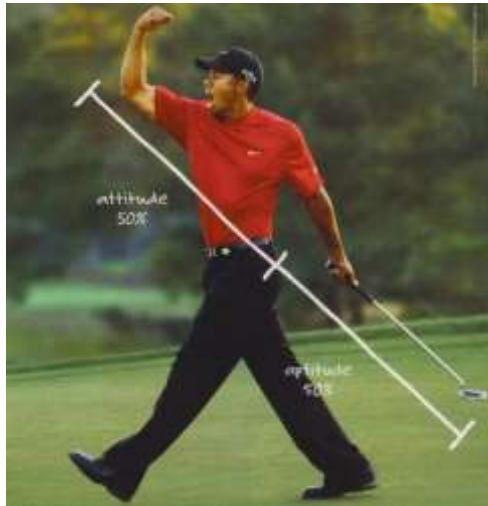




Talking in the 19th Hole

DRIVER. The concept of attitude refers to the "disposition" of the mind expressed externally in some way. Attitude, therefore, refers to the personal posture that makes some players maximize their skills or that turns others into frustrated players despite their excellent golf skills. It is easy to have a bad attitude towards golf because there are so many things that can go wrong; many times, the game is cruel. It can be an endless cycle of negativity if you let it be.

The way we act on the course is intimately linked to how we think and how we feel, hence having a positive attitude is essential for playing golf. Potential in golf depends mainly on the player's attitude, how well his short game is and how well he manages the game.



Thinking positively generates positive emotions and leads to positive actions because, as we think, this is how we feel, which is how we act. Taking this into account is essential to achieve optimal performance and be strong support for the player's confidence in his possibilities.

For example, when the player misses a putt considered easy, it can provoke thoughts such as: "I am a disaster," "so I can never win a tournament," and so on. These negative thoughts produce a negative feeling of discouragement (emotions), leading to a greater probability of making mistakes in the following shots (acting).

A bad attitude (I can't, it won't come out, crying, throwing tantrums, etc.) is worse than bad technique. Attitude will always trump skill. Players must learn to have a positive attitude and be in a good mood. Attitudes greatly influence success in the course and life. It would help if you did not lose sight of the fact that our game reflects how we think and how we feel.

Let's look at some of the most common negative attitudes:

- Getting into the other players' game, neglecting yours. Some players spend energy, time, and attention observing and getting into the other players' game because they believe that it puts pressure on them and avoids any advantage that they could take. Some behaviors that can improve this attitude are:
 - Focus on your game.
 - Let others play their game.
 - Understand the unalterable truth that golf is always a game between two players: the golfer and the course he is playing.

Learn what:

- You are not playing against a score.
- You are not playing against a tournament.
- You are not playing against other players.
- You are playing a golf course, one shot at a time, to the best of your ability.

And remember, you can't play your best golf if your mind is preoccupied with other players. To play your best golf, your mind must be focused on hitting specific targets.

- Make the situation worse after a bad shot or hole. After a missed shot or a bad hole:
 - You lose control of yourself.
 - You react with anger.
 - You lose your attention.
 - You give up and commit golf suicide.
 - On the next tee shot, you try to thunder the ball.
 - You play very aggressively, attacking the flags to birdie and regain ground.

All of this tends to make the situation worse and undermines your ability to score well. To overcome this behavior:

- Accept mistakes as part of the game.
- Focus your attention on the next shot or hole, forgetting the previous ones.
- Follow the game plan.

The great mental players never get too excited when things go their way or depressed when things go against them. This can be credited to his relaxed mental attitude. These players are so low-key and expressionless that you can't tell if they make eagle or double bogey when they come off a green.

The real advantage of this relaxed mindset is that it prevents you from getting too upset over a mistake and prevents you from embarking on a suicide mission for the remainder of the round, making destructive decisions that go against basic strategy principles.

- Justify a bad shot or a bad round. Some players invent pretexts, real or not, to hide the true attributions of a bad round or a bad shot. For example: "I had a very uncomfortable group", "the greens were fast", "it was very windy", etc. Good players don't have words like, if (conditional)..., should... if there... they know that there are no second chances on the course, so it's not worth lamenting over the past. If you make a mistake that costs you one or more strokes, accept the consequences and go to the next hole. Return to the present moment and leave the disappointment of the past behind.

Some players believe that they should always find something or blame for a bad shot or performance, so their confidence does not weaken. In reality, you will develop a much more robust attitude, and you will be better if you accept the idea that everything that happens to you on the course is your responsibility. Blaming an outside force can make you feel good in the short term, but justifications prevent a player from developing the mental strength necessary to deal with adversity.

Accept the consequences and then do everything in your power to make the best possible shot from the situation you got yourself. Good players enjoy the challenge of recovering from a bad shot. This attitude will put you in the present that it is the best state to play.

Recognizing the attributions of a bad round helps you prepare better. For example, if it was very windy, it was for everyone, so you have to prepare better to play in those conditions.

- Use the first holes to get into play. Some players consider that the first holes are warm-up, and it is justified to score high on them. To change this attitude, focus on your game from the first hole and consider that the first holes and strokes count equally.
- Think, talk and play how you have the illusion of doing it. The attitude of playing as if you were a low handicap player when you are not produces high scores; it also prevents you from improving because you do not recognize your real flaws and limitations. To overcome this attitude:
 - Take the shot that you know you can do, not the one that your favorite professional player would do, nor the shot that you think you should be able to do.
 - Make the shots that are within your real possibilities.
 - Do the swing you know how to do.
 - Don't try out innovative swing details during the round.
 - Enjoy the game with what you have.
- Anger or rage. This is a topic that we will look at in a future newsletter.
- Feel like a golf teacher. Every golfer, regardless of his level of play, feels like a national golf coach, so he tries to give advice, most of the time with good intentions, but some do it with the purpose of sowing doubts in his fellow golfers. To overcome this attitude:
 - Focus on your game.
 - Stop watching and judging the game of others.
 - Never give unsolicited advice.
 - Not advising during the round; in fact, it is forbidden by rule.
 - On the driving range, avoid observing others as they train unless you do it to learn from a good player.

Bad attitudes affect the game just like bad technique. Changing bad attitudes requires a training such as technique. I invite you to train and overcome your bad attitudes. **FORE.**

Mateo Melgar Ochoa – Golf Pro
www.handy.golf
www.youtube.com/jugargolf
mateomelgar1969@hotmail.com