

October Article - Kent Golfer

“Being in The Right ‘State’ to Hit Good Shots”

In his excellent book, “Quantum Golf,” Kjell Enhager tells the story of John Smith, a highly successful American businessman who plays off 18 and who has got to the point where he decides to give the game up. So disappointed and embarrassed has he become with his game that he just can’t stand it anymore. Hands up if you’ve never felt like that.

A last straw of hope is offered to this poor man when the Club Pro gives him the address of an old guru coach and John duly flies across the States to see if this Linc St. Clair fella’ can unlock the great golfer within. You see, like everyone who plays this game, John knows that he should be better. After all, over the years, he has struck some marvellous shots and played many brilliant holes. OK, he’s rarely put them all together in the same round and certainly never been able to sustain a run of form for longer than a couple of weeks, but he just feels that he should be able to perform to a better standard. In the world of business he is a consistent ‘high performer’ who is used to success and finds it difficult to accept failure on the golf course.

I won’t ruin the reading of Quantum Golf for you but Linc starts by asking what John does well and which club is his favourite, surprising John who is itching to talk about what he does badly. After protesting that he does nothing well, John eventually concentrates on Linc’s question and replies, “Ok, I don’t know how or why, but I can do anything I want with a 3 wood.” Linc simply asks John to approach all clubs with the same confidence that he has with his 3 wood.

Just recently, I have been helping Andy with his game. He is also a very successful entrepreneur and businessman who came to me in desperation as a 16 handicapper who was getting into the same state as John of giving the game up because playing golf had ceased to be a pleasure. His problem was his tee shots for which he used a 3-wood, the driver having been consigned to the garage many years ago.

Let’s imagine the inner state of these two golfers, John and Andy, with a 3 wood in their hands. John is relaxed and comfortable as he expects to hit a good shot. Sometimes, it doesn’t come off but he just shrugs and carries on in the knowledge that this was just a blip and the next one will be fine. On the other hand, Andy feels tense as his mind throws up all sorts of bad shot memories including tops,

hooks and slices. When he hits a rare good one he treats it as an accident and carries on knowing that the next one will most likely be awful.

With a 5 iron in their hands the roles are completely reversed. John feels like he has a foreign object in his hands which tighten in an effort to gain some semblance of control. The tension creeps from his hands to his arms and up into his shoulders like an invading enemy and his swing starts as if he is in a race to get the thing done before the invader gets to his very soul. As I am sure you can imagine, John's rhythm and balance are totally compromised and the resulting poor shot is no surprise as he hardly gets through to any kind of finish. What happened to that smooth, fluid swing with the 3-wood?

How is Andy getting on? Surprise, surprise, his tension levels reduce as soon as he gets the 5-iron out of his bag. The invading enemy, so present on his tee shot, seems to have packed its bags and headed for some other defenceless golfer on an adjacent fairway. His muscles relax and he produces a rhythmical, smooth swing and finishes the shot in a composed and balanced position as the ball flies towards its target.

There is no reason why you can't swing well with all your clubs once you recognise that you can do it. Stop giving your weak clubs some unimaginable characteristic and start believing in them. Only then will you stand over the ball in the right 'STATE' to be able to succeed.

Breathing deeply and slowly can help get you into the right 'state' and relax your mind and your muscles. Butch Harmon recently shared with us on TV that Tiger Woods uses breathing exercises during tournament golf to help him relax.

This Sam Snead quote is one of my favourites; "When I swing at a golf ball right, my mind is blank and my body is as loose as a goose!"

The fact is that we perform well when we are confident and relaxed but poorly when we are tense and anxious. At Positive Impact Golf we are experts in helping golfers to play in a more relaxed style and we understand why many players believe in over-technical 'methods' which, in themselves, make people more tight and tense.

Why not come and see what we can do for you!

Brian Sparks - Founder & Head Pro at Positive Impact Golf