

The Golf Whisperer

An Interview with Dan DeMuth

by Wes Hamilton
Fifth of a seven-part series



We teach strategy. We have our clients look at the hole and then look at the target; these may be different areas of focus.

We teach our clients to create their own plan of attack, using their own strengths and weaknesses to best reach the target within the “games rules.” We are always working to keep our clients connected to the target and connected to the present moment they are experiencing.

The golf course is usually one of the prettiest, best landscaped pieces of real estate in the area. Are these landscaped areas — the fairways, bunkers (sand traps) and water hazards (ponds, rivers, lakes) — all part of the architect’s plan of defense?

DeMuth: Yes, the architect’s plan is very clever and very subtle. The beauty of the landscape is designed to connect us to our surroundings during the time we are not in performance, hitting the ball. Remember, out of the four-hour game of golf, we are only performing 15 minutes; we have three hours and 45 minutes to stay connected to our surroundings and our inner self by observing the landscaped beauty.

The water is designed as a distraction, or interference, to our natural flow to the target. We are on solid ground during most of the game. However, when we have to shoot

over water, we become anxious about our performance. If we hit the ball in the water, we will be penalized, and the target may change. Water puts us into our emotions about performance.

The sand traps (bunkers) usually are placed in the best spot to hit the ball on the way to the target. The architect’s plan is to put fear into your thoughts; he is trying to move our coin.

You mentioned, “He is trying to move our coin.” What are you taking about?

DeMuth: In our Better Golf school, we have our clients do a fun exercise with a coin tied to a 9-inch piece of string. We have created a golf course scene with the four directions — north, south, east and west.

We ask our clients to hold the coin over the intersection where the directions meet. Then we ask them to focus on the north-south direction and get the coin to move in that direction without any physical movement. Slowly, the coin starts to move as they focus their thoughts.

Next we ask them to switch the direction from east to west. Slowly the coin begins to move with their thought energy.

I stopped into the Better golf school last week and saw Dan using this coin moving exercise with Tom Cook Sr. of Pat Ryan Golf, the PGA-recognized custom golf club builder.

“No way, how can this be happening?” remarked Tom. “I must be moving my arm, but I know I’m not moving!”

It is always fun to see someone experience the energy of their thoughts.

Dan, what does this exercise have to do with golf?

DeMuth: When we are on or off the golf course, there is usually someone trying to be helpful in our lives. On the course, oftentimes our playing partners will offer suggestions to us as we are playing our game. Next time this happens, remember the coin being moved with your thoughts. When someone else begins to enter our game, they become the mover of our coin, not us.

We begin following their intentions, not our own. We try to connect to their target. We lose the ability to play our own game.

Let me share an example of what I am talking about. This week I was talking with Larry, one of my long-term clients, and he was telling me how he and his high school buddy had not seen each other for many years. They connected and decided to play a game of golf.

In high school, they were always very competitive with each other. On the way to the course, Larry began to connect to the old competitive energy and allowed his past High School Self to begin moving his coin. Needless to say, Larry, who usually shoots 85, shot 109 that day.

Take time out at the end of your game or at the end of your day. Reflect back to see if someone moved your coin, changed your direction and pulled you out of your experience.

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I am constantly challenging myself to improve my game. I become frustrated with my results on “bad shot” golf days and excel with joy on “good shot” golf days.

This week while talking with Tom Korman, a shaman carpenter friend who is remodeling my kitchen, I learned that a 2 percent shift in our life or our consciousness can change our reality.

Pondering this theory, I began to look at my beliefs about my golf game. I needed to look at my expectations and I needed to understand why golf is called a game. I believe that if I can understand myself and the golf course better, then I will be able to create the 2 percent change to alter my golfing reality.

In my next training session at the Better Golf School, I asked Dan many questions to help me facilitate a 2 percent change in my expectations.

Dan, what do we golfers need to know about the “game of golf” and how is this applied to the golf course?

Dan DeMuth: Golf is called a game because there is an offense, you the golfer, and a defense, the architect who designed the golf course.

We teach our clients that the golf course is set up to “defend its holes” from an easy attack.