

Motivation Direction

Many successful players (and business leaders) are motivated by their own dissatisfaction with their performance. It can be a very powerful motivator. You would expect someone who is thus motivated to improve their game to be similarly motivated in other aspects of their life.



Do you see a golf course as a series of obstacles to be avoided, or do you see the fairways and greens as the thing to hit. There are a few people who actually aim for the obstacles because they excel at the tricky shots – something discussed in the session on character and nature.

For most people, the self-directed anger resulting from dissatisfaction is not a positive state to be in. If you condemn yourself for playing poorly and use self-talk phrase such as "I should have...", or yelling (at yourself or outwardly) your self-disgust such as "useless idiot" and perhaps more colourful phrasing – you are doomed to repeat it. Not only will you repeat the 'error', you are physically hurting yourself – self-condemnation causes self-directed anger causes stress causes physical distress causes physical sickness and, for many, heart failure. It's a little as if your heart decides that's it's had enough of your inward abuse and is desperately trying to communicate your need to stop doing it. If you've had a heart attack or stroke you've probably completely reassessed how you live your life – and sought more tranquility, less stressful behaviours – in some cases avoiding the major contributors to your previously high stress levels – work and/or golf.



Some people don't realise that this is what they are like. The way you drive your car is often a good indicator of your style. How angry do you get when someone cuts in to the queue in front of you? When you pull up to the red traffic light, do you swerve over to the other lane to be at the front of the queue? When motoring along are you more concerned about getting somewhere quickly, or more concerned with the traffic around you?



Back to golf. When you stand at the tee, what do you focus your attention on? Your target? Avoiding the trees/bunkers/water/rough? I hope the former by now if you've been with me all this time. What you focus on is what you'll get.

Motivation is a multi-faceted phenomenon. In large part, motivation is about the satisfaction of values held. It is the result of using particular personal resources towards a specific goal that satisfies a value or value held by that individual. Connecting any of these three in any order, resources, values and outcome creates the feeling of motivation. In smaller part, though often the critical component, is encouragement to achieve a goal.

It is worth spending some time here on what we mean by encouragement. The word has 'courage' at its root. Thus, to encourage is to develop, enhance or build courage. Courage, you'll remember, is not the absence of fear but the continuation to do something of which you are fearful. It follows therefore, that if we 'encourage' ourselves – we are building the



strength to overcome our fears and commit to an action. Encouragement itself, is often mistaken for motivation – or exchanged for it. In order to get someone to accomplish something – they will need to be motivated and/or encouraged to do so. It is possible to get someone – or even yourself – to do something which does not satisfy a value – but such actions are not repeated if no personal value is realised.

For example, many beginner golfers give up playing after being encouraged (usually by a relative or close friend) to take up the game. They continue to 'try' to play until they find that they do not realise something of value for themselves. Yes, there are people who don't like or enjoy golf. Shocking but true. Encouragement is good, but it is not a substitute for genuine motivation.

There are some fundamental needs that we as human beings find motivational. There's plenty of books and papers on the subject for the interested individual and I don't intend to argue every combination here. However, there are some generally accepted 'big' motivators that the academics agree on – even if they want to put different labels to each term and put them in a different order.

