

is the game I am going to play today on the golf course. I've come away from the range in a strong feeling mindset, meaning that I have embodied the comprehensive feeling of my desired swing action as a state of inner knowing, rather than a more superficial compilation of do's and don'ts. **Another way to say this is that my knowledge is coming from an inner feeling perspective versus a perspective of outer mechanical effort.**

For me, this inner "feeling" is one of relaxed effortlessness. Aspects of this effortless feeling include a smooth, tension-free windup and pause, no "hitting" effort, and a balanced finish. In the case of an actual golf shot, *my target* is also wrapped up in the package.

What about swing thoughts? The fewer the better in my view, but whatever is thought should emanate from and harmonize with what is felt. I want my swing motion to fit into my specific feeling mold, so that's my single swing thought: "the feeling." When I push the power button, I expect the physical action to match the inner feeling.

My goal is simply to generate as many swings as possible from this inner feeling perspective. **Each time this good feeling mode is evidenced in my swing, I pencil a slash mark at the bottom of my scorecard.** My actual golf score is recorded as well, yet my degree of success will be judged by the total number of slash marks at the end of the round. **The feeling game should include all shots, even putts (excluding tap-ins).** If I'm not sure whether a certain swing deserves a slash, I'll rely on my best judgment. Jack Nicklaus said that if he stroked a putt exactly the way he intended, whether it dropped or not, **in his mind he made it.** And that's a perfect attitude for the feeling game. **My total "slash score" will give me an idea of how well my mindset is operating and provide a baseline for future comparison.**

At first it was challenging to remain committed to the feeling game alone for a full 18 holes. However, once I determined that this was indeed a viable approach (and the only way to obtain proof was to test it), I found that it was easier and more beneficial to remain committed



rather than to change course every time I hit a minor or major bump in the road. A poor shot simply meant that I couldn't mark a slash on my card. My goal was to accumulate slash points, and I knew what was necessary to get them— good feeling golf swings!

Yet one might wonder, *is this really GOLF? I go to the golf course to play golf, not some other game.* Well, as long as the game involves hitting a little white ball towards a target, it looks and feels like *golf* to me. The feeling game is a *thinking/feeling* strategy for playing better golf— an “inner technique” to improve one's “outer game” and entire golf experience. In no way will it dampen or eliminate the enjoyment of good results, which are a consequence of good swings.

My first couple of rounds playing the feeling game showed tallies in the low twenties. These totals indicated one good swing for every three to four shots. Not bad considering that many days in the past I could recall only around half that many. With additional practice, the numbers gradually increased, reaching as high as forty or more slash marks on my card. For the most part, a higher feeling based score corresponded to a lower actual golf score.

Now comes the exciting part. Playing this game led me to a greater understanding of what might seem like an obvious fact. When operating in this kind of mindset, I discovered that I have direct control of my golf swing. I have no such direct control over where the ball comes to rest, or my numeric score. **The feeling game helped to teach me the reality that my golf swing is not a function separate from myself. Therefore it does not require its own separate set of mental or physical instructions (which we often use in an attempt to manually override our auto pilot).**

Put differently, the feeling which flows from my emotional state of mind becomes my golf swing. One could also say that the swing is an extension of this feeling. **Rather than look upon the swing as an outside task to be performed with some measure of effort, I want to draw it inward and incorporate it into my feeling mindset.**

