

YIPPITTY DO DA

Golfers have come to term a phrase 'the yips' Bowlers too may suffer the same indignities.

You are struggling mightily and have been for some time. Now you notice patterns that you never noticed before. You are screwing up when you usually do not. Maybe you are pushing the panic button and getting more emotional than usual. You've possibly lost perspective over things you normally think you have control over. You are in a real rut! YET...the problem seems to only reoccur during certain circumstances. What can you do?

LET'S BEGIN

Whenever I start searching to find out answers the first question I want to sort out is if the problem originated from simply a physical error or was caused due to a mental error that led to physical problems with execution.

For the purposes of this scenario we will assume it is now the mental side that is dragging the physical into disrepair.

My suggestions for getting back on track include;

Step One – Patience

When things develop normally, we tend to roll with the so-called punches. Once we feel normality has been interrupted, we tend not to respond as effectively. Patience then becomes one of the most important elements of a recovery. Why? Because we need to regain an understanding and appreciation that we are human, and we make mistakes. Therefore, a key component of patience is in giving ourselves permission to make mistakes. Patience and permission help us 'clear the mind' to start anew. Is it acceptable that we may lose focus on the patience we commit to? yes of course, simply bring yourself back to the task at hand, possibly adopt or create a couple of self-talk expressions to help bring yourself back to a frame of mind that includes patience. For example: simply and gently without judgment, say '*stop*', then take a breath, let go of the current distraction, pick one thing you control to put your focus on (possibly – hold your follow through) and move on. Other equally effective strategies may be the self-talk such as; "*I am open to learning and achieving by being patient*". "*Rome was not built in a day*". "*One day at a time – one thing at a time*", "*Patience I can choose*". "*I have free will to choose*".

Step Two – Perspective

Entrenched in many of our problems is the deterioration of a productive perspective. The degree to which we have maintained a productive perspective can be measured in the rational versus irrational self-talk we do. This notion of rational and irrational is well documented in the work of Dr. Albert Ellis. Ellis developed the theory or Rational Emotive Theory. At the core of his work is the belief that; *“it is not the event that causes the problem, but rather our perception of the event”*. FOR EXAMPLE; IF you thought that because you had less experience than others, held an average higher or lower than others, had ‘never’ done well in a particular event, did not bowl well in a certain bowling Centre, etc. etc. THIS in Albert Ellis’s view reflects your perception of an ‘*event/circumstance*’ which in turn can dictate the quality of your play and/or the handling of a problem.

A second important part of the R.E.T. of Ellis’s is in the type of self-talk we engage in. Ellis will say, (and I fully agree); that to make statements to yourself such as; I need, I must, I will, I can’t, I won’t, It is impossible, I am not good enough, I shouldn’t, I should, I have to, is detrimental to being successful because you set up an all or none alternative. There are so many ways to winning, and/or doing well how can one ever say; I can’t, I should’ve etc.

What is a productive perspective? One free of all or nothing statements, where the building blocks are primarily consisting of things within your control.

This whole perspective thing is tied closely to our emotions. To that end a good barometer is in how you guide your emotional energy. Frustration, and anger are simply flip sides of the same coin that determination resides on. Emotion is important. Your directing of your emotional energy to be determined is the productive response – and a choice you can make.

Time (patience) helps us gain an opportunity for building back our productive perspective.

Step Three - Self Discipline

At least in word, ‘self-discipline’ seems straight forward. After all, IF you are making a commitment to improve, adopting the self-discipline to follow that recipe seems simple enough. However, self-discipline does require commitment and in part a sacrifice. The sacrifice being for the long-term benefit rather than short term. Impulsivity is the undoing of self-discipline. As important. Self-discipline will be a definite uphill battle IF it is not proceeded by your patience and maintenance of productive perception.

Step Four – Objectivity of Analysis

With your commitment to the previous 3 steps you set up the opportunity to remain objective in your analysis of your mechanical, mental, or lane adjustment challenges. An emotionally charged mind set will undermine your analysis. This does not mean you are void of emotion but rather are using it productively (i.e.) to be determined. Determination can drive you in the toughest of times. AND I think we can all identify with how determination feels when contrasted with frustration or anger.

To that end I find it helpful to consider the analysis to be much akin to a business plan. When 'X' happens, I want to.... The first analysis will be to determine is the problem a mechanical one; (how you are executing your shot), a mental one; (distracted by what, and how), or of an adjustment to lane conditions.

Step Five – Focus on Process (things you control)

Yes, you can make mistakes with your focus – patience

It is logical that once you have made your analysis that you are going to apply it. Its application is all about putting your energy into things you control. We control the following;

1. Our energy given to something
2. The Mindset given to the task
3. The Execution – how we execute what we decide to do
4. Imagery - of time and space, emotion and execution.
5. Decision making – that is productive (based on our data collection and/or intuitive responses).

In Wrapping Up

Does all of this seem like a lot of work? Probably, especially to those who have not experienced feeling inadequate within something that is very important to them. But for those of us (self-included) who have had struggles that seem to have entrenched themselves within our psyche this stuff just might make a lot of sense. It is to those that this article may prove most helpful.