

The Ability to Come Back



“The Comeback,” is one of the most marveled parts of the sports world. It is an exciting thing to watch when the odds pile up against a team or individual and they somehow find a way to overcome them. In light of Phil Mickelson’s British Open comeback, let’s break down some of the aspects of the comeback.

When our thoughts and actions stray from our goals, it creates some internal interference. Dealing with this interference is the key to getting back on track. The internal interference can manifest in a few different ways. These include:

- **Focusing on what we don’t want to do rather than what we do want to do**
- **Allowing the past to control the future**
- **The need for perfection**
- **Negative perceptions clouding our judgment**

No matter where the interference comes from, it takes practice and persistence to be able to realign yourself to focus on a comeback. Many of us get stuck when we are not performing at our best and are unable to move forward. Finding a way to let go of the interference happens through a change in your thinking. What we need to realize is that our perceived setback is actually an opportunity to comeback. You have the power to change your reality through a change in your thinking. It is important to keep an open mindset with the ability to love ourselves in challenging times. If your thoughts are saying, “you can’t do it,” you won’t be able to.

Anger towards oneself for making mistakes or underperforming stems from the fear of repeating those failed actions. You assume that you are going to keep making mistakes, which is why people sometimes simply give up as they accept failure. However, whether you have failed at something or are losing in a game, there is actually an opportunity. Letting go of the past makes room in your mind for the possibilities. This allows for movement in the direction of creating achieving our dreams. You have the power to create the future; forget about the past. Change your perception from “this is something I can’t do” to “this is something I can do.”



Phil Mickelson's body language showed his calmness and confidence.

Phil Mickelson is an excellent example of the art of coming back. Mickelson has experienced many setbacks both on the course and in his personal life, dealing with the medical problems of his wife and mother as well as himself. The year of 2012 was a tough one for Mickelson, as his golf game seemed to be suffering. He even took time off, citing “mental

fatigue.” After winning countless tournaments, it was a surprise to see him struggling so much. Mickelson also dealt with a heartbreaking runner up finish in the 2013 U.S. Open, nonetheless on his 43rd birthday.

However, Mickelson was able to put all of this behind him going into the 2013 British Open. He played extremely well the week leading up to the tournament and used that as momentum to fuel his confidence. He spoke of his excitement, saying, “Coming out on top just gives me more confidence.” He went on to play arguable his greatest back nine ever on the final day to win his fifth professional title at the British Open, being the first person to ever win both the Scottish and British Opens in the same year. In an interview after the game Mickelson stated that he’s playing some of the best golf of his career. He spoke of his approach, saying he remained focused on each shot. Playing as well as he ever has, Mickelson never spoke of the ball as his target, only of his shots and the hole.



Tiger Woods' body language shows his internal interference.

Mickelson also spoke of his love/hate relationship with the British Open, saying during the times of struggle, love was not what he felt. However, he did not let the setbacks from each hole affect him while he continued to play the course. He spoke of having a “minute-to-minute” relationship with the game, illustrating his ability to be in the moment while playing his game. To be able to achieve such amazing performances in his recent tournaments, Mickelson needed to be able to put his past mistakes behind him. His body language showed him focused

and confident, only thinking about his current goals and targets, one shot and hole at a time. It became obvious that his game was an extension of himself.

Even though he has failed many times, Mickelson had no fear of failure. He turned his failures into opportunities to learn and improve on the next shots. Although his gold game had gone through setbacks, he was still excited to keep playing and did not dread going into future tournaments. Mickelson is just another example of the powerful affect of the mindset. Keeping a clear mindset is important to allow ourselves to see the entire picture and not let our perceptions stray from reality. Although Mickelson had not played his best in previous tournaments, he kept his mindset clear and knew that he was still an extremely talented golfer. The control of our own mindsets helps us to see, think, influence, behave, and perform in the direction of our goals, always returning strong from our setbacks.