanoi Hilton. This American prisoner was in solitary confinement for years. What did he do to pass the time? He visualized playing golf! He spent years seeing himself enjoying the game he loved and playing well. Literally thousands upon thousands of rounds were played in his imagination.

When he finally returned home and settled in he couldn't wait to play golf. Prior to the war he was a decent golfer who played in the eighties. So with much anticipation he went and played golf.

Guess what happened? He shot in the eighties his first round back! Then continually improved and began approaching his average handicap within a month.

Here's a guy that was malnourished and hadn't hit a ball in years! And he goes out and plays like he never left the game or merely took a month off.

I was using techniques I had developed along the way from modeling top athletes in many sports. You have the benefit of getting what actually works as well as many new and more advanced processes I've recently developed that have taken things to another level. This is the power of a constructively applied imagination. Of seeing yourself playing your best and truly gaining satisfaction from the game.

You're learning, in simple duplicable steps, how you can play at your peak, if you choose. After all, it is a choice. How we play is up to us. Even when we play poorly. This means you're beginning to take personal responsibility for your game. You're doing this by managing the untapped potential of your mind.

Exercise:

This is a simple process that you can first read through to memorize and then do. You'll see a breathing pattern explained that will become an integral part of most every imagery/visualization exercise you do.

1. Get comfortable in a chair or as I prefer, lying in bed.

2. Take several slow, deep breaths to begin relaxing. Breathe in the following manner:
 - Inhale – 4 counts
 - Hold – 5 counts
 - Exhale – 6 or more
3. Imagine being at your favorite golf course. It can be any course. Even one you have never played yet know the layout of. Your mind will fill in the rest. Slow down internally and take a look around this course. Breathe in the air and feel the breeze on your skin.
4. Pick your favorite hole and stand on the tee looking down the fairway. See your tee shot traveling with your desired ball flight, and landing in the middle of the fairway. Deep!
5. Take this feeling and stroll around the course. At this point it is more important just to practice using your imagination. No need to get too involved yet. Take your time to see, hear and feel as much as you can around you. Let these sensations sink in.

You are beginning to exercise your imagination. It will be the foundation of your inner game so take your time and get into it. This will begin to open your mind's eye.

6 Distinctions

Have you ever wondered what the key is in developing a strong inner game? What would it feel like to have one? Is there some mental key to unlocking our potential or at least improving our ability to access that potential?

The elixir of thought and the universal mental game key to tapping your mind is called distinctions.

The acquisition of knowledge and understanding is an endless series of refinements of thought. A peeling away of layers of illusion or self induced trances we all live in.

You will learn that the following statement is one of the most powerful principles for running your own mind at peak levels and getting superior results. *Distinctions are the difference that makes the difference.*

Read that as many times as it takes to have it installed in memory. Let me use a few examples to illustrate my point.

(The following example is written from a man's perspective as he dates a woman. Just alter the gender if you are a woman reading this. The important thing is your understanding)

There's a woman whom you have a great attraction to. You come to learn she loves flowers. So like the thoughtful man you are you decide to make sure to buy her some when you go on your next date with her.

Mmmmm, you can almost see it already as you give yourself a preview in your imagination of things to come ... she answers the door, you hand her some roses and she flashes an enormous, thankful smile ... softly says "you shouldn't have" ... "how very thoughtful" ... and kisses you. Yup, you are the man. You are in her good books from the start!

So the evening comes for the next date. Proudly you stroll to her front door, a dozen roses in hand, and you knock on the door. She opens the door ... you hand her the roses ... yet instead of the huge smile you expect from her you see a forced smile and receive a half hearted thank you. And she gives you a kiss that has as much passion as being kissed by your grandma ... and on the cheek no less!

What happened? What did you do? What went wrong? The night just never feels right from then on. Unsure of yourself and her, you stumble through the date and leave on an uneventful note with a nagging sense of uncertainty.

A few days later you find out from one of her friends that she hates roses! The last time she received roses was from her last boyfriend who gave her a dozen just before he dumped her!

Oops ... you blew it. But you didn't know you say! Tough. It's too late. The night was a disaster.

You knew she loved flowers but *you didn't know what kind!*

Distinctions, distinctions, distinctions. They're the difference that makes the difference. It applies to well to golf, as we'll see...

You're about to play golf. You're stretching and waiting for your tee time. You feel good. The sun is shining and all is well. You step up to the tee, take your customary waggles, and with the finesse of a rhinoceros you shank one Out of Bounds.

"Hmmm ... that was interesting" you say to yourself, as you re-load and try to appear like you're not rattled to the bone. You manage to escape the hole with a double bogie.

Impressive since you were 3 off the tee on the par 4. Finding the silver lining you congratulate yourself for not letting additional strokes get away from you. You minimized the damage. Well done.

You compose yourself. You have plenty of time to think, since you're the last one in your foursome to hit on the 2nd hole after your double bogie start.

You tee it up ... a couple of unrehearsed waggles ... a big, full turn ... a mighty lash at the ball ... and you cold top it 70 yards into the rough in front of you ... sky the next one ... blade a 7 iron over the green ... chip on to the green 50 feet from the pin ... blow your first putt 12 feet by the hole ... and mercifully 2 putt from there for an exhilarating triple bogie.

5 over par through 2 holes. Nice start. You were feeling good before you teed off, how are you feeling now?

Being the optimist you are you shrug it off saying, "Hey, it can't get any worse!" Oh yeah ... You manage to just pipe one 280 yards down the center of the fairway on the next hole. Honestly, it was one of the best drives you've hit in many rounds.

Pumped, and back on track, you stride confidently to the ball only to find it resting down inside the center of an unfilled divot.

"Son of a bitch!" you shout. Talk about a bad break! Only the top of the ball is above the ground. After cussing loudly and filling the airwaves with more profanity than you'd hear in a foursome of longshoremen with turrets syndrome, you calm yourself and get focused.

With resignation you say, "I may as well go for it, I'm 5 over anyways." So you take out a 9 iron and try to gouge it onto the green. Unfortunately the club face never sees the ball and you blast a hosel rocket into the pond to the right of the green.

What the *#%*&^*!

You take your drop near the pond beside the green and the ball virtually embeds into the rough.

The green is above you, the pin tucked tight and sloping away from you. As Bob Rosburg used to say, "He's got no shot".

You manage to slash it onto the green but the slope is severe and the ball runs into the bunker on the other side ... you make a decent bunker shot but gravity rolls the ball back onto the collar against the rough. No way to putt it now.

You think to yourself, "Hey, why not try that shot the pros use once in a while. Yeah, I'll try and belly wedge it." And with a new found resolve you hover your sand wedge in line with the balls' equator and make what feels to be a nice smooth stroke ... it glides toward the pin ... but past it and up the green ... and defying gravity it stops in the fringe above the hole! There's no way that ball stops there! The slope is huge. How in the world did it do that?!

You realize there is no way to stop this ball without hitting the pin. You simply get it over with, give it a light tap and it picks up speed and ends 20 feet below the hole. With 2 more putts and your shoulders hanging near your knees, you end the debacle with a solid 5 over on the hole.

Apparently things can get worse...

What the heck is going on? 10 over through 3 holes. And you're a 10 handicap. You have to shoot even par for the next 15 holes to shoot your cap! Still feeling good about the day?

Ok, this could go on but let's give this hypothetical player a break! It's hard enough to even read let alone experience!

There were so many things going on here. You might simply see a brief synopsis of most peoples' golf rounds. Yet inside each moment lies certain distinctions that could alleviate this scenario from unfolding as it did. As it does for so many players, amateurs and pros alike. Granted a pros numbers might not be so large but the inner struggles are similar.

This player may have made numerous mental errors in each shot. All we know is that this player continued to struggle and watch his score skyrocket upwards. Even though he gave his Sunday best to maintain a "positive attitude", his performance never improved.

His mindset might not even have had a chance to settle prior to each shot. He may not have even picked a target. His pre-shot routine (if he used one) might not have been followed properly. With each shot he might not have allowed the last shot to leave his memory. He definitely didn't employ a post-shot and between-shot routine. Without question he didn't play within his golfing style.

No doubt this player didn't establish his own playing rhythm and likely wasn't aware of the speed of his breathing which combined to guarantee he'd lose focus. Having a method to trigger a confident and resourceful state (you'll be learning this process in depth later) wasn't available to him either so he was at the mercy of whatever state was gripping his mind in each moment.

You see, there is a list of mental game keys that were unknown or ignored by this player which allowed his game to spiral out of control, completely unnecessarily.

What you will do is learn these distinctions and do dozens of exercises to improve your mental acuity, sharpen your focus and harness your potential. On each shot. You'll do more than just think about the proverbial golfing cliché "play one shot at a time". You'll experience the true meaning of it!

The long term goal of acquiring the mental skills in this training course is to put your game on auto-pilot and play with unconscious competence. Stage IV golf. Quantum golf. Zen golf.

The word distinction will be used often throughout these pages. Be particularly aware of these areas as they are key moments in the development and mastery of your inner game.

Peak Performance Principle:

Distinctions are the difference that make the difference.

If you're an artist and I am not, then what we both see in a painting is very different, agreed? I see some interesting colors arranged in unique ways with a collage of blended strokes. All shaped in a way that makes a cool painting. While you, the artist, see a battle between good and evil and the eternal struggle between the opposing forces of man which place us in a caldron of inner turmoil ... wow. That was quite the painting apparently!

The point is obvious. Distinctions determine the depth of our ability to understand. They reveal our capacity to notice things. The more distinctions you are able to perceive, the more you are capable of creating for yourself.

I see a guy hitting an upshoot flare fade and my understanding of what caused it might end right there, while a golf pro sees a lack of weight transfer, an over the top swing and a lack of balance. It's all about distinctions. You see a blustery golf course with fescue all over the place and I see half the competition mentally folding before the event even begins!

One player sees hard pan fairways and very unreceptive greens and you see a perfect scenario for low flighted shots since hard pan will favor this AND running shots into the green is more favorable than flying them there since they're so firm.

Your awareness is built on distinctions. Build as many new ones as you can. Every new learning we ever have is about adding distinctions. Knowing this I want you to look at your golf game as Peak Performance education. Each and every nuance of the game is designed to teach and refine you. Expand your ability to notice even more about yourself and your game.

The more you associate with great players the more you appreciate the depth of their distinctions of the game.

Take your typical perspectives and then put on your distinction hat. Think about them and see them differently. Perhaps there is another angle to the way you have habitually looked at your game. Since you're attending Peak Performance college every time you play, what new distinctions about your inner game did you learn?

Create a personal journal and make some notes in it. I'm not talking about writing essays in your journal. It's not about feeling like it's a job to monitor your inner game. Just a few notes that you add to over time. The payoffs will seem slight at first then like popcorn you get an explosion of growth in your game and never look back.

There's a saying that goes, "once a mind is stretched it never reverts back to its original size."

Stretch your mind. I will be coaching you along the way. It is the ultimate satisfaction in golf to know you took the time and effort to master your inner game. Very few people do!

Hmmm, maybe there's something to Tiger's intense focus ... do you think his mental game is superior to every other player on tour? I wonder what mental game distinctions he has that others do not???