

Self-Reflection

a mental skill that can make a huge impact on your game

Making the time to either look back or reflect on a past performance can have huge benefits for any golfer. Questioning and examining golf experiences or performances can help you learn from them and may enable you to deal with similar situations in the future far more effectively. This type of practice is called 'self-reflection'.

By Allison Dyer, BSc, MSc, C.Psychol,
Total Sport Psychology



What is Self-Reflection?

Learning from experience and working around aspects of your performance that need to be changed.

Questioning your common routines, challenging your usual practices and asking why-type questions.

This attitude or open-minded way of looking at things builds on your achievements, asking what went well and why, but it can also be critical, working constructively with the weaker sides of performance.

Fifteen minutes of your time could be well spent on self-reflection!

Reflection is important to:

Identify lessons learnt

e.g. If I could live that experience again (a particular round, hole or practice session) what would I do differently? What would I repeat?

Inform practice sessions

e.g. What area of my game (technically and/or mentally) is a priority to work on this week?

Enhance confidence

e.g. By logging the experiences you are pleased with you are effectively creating a confidence library of good shots, positive experiences, achievements and so on that you can refer back to.

ACTIVE REFLECTION

Draw out lessons from your experiences



Target areas for improvement



Create appropriate action plans



Act on the action plans

“It is important to challenge your decisions and create action plans that will help ensure that you do not make the same mistake twice!”

Example Practice Session Reflections:

Did I engage in a quality practice session today? Did I practice my long and short game? Did I spend enough time on my least favourite practice? Did I work on the weaker elements of my game? Did I spend enough time ingraining my pre-shot routine? Did I think of new drills I could complete? Were the goals I set myself challenging enough? What areas do I need to focus on in my next practice session? What did I do particularly well today? What am I pleased with?

Example Competition Round Reflections:

If I could play that round again what would I do differently? Are there any decisions I would change e.g. with regards to my course management? Did I let anything distract me e.g. a bad shot, my opponent? Did I effectively use my pre-shot routine? What was my thought control like today? Following that performance what part of my game should I focus on in my practice sessions next week? What do I need to work on? What decisions would I make again? If I could play that round again what would I do the same?

What was particularly good about that round? Which shots am I particularly pleased with?

It is important to challenge your decisions and create **action plans** that will help ensure that you do not make the same mistake twice! It is also essential that you build your confidence by placing emphasis on what you do well. Although it's important to work on areas of weakness it is also important to acknowledge and remember the areas you are pleased with!

It is recommended that you regularly record your self-reflections using a 'Self-Reflection Grid' similar to the one below.

The grid should help you to identify:

- What you have learnt and need to improve on.
- What you are particularly pleased with.
- Appropriate action plans.

You can revisit your past reflections at regular intervals to identify any emerging themes relating to your development.

Tips:

- Be honest with yourself. Reflection takes you out of your comfort zone and can be an uncomfortable experience but you need to be open and truthful for it to work.
- Set a time when you are going to reflect. Like anything new you will have to build reflection into your routine.
- Ideally you would complete the process of self-reflection within 24 hours following the golf experience or performance.
- Make a conscious, full-hearted decision to reflect.
- During your practice of self-reflection consider all possible options and solutions to a given scenario.
- Learn from yourself and others. Reflection does not have to be completed alone, reflection is often more effective when done with others.
- Make use of all sources of feedback available.
- You may find it helpful to record your self-reflection in a diary. It is often useful to look back on your previous thoughts and feelings.

Example Self Reflection Grid:

EVENT: EuroPro Event Three		DATE: 18th May 2006	
WHAT WAS STRONGER / WEAKER ABOUT THIS EXPERIENCE?			
WEAKER:		STRONGER:	
After a couple of bad holes (10th/11th) I let my head drop and got sloppy with my pre-shot routine. I tried to overcompensate on the 11th and played too aggressively.		I putted well throughout the competition. My chipping was consistent. I felt more confident with it.	
WHAT ACTION PLAN CAN I CREATE TO HELP PREVENT THIS EXPERIENCE HAPPENING AGAIN?		WHAT ACTION PLAN CAN I CREATE TO HELP REPEAT THIS EXPERIENCE?	
In my next competition I will set myself the goal of committing to working hard from the first tee through to the last putt on the 18th – I must remember there could be a birdie around the corner!?!?		I will continue to practice and use my putting pre-shot routine. I will continue working hard on my chipping drills in practice this week.	
In the next competition I will set myself the goal of committing and sticking to my game plan.			

So - why don't you give it a go! Turn experience into learning and learning into improved performance!



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Pendragon House,
65 London Road,
St Albans,
Hertfordshire, AL1 1LJ.

Telephone: 01727 750000 Fax: 01727 750005
E-Mail: office@gilberts.uk.com
www.gilberts.uk.com

