

# Articles and Tips - Lesson on a Lesson

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If you're a regular reader of this magazine, and specifically of my monthly article, then one of your New Year's resolutions should be to get better at this game. The best way to go about achieving this is to go spend a little of your hard-earned money on some lessons. There's more value in lessons than in the next new driver on the market.

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Have you ever considered how to take a lesson? As a student, what should you look for in a lesson? Consider these thoughts.

**Do you have a concise understanding of what should happen?**

I have found when students have a clear understanding of what should happen, it becomes a little easier to work with them. One big piece of the puzzle is to not be perplexed. Without a doubt, the use of video gives students a concise understanding of what should happen.

**Do you experience "where it is" or what is truly happening?**

I have found with video, it reveals blind spots. Most people have a model in their head of what they look like before they see it. If what they see on video doesn't match the experience, then those are blind spots. If you can look at the video for the things you don't experience versus what you like about it or don't like about it, the learning begins. Tiger calls it "feel versus real."

**Do you need to know where you are first?**

I have found most people need to know where they are first before they can improve. How can you change something that you don't experience? Awareness is the ability to experience something for what it is. Without a doubt, the best players are more aware of what actually happens.

**Do you really need more information?**

It amazes me how many times we believe that if we had more information, our swings—and our games—would get better. The truth may be that we should master the information we already have. Be careful who and what you listen to, because if the information doesn't apply to you, it is useless, anyway.

**What if your goals are too difficult?**

The goals set in your learning need to be attainable; if you set the bar too high, it becomes frustrating. If your goals are too easy, conversely, it becomes boring. I have found learning is best when the student has a huge sense of curiosity and the goals are attainable.

**Can you stay with the process during practice without your teacher present?**

Write down one thing to work on—swing with good tempo, for example—and stay with it for the complete practice session. When you document your practice sessions on an index card each day and affix it to the ground via a tee, your mind won't wander, and you can stay in the process of that practice session.

**How many times did a thought from yesterday not work today?**

It's possible to be in a thought, but not in the experience or feel of that thought. Multiple thoughts for the same experience can help, however. Consider where the feel goes away.

**Do you become better outcome-focused or process-focused?**

I have seen people develop change in their golf swing with the focus on the outcome, and I have seen students change the outcome with the focus on the process. In some cases, the former is better than the latter.

**When does learning happen?**

The best learning occurs free of judgment and looking at what is possible. If you look at your progress and search for what you're doing right, it is amazing how quickly you can improve. If you look at it for what is wrong, you'll get nowhere.

**What did you give up on too soon?**

Don't give up! If it feels awkward, that's good. It's supposed to feel different because you are making changes. If it feels easy or normal, then your swing probably isn't any different than where you started. It will take a while for it to feel comfortable. Honestly, if it feels weird, that is good thing.

**Should you get worse before you get better?**

Not in my teaching center. I can't say it's never happened, however, but I don't buy into the saying, "You're going to get worse before you get better." If you're not getting better, find a different teacher.

**How do you evaluate yourself?**

Most students want to see change in their swings immediately. Sometimes growth is slow, and it's easy to become impatient. However, it seems the longer it takes to change something, the longer you keep it. Don't get me wrong: I want to see growth from the most recent session. However, if it's easy to change, it can change back easily, too.

**All in all, what should change?**

Ball-flight, ball-flight, ball-flight. If the ball-flight is not any different, you have not changed a thing. When a student comes in with a slice, I want them to leave with a hook. If they hit it too high with a scooped impact, I want them to hit a lower trajectory shot, ball-flight is huge.

Where you are as a player will dictate what you should expect from taking lessons. The bottom line, to me, is that there is "teaching" and there is "coaching." Teaching is when I give my students a concise understanding of what should happen, the correct information. There is value in that. But as a coach, I want to see people change, get better. I want to see the application of that information. Every player should expect the same from their lessons and their teacher.

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