

The Three Principles Of Outstanding Golf

How A Golfer's Mind Really Works



Sam Jarman

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by Sam Jarman

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Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Epigraph](#)

[Chapter 1: We Don't Do 'Head Stuff'.](#)

[Chapter 2: Ups And Downs.](#)

[Chapter 3: Why Isn't Golf Fun Any More?](#)

[Contact](#)

[About the author](#)

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Lastly to Sydney Banks, who saw what he saw, and wasn't afraid to tell the world about it.

Foreword

“It is rare these days that I come across a golf coaching book which holds my attention from start to finish. It is also rare to find a book about the mind written by someone who is genuinely at the ‘coal face’ of both playing and coaching as opposed to classroom theory. Sam has written such a book.

It will do what a great book should by challenging your existing beliefs and making you think about the way you either play or coach the game. It is not more of the same ‘positive thinking’ and ‘affirmation’ nonsense but a genuine inquiry about how our mind actually interacts with our body to either make or break our performance. Your game and your life can’t help but be enhanced by reading this book.”

Dr Karl Morris

'If the only thing people learned was not to be afraid of their experience, that alone would change the world.'

Syd Banks

CHAPTER 1

We Don't Do 'Head Stuff'.

'Golf is deceptively simple and endlessly complicated; it satisfies the soul and frustrates the intellect. It is at the same time rewarding and maddening – and without a doubt the greatest game mankind has ever invented.'

—Arnold Palmer

IT WAS THE SUNDAY AFTERNOON of the 2011 Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass in Florida. Cheers rang out as KJ Choi and David Toms battled for the title over the closing holes. Things were a little quieter on the front nine, and a lot less dramatic. Bad weather on Saturday meant the third round had been completed on Sunday morning. The Tour implemented a two tee start to finish the final round on schedule on Sunday evening. Players further down the field were on the golf course at the same time as the leaders.

I was watching Ian Poulter. I knew Ian from playing mini tour events years ago, and through his attachment to Woburn Golf Club. Also walking with the three ball were his wife Katie, IJP Design colleague Russell Hurd and fellow Woburn members Gary Johnstone and Steve Jensen.

Playing the back nine first, he was hitting the ball nicely but not holing anything. Very relaxed, he was chatting with his caddy Terry Mundy and exchanging some banter with

Russell. We watched him hit his tee shot down the 1st. Gary, Steve and I waited to see Bubba Watson drive off in the group behind before walking across to the 2nd green to meet Ian's group as they came down the par five.

Things didn't go well. The hole is reachable in two shots and a definite birdie opportunity. Ian blocked his drive right into the trees. He found his ball, but hit a tree with his recovery shot and had to take a penalty drop. He hacked it out and laid up sixty yards short of the green. In typical, never give up Poulter fashion, he pitched to six inches for a double bogey seven.

Looking a bit disenchanted with life, he tapped in, then wandered to the back of the green and sat down in an empty marshall's seat while his two playing partners putted out. I watched from about twenty yards away as he pulled the yardage book out of his back pocket and started scribbling, intent on getting something important down on paper. Always curious about what top players are thinking, I wondered what he was writing.

The double bogey had little effect on him. He made one of the best up and downs I have ever seen on the next hole to save par.

A few weeks later, I was back at Woburn watching the English Amateur Championship being played over the Marquess course. A couple of players I worked with were competing, so I spent the morning wandering in the sunshine watching them play. As I walked back to the clubhouse, I spotted two familiar figures on the practice ground alongside the eighteenth fairway. I made my way over to find Ian and caddy Terry in animated discussion about how to use a new video camera.

'Alright if I watch you hit a few?' I asked, after we had exchanged pleasantries.

'You're fine mate', Ian replied.

I stretched out on the grass as he fired six irons onto one of the tiny practice greens halfway down the range.

After an hour it became clear he was winding down. The conversation with Terry moved on from business (his golf swing) to football, cars, recent tournaments, typical golfer chit chat. I waited for a lull in the conversation, took a deep breath, then dived in.

'Ian, I'm not sure I should ask, but do you remember the second hole at Sawgrass on Sunday? You hit it into the trees off the tee but couldn't get it back on the fairway. Then you laid it up and pitched it stiff from about sixty yards. I think you made a double?'

He looked at me quizzically for a couple of seconds. 'Err, vaguely. Why?'

'You sat down at the back of the green and wrote stuff in your yardage book for about five minutes. It looked pretty important at the time. Can I ask you what you were doing?'

'Probably just writing down my yardages and doing the scorecard.'

'So you weren't making notes or anything?'

'Notes? What about?'

'Well, you'd just made a mistake, and seemed a bit annoyed about it. I wondered if you were writing some notes. You know, positive mental reminders, key swing thoughts, some affirmations maybe...you know, 'Head Stuff'?

He smiled at Terry and then at me.

'No Mate... We don't do Head Stuff.'

* * *

Why Ian Poulter Is Better Than Me.

'Golf is a game played on a five inch course. The distance between your ears.'

—Bobby Jones

From the day I met him as a precocious eighteen year old, I've been impressed by the way Ian gets the maximum out of his game. He's a very good ball striker, but by his own admission, not the best in the world. If you didn't know and saw him on the practice range at a Tour event, you probably wouldn't pick him as a Ryder Cup legend. He's not a short hitter, but he doesn't overpower golf courses like Rory McIlroy, Dustin Johnson or Bubba Watson can.

His Ryder Cup record is phenomenal. He always seems to play his best golf when the pressure is at its highest, typified by an amazing run of birdies on the Saturday at Medinah in 2010. So why is he so good? How does he deliver so consistently in demanding situations?

Looking at the statistics, he does the simple things very well. He drives the ball in the fairway. He is excellent with his wedges. He has a great short game, and putts well, especially from inside ten feet. The short game and putting are the simplest shots in terms of technique, and you don't need to be a great athlete to be a great putter.

What you do need, are calmness, clarity of mind and imagination. Ian has these in abundance. He knows his game very well and plays to his strengths. Famously, he doesn't get nervous. When asked why, he replied,

'I'm playing the shot, not the situation.'

This statement gives an insight into why he excels when the pressure is at its most intense. I'll explain later in the book.

His passion for the game is obvious and he works hard to be the best he can be. He's very independent. He doesn't have a regular coach. He keeps things simple. As you will be aware if you follow him on Twitter, he doesn't seem care about other people's thoughts or opinions. He has a great sense of perspective. His family is by far the most important thing in his life. A bad day on the golf course is just a bad day on the golf course. Terry Mundy his long time caddy is similarly down to earth.

From talking to Ian occasionally, from conversations with his father Terry and his former coach Lee Scarbrow, I would suggest the main reason Ian plays to and beyond his potential so often is because he doesn't think too much. He trusts himself and his golf swing. He sees the shot and lets it go without worrying about the consequences.

An interviewer once asked him if he used a sports psychologist.

'Why would I want to pay someone to tell me how good I already know I am?' was his reply.

From the guy trying to break a hundred for the first time, to the tour pro trying to win his first major, most golfers agree that golf is a mental game. The importance of the mind in golf has become well recognised. Acknowledgement of its significance is increasing all the time, as is the prominence of mind coaches and sports psychologists such as Tim Gallwey, Bob Rotella, Karl Morris and Steve Peters.

Golf is a hard sport to play at a high level, week in, week out, hence the time and effort the best players spend 'working' on the mental side of their performance. Since Tiger Woods won the 2008 US Open, the last in his era of dominance, first timers won seventeen out of the next twenty majors. The world number one spot keeps changing hands. Players at the top of their game who seemed poised to dominate have dropped back into the pack.

I would suggest a golfer's mind is the greatest separator between success and failure, between champion and also-ran. More so than swing technique, physical fitness or equipment. It's perfectly possible to win important tournaments with a golf swing that doesn't fit the technical ideals promoted by commentators and golf instructors, as Graeme McDowell, Jim Furyk, Jeev Milkha Singh, Colin Montgomerie and Jordan Spieth have shown.

Camillo Villegas and Dustin Johnson are generally accepted as two of the fittest, most athletic players in the professional game. At the time of writing, neither is a major champion. Indeed, Villegas lost his PGA Tour playing rights in 2012. If you wander down the range at a Tour event, you will see a range of ages, body types, and levels of physical fitness.

The best players in the world struggle to play their best golf consistently even with the quantity of psychological advice and information available to them. It isn't unusual to see the world's best players shoot 65 one day, followed by 75 the next. Tiger Wood's greatest asset at his peak was a calmness and mental resilience which allowed him to produce his best golf when it mattered most, regardless of the apparent pressures of the situation.

How can Adam Scott, lauded as perhaps the best swinger of a golf club in the world, lose a four shot lead over the last four holes of the 2012 Open Championship? He played sublime golf for the previous three and a half rounds. Watching the television footage, there's no discernible change in his golf swing or putting stroke. I doubt Adam himself can explain exactly what happened at Royal Lytham on that July afternoon. I'm sure he believed in himself, trusted his swing, visualised the shot and went through his pre shot routine. He still couldn't par any of the last four holes.

Why is it that some of the 15 handicappers who turn up at my studio can regularly hit a driver 250 yards into a fairway, can repeatedly land a seven iron on a green from 150 yards and can hole a dozen four footers in a row on the practice green, but struggle to break 90 when they have a medal card in their hand?

Golfers are offered endless streams of technical information supposedly to help them improve, but they don't. They're told what to learn in terms of swing technique, but very little about how to learn it. They are overloaded with technical information and stuff to think about. This is counter productive, particularly when it comes to the mental side of golf which is such a significant aspect of the game.

They are then offered strategies and tips to manage their thinking, or cope with 'pressure'. Sometimes these tips work, but often they don't. Even if they do work, relief is temporary. Golfers are rarely, if ever, asked to look inwards, towards what might be causing them to feel 'pressure' in the first place.

Who is this book for?

I'm guessing you aren't completely happy with your game. Maybe you aren't enjoying it as much as you used to, or you have had some lessons and haven't improved as you had hoped? Maybe you're feeling stressed and under pressure when you play, and are looking for ways to cope with those feelings? Maybe you feel the progress in your game has levelled off, and you're looking for a way to improve your scores without another round of 'worse before it gets better' swing changes?

I'd love this book to be the catalyst for a new way of seeing things. Instead of searching for another swing model, another coach, new golf clubs, the latest training aid, more balls at the driving range, or a new fitness programme, I'd like this book to point you inwards.

How do you feel when you're playing golf? Where are those feelings coming from?

Are you relaxed, calm, decisive, resilient and free when you play? Or are you tight and pressured, a bundle of nerves? Are you anxiously waiting for the wheels to come off at the worst possible moment, as seems to happen more often than not?

I hope this book will prompt you to question your perceptions of the game. How does it look to you? When things are going well, golf seems simple and logical, make or miss. The problems start when we start digging deeper. Modern coaching seems to be pushing us towards playing and learning in a much more mechanical, scientific way. But can it really be boiled down to physics and ballistics, to analysis of the numbers?

I will suggest some ideas which may seem confusing, contradictory, baffling, paradoxical even, about the nature of reality, of time and space, and about ourselves. What we know, what we think we know and what we don't know.

Golf is played by fallible, emotional, sometimes irrational human beings, on the surface of a planet which is alive, ever changing, and unpredictable. This ball of rock was formed several billion years ago and then shaped by forces much more powerful than we can possibly imagine.

We launch a small, spherical projectile into the elements with hope and faith that it will fall in a way that will please us. That optimism is essential, but we also cherish the uncertainty. If we knew exactly what was going to happen after each swing, the game would lose its attraction very quickly.

Why is this paradox so appealing? Why are games so important to human beings? We have played them for at least the last few thousand years, almost certainly longer. What does playing golf do for us and on what level? Games are not essential to human existence, but I know that my life and that of many others would be significantly poorer without them.

Why are Golfers and Golf Struggling?

Golf is at a crossroads. The number of people playing is levelling off, if not falling. The demographic of golfers is aging, with fewer youngsters coming into the game. There are numerous theories put forward for this decline, from slow play to the cost of playing. From the lack of leisure time, to the game being difficult to learn.

I think all these opinions are missing the point. Golfers play golf because they love it. They enjoy it. It's challenging, it's fun. Unfortunately, the people who run the game and golfers themselves are largely oblivious to where our feelings of enjoyment come from. In the same way they look outside themselves for ways to improve their golf, they look outside for the reasons golf makes them happy, or unhappy, and for the reasons why they play golf at all.

The theory that the way to attract more people to the game is to make it easier, less challenging, doesn't make sense. I've seen young children learn to hit the ball well in a couple of hours. Mastering something difficult is one of the most satisfying experiences a human being can have. It's why millions of golfers play on into their dotage. The challenge of golf is what keeps people coming back.

This book introduces three psychological principles which are the building blocks of the human experience. These principles offer explanations for the three big difficulties golfers seem to have. Learning and improving naturally without struggling. Playing their best golf when they really want to, and enjoying the game now and into the future.

I believe in fifty years time these principles will be accepted and be at the forefront of everyday psychological education, in the same way that germ theory led to hand washing and sterilisation of instruments being at the forefront of modern medical education. I believe sport and golf in particular, due to its individual, deliberate and cerebral nature, present a huge opportunity to help bring this understanding into the public consciousness.

The nature of these three principles is the truth, or as close to it as I have come. I just don't see how human beings can experience life in any other way. I don't imagine for a moment I see the nature of it as deeply as Sydney Banks, whose enlightenment experience in the autumn of 1973 led to this breakthrough, or as clearly as my friends and mentors Garret Kramer and Jamie Smart do.

I do see very clearly what these principles mean to me. I see their potential to make the game I love more enjoyable for those that play it, and more accessible for those that would like to play. I believe a new approach can change the experience of golf forever for my fellow golfers, without whose company the game would not be half the fun it is.

The game of golf is not the issue. Most golfers don't know where their feelings are coming from, so they have no idea why golf can feel so disappointing and frustrating sometimes. By the end of this book you will understand how your mind works and why you feel the way you do about the game. Why on some days you love it, on others it drives you crazy.

You will be amongst a select group of golfers who do understand, and you will see why these lucky golfers want to keep playing for as long as they can walk.

As a result of the understanding I'm about to share, you will play your best golf more often. You will find it easier to ride the inevitable mental challenges that the game throws at you. You will continue to learn and improve for as long as you choose to keep playing this amazing game. You will fall in love with the game all over again.

CHAPTER 2

Ups And Downs.

'It's a form of insanity to keep beating yourself over the head just because it feels good when you stop.'

—John Geirach

THIS IS MY STORY. It isn't the truth. It isn't reality. It's my recollections of the past thirty or so years of my life. This might sound like an odd distinction to make. You'll understand why I make it as the book progresses.

* * *

My golfing journey began at the age of twelve, chipping a golf ball around our back garden with Andrew Harrott, another young golfer who lived over the road. One afternoon, for some reason (possibly a bet) I was trying to hit a wedge over my parent's house from the back to the front garden.

Not for the last time in my golfing life, the occasion got to me. I tightened up and thinned it towards the kitchen window. I had time to wonder which of my parents would injure me most seriously when the ball hit the wooden frame between the two panes of glass and rebounded back to my feet. Three inches either way and I mightn't be writing these

words. My golfing career would probably have been over before it began. Luck plays a significant part in the game of golf, as any major winner will tell you.

Over the next couple of years, I played at Mowsbury Park, the municipal course in Bedford during the summer holidays. I had some talent, but my technique was unconventional. I had a strong grip and a funky swing, but was good around the greens. I loved the feeling of hitting the ball, watching it soar off into space. Every round was an opportunity to learn, to improve and find out how well I could play. Golf was a fascinating challenge, a chance to compete and have fun with my mates.

My hero was Severiano Ballesteros, the legendary Spaniard. In his prime, Seve was the most exciting, naturally gifted player the world has ever seen. The obvious pleasure he got from the game inspired me. I loved the way he charged around the course, the joy he got from playing outrageous shots from impossible situations. I was completely hooked. I gave up football, rugby and athletics and just played golf.

Aged fifteen I joined Bedford and County Golf Club, where Chris Harrott, Andrew's father was the junior organiser. My first handicap was twenty three. I got down to scratch by the time I was eighteen. I still had a strong grip and hit it about 220 yards off the tee with a little fade. My strengths were confidence, persistence and the fact I possessed a short game that could get the ball up and down out of a rubbish bin. I took some lessons, practised hard and gradually improved my swing and ball striking.

I joined Woburn Golf Club in 1989 and represented Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire at county

level, combining golf with working at the American Golf Discount store in Biggleswade. Long hours in the golf shop didn't give me time to practice, so I jumped at the chance when my friend Bob Smith offered me a job as a sales agent for his golf accessories company. I racked up the miles around the Home Counties selling logoed ball markers and bag tags, Cape Crest Rainwear, Rhythm Clothing and Yonex golf clubs.

The highlight of my amateur career was reaching the final of the English Amateur Championship at Hunstanton in 1995. The match was an anti-climax. Mark Foster (subsequently a winner on the European Tour) beat me 6 & 5. Despite the loss, the English Golf Union gave me the opportunity to play for England in a tournament in Greece that September. It was a proud moment.

I was included in the national training squad that winter. At the first session, I had my swing analysed on video for the first time. I was mortified. It looked dreadful, nothing like I imagined. Coach Keith Williams suggested a number of changes to improve my ball striking. This was the start of fifteen years of swing changes with a number of different instructors. I wish I knew then what I know now.

Feeling The Pressure.

I turned professional in 1998 and secured a provisional card to play the Australian PGA Tour that winter. There was Monday qualifying every week to get into tournaments. My nerves got the better of me more often than not.

I returned home in the spring of 1999 to play various mini tours. The Hippo Tour, the Futures Tour and the Players Tour were basically big sweepstakes where players

put up the prize money rather than sponsors. The top ten finishers and the tournament organisers kept most of it. A back injury saved me from going completely broke, but put me out of the game for two years.

During my break from golf I married my girlfriend Belinda and we bought a house. I rediscovered my boyhood love of salmon fishing, helped Peter Little set up the EuroPro Tour, before taking a sales role with a software company. Recovery from injury and having forgotten how hard golf could be, I started playing again in 2002. I played full seasons on the EuroPro Tour in 2003, 2004 and 2005. I managed a few top ten finishes and ranked in the top 50 on the order of merit a couple of times. I entered European Tour Qualifying School on three or four occasions between 1998 and 2006, but never managed to play my best golf when I wanted or needed to.

I called time on my first playing career in 2006. Unsurprisingly, Belinda decided she'd had enough of sharing her life with a grumpy, broke, neurotic golf professional. Having followed me around the world paying more than her fair share of the bills and putting her life and career on hold, she gave me a choice: golf or her. The arguments that followed are some of my worst memories. We decided to go our separate ways a few weeks later. My dear friends Mike and Hannah Pilgrim offered me some work on their farm while I figured out what I could do with the rest of my life. I was pretty low and I'm not sure what would have happened if they hadn't been there for me.

My strongest memory of playing tournaments was feeling sick with nerves pretty much every time I teed it up. I was happiest when I was practising. I loved hitting golf balls

and working on my swing or short game. Practising wasn't accompanied by the pressure I felt when playing.

The sad thing for me was, the better I got the less enjoyable the game seemed. My good rounds didn't give me much satisfaction. I was just doing what I expected. I took my poor rounds very personally, replaying the bad shots over and over in my mind. I felt I was a disappointment to all the people who were supporting me. This increased the nervous anxiety. In tournaments I felt I was battling, trying hard, and grinding. It felt like walking through a minefield, just waiting for something bad to happen, rather than doing something I loved. When I did have a good round, it felt more of a relief than a cause for celebration.

Looking back now, I had completely lost touch with the reasons I fell in love with the game when I was a kid. I had gone from playing golf for its own sake, the simple game of hitting a ball around a nicely manicured piece of countryside till it went in a hole, to playing another game I had no chance of winning.

At the time I didn't understand what was happening. I just knew when I played badly I felt sad, disappointed, frustrated and angry. The tighter and more anxious I felt, the worse I played, which made me more tense, which made me play worse. A classic downward spiral.

I was trying to live up to my own expectations. I was trying to prove something to myself, my wife and our families and friends. I was trying to earn a living. Golf had become the means to an end, rather than something I did because I enjoyed it. Every shot was judged either good or bad depending on how it would affect other things in my life. I didn't appreciate a good swing for the great feeling it

gave me, or a poor one as something I could learn from. Golf stopped being something I loved and became a job. The outcome had become more important than the process. The game wasn't fun any more. I came very close to giving up.

'Two Shots From Being Crazy'.

As the son of an author, I have always loved reading. A golfer has plenty of books to choose from. One of my favourites is 'Extraordinary Golf' by Fred Shoemaker. He makes an astute observation about the thinking the majority of golfers adopt once they've played the game for more than a few weeks. He calls this mind-set the 'Culture of Golfers'. Two particular statements perfectly describe my state of mind for most of my time as a tour professional.

The first is that all golfers, regardless of their ability or status, are two bad shots away from being crazy.

The second is that most golfers believe that there is something wrong with their game or golf swing. They need to fix it in order to be happy with their golf.

This isn't just true of club golfers. A number of friends I grew up with are currently playing on the European Tour. Others are caddies or rules officials, or agents or coaches to tour players. The following statement might surprise club golfers: Shoemaker's Culture of Golfers is strong even at the highest levels of the game. It is hard to believe the level of insecurity amongst top players, their coaches and caddies.

The world's best golfers have weeks where they are two bad shots from going crazy in the same way most club players are. A minority would profess satisfaction with the way they're playing. They are always trying to improve their game or trying to fix something. Few would tell you they

enjoy the game as much as they did when they were growing up.

There are many accounts of tour players who have won a major championship, then tried to change their swing or fix something in order to improve, or to get to 'the next level'. Usually they disappear from the limelight as their game deserts them. Martin Kaymer did it after winning the 2010 US PGA Championship. Clearly there wasn't much wrong with his golf, yet he believed his game wasn't complete, that it still wasn't good enough and needed fixing. He decided to change something that worked in the quest to get better. Michael Campbell and David Duval are other examples of players who went missing in action after major wins.

This is the paradox that makes the game so seductive and in many cases so addictive. Golf is difficult. It always looks like we can and indeed must improve. No one ever plays a round of golf where they don't think of shots they wish they could have again. We are always striving to get better. Unfortunately this striving often takes us in the opposite direction.

Teacher Fix Thyself.

Thankfully my love for the game returned once I stopped thinking that playing golf was my only means of making something of my life. I began teaching. It was fun helping other people play better and enjoy their golf. I began to remember the reasons I played the game in the first place.

Unfortunately, many golfers I meet are in a bad place psychologically for the same reasons I was. They have forgotten why they fell in love with golf, and are struggling to find any enjoyment in it. They play in the hope that the

next round will be where it all turns round, like a gambler chasing his losses. Usually they are searching for technical improvements in the hope that better scores will rekindle their enthusiasm for the game. My experiences help me empathise, to see things from their perspective and to perhaps explain why that perspective isn't helping.

Sometimes the universe moves in ways we don't understand until we look back later.

Over the past thirty years, I've seen few different ways of swinging a golf club. Some of them work better than others. I've experimented with some of them, persevered and played well with one or two. One thing I have learned from watching good players, is that a talented athlete can make any swing model work if they believe in it and practice it enough.

Maybe someone someday will come up with The One. The single, most efficient biomechanically correct way of swinging a golf club that everyone can use, regardless of size, shape, body type, strength, flexibility and athleticism. I'm not holding my breath for it, because there will always be personal preference and subjectivity involved.

When someone does find that optimal swing, they also need to explain to golfers that we have a natural way of learning new movement instead of working against our instincts as we seem to do at the moment. We need to accept that a person's golf swing will change and feel different from day to day, month to month, year to year, because we are human beings, and we change over time.

I have worked with some very good coaches during my playing days; Luther Blacklock, Chuck Quinton, Lee Scarbrow, Charlie Earp, Eddie Bullock, Kevyn Cunningham,

Alex Hay, Keith Williams, Tommy Horton and others. The lessons I learnt from them may not have been the ones they thought they were teaching me, but proved to be valuable nonetheless.

I have played my best golf when I felt I understood my own golf swing enough that I didn't need to think about it. I may have come to that understanding through studying other swing models, but my biggest steps forward have come through increased awareness of what I was actually doing. Awareness of what felt good in my swing and what didn't. I don't think it's coincidence that some of the all time great ball strikers – Hogan, Snead, Trevino, George Knudsen and Moe Norman, for example – were mainly self-taught.

I have been fortunate to play with a number of fantastic golfers over the years. You may have heard of Retief Goosen, Luke Donald, Paul Casey, David Howell, Mark Foster, Justin Rose, Andrew Coltart, Ian Poulter and Lee Westwood. I also played with a number of talented golfers who never made it onto the big stage. David Fisher, Charlie Challen, Garry Harris and Gordon Sherry were all huge talents who could easily have become household names. I've spent many hours wondering about what separates those who went on to play golf at the highest level and those of us who are now doing something else. I imagine they have too.

The understanding I'm about to share points to some of the answers. The secret, if you want to call it that, is something you can't see. A clear head, an inner resilience and a deep sense of awareness are more important than a technically perfect golf swing or a repeatable putting stroke.

I wish the golf instruction industry would change its focus from teaching technique, to helping golfers

understand how they can play their best golf more often. Two of the most important books I've read about learning golf, 'The Inner Game of Golf' by Tim Gallwey and Shoemaker's 'Extraordinary Golf', emphasise that how we learn is much more important than what we learn.

Unfortunately the instruction industry seems obsessed with perfecting the golf swing, rather than with understanding, functionality and enjoyment. This obsession has led to large numbers of unhappy and frustrated golfers, many of whom are leaving the game and looking for other things to do in their leisure time.

Learning movement is a natural process we all do from the moment we are born. It doesn't need to be broken down, packaged up as a seven step plan and marketed on the internet with a new training aid. Until we accept this and point golfers in the direction of instinctive learning, golfers will continue to find improving their golf swings a frustrating, uphill battle.

Welcome to the Madhouse.

The feelings of insecurity, nervousness and anxiety I struggled with for most of my golfing life are not uncommon. Over the years I sought advice from a number of sports psychologists to help me feel more at ease when I played. Teaching the mental side of golf has been a big growth area in the last thirty years, with a number of books written on the subject.

'Golf is not a Game of Perfect' by Bob Rotella was published in May 1995. In August of that year I reached the final of the English Amateur Championship, probably my finest golfing achievement. I remember reading Rotella's

book and adopting a few of his techniques, particularly for the short game and putting. Picking a small target and letting the shot go without delay were two I remember adopting. I practiced my short game a lot leading up to the tournament, and putted like a demon that week. The greens were hard and super fast. I holed yards and yards of putts right up until the final match.

I have always been a good match play golfer. The idea that a poor shot might only cost me one hole seemed to reduce the pressure and anxiety I experienced compared to stroke play tournaments.

I went to see sports psychologist Jack Lamport Mitchell shortly before travelling up to Hunstanton in Norfolk. In my initial assessment, he scored me one out of ten for ability to relax, five out of ten for self-confidence, four out of ten for muscle tension and one out of ten for dealing with competition nerves. He sent a lovely letter of congratulations after the final which I still have.

He gave me a relaxation tape to listen to, and showed me a deep breathing exercise I could use. I remember feeling nervous as usual, but I coped and enjoyed a couple of matches. I played against a good friend, Lewis Watcham in the last sixteen and Jim Miller from Yorkshire in the quarterfinals.

I made two outrageous up and downs over the last three holes of the semi-final. One from a bad lie in a greenside bunker on the sixteenth, the other from the first tee beside the final green, where Shaun Webster kindly three putted from the front fringe to give me the win.

Getting to the final was the best result of my golfing life. I thought I had made a breakthrough with regards to my

anxiety, now that I had a couple of tricks up my sleeve to cope with it. I kept listening to the tape, and doing the breathing exercise. I worked hard on developing and improving my pre shot routine as Rotella recommended, focussing on a small target and visualising the ball going towards it.

Despite following the advice, my anxious feelings returned and never really went away. My golf stayed pretty much at the same level rather than continuing on an upward trajectory. Over the following years I went to see a number of other mind coaches with similar results. They gave me the latest strategy, all variations on the same theme of analysing my thinking and coping with the feelings. Sometimes I felt better and played well for a while, but then returned to how I was feeling before; stressed out and increasingly frustrated.

I've spoken to many golfers about their experiences with sports psychologists and mind coaches. Sometimes they play well after the session, sometimes they don't. When they do, there seems to be a reason for it. However, doing the same thing next time doesn't lead to the same feeling or level of performance.

Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, muscle flexing, rapid eye movements, thinking about a happy time or place, may all relieve tension or anxiety levels in the short term. Visualisation can work, but only if you're not too anxious or tense to visualise. What happens if other scenarios keep coming into mind rather than the ones you want to see?

I remember one well meaning psychologist who wanted to take me back to memories of past rounds where I had played badly in order to deal with the feelings those

memories triggered. I remember thinking at the time, 'This seems a bit cruel and unnecessary. How can reliving bad memories help make me play better in the future?'

It just bought all the old feelings back. I was then supposed to get rid of the anxiety by tapping my finger on my face and forehead.

When a golfer goes to see a sports psychologist, he or she expects to get a technique or a strategy to work on. Most begin by analysing the content of a person's thinking in order to explain feelings or behaviour. They then offer a routine or a practice to mitigate or replace the unwanted feelings and thus change the behaviour.

Unfortunately, this is a complete misunderstanding of how the mind actually works, and is usually more harmful than helpful. I have yet to see or hear of a successful technique, routine or strategy which works successfully on every shot. Maybe I'm missing the point. Many sports psychologists seem to be making a good living from what they're prescribing.

Time for a New Approach.

I'm a relatively intelligent person and a decent golfer, probably in the top one or two percent of everyone playing the game worldwide. I've played sub par golf for the past twenty five years, won my club championship five times, represented my county and my country, and reached the final of my national championship. I earn a proportion of my living every year from playing golf in professional tournaments.

However, in the past I rarely played my best golf when I really wanted to. I came very close to giving up the game

because it seemed to be making me miserable. When I'm teaching, I see first hand the difficulties other people have trying to play their best golf consistently. I regularly see both the enjoyment and the frustration the game can bring.

Despite my struggles, I consider myself very fortunate to have had the opportunity to follow my dream. I've played some of the best golf courses around the world, met some wonderful people, many of whom I'm proud to call my friends. I wouldn't swap a single hour I spent on the range and the putting green, from junior golf right through to professional level.

I have hit hundreds of thousands of golf balls and tried many different ways of swinging a golf club. I have developed a deep understanding of how my golf swing works. I'm currently hitting the ball better than ever and I'm looking forward to playing some good golf in the coming months and years.

By far the most important thing I've learnt is the understanding I'm going to share with you in the following pages. It provides an explanation for my difficulties playing my best golf when I really wanted to and the obsession I had with constantly changing and fixing my golf swing. It led me to the breakthrough where I saw where my feelings of anxiety and frustration were really coming from.

How To Read This Book.

This might seem like an odd instruction. Hopefully it will stop you falling into the same mental trap which caught me when I began to see the possibilities this understanding offers. Like you might be doing now, I was searching for something. When we are searching for an answer, we read

and listen in a particular way. We read with our intellect, rather than with an open mind. We filter and judge and compare what we are reading to see if it stacks up against what we already know or believe.

What you won't get from this book is an intellectual understanding of how to play golf. If you start to feel excited or agitated, please put it down for a while. What I hope you experience is a nice, calm, relaxed feeling as you read. This is the first clue that it is reaching the parts other golf books have failed to reach.

That's the feeling of your connection to your inner wisdom opening up, of your thinking slowing down. If you get this feeling, you're on the right track. If you start asking yourself questions about how to apply the things you read here, or feeling that you want to rush out to try and put them into practice, you've probably missed it.

If this doesn't make sense to you at the moment, don't worry. It didn't when I first heard it either. I promise, if you can read the rest of the book with an open mind and a good feeling, what I'm about to tell you can't help but have the same positive effect on your golf as it has had on mine.

CHAPTER 3

Why Isn't Golf Fun Any More?

'Of all the hazards, fear is the worst.'

—Bobby Jones

THE LAST TIME I FAILED to get through the first stage of European Tour Qualifying School, I remember walking off the final green and the question above popped into my head. (I think my answer was 'Because you're so crap at it.') I didn't understand the haphazard, ephemeral nature of Thought at that point, so I took it a lot more seriously than I would do now. I wrote down more answers when I got home.

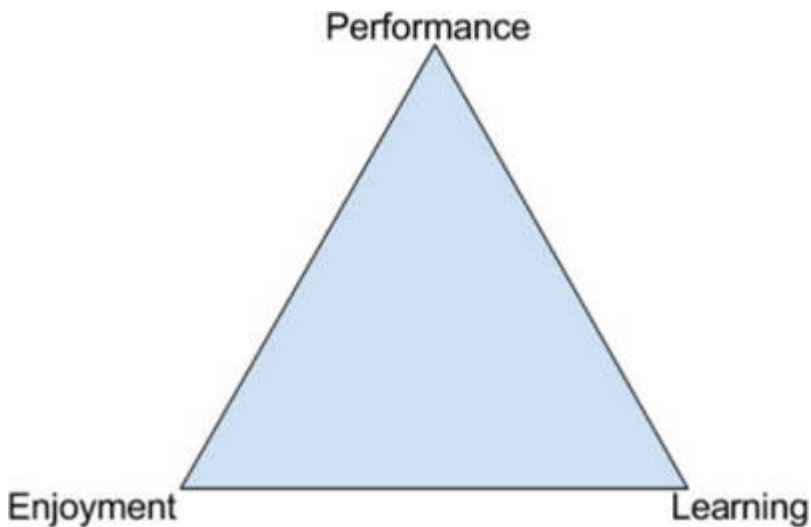
Looking back on those answers now, it seems like whiny, self centred introspection. But as I started teaching and talking to more golfers about how they felt after they played, what they were telling me sounded very familiar.

If I went round the lounge at Woburn Golf Club on a Saturday lunchtime and discreetly asked: 'Who honestly enjoyed their round this morning?' I would suggest fewer than half the people would answer positively. Woburn is a beautiful place to play. It has three of the best courses in the country, always in excellent condition. The members are friendly, welcoming and play golf in good spirit. So why are there so many frustrated people in the room? They spend a

lot of time and money on their hobby. Why are so few of them enjoying themselves?

What Do Golfers Want?

In 'The Inner Game of Golf', Tim Gallwey suggests golfers want three different things from their experience. He illustrates these desires in an infographic which he calls the 'Performance, Enjoyment, Learning triangle' (P.E.L).



He suggests that balancing up the three sides of the triangle is essential for a golfer to perform well, fulfil their potential by improving skills and technique, enjoy what they are doing and get satisfaction from it. The 'Inner Game' has become a huge coaching business. This infographic is the foundation of the philosophy behind it.

P.E.L makes sense to me. From my own experience of playing, and from talking to a few hundred golfers over the past five years, there is truth in it. In all my conversations, enjoyment is the overwhelming priority for golfers. They

want to have a good time when they play, to feel their investment of time and money has been worth it. The problem is they don't seem to know what that means or where the enjoyment comes from. I started off playing for fun, but I got confused as my game got better. Shooting 68 should always be fun, but often it felt like hard work.

Gallwey comes to a similar conclusion, that most golfers are confused. They place far more emphasis on performance than the other two areas. They believe that playing better than their expectations will bring enjoyment. Many golfers feel they only enjoy golf when their performance matches predetermined levels. That was certainly true in my case.

This mindset creates an unwinnable game. The better I played, the higher my expectations became. If I was designing a process to make myself miserable, it would be hard to come up with a more successful one.

Most golfers tell a similar story. They want to play close to their potential 'best golf' most of the time. They especially want to play well when they consider a round to be important. They also want to learn and improve. They want their golf swing to become more efficient. They want to learn to control the golf ball better, to hit it further, to improve their scores and lower their handicap as their golf career progresses.

Golfers want to enjoy learning and playing. They want the process of improvement to feel free and fun, rather than grinding and turning golf into another form of work. Our thoughts about what we want from the game will change from day to day and moment to moment. This is normal and completely natural, but confusing for many golfers. They

don't understand why they enjoy golf one day and not the next, despite the fact they might have shot a similar score.

In theory it should be easier than ever to improve, to play well and shoot good scores. Equipment today is more forgiving and easier to use than thirty years ago. It can be adjusted minutely to suit every aspect of our golf swings. Golf courses are maintained to higher standards and practice facilities such as driving ranges are more accessible.

Technology in the form of high speed video cameras and launch monitors give us endless accurate feedback about our swings. Yet handicaps aren't coming down. Participation is flat, if not falling, and enjoyment seems to be in short supply at most golf clubs I visit.

Why am I Shaking?

When I was playing tournaments, every time I stepped on the first tee with a scorecard in my hand, my default state was stressed out. Fear became normal. Most golfers will recognise the feelings: a physical reaction in the form of tightness in the stomach and in the small muscles of the hands and arms. Most golfers will also have come to the same conclusion as I did – it's hard to play your best golf when you're shaking, and it isn't much fun. I much preferred practising to playing. I didn't feel nervous and I hit the ball much better when I had a big bucket of practice balls in front of me.

A successful golf swing is dependent on good timing. Good golfers don't hit bad shots because their technique suddenly failed them. After all, the same swing hit good shots when they were relaxed. A bad shot happens because their timing, the sequencing of their swing, was slightly off.

Variations in sequencing can change the clubface angle, the clubhead path or the low point of the golf swing.

Tightness and tension affects timing. Small alterations in timing causes inconsistent golf shots. I spent thousands of hours on the practice ground trying to build a golf swing that would stand up under pressure. Unfortunately it isn't golf swings that fail under pressure. People who don't understand the nature of Thought often fail under pressure.

We Know What to Do, We Just Don't Do It.

Most golfers who have been playing the game for a while, know what they should do to play well. They know how to grip the golf club, how to align themselves to the target and where the ball should be in their stance. They have a reasonable understanding about how they want to swing the golf club. Unfortunately, many golfers don't do the things they need to do to play well. Even worse, they don't even know they aren't doing them, because their awareness of what they *are actually doing* is so low.

There are few things more needless than missing the fairway or green because you haven't lined up correctly. I see this all the time when I play in Pro Ams or give playing lessons. The golfer aims twenty yards off line. They swing well, they hit the ball solidly and they hit it straight, but it finishes in the rough. Poor alignment can be more damaging than just missing greens. If your body isn't aimed properly you will make swing compensations to start the ball on target. The swing you're using on the course is different from the one you have been practising. No wonder something doesn't feel right.

I know a number of golfers who set up to the ball with a good grip, but move their hands on the club at the last second. When the ball goes left or right and I ask them why, they don't even realise they have changed their grip. They know how to hold the club but they don't do it properly.

Reviewing the notes I used to make after each tournament round, I am amazed at the number of times I wrote down the same things. I made the same mistakes over and over again. I'm not stupid, but my notes suggest I used to play golf like I was. I knew what I should do, but I didn't do it consistently because my consciousness was low most of the time.

Are You Playing Golf Swing, or Playing Golf?

One reason golfers don't play well as often as they would like, is because they don't appreciate the difference between learning a golf swing and performing it. Performance means playing your best golf regularly, when you really want to. Learning is changing or refining a movement pattern (a golf swing) to make it more efficient. Learning is best done away from the golf course, in an environment where you can think consciously about what you are doing, make mistakes, experiment with different ways of moving and get feedback.

I used to write down my swing thought for the day on my yardage chart. I've got dozens of them, all with different things I was working on each week. Some of the books have got four or five thoughts for the same round. I spent a huge amount of mental energy judging how well I reproduced my swing technique. This was a distraction from the real task of getting the ball in the hole in the fewest number of strokes possible. As I discovered, nobody will pay you for having a

pretty golf swing, hitting the ball with a nice draw or hitting a certain number of greens in regulation.

When we set out to play an important round, the game should be shooting the lowest score possible. Yet we distract ourselves with trying to swing 'correctly' or put into practice what we were learning in our last lesson. We go into 'Swing Fix' mode as soon as we hit one bad shot, rather than forgetting about it and moving on to the next one.

Not so Great Expectations.

Golf is a bit different from other leisure activities. We have a black and white way of judging how we perform every time we play. I don't keep score when I'm fishing or skiing, but I know few golfers who play without knowing their score. Most have a handicap they use to judge how they are doing against the course, against other golfers and against themselves. They have a number in their head before they tee off. If they are close to that number then they feel they have enjoyed the round. If they are a long way over their target, then it might well be a tense conversation at the bar afterwards.

Here is a summary of the game most of us play instead of golf. You make up an arbitrary target you need to achieve in order to be happy. If you don't reach that target, you must beat yourself up about it. If you reach your goal, immediately make up another target which is more difficult to achieve. Repeat until you are so fed up with golf that gardening begins to look like an attractive alternative.

This is the 'I'll be Happy When Game'. There are some interesting variations of it at the end of the chapter.

When they aren't thinking about what they need in order to be happy, many golfers think about what they don't want in order not to be miserable. They worry about looking silly in front of their friends and peers. They worry about being embarrassed by their technique or their scores. They worry about what other people think about them.

They have a variation of the same negative mind-set when they are standing over a shot. They dwell on where they don't want to hit the ball, and are so focused on preventing a bad shot that the possibility of hitting a good one doesn't even occur to them.

Why is it so Hard to Get Better?

When most golfers are at the range or practice ground, they are judging themselves on how well they are hitting the ball, rather than learning or refining their technique. The success of a session is judged in terms of 'Did I strike the ball as I believe I should, and did the ball go where I wanted it to go?'

The purpose of practice is to learn and develop your golf swing. Instead, I would constantly judge myself. I used to stand in the same place hitting the same club to the same target in the same way. I was happy if I hit a good shot and angry if I hit a bad one. There wasn't a lot of learning going on, just a lot of judging. I often see people getting annoyed and berating themselves on driving ranges. It's highly amusing – if you don't have to go home with them afterwards.

The mind and body learn as much from bad golf shots as from good ones. We learn to walk by falling over. We learn to ride a bike by wobbling around and bouncing off the

stabilisers. We learn to catch by dropping the ball. We learn motor skills by trying, failing, trying again, failing better, trying again and again until we get it. Except with golf. With golf we try, we fail, we try, we fail again. We have a think. We go onto YouTube or order a book or a DVD, or we find someone to tell us what we are doing wrong and how they think we should fix it.

You Can't Fix it if You Don't Know What's Broken.

Fred Shoemaker makes the observation that the first step to changing and improving your golf swing is attaining a high level of awareness for what you already do. I'm surprised when I ask golfers during a lesson what something in their swing feels like. Many of them reply: 'I don't know.'

Golfers struggle to learn for exactly the same reason they struggle to play well. They don't have awareness of what they are doing while they are doing it. If you can't feel it, you will really struggle to change it or improve it, because you aren't aware of the difference between the movement you make now, and the one you want to make.

Too Much Information.

Modern golfers suffer from information overload. There is so much dissection and analysis of the golf swing available in instruction books, magazines, online articles and YouTube videos, that they struggle to put it all into context. I know mid handicap golfers who would easily pass a written exam on the golf swing. They know about swing plane, swing path, angle of attack, weight shift, pronation, supination, getting stuck and coming over the top. They just aren't sure how it all applies to them. A statement I hear regularly is;

'I understand the (pick one of many) swing model and how it works, I just don't really know how where my swing is in relation to it.'

All their knowledge is irrelevant because they have no idea how to put it into practice. A map isn't much use if you don't know your present location.

We Were Born to Learn.

Human beings have evolved to become the fastest most efficient learners of new skills on the planet. We are natural learners from the minute we are born. Learning is an innate ability that never leaves us. Unfortunately, when it comes to learning movement as adults this is forgotten. We have tried to intellectualise and sanitise the process, to cut out mistakes and make it as risk free as possible. The fear of looking silly drives us more than the desire to learn and improve.

Learning a new movement pattern seems clumsy, chaotic, muddled, is definitely not linear and can occasionally be painful, as anyone with children will know. In golf, we have tried to eliminate the clumsy chaotic stages by trying to make it a thinking, rather than a doing and feeling process.

Some of the biggest eureka moments in my golf swing have come in a twenty minute practice session doing something counter intuitive, like exaggerating a very flat swing plane, or feeling the club head accelerate after the ball rather than before it. Conversely, I have spent months making thousands of repetitions of the same position in the swing, only to review a video of actually hitting a ball and having it look exactly the same. Repetition has its place, but it works far better with increased awareness.

If it Ain't Broke.....

So far the responsibility has been on the golfer, but the golf instruction industry has to take some of the blame. Some golf coaches and teachers are seen and like to be seen as 'experts,' as the owners and dispensers of knowledge and information. Golfers are seen as empty vessels to be filled up with this knowledge. Their transformation into better golfers will reflect well on the coach. It is a very Outside In model of teaching and learning, which is gradually being seen as archaic, outdated and largely ineffective.

There's a lovely story about the late, great Bob Torrance, father of Ryder Cup captain Sam and coach to numerous Tour players. Rory McIlroy was a young superstar with huge potential, (both talent and earning wise) who had just played in the Walker Cup and was about to turn professional. Michael Bannon had coached McIlroy since he was a boy and deserves credit for nurturing one of the best swings in golf.

Rory felt he wanted a fresh pair of eyes to look at his swing, so he flew up to Scotland to see Bob. On the practice ground at Largs, the young man went through the bag, hitting shot after pure shot. Bob stood watching, smoking a cigarette and as usual, saying very little. After finishing by smashing a few drivers into the distance, Rory turned and said, 'Well, what do you think?'

Bob paused for a moment, then growled back in his heavy brogue, 'I wouldna dream of touching that golf swing, and I din'na think you should let anyone else touch it either.'

He turned on his heel and set off towards the clubhouse.

The best coaches have a few things in common. They don't fix what isn't broken. They ask lots of questions They

don't try to impose their own ideas by telling you what to think and what to feel. They let you make mistakes and prompt you to find your own solutions. This is a much more productive way of learning than being given all the answers.

The 'I'll Be Happy When Game'

Most golfers on the planet are playing a variation on this game. You might recognise it from other areas your life. Jamie Smart coined the phrase in his excellent book 'Clarity; Clearer Mind, Better Performance'.

As I described earlier, golfers have a list of things they believe they need to do, feel or achieve in order to get what they want from golf. It starts from the moment we first pick up a golf club and, for most people, ends when we can't play any more. See if any of the following sounds familiar?

I'll be Happy When... for Beginners.

'I'll be happy when I can hit the ball.'

'I'll be happy when I can hit the ball in the air.'

'I'll be happy when I can hit the ball further.'

'I'll be happy when I can hit the ball straight.'

I'll be Happy When... for Club Golfers.

'I'll be happy when I break 100, 90, 80, 70.'

'I'll be happy when I stop (pick one) shanking, slicing, hooking, topping the ball.'

'I'll be happy when I get my handicap into single figures.'

'I'll be happy when I win the club championship.'

'I'll be happy when I break par.'

'I'll be happy when I get to a scratch handicap.'

I'll be Happy When... for Professionals and Wannabe Professionals.

'I'll be happy when I'm playing golf for a living.'

'I'll be happy when I get my tour card.'

'I'll be happy when I keep my tour card.'

'I'll be happy when I win my first tour event.'

'I'll be happy when I make the Ryder Cup team.'

'I'll be happy when I win my first major championship.'

'I'll be happy when I prove that my first major wasn't a fluke.'

This game is unwinnable, as a few major champions would accept. Several winners of golf's biggest events have admitted to a feeling of emptiness after achieving the thing they had worked all their lives for.

The goal they were chasing never had the power to give them the feelings they were looking for in the first place, but they needed to achieve it for them to realise.

It Isn't Only Golfers.

I have few regrets about the years I spent chasing my dream. After all, it has brought me to the very happy situation I'm in now. The one thing I would change? I would love to have played a big tournament free from anxiety and stressful feelings. At the time, I thought it was just me who was

suffering. Subsequent conversations with guys I played with over the years have revealed many of us felt the same.

It isn't only golfers. I have friends who played other sports professionally. It seems like fear and anxiety are familiar companions for many high level performers.

Matt Jackson has been one of my closest friends since we kicked a tennis ball around the playground at primary school. Matt was an outstanding footballer. He played for England under 21s, for eight different professional teams, made over one hundred and thirty appearances for Everton, including winning the 1995 F.A Cup final. He was the consummate professional, a student of the game. He trained hard, looked after himself and made sure he got the most out of his talent.

I remember sitting in the pub one evening a few weeks after he retired in 2008. We were the right side of a couple of steaks and few pints and were having a good chat. I asked him whether he missed football.

'Not really', he said. 'I couldn't be sitting here doing this if I was still playing.'

I was a bit surprised.

'So you don't miss the game? You don't miss playing in front of thirty thousand people every week?'

'I miss the craic with the lads at training, but I don't miss the game.'

'So you didn't enjoy it then?'

'I enjoyed it when the final whistle went if we had won. But I didn't enjoy the match itself. I think the last time I could honestly say I enjoyed a game of football was when I was about fourteen.'

'Why didn't you enjoy it?'

‘Because I was always worried about playing badly, of making a mistake. The stakes were so high. I felt like peoples’ livelihoods were dependent on how we played.’

I felt sad. Not in the sense I felt sorry for him. Matt has had a fantastic career. At forty years of age he had made a great living for him and his family. He can choose what he does for the rest of his days. It just struck me as a shame he had what most blokes would see as the ultimate career, yet he didn’t enjoy playing the game he loved as a kid.

It seems to be accepted as a fact of life by most golfers and other athletes that ‘pressure’, feeling anxious and stressed out, is part of the deal. If you want to be successful, you have to learn to cope with it. No pain, no gain. In order to be successful, you have to suffer. It’s assumed that the rewards make it all worthwhile.

In order to cope, with the pressure of the situation, it has become common practice to use techniques to help golfers cope with and overcome their feelings. I’ve tried most of them. They sometimes work, but if they do, relief is temporary.

Many of these strategies focus on the golfer’s thoughts about the situation. They look for a logical explanation and encourage the golfer to think through each scenario so they can see that what they are worrying about isn’t really scary and the feelings will go away. The advice is to replace the negative thought with a positive one. It sounds promising, but anyone who has attempted it will confirm how difficult it is to manage your thinking. Trying to find a logical explanation for every crazy situation your imagination can come up with is a never ending task.

Finding the Fun Again.

Golf has given me so much pleasure over the past thirty years. I don't want to give the impression that it's all doom and gloom. Many lucky players do enjoy their golf. I hope the rest of the book will help these golfers play better and get even more from it than they are doing now. The reason for writing this book is that many golfers find the things they think they want from the game elusive, whether that's more fun, a better swing or lower scores. They only play close to their potential occasionally, and rarely when they really want to.

Learning and improving proves difficult. Despite the improvements in equipment and condition of golf courses, the average handicap has hardly improved in the past thirty years. Enjoyment and fun are rare experiences, paradoxically particularly so for better players. Feelings of frustration, anxiety and disappointment are more common for many good golfers.

I am about to introduce you to a different way of seeing your golf. It's the answer to the question posed at the start of the chapter. Golf can be fun again, It should be fun. In the coming pages, you will see how a fundamental change in your perception can help you enjoy the game again, improve your technique, and play your best golf more often.

Thank you for reading my book!

If you enjoyed it, I'd be really grateful if you could spend a couple of minutes writing a short review at the place where you bought it.

If you'd like to get in touch, please use drop me an email or connect via Twitter and Facebook. Contact details are below.

I have written a short bonus chapter, which includes a couple of fresh insights I had after the book was completed.

You can download it here

www.samjarmangolf.com/3pog-bonus

Thanks again,

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Sam lives in Wavendon, Buckinghamshire, a short drive from Woburn Golf Club where he has been a member for the last 27 years. Away from the golf course he enjoys walking his dog Daisy, salmon fishing, skiing, playing cards, reading and writing.