



Motivation: What is Driving Your Game? By Ron Mann

Golf is a great game and people play it for many reasons. When you watch players on the course you can see people having fun, working hard on their game, experiencing great joy, getting very frustrated, having temper tantrums, cheating, lying, stealing, helping others, laughing, crying; what a drama! What drives this vast difference in behavior? One's underlying motivation for playing the game has a lot to do with one's actions and responses on the course!

There are various aspects to the mental side of golf that are important: concentration, belief systems, focus, emotional control, tension management, and visualization, just to mention a few. The area of motivation is rarely discussed. Dr. Cohn, wisely requested this topic for an article. Let's take a look at what motivates you to play golf and how that affects your game.

First of all, what is motivation? In general, it is the force that inspires you, excites you and creates the spark that makes you want to play golf. From a behavioral perspective, it is the underlying set of feelings, beliefs, desires and attitudes that drive behavior. There can be very positive motivating forces or negative motivating forces. Obviously, the positive forces will help your game and the negative ones will wreak havoc with your ability to play well. Let's look at both.

When people are highly and positively motivated, they accomplish great things. Here are some factors that will improve your game and lower your score: the love of nature, the desire for self-improvement, the joy one gets from accomplishing a goal, the desire for self-mastery and the opportunity to develop relationships with others. All of these motivating factors will get you out to the course to be with friends, enjoy your experience and keep you working on your game. When you have a positive attitude and want to use golf as a learning experience, you will stay even minded, even when you are not scoring well.

On the other hand, when people are highly motivated, but for the wrong reasons, they can work very hard at trying to accomplish something, but continually fail. Here are some of the "negative" motivating forces that drive people on the course: desire for fame, a need to prove their worth and value, anger, or fear of defeat. All of the factors can get you to the course to play, but will ultimately

create negative self-talk, increased tension and loss of concentration. Golf reflects your personality. If you have internal issues about success, you will break down on the last few holes and blow a good round. If you have unresolved guilt about how you have treated others, it will keep you from winning. Who you are at the deepest level will show up on the course.

In summary, if you want to play at your highest potential, then you need to be clear about why you play and develop a very positive inner life. Play for the love of the game, the desire for self-improvement and the joy that result from self-mastery and being with good friends in a beautiful environment.

Ron Mann, Ph.D. is a Peak Performance Coach. He lives in the Pacific Palisades, CA. Additional information about Dr. Mann and his services can be found at www.ronmann.com.