

No two books could be more dissimilar than *The Golfing Machine* and *The Inner Game of Golf*. Yet in some respects the two have close affinities, says John Allan May. And these are important to most golfers.

The MACHINE and the INNER GAME

THE Machine lists three Zones, 24 Basic Components and 144 Variations of the golf swing. Tim Gallwey's *Inner Game* has nothing to say at all about technique. The basic theme of the book is "Let IT do it". "IT" might be described as the athletic subconscious.

The "inner game" has helped thousands of golfers. Yet in my opinion its propositions are based on two assumptions that simply are not true for everyone. The first is that "IT" knows exactly what to do. And the second is that if people make a series of movements in their habitual way they will usually do them correctly.

But "IT" may need training. (Tim Gallwey himself is a trained athlete and a first-class player of ball games). And secondly, the average person's habitual way of doing anything that involves posture and muscles is nearly always wrong. Habit makes wrecks of many people, giving them kinks, twists, slipped discs and pulled muscles.

And any readers who have played golf for a few years will agree, I suspect, that what they think they have been doing and what they have actually been doing are often two quite different things. The pro, a friend, even a spectator will tell better than they whether they are aiming straight, swinging on-plane, quitting on the shot, coming round with the right shoulder or whatever. This is a very common experience.

Homer Kelley's *Golfing Machine* aims to provide a firm basis on which "IT" can be trained and at the same time to enable the average golfer to get to a point where he does what he thinks he is doing. And does it right.

But The Machine does NOT say the golfer should think of a hundred things at once. It does NOT advocate detailed conscious control of the swing.

"Never try to make a shot," says Kelley at one point. "Make a MOTION. The motion makes the shot."

This motion, he adds, should be strong, consistent and rhythmic.

"Have a clear picture of the intended

Impact hand position all the way down from the top of the swing—NOT THE PROCESS OF ACHIEVING IT."

That is a tremendously important statement.

In other words DON'T try to roll the wrists or turn the forearms or anything. Don't TRY. Rather learn what it is you should be doing, practise so that you are actually doing it more often than not and then swing through mental pictures and "feel".

The flat left wrist at Impact was vital in Kelley's eyes. But he never urged anyone to MAKE it flat. Know that it should be flat at Impact, he said. SEE it flat in the imagination. The imagination, it is said, is more powerful than the will.

Dr Maxwell Maltz in his book *Psycho-Cybernetics* recounts the story of three groups of students at an American university who took part in an experiment in sinking basketball throws. One group practised throwing every day for 20 days and showed a 24 per cent improvement in accuracy. Another group did not practise at all. They showed no improvement. The third group spent 20 minutes a day imagining they were having free throws at the basket and correcting their aim when they "missed". This last group improved in scoring by 23 per cent!

Alex Morrison, a Scottish-American teacher of yore, actually wrote a book called *Better Golf Without Practice*. Sit in an easy chair and imagine seven key moves, he said.

It is essential however that the player imagines he or she is *doing it right*, and therefore that they know exactly what's right and how what's right feels in action.

Swing with your eyes closed as often as you can, Kelley advised—as do many other teachers—for then you will more easily *feel* whether you are doing things right.

Never use EFFORT, he said. Effort and power are two very different things. No amount of effort will produce more than a player's maximum speed. "Regardless of

effort you simply cannot push anything faster than you can run," Homer remarked.

When practising, technique is the primary purpose of the action. Where the ball goes can be immaterial, he added. When playing the situation is reversed. The player needs only "a relatively shadowy mental impression of techniques" and where the ball goes becomes the name of the game. Become TARGET CONSCIOUS, Kelley advised, himself putting those two words in capital letters to emphasise them.

Practise a technique into feel, he said, and then play it into "computer dependability". That's the time to let "IT" do it for you.

Eventually a Machine golfer forgets the clubhead, ignores the club and simply swings the hands. He or she may also forget the ball and focus all motion on driving the hands at and through an Aiming Point.

The habit of trying to drive the club through the ball "is where and how a player's game comes apart."

Now it seems to me that these concepts come very close indeed to Tim Gallwey's ideas about "Self 1" and "Self 2", the interfering conscious mind and the clued-up subconscious.

Don't TRY.

Forget the clubhead.

NEVER use effort.

Become target conscious.

Use your imagination.

But TRAIN YOUR IMAGINATION so that what you imagine is right. And train your body—with the help of your pro—so that you actually do what you imagine you are doing.

Then "make a MOTION" and let the MOTION make the shot.

Training the imagination can be as complete or as simple as the player likes. It's all there in the book, 24 basic components and 144 variations. But if it is simplicity a player is after then, according to Kelley, he or she may get along very well with just these three pictures in the mind:

1. Clubhead LAG . . . feeling the weight . . . "swinging the club-head."
2. Swinging on a chosen PLANE.
3. Swinging with educated hands.

That may be enough to play very well, although personally I would add a fourth mental picture: the picture of where you want the ball to fly to. Self 2—the subconscious—will do whatever is necessary *provided it knows what you want it to do*.

This is the major difference in the approaches of Kelley and Gallwey. Both are saying "Don't try; let 'IT' do it all for you." Only Homer Kelley went not just one better but 144 better. He provided a complete blueprint for "IT" to work to—rhythmically, effortlessly, effectively.