

We have taken the liberty to add friends with whom we wanted to share our newsletter. As with all transmissions these days, this one doesn't have to be in your inbox. If you prefer not to have it sent every two months, just let us know. Also, we have elected to provide a URL from which our readers may download the current issue so as to deter anything resembling "Spam." Thanks, CGM

# *One Under Par*

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A Newsletter from *ClearKeyGolf™* .....October, 2009

## ***Enough is not Enough... Or Is It?***

As we move well into our 30<sup>th</sup> year focusing on discovering, heeding and developing ways to continue thorough attention to helping players stretch their minds and games - not necessarily to their limit - but at least a step or two toward "the limit," and rather than wasting time and energy excusing ourselves for not going there, we have become inexplicably nostalgic.

The nostalgia takes us back to the beginning of what for us has become the "age of the clear key" and the "automatic principle." The inexplicable part stations itself in a question: "Why have we not been more successful in engaging more players in understanding the automatic process and its benefits?"

Put the two together - nostalgia and the fanciful "inexplicable" - and they provide the answer. Players tend only to operate on the nostalgia of "conventional wisdom" and we have not done a sufficient job of "explicating." Nostalgia keeps company with the status quo and is careful not to admit innovation that does not agree with tradition. Not being clear enough (explicating) comes from trying to help players while limiting over-exposure to critical knowledge and procedure that, if delivered full strength, would confuse more than clarify and fail to fit into their willing time and desire. Both of those were, and are, captives of a lock-step mentality.

A player in Australia recently sent us an email that planted the seed of an idea whose time has come - one that may alter the course of imbalance that exists in the matter of explaining the automatic process and allowing it to be relevant to more players. After pointing out that there appears to be a gender issue in acceptance of the process, with one group being far more accepting than the other, the following appeared in that email: *"The one point I think that's valid with your next book is to put the CKs [ed., Clear Keys] in context which you've done with each E [ed., email] so I get the whole picture. Although very simple it works because.... For some bizarre reason I thought it was too easy, too simple but now I see it in place, it can and does work despite, or in spite, of all other issues. You don't need to qualify it, just explain how it sits in that world and what can go on around with little effect...."*

The "what goes on around" is derived from a realization that every life experience each one of us has faced in the course of our lifetimes is totally unique and has an effect on what we do at any given moment. And it also faces the reality that if any one of us would be so bright and resourceful as to have solved every problem that came to us in whatever lifetime we have enjoyed up to the present, *we would still need the automatic process to do two things* that otherwise have only been done by the few who have fully embraced the process with diligent commitment. *Why? Because all that personal therapy and problem solving does not contain a single iota of ability to block the signals that our natural system sends when we are pressured.* Like the predominance of other agencies and their programs, counseling, therapy, spiritual insight, listening to ocean sound tapes, problem solving, proper rest, strength building can help us prepare ourselves, but it cannot take us through the 14 seconds when we have a club in hand and are in the process of making a shot.

We just answered another player whose message also dealt with this matter. Our comment was: "Doing the counseling thing is, of course, very good. Just bear in mind that learning to be calm, or

entertaining any other form of preparation, still needs the added process that shuts down anxiety at the moment of truth. I can wax my car and keep it finely tuned, with plenty of oil and fuel, etc. But that will not stop the effect of what happens when some other guy races through a red light and t-bones my vehicle. All that preparation will not be protective under those circumstances. Same thing exists with us when anxiety t-bones us with the signal that turns on our defenses. All the preparation and strength building in the world cannot stop that. It takes a "little old" clear key. Your car might do well with armor plate designed to resist bombing, but that might even not work. Fortunately, in golf we are only needing 14 seconds worth on each shot."

Most players still cannot believe that anxiety can disrupt something like a golf swing, especially when there seems only a smidgen of pressure (anxiety) operating, so they replace whatever trust they do have with doubt. If they can't see it consciously, they assume it doesn't count. Unfortunately, not being ready or able to accept what "non conscious" means and how it functions does not make it go away. Even tiny signals set in motion can trigger our system's defenses and create such a variety of physiological changes that we might never identify all of them and certainly not in the time frame given for shot-making in a round of golf. So there are many and varied hidden considerations that will affect our receptivity to any idea, and most of those will contain static. So our friend in Australia wanted to say that it finally made sense to deliver a process called automatic, marked by a clear key that would act like a "work around" without having to go through a myriad of unburdening of one's soul and understanding every twist and turn of which the human mind and body is instantly capable, in order to be successful. (In a profound way, embracing the automatic process tends to help unravel the effects of junk that got into our systems before we could do anything to stop it, though that's no more or less than a side benefit).

So 30 years ago we set out to find a path that would diminish a golfer's workload, but provide freedom of movement for making golf shots. We found it in the automatic process marked by its main tool, - the clear key - and it's main servant - the 32 ball drill.

As it turns out, that was not enough, since we made it so simple to do that few believed it. The majority simply quoted the magnitude of traditional perception that is a bland mixture of what is true, beliefs based on half-truths, ideas that are no more than notions, misinterpretation, over-simplification, and jaundiced vision, accompanied by a legion of voices, claiming authority for all that, and never once realizing that they only got halfway through the needed trip. So taken together, there remains an elephant sized problem which we have, nonetheless, clearly "worked around" with the automatic process. The rest could be dealt with and solved if one had enough lifetime left to do it. After all, it only took us the better part of 50 years to see it clearly enough to bring relief. So what we intended was to share the relief without each player having to go through all the work that made it possible. Too simple? Yes, for the process. No for what informed it. The latter is complex in principle, magnified by all the input in each player's lifetime.

We cannot do anything about motivating players (other than what all do themselves) to get out of the past and bring their games forward to the present. Players are already motivated and no one can motivate anyone else for that very reason, anyway. No one does anything for anyone's reasons but one's own. But we can do something about shedding light on the inexplicable part and "how it sits in the world" and all the personal add-ons that have come our way over time.

When we set out three decades ago to do something about what we heard repeatedly from players, mostly in the 19<sup>th</sup> hole, we really didn't know where that would take us. But we heard the major themes: "Why hadn't players been able to improve their average scoring in the 20<sup>th</sup> century? And invariably, that led to questions like, "How come I can do so well on the range, but it all goes south when I get to the course?" Followed by, "I can hit my shorter clubs fine, but can't get a nickel's worth out of my driver and long irons." Or, "I can't make a three foot putt, but I putt really well from 20 feet." "I know I'm going OTT (over the top) but I can't stop it. Do you have any drills that will fix that?" "First I hook one and then I slice one. What's that all about?"

If you mix in a few swear words and multiply the questions above to the power of 7 or so, you will get some idea about what is seen as inexplicable. For us, the harder we have tried to provide understandable input to resolve the problems, the more resistance we got from players.

That reality brought on "The Pause." Not the one that refreshes, but one that is taking opportunity to reshape how we will use the rest of our allotted time to attend to a century of mindset that needs a jackhammer to break through it.

Our journey began with hearing the questions. It progressed to a point at which we realized the issues were far too numerous to list, let alone resolve - unless we could bring on a second lifetime to play the game by using the rest of this one to figure it out.

So we wound up as follows - It would be a lot easier on the players if we could just simplify the process and not have to deal with all the garbage in and out of people's lives that clearly was, and continues, affecting their games, and likely, the rest of their living as well.

That gave birth to the clear key and the automatic principle. We thought to ourselves that this would solve the problem so the players would not have to engage in psychotherapy to rid themselves of lifetimes of trash and ornery conditions that life can bring, in an effort to free them from the excess baggage that bites people in the hind side and interrupts the reasonable implementation of activities wanted or needed. We don't deny that such long-term intervention and attention could make for an easier life, but we are trying to give the "moment of truth" room to breathe and be successful in the time allotted for golf shots.

So we found a simple way to manage that "moment," thinking that the complexity of understanding it could be tabled to get good results in playing without having to know or understand the mental complexities. In other words, the process is simple, but the platform, reasons and principles behind that simple process are very complex. The kicker is that one does not need to master the complexities to make it a working tool for excellence in playing. The sub-problem attached is that golfers tend to think what they are doing has to be tough to do, and if it's not, it must be of little or no value. After all, virtually everyone will vigorously protest that using a golf club is "really hard to do." Eliminating the complexity from the discussion satisfied and helped some, but left most with the first thought that it was so easy, it must not be worth a damn, so they discarded it before they had a chance to examine it even in the most cursory fashion. (Today's "instant culture" tends to discard anything that doesn't produce a pleasurable result immediately).

Take a walk with us through some of the complex issues. Most players clearly do not understand what trust is, how it works, or how it affects their games. They tend to see it as something to strive for, at which they will eventually arrive, after they have learned to make shots that can be trusted. That is wayward and distant from reality. Trust came with our first year of life for good or bad. The groundwork was laid long before any of us learned to walk, let alone took a club in hand. Trust runs on a continuum from none to infinity. You, me, them, us, we all got that ingredient before we could do anything for ourselves, and we got it from others who brought it to us without our permission in whatever ways they chose. The prototype for trust came with how we met the first year of our existence and the results from that time in which everything that happened *to us*, with little or no thought concerning whether it was, indeed, *FOR us* - in our best interests. That means that if we had enough time to put everybody on a couch and draw the necessary psychoanalytic picture of our individual trust positioning, we could start with a little more reality.

The automatic process allows us to set that aside long enough to make our shots. It won't make a new person out of anyone, but it will prevent the "old" person from succumbing to hooks, slices, and yips that you didn't want. *The immediate problem is that we need trust in order to get started.* So what happens to those who got more mistrust than trust when the "stuff" was hitting the fan in that first year? That too, has a management solution. *No one is incapable of making a decision based on personal choice.* We may not have learned that, but that does not remove the ability to make one. So anyone wanting to do the "simple thing" to manage the 14 second moment of truth will need to make a choice that says, "I will trust this now and until it is so thoroughly embedded in my non conscious mind that the trust will no longer be in question. *First you must answer the question: "Do you want the world and all its problems to be in charge of you, or are you ready and willing to take charge of them?"*

What we sought to do with the automatic process and the clear key was to provide a means so all that work and positioning could be encapsulated and rendered harmless during each 14 second interval in which we had the club moving toward the ball trying to make a shot and be able to do that without interference from our autonomic nervous system and the highly active infusion of anxiety (which most prefer to call "nervousness"). We have been saying - because it is true - that you don't need all the therapy in order to be effective with your game. It's nice to have all that information and remedial work, but if you do nothing more than determine to trust the process (if you can, and did not have such a terrible childhood introduction to that trust that you really ought to be a patient in a psychiatric hospital rather than out on the golf course), you can play this game at your own, personal highest level. *If you do not begin with trust, there is little or no way to make a safe trip to that highest personal level.*

Take the following illustration that might be described as a mundane, but easily identifiable, example. It is evident that most people are willing to accept, without any reasons given, the side effects of viagra, cialis and levitra than they are willing to see in the side effects of allowing anxiety to move at will when one is trying to make a golf shot. Astoundingly, both the side effects from viagra, cialis and levitra, and the effect of anxiety on your golf game come from exactly the same systemic source in the human system. The difference is that apparently men are willing to trade off a four-hour erection from the medication, without a whimper of need to know what that's all about, as compared with the terror they face from yips in golf. (The ladies don't have to worry about that part, so maybe that's why they, as a group, are more productive with the automatic process than men, as a group). Both medication side effects and yips in golf come from one of the many forms of nonspecific demand (including the introduction of medication) made upon one's system that precipitates an instant, initial defense mode, creating all manner of physiological responses (side effects). Our systems do not vote. They do not distinguish what is good from what is bad. Our systems simply follow the natural laws that have always been there, and one of those is that when the demand on the system creates pressure it triggers the alarm that we experience first as anxiety, then as one or more of possibly hundreds of consequences. We suppose that men will like the one referred to as a four-hour erection "so they can be ready," while they abhor the yips. Once that happens it is too late for protection from any of the consequences sure to follow. Golf's contraceptive is a "clear key." It prevents becoming "pregnant from anxiety."

The number of informational threads one would need to master to have an ideal grasp of the mental game is staggering. It took us the 30 years from 1950 until 1980 to gather that in a way to be useful and allow the automatic process to become describable. (That part was serendipitous since we weren't planning on attending to golf). It has taken the 30 years since then to figure out how to present that in a way that it would be useful if players did not have 30 years to undergo therapy or spend in books, studies, classrooms and clinical training situations to acquire enough information and skill to declare their own independently discovered means to superior management of their games.

As we have pointed and/or alluded to many times, the volume of paper, video and verbal presentation offered with regard to improving one's mental game has been enormous, but has generally failed to finish the task. That mighty river of "stuff," while interesting, and often inspirational, though sometimes misleading, never quite gets to the actual moment of truth. It's all in the "get ready" or "recovery" modes, with little or nothing in the "go" mode. Plenty of "before and after, but no attention to in-between. We get a catch in our gut every time we see a post on a golf forum that orgasms over the ideas flowing from the "approved" list of gurus who do nothing more than parrot what has been said, regularly and persistently, since Grantland Rice first took a pen in hand. It may get said in some novel way, or it may insist that it is "new," but anyone with sound skills and habits that inform evaluation measures can separate the wheat from the chaff instantly. A following problem - not many have that ability, so it's easier to just keep on thinking and doing what we always thought and did, and keep on getting the same result we always got. It's a lot more "fun" when our comfort remains undisturbed.

Now, read the last few paragraphs again and ask yourself if it's OK if we skip the part about understanding how the natural human system works. If we do not bring that into the equation, the

temptation is for observers to assume that the automatic process is a fanciful toy. If we do put that information into the mix, the risk becomes information overload and invites a rasping cry of frustration from those who want a fast track to glory. What we concluded from the early stages was that as long as a player is willing to commit to an investment in using a clear key to keep all that potpourri of issues out of your game long enough to make each shot, it really isn't necessary to break down the thousands of fine points that may be part of an individual's life experiences or the thousands of pieces of researched scientific information about the human system. It's only necessary to be able to manage oneself in the game, primarily during the 14 seconds for each shot's moment of truth. It simply is not critical what a player does or thinks between shots, other than applying effective pre-shot planning, as long as overall attention is directed to the well-tuned automatic process, and that can readily take place in 14 seconds per shot. What goes on between shots is irrelevant to automatic execution of a shot that is protected from the normal human response to an anxiety signal. Extracurricular activity cannot injure the moment of truth if one has built a sound, habitual game and made a sound installation of the automatic process. In-between-shots cannot hurt you if you know how to manage your time and space on the course and in the game when you are facing your shot - unless you are so bereft of information that you still believe you must grind a mental ton for the four to five hours you are on the course.

Enough said!

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We have placed past issues @ <http://clearkeygolf.com>.  
Let us know if you have questions or comments  
[clearkey@gmail.com](mailto:clearkey@gmail.com)