

# The Three Principles of Outstanding Golf -

## Bonus Chapter

April 2017. Woburn, UK.

It's been over a year since *The Three Principles of Outstanding Golf* was published.

The feedback from golfers who have got in touch has been humbling and encouraging. Many have been kind enough to say that reading the book has had a positive effect, particularly on their enjoyment of the game.

Perhaps even more importantly, golfers report a different perspective on other areas of their lives. They see a richness and potential in their work, relationships and other pastimes that wasn't apparent before.

My own golf has been in something of a fallow period. A serious knee injury skiing last New Year meant a couple of months of physio. Revising and publishing the book has taken more time and effort than anticipated. I started hitting balls and playing a few competitive rounds late last summer but didn't get on the golf course as often as would normally be the case.

Returning after my longest break from the game since my early twenties has been interesting to say the least. I was pleasantly surprised how well I was hitting the ball. There was an ease about what was happening, especially on the putting green.

My mind seemed quieter giving the sense that there was space for insights to arise.

Practice has felt different since writing the book. Getting many years of ideas and insights down on paper seems to have allowed some layers of thinking that were getting in the way to evaporate.

More awareness when I practice has led to a couple of interesting feelings in my swing that seem to have improved my ball striking, short game and putting. Just hitting the ball again for the enjoyment of doing it rather than to get somewhere is a pleasant experience.

On several occasions I lost myself in what I was doing to the extent that I was surprised when I eventually realised how long I had been on the practice ground.

In the past I was always practising for a reason. To become someone. To try to achieve something. Now I'm hitting balls simply because I love doing it.

The new tournament season begins in the next few days and I'm curious how it will feel to get back out there with a card in my pocket. There is the usual thinking along the lines of how great it would be if I went out and played well. How that might help book sales.

This is balanced by worries about putting myself out there in case I play badly. Will people make judgements about me and the about the book if that happens? The intellect can't seem to help itself searching for meaning in every possible scenario.

I'm curious to see whether I can remain detached from the old habits of seeking and resisting. No doubt I will get caught up again at some point.

It will be interesting see how long the illusion persists when this does happen.

## Balance

This ebb and flow of thought and feeling reminds me of a nice analogy I heard recently from another author.

As you might be aware having read my attempts, trying to describe what Syd Banks was pointing to with the Three Principles is a bit like catching smoke with your bare hands.

The best we can do is use stories and examples from our experience and that of others to point the reader or listener in the right direction, in the hope that they will look towards their inner wisdom and see something for themselves.

Gravity is sometimes used as an example of a fundamental principle. A constant that we are all aware of, but rarely think about. Balance, in the physical sense is perhaps our most common experience of gravity in our day-to-day experience.

What we don't notice, is that we are constantly moving in and out of balance from moment to moment as we move around and live our lives.

With every walking step we are momentarily throwing ourselves off balance, before moving the other leg forward to catch the momentum and regain stability.

Every golfer knows what being in balance physically feels like. But if I asked you to use words to describe what balance is, you might struggle. We can only define it in terms of being aware of losing balance sometimes. Maybe feeling a bit wobbly or unstable.

Being in balance just feels normal. It's the natural state that we revert to without really thinking too much about it.

Understanding the principles of Mind, Consciousness and Thought might be described as the mental equivalent of the physical state of balance. Impossible to put into words, but something we are aware of. More so by its absence.

The constant loss and regaining of our physical balance is mirrored in the way we continually move in and out of emotional or mental equilibrium.

The more deeply we appreciate the nature of what the principles point to, especially the connection between thought and feelings, the less time we spend seeking relief from them. It's a constant cycle of getting caught in our thinking and being bumped into instability - experiencing the feelings that thinking engenders and then seeing through that thinking and returning to balance.

We can improve our physical balance through practice. We engineer challenging situations where being off balance is more likely - standing on one leg for example. When we get good at this, we increase the challenge by adding movement, such as performing single leg squats.

It's important to recognise that what we are doing here is practising regaining stability after losing it. Awareness of balance is enhanced, and the muscles which help keep us stable are strengthened.

In day-to-day life, most of us don't need to create situations where our emotional balance is put to the test. We encounter plenty of those as it is!

*Or maybe we do?*

Maybe that is why games such as golf are played and enjoyed? When we challenge ourselves to perform at or beyond the perceived limits of our capabilities, our mental resilience is put to the test.

For me, part of the fun of the game was always seeing whether I could play my best golf in situations I perceived to be more challenging. As well as helping us learn how to maintain and enhance our physical skills, these situations provide opportunities to learn about maintaining our emotional balance as well.

The key to retaining your balance, both in the physical and mental sense is having the detachment to recognise when you're losing it. The most resilient golfers are not immune from the same ebbs and flows of emotion that we all experience.

I have yet to meet someone who doesn't lose themselves in thought from time to time.

Even the best players in the world get caught up. Jordan Speith on the 12th hole of the 2016 US Masters is a good example. The nature of the human experience is that thinking looks real.

Golf is a challenging sport. The temptation to take your personal thinking too seriously is ever present. The most resilient players are the ones who are aware of their thinking and regain their balance quickly, often before they hit the next shot. Like anything, it gets easier with practice.

# The Insight Trap

Several fresh insights have revealed themselves during my play over recent weeks.

They might be important in terms of how I swing the golf club and the consistency and accuracy of my ball striking. I played a few holes with a friend the other day and hit half a dozen iron shots to within eight feet of the flag.

In the past my excitement at the improvements would have been difficult to contain. An article for my website about how using my right arm in a different way at the start of the downswing allowed me to release the club differently and maintain better balance through impact would almost certainly have been written.

I might well have mentioned the idea in lessons, in the hope that it might have the same effect on other swings as it has had on mine.

Somehow, this time it feels different. I might mention it to one or two specific golfers I know, and it may help them. These big insights happen from time to time and improvements can be the result.

But the real learning is not the improvement in understanding of my golf swing, but about the state of mind that allowed that insight to occur. I know now that if I continue to become more aware of awareness, this insight certainly won't be the last one.

The way I approach my coaching has changed in the past few months. Rather than suggesting changes or offering solutions, pointing students in the direction of their own awareness, their own clarity, their own inner wisdom seems to make more sense. If they can connect with it, their own insights will arise. Those insights will be likely be more appropriate and beneficial to them than any swing tip I can offer.

How many times as golfers, have we had a thought which changed the feel of our golf swing for the better? Followed by another thought, something like:

*“That's it! I've got it! As long as I just keep doing X or feeling Y then I'll always hit the ball as well as I'm starting to now!”*

As you might have experienced, sooner or later either the feeling changes, or the thought doesn't seem to produce the same sensations. At first, the movement can be recognised as new and different from what you were doing previously.

It is easy to distinguish the change. However, as the memories of the old movement fade, it becomes harder to get that 'different' feeling. The new sensation becomes the norm and replaces the old.

This is natural and is how it is supposed to work when you are learning.

If, however, you are caught up in thinking about how the swing *should* feel, it is easy to exaggerate the 'new' feeling. You overdo the movement until you go too far in the other direction and the good results you were seeing disappear. This is a common occurrence, and is perhaps the main reason for the fluctuations in form experienced by all golfers

More thinking results and the whole cycle of fault-finding and fixing starts all over again.

Our thoughts and feelings are streams in a broader flow of energy. When we create a blockage in the flow by hanging onto a swing thought or trying to repeat a swing feeling, it doesn't feel good.

On the other hand, if we allow a thought or a feeling to prime our awareness of the next thought or feeling, the flow is not inhibited.

Awareness deepens and the results are more consistent.

# The Power of Perception

In the early chapters of *The Three Principles of Outstanding Golf*, I suggested that a slightly different approach to reading the book might be beneficial.

Rather than reading to gain something, to get somewhere, or to add to your stack of intellectual knowledge, it might be helpful if you read it in the same way you might read a book of poetry or listen to a piece of music.

Rather than read it with a pre-determined outcome in mind, be open to the idea of just enjoying the experience and seeing where it takes you.

Before I understood thought, and the nature of consciousness, I would sometimes read a book and not find it particularly interesting. Or I would reach the conclusion and feel disappointed that nothing useful had been gained from it.

I'd then read the same book a year later and be surprised to find wisdom on every page

I must confess, I'm a bit of a golf book junkie. Over the years I have accumulated a library by a variety of authors. Research for my next book has meant re reading many of them.

I have tried to take my own medicine and approach the task with an open mind, rather than looking for solutions to a problem I thought I had, as I might have done previously

The experience has been a revelation. Like when you lose something, only for it to turn up a couple of days later when you aren't looking for it, several interesting and helpful insights about my own golf swing have arisen. And others about learning in general.

(For the reasons described above, I'm not going to tell you what they are.)

What I will suggest is to go and find a book you might have overlooked or dismissed in the past, and re read it. See if it looks different to you now from a different perspective?

Another suggestion when you have a bad day with your swing - rather than immediately go looking for a solution in a book, magazine or on YouTube, wait a while for your thoughts to settle and your mind to clear.

You may well find that during this time of reflection, an insight arises from inner wisdom, rather than from outside.

If you then decide to go and seek confirmation or clarification, perhaps from a book or other source, your mind will be settled and quiet. It will be easier to separate the wheat from the chaff in deciding whether the solution on offer feels right and is in sympathy with your overall sense and feeling of your golf swing.

## The Illusion of Choice

Several aspects of my understanding have changed and deepened significantly since the publication of *The Three Principles of Outstanding Golf*. Some of what I had written didn't feel quite right anymore. I thought for some time about withdrawing the book and rewriting certain chapters.

I decided against doing so, mainly due to the appreciation expressed by readers who have got in touch, or positively reviewed the book on Amazon and other sites. It honestly represents where I was on my own journey at that point. I have no doubt that the perspective I have today will feel dated in a few months.

This evolving perspective will I'm sure be apparent in my writing from this point forward, starting with what you are reading here. It's something I guess every writer has to come to terms with.

Decision making and the idea of choice and free will are much discussed in golf and other sports coaching. My thoughts have changed significantly in recent months. As I wrote in the book, I sensed that my thinking was not under my direct control, and any thought could appear at any moment. But it also looked to me like I had a choice whether I acted on the thinking that came to me.

This belief was strong. One of the things that attracted me to golf as a teenager was that it seemed that an individual had control over their choices, decisions, and actions, and therefore, could rightfully claim responsibility for success or failure.

At least that's what I thought at the time. Doubts began to creep in when it became apparent that despite thinking positively and managing my state of mind, my life and my golf weren't going the way I had hoped they would.

My friend and colleague Clare Dimond wrote a fantastic article about this subject. It led to the discussion with one of my mentors described below.

(You can find her blog at [www.claredimond.wordpress.com](http://www.claredimond.wordpress.com))

The conversation began with a question about personal responsibility for success, or failure. The answer wasn't what I was anticipating.

***“The simple fact is that at a personal level, we don't really have a choice about what we think or do”.***

Boy did I have a negative reaction to that statement. The understanding of the principles had brought me to a place where for the first time in my life I thought I knew what was going on. I felt that at last understood the relationship between my thoughts and my feelings and how I experienced the world.

I thought I had it all figured out. I felt free. I felt in control, (at least most of the time).

The suggestion that this wasn't the case was troubling.

*‘What about personal responsibility?’ I asked. ‘Or free will? Or freedom to choose? Or mind over matter?’*

I had been striving for control of my own destiny since I was a teenager. To be free. To succeed or fail on my own terms.

Now I was being told that it didn't work in the way I thought.

*“Are you saying that we are all controlled by some omnipotent force, or that the future is already mapped out?”*

*Or that we are all zombies or robots?*

*Or our lives are pre-ordained?*

*Or that we have no responsibility to others or to the planet?*

*That we can do whatever the hell we like because ‘Hey, it's not down to me’?”*

*‘No’ was the reply. ‘That’s not how it works’.*

The discussion that followed allowed me to take another big step along the path. This is what became clear:

At the level of the separate Self, the ego, of personal thought, of the intellect, we don't choose what thought arises and when it arrives. The range of thoughts that can come to us is pretty much unbounded.

So, the idea of ‘free will’ as personal agency or control is commonly misunderstood.

There is variance in our clarity of mind, and therefore in our capacity to use logic and reason. Therefore, our commitment to our beliefs and values fluctuates. So, our experience of having ‘no choice’ and our resulting behaviour can range from heroic to chaotic. Our judgements are usually based in hindsight depending on the outcomes.

Take the example of a parent running into a burning building to rescue a child, or a soldier returning to the battlefield to save a fallen comrade.

When asked why they acted as they did, often they respond, 'I had no choice'. But a psychopath will say something similar when asked why they committed a violent crime.

*'There was a voice in my head that told me to do it.'*

At a more trivial level, we make mistakes and errors of judgment every day. Would they occur if we really could choose not to?

All of these experiences are understandable, (regardless of our personal opinion of their acceptability). From the perspective held, it looked to the individual as if there was only one thing they could do at that moment, so that's what happened

We are all on a spectrum of how deeply we understand ourselves and the world. And we are all doing what makes sense to us from the level we find ourselves at. Anyone can feel separated from their true nature by misguided beliefs and find themselves in chaos from time to time.

It is common that there is a part of our life where we feel stuck, while other areas are flowing freely. This is how it felt to me with my golf for a while. I could see the Inside-Out nature of other parts of my life, while my golf still felt bound up and fraught.

Happily, once we start realising the truth of who we are, we see that life is not separated into compartments or segments. It is a single, indivisible whole. As I realised this, my perspective widened. I saw the bigger picture. Gradually the habitual thinking I had about my golf fell away and the game became fun again.

I started to play better. My capabilities seemed to develop and improve with less practice and struggling.

A deeper understanding of the nature of consciousness, the stripping away of beliefs and a corresponding reduction in thinking and worrying, is essentially trust in the universal 'no choice' nature of life.

This is the 'gaining control by giving up control' referred to in Chapter 7 of the book.

An absolute transformation of your experience is the result.

The passage below describes how the stages of that transformation might look to a golfer who is struggling and has fallen out of love with the game.

Many of the golfers who get in touch to enquire about coaching or mentoring after reading the book have been struggling for a while.

They have tried everything that the mainstream golf instruction industry can offer them, but to no avail. This is because the problem is not about golf. It is a fundamental misunderstanding about who they really are.

## Stage 1. Angry and Oblivious

*'Much of the time I don't know what I am doing on the golf course, or why I am doing it.*

*I rarely enjoy the game but keep finding myself back on the golf course in the hope that this time will be different. I get extremely angry and frustrated and I let it show.*

*I sometimes bend the rules or tell lies to improve my score. I don't see the impact of my behaviour on other people or myself. The voices in my head are irresistible. It feels like I'm out of control.*

*Golf is a very important part of my life. I've invested a lot of time and money in trying to get better and I can't bear the thought that all my efforts might be wasted - that I might never become the golfer I want to be. I have given up on numerous occasions, but the only thing worse than playing badly is not playing at all.*

*Occasionally I realise what I am doing to myself. But I believe the thoughts that justify why I am doing it.*

*I experience fear and anxiety about playing in competitions or with people I don't know. Especially if I think they are better than me. I feel genuine animosity towards myself and other golfers, especially if they are opponents who are playing well while I'm struggling.*

*I am often consciously and outwardly abusive to myself, out of the conviction that my game will improve and I will feel better as a result. I want other people to know I can play better than I'm demonstrating now.*

*I can't help but let golf affect the way I relate to the people close to me when I'm playing and when I get back from the course. It takes me a long time to get over a bad game. I'm often thinking about golf when I should be present with my friends and family.*

*I have taken lessons to try to improve, but I don't have the patience to persist while I'm learning. My frustration gets in the way and I revert to what I've always done.*

*In the back of my mind, I know that I can't go on like this, but I don't know where to turn.'*

Thankfully, most golfers never get as low as this. But you might know one or two who come close. In this state of mind there is no recognition of a distinction between thought and reality, or awareness of the impact of their behaviour on others.

These golfers experience their fearful and angry thoughts as inevitable. Golf and other golfers are making them feel this way. There is no separation between the outside world and their feelings of insecurity.

A glimmer of light at the end of this dark tunnel might arise when the golfer becomes aware of their behaviour. But they still don't question or doubt their thoughts and beliefs about themselves or the game.

A golfer in this state of mind believes completely that playing better and other people recognising their good play is the only way to find relief from the feelings of fear, anger or insecurity and they act in accordance.

Golf isn't much fun, either for them or for those around them. Some give up the game. Unfortunately, they are likely to meet similar problems in other areas of their lives.

## 2. Exhausted and Frustrated

*I am aware of my thoughts and feelings before, during and after I play.*

*I am aware of the effects of them on my golf and my behaviour on the golf course, and I know it is damaging to me and unpleasant for the people I play with. I think maybe I should probably put the clubs away for a while, but I'm not a quitter. I'm not going to let the game get the better of me!*

*I believe I can play better, and when I do, I am going to feel better and enjoy my golf. All the people who doubted me will have to think again.*

*I am frustrated and exhausted from trying to change my swing, from practising, from trying to prove something to my golfing partners, friends, family and myself and to fulfil my potential.*

*I can sometimes hit shots that anyone would be proud of, but I just can't seem to play as well as I know I can, especially when I have a card in my hand.*

*I get caught up in my feelings, try not to act on them and then feel bad when I do, which makes me feel worse. When I do occasionally play well, I have no idea why. I try to do the same things next time and I play badly.*

*When I play badly and want to feel better, I have no choice about whether I will go to practice or not, even though I know I probably won't enjoy it.*

*Grinding on the driving range at least makes me feel like I'm doing something positive. It gives me hope.*

*I believe that more willpower is the answer. I keep telling myself that my good shots on the range will show up on the golf course eventually if I keep putting the work in. But am I kidding myself? Thinking positively is wearing and the relief is temporary.*

*Now if only I can just shorten my backswing and get my hips turning through impact like the Tour players...*

*I honestly believe I do have a choice, that the answer is hiding somewhere in the knowledge about the swing I have accumulated over the years. Or that I can acquire the secret from outside.*

*I just need to find the right technique, the right coach, the right equipment, the right state of mind.*

*I see other people who practice and take lessons and who do improve and get their handicap down. I believe I could be like them. I feel bad that I'm not, and here I go, shelling another large bucket of balls in the hope that a few good shots will make me feel better.*

*After another disappointing round I beat myself up for the bad decisions I continue to make on the golf course. Each error of judgement is more evidence that I am mentally weak or have something wrong with me.*

*Every bad score fortifies the belief that I need to do something to play better so I can feel better.'*

People at this stage believe that golf defines who they are. They think a lot about what other people think about them.

They may intend to practice their short game more, stop changing their equipment, stick with one coach, stop trying to fix their golf swing, relax more on the golf course, or change whatever other habit.

They are tied to the investment of time, money and effort they feel they have made in their game and think that there is just one thing stopping them from becoming the golfer they want to be. They just need to find it and apply it.

So, they struggle on, blaming themselves for every bad decision or wrong choice or loss of temper as though they had a choice. But they don't.

Caught in a never-ending cycle of seeking and resisting, fault finding and fixing. Golf played like this is exhausting.

### 3. Resigned, but Hopeful.

*I notice that I play my best golf when my thinking quietens down. Often this is when I'm playing badly, and I give up and care less about my swing and score.*

*I realise that if I play like I know I can play, despite my inconsistent ball flight, I can shoot some decent scores. I sometimes find that I can enjoy the challenge of the game even when I'm not playing that well.*

*Some helpful ideas about my golf come to me while I am watching the kids play football, or at work rather than when I'm beating balls at the range.*

*I recognise momentarily that these are positive insights, that they would lead to simplification of how I swing the club or play a particular shot. For a moment I allow myself to imagine what these ideas would feel like if could put them into practice. Or if I could remember them when I was playing.*

*I am curious and intrigued. They seem to make sense. I might write them down.*

*Then my insecure thinking takes over.*

*"So-and-so doesn't grip the club like that.*

*You'll never be any good hitting it with a slice.*

*You don't have time to practice that and make it feel natural.*

*You need to improve your ball striking if you want to really enjoy this game.*

*Even when you hit it OK you always putt badly."*

*Insights are noticed but insecure thinking steps in and is taken seriously. The negativity looks like logic. Learning from experience, doing what everyone else seems to be doing.*

*"You have to put the time and effort in.*

*No pain, no gain.*

*If only I can get my handicap down to 18, 12, to single figures, then I'll be able to enjoy the game and get the respect I deserve for all my efforts."*

This is the golfer who plays the front nine in level par, then blows their handicap on the back nine. Or they make double bogeys on the first three holes, then give up and play the back nine well, before three putting the last to miss the buffer zone by a shot.

The range warm-up before the medal round when shot after shot is sweetly struck, followed by a no return after 12 holes.

Turning down the invitation to a company day at a prestigious golf course you've always wanted to play, in case you show yourself up in front of some people you don't know.

You recognised the twinge of doubt when you bought that golf magazine that promised to fix your slice. You saw the glimmer of light that afternoon when you had a couple of beers before you played and shot your best ever score on the front nine without using a swing thought.

But the comfort blanket of your conditioning and beliefs are hard to shake, at least for long enough to question them more fully.

You suspect that the answer is to finally trust yourself and to go with your gut instinct. But something stops you taking that last step.

Hopeful, but realistic. Many golfers fall into this category.

## 4. Inspired

*I am fully aware that I experience the world and my golf via unlimited, unbounded awareness.*

*I know that I'm feeling my thinking in the moment. Not the situation of the tournament, the score, my playing partners or my handicap.*

*I know that these thoughts and these feelings are ever changing, transient and insubstantial. I can enjoy and relax into a full range of emotions when I'm on the golf course. I don't need to change them in any way in order to improve my performance.*

*I know that expending energy in that direction is wasted effort.*

*I can recognise the gaps in the noise of my thinking, revealing the quiet wisdom beneath. I notice the ideas and insights that make sense, that come from love, creativity, curiosity and peace.*

*I know that there is a truth and a reliability in this inspiration.*

*I know that anything I think about the reasons I'm playing the game, about whether this will make me happy or not, successful or not, respected or not, loved or not, is made up. I can let all that go.*

*I also notice the insecure thinking that appears. The thoughts telling me that playing well will make me feel better, will enhance my reputation, will get me somewhere or something.*

*I notice how these thoughts come with a feeling of excitement, unease, insecurity, fear or anxiety. I don't control them, but I know that taking them seriously isn't helpful.*

*I turn back towards inspiration. I know I can't control the timing, content or form of insights either. I am passive, receptive in this process. I can only ever act on what occurs to me.*

*If it doesn't occur to me, then it is not in my reality, it is not part of my game today.*

*The only reason I would not act on this wisdom, over which I have no control, is because I am believing my thinking, over which I have no control. Act on wisdom? Act on insecure thinking? I realise, ultimately, and only with hindsight, any sense of choice about what I do is an illusion. Or rather the chooser is an illusion.*

*I know that insight brings its own capability once I start to go with it. My swing feels more natural, instinctive, more efficient, more powerful. Without consciously thinking about or making 'decisions' on the golf course, things turn out better than I expect.*

*I have as much energy and time as I want for practice. I do it as an expression of happiness, rather than as a route to happiness. I continue to act on the personal wisdom that seems specifically for me and I express it in the way that only I can.*

*As I do so, I realise my potential. I take my place among the happiest, most creative, most fulfilled golfers to ever walk the fairways.*

*I feel inspired.'*

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Thankfully, only a few golfers who get in touch for help with their game are in the dark wilderness of despair described in example one. Stages two and three are more usual.

The first step on the path to enjoying golf again is often the realisation that your feelings are there for a reason. They are actually trying to help! They are pointing you back towards the light. You may not get to stage four, but at least you know it's possible.

Once you have seen the potential of this understanding to help you move forward with your golf, the hardest part for many is escaping from the 'trying to apply this' mode we so often fall into after taking a lesson or reading other golf books.

You can't apply this because you already know it. It's part of you. You can't escape it.

My suggestion is just to stop striving, play your golf, live your life and see what shows up. There's nothing to do. Nowhere to get to. You already have what you need, even if it doesn't look like you thought it would. When you stop searching, you'll be amazed at what you find.

When you stop trying to apply this, you might start to realise that the principles of Mind, Consciousness and Thought are themselves a concept. A way of thinking about or describing experience.

They are a concession, a step on the path. A useful tool to help us get beyond the illusion that our feelings come from what happens to us, that we are separate selves in a hard, unforgiving world and that happiness comes from results, achievements and from accumulating objects, status or wealth.

I will be forever grateful to the people who helped me see past this erroneous belief. The difference it has made to my enjoyment of life and golf can't be measured.

The next stage of my understanding was to get curious about what might be beyond this concept, in the same way that I found this contentment and peace beyond the concept of separation, of becoming, of believing my happiness lay in results and attainment.

As I wrote at the start of this chapter, the beauty of this perspective is that there is always more to see, layers to uncover and explore.

We are always oscillating between the human experience, and our true nature - the *awareness of* that experience. For me, insights often occur when I'm sharing what I have seen or am exploring these ideas with someone who is curious about their own experience.

It's great when a reader gets in touch and we start a conversation, because they bring their unique perspective to what I wrote. I know that we'll both see things more deeply as a result.

I'm sure another book will come along at some point. I'm not sure at the moment whether this chapter is the last one of the previous book or the first one of the next. In the past, not knowing might have been unsettling, a little bit scary even.

Now it feels exciting, like anything is possible.

The same is now true when I step onto the first tee for a round of golf. I have no idea what the next four hours might hold, but it might be amazing!

This is so different from how golf felt in the past, when I just wanted to get a score on the board and get back to the safety of the practice ground.

The awareness that I'm not what was feeling anxious is the ultimate freedom to just go out and play.

Exploring the nature of what it might be that knows, rather than what is known will be the main subject of the next book. I'm looking forward to finding out how it unfolds.

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Update: September 2019

As you might be aware, *Take Relief*, the sequel to *The Three Principles of Outstanding Golf* is now available.

You can find out more about it and read the first three chapters for free by following this link.

<https://samjarmangolf.com/take-relief-preview-chapters-bclp/>

## Taking the Next Steps

I'm aware that the ideas and concepts explored in my books are different from those being proposed by other areas of the golf instruction and performance coaching industries.

In my experience, improving your mental game is more about questioning and stripping away erroneous beliefs and concepts, than it is about adding further strategies, techniques or layers of complexity.

As you strip away those beliefs, your thinking changes. As your thinking changes, your feelings are likely to become less volatile.

Many golfers report an upturn in enjoyment and performance when they finish reading and their old patterns of thinking drop away. They play with a freedom and presence that they had forgotten was possible.

But our beliefs are often so ingrained they are impossible to recognise, let alone to put aside. The temptation to apply the principles as a strategy creeps in at the first dip in form. Before you know it, you're back to seeking and resisting again. Frustration returns.

When that happens, it sometimes helps to re-read the book. As mentioned earlier your perspective will change. You will find things in the text that you had overlooked or interpreted differently.

Sometimes hearing the words in a different format can help. The book is now available as an audiobook. If you'd like to listen rather than re read, please send an email to [sam@samjarmangolf.com](mailto:sam@samjarmangolf.com) and I'll give you the link to download the files.

If you would like to learn more about how my understanding has developed since the book was published, and how that might help your game, there is now an Online Learning Program based on the book. You can find it here:

<https://samjarmangolf.teachable.com/p/playing-with-the-principles>

Thanks again for reading the book. I hope this extra chapter was useful in terms of clarification and a vision of the path ahead.

I wish you success and happiness both on and off the golf course.