

"Drive for show, and putt for dough"

How many times have you heard this said on the course? Yet many of the game's greats dispute it:

Greg Norman says in his book SHARK ATTACK:

"Don't ever sell me on that line. If you can't put your tee-shot in play, the smoothest stroke in the world won't help you enough. To my mind, the most important shot in golf is the drive".

And most club golfers and amateurs agree. Just look at their reaction when they duff the ball off the tee – it's definitely more "pronounced" (regardless of their handicap) than it is when they miss a putt, for example. This tells me that we all view the *Drive* as a key part of our game, so how can the mental side of golf help us when we have the "big dog" in our hands?

Well let's look at things from a different angle first: The last time you drove your car – how often did you *consciously* think of changing gear, depressing the clutch or moving from the brake pedal back onto the accelerator?

If you don't drive – what about riding a bike? Do think about how hard to press down on the pedals to move forward or how to centre yourself on the saddle to stay balanced?

The answer to both of the above situations is that you DON'T, do you? Driving your car and riding your bike comes naturally – there is no mechanical, conscious process involved – you just do it. Put another way, without knowing it, you are trusting your subconscious mind; it is doing everything instinctively while you enjoy the experience.

Now let's compare this to driving on the golf course - All that golf advice about setup, ball position, swing checkpoints, releasing late, follow-through, etc. It's all good and essential when learning, however, it's sometimes too much for us to handle and causes us "paralysis by analysis" when we are actually standing on the tee. It's like trying to remember everything about changing gear when driving your car. To be successful we need to work a different way - we need to get into trust mode (just like we do when riding our bike) and only our inner coach can achieve this – we need to engage our subconscious mind in the process, not our conscious mind.

Our subconscious mind controls all of our involuntary functions like breathing and heart rate but it also runs extremely complicated physical motions - as long as it has been taught how. Remember how difficult it was to change gear when learning to drive your car? There were too many conscious elements to the process but after a while our subconscious took over – it understood and learned the movements involved and we let it repeat them without even thinking about it. Now hitting the driver is similar to this scenario – it is at the height of complication for the golf swing since we are expecting maximum force and speed coupled with keeping precision and we tend to rely too much on the mechanical checks outlined above to help us achieve this. On the tee we have to develop the same trust in our abilities that we show when we drive our car or ride our bike. So here's what to do:

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Play any mechanical checks, which you feel you need to perform on the tee, over and over in your minds eye when doing mental rehearsals* away from the course. Do this often enough and they will become second nature. Anchor* them, ready for recall while playing. Let your subconscious do its stuff, remember the subconscious mind does not know the difference between what real and what's not so when you mentally rehearse driving off the tee – your subconscious mind will record what you envisage.

The anchoring process will allow your subconscious to instantly recall all of the “mechanical” aspects of your swing, ensuring correct setup etc, without you having to go through them consciously on the tee.

Make the anchor part of any pre-shot routine* you develop and trust it. You trust yourself driving your car and riding your bike, don't you?

So why not let the same subconscious programming help you on the course?

You just need to let it happen.

* These phrases and concepts are fully explained in the Inner Golf Coach Audio Program.