

THE GOLF COACH

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Extract

IT IS
ABOUT WHO
YOU ARE,
NOT JUST
WHAT YOU
DO

As previously considered, we are in the information age of golf coaching. Go on any website or Youtube video related to golf and you will be inundated with the latest tips and newest info as to how to improve your game, most of them swing related. But what if the coach's role was slightly deeper than the information that they give or even if you improve whilst you work with them?

To prove my point, think about the teachers or coaches that had the biggest effect on you in your youth (granted, for some of us this might be a very short list!). How would you describe them? How did they have such an impact on you? What makes them your favourite? If you are like me and the coaches that I do this exercise with, some of your answers might be similar to the following:

They were enthusiastic and supportive”

“They were just really cool”

“They cared about me and how I was doing”

“They were funny”

“I looked forward to their lessons”

What probably didn't cross your mind was:

“They knew a lot about Physics”

“They could explain Pythagoras really well”

Or perhaps not even:

“I got good grades with them”

“I improved under their tutelage”

What we more often than not think about is them as a person. How were they? How did they treat us? How did they affect our experience with their subject? These are more the questions that strike a chord with us and these are perhaps more what we should be thinking about when we coach golf. For at the end of the day, in a broader perspective, keeping people in and enjoying this game may be the greatest role that we have.

To further make my point, I would like you to imagine that you are in a golf lesson and that the teacher that you are working with is a middle aged, slightly overweight, rather unkempt gentleman with very little patience and a penchant for talking about himself a lot. Poor shots are met with a tut and every seemingly relevant question is met with a slightly patronising, monotone response.

Now, imagine that he stops you after every ball to drag you over to his computer with a slightly annoyed expression, dissecting the minutiae of your swing with extremely advanced information around plane lines, angles and axes and then going on a wavering diatribe about his philosophies and how you should listen to him. All the time with no humour, no questions about what you would like to do and absolutely no interest in you as a person whatsoever. Even if you start to hit it better, how enjoyable is that experience?

For both the eagle eyed and Youtube golf learners amongst us, you would be aware that a small part of the description of that golf lesson is extremely similar to the lessons that George Gankas gives. It is at this point that I must highlight that I do not want to denigrate George. I actually like him and in fact I'm really not a fan of the current trend in coaching circles of it being "cool" to put him down. Although I don't agree with everything that he says and does, I rate him. However, I do rate him in a slightly different way to the authors of the comments below his Youtube videos:

"GG dropping knowleeeeeeeedge!"

"I would travel from Sweden to have a lesson with you and get this information"

"I've been telling people for years, no one knows as much as George"

"I love turtles"

Now, although the above points may be true, I really think that we are missing a trick. The coach in my imaginary lesson was "ahem", dropping knowledge as well and gave very detailed analyses but if you were in Sweden, would you travel over to the States to see him?

What did you think of his lesson compared to the ones that GG gives? Who would you rather spend your time with? But why? The information was good for both of them wasn't it?

I just think that we as golfers and golf coaches often get caught up in information rather than considering if it was only the information that we enjoyed. In other words, would golfers warm to George as much if he wasn't the charismatic son of a gun that he is? If for every explanation of internal and external there wasn't also a G funk reference? Who knows, but the way I see it is that we as coaches should look slightly more "internal" ourselves and try to be as authentic as possible and not solely focus on the information that we give. For in the end that differentiates the good from the great, the dull from the inspiring and the Gola from the Gucci.



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