

Swinging Around Center: Mystery, Mastery and Demystification

By Jamie Leno Zimron



I was all of 7 years old when a golf club first graced my hands. I remember the fabulous green of the grass and trees, the bright yellow sunlight and the warm windy summer air. Mom and Dad were new to golf and wanted to play! So Friday afternoons we roved round the public par-3 course in Milwaukee, Wisconsin overlooking Lake Michigan.

I had no real thoughts except to turn my little body and swing away, then carry my clubs and chase the tiny ball I'd magically managed to hit. I was so short that wrapping my hands around the grip, it seemed I could touch the ball through my cut-down mini-club. I observed from above with my eyes, my head so naturally right there in the middle of me. I could feel my mind focusing and flowing freely down my arms into my hands down the club into the club head. I didn't have the words then but sensed my body's center line, and the comfortable base my legs and feet provided.

I was always all ready.

Set up squarely. It was time to take the club back. Inhale. Feet engaged, hips and shoulders started turning, moving arms and hands upwards. Slight pause at the top. Exhale. Back foot and knee kicked in, like Henry Aaron, my home-run-hitting idol! Eyes on the ball and head down, my hips started uncoiling while shoulders brought arms and hands forward. Feet and

knees pushed into the ground, legs and belly guiding club powerfully into impact. Breath was long and body mighty as club face came down and launched the ball forward. Following all the way through, I stood tall and balanced, arms high, peering down the fairway middle.

Smack! Whoosh! Fly! Something in me sensed this golfing thing was like enacting a miracle!

Back in the 1960s, without the cool instruction, equipment or technology now available, I became a decorated junior champion with Tour Pro potential. No lessons were necessary. I just coiled my body from my feet upward around my belly, then uncoiled and unleashed all my oomph into the golf ball to my goal. Years later, I realized there was something important my little body-mind seemed to naturally know – and that I had been doing Aikido on the golf course!

We all play in the field of universal, intelligent energy, and untold capability resides inside every person. Applying universal principles of Aikido and holistic somatic psychology, *The Centered Way* opens fresh avenues of enjoyment, improvement, and achievement in any sport or realm. Common sense, mystery, and magic are always at work and ready to yield answers to our yearnings—once properly activated.

In one Centered golf shot, supra-consciousness shows up in our bodies. We taste the unitive state, where we are operating beyond ego and transcend the typical. Ordinary turns extraordinary, and the miraculous tinges the usual and everyday.

A tremendous and beautiful power manifests when all parts of a golf swing, or anything, function in harmony. These are the exultant sweet-spot shots that keep golfers coming back. But players experience such sweetness only occasionally, while often despairing or quitting – because golf is rarely approached holistically. Emphasis is on technique and expensive equipment, with mental game tips at times tossed in. The realms of emotion, somatic awareness, energetic phenomenon and integrated self-mastery are hardly in the lexicon. Although the swing is circular and the game played in rounds, Centering is scarcely addressed.

To me, golf feels like strolling along, then flash-dancing inside a koan, then managing myself for hours surrounding mere moments of action. So much goes on in 1-2 seconds launching a drive or rolling a putt. Technique is important – yet everything happens so fast, we hardly know what we did or how we hit the ball at all. It is like Zen: radical intuition in the act itself.

Indeed, golf is regular encounter with the mysterious and magical terrain of non-duality. A sweet-spot shot is so harmonious and pure that golfers exclaim incredulously: “It felt like nothing; I didn’t do anything!” Today’s top Tour pros seek transcendent results through fitness, mindfulness, and entourages of holistic trainers. Their body-mind / east-west approach is on-purpose, to maximize ability and success. Tiger Woods’ parents helped hone his golfing talents into almost super-human excellence using Thai Buddhist and American means. Annika Sorenstam, all-time LPGA great and the only woman to break 60 on Tour, put it this way: “*We are not golfers who happen to be human beings. We are*

human beings who happen to be golfers. Reaching my goal of #1 was about improving not only as a player, but as a total person."

Renowned visionary Jean Houston links holistic practice to "new orders of fascination" and helping us transform into "future humans creating new societies." Olympians, masters, yogis, inspired artists and business leaders all exemplify greatness flowing from the command of inner resources; combined with the tools and techniques of one's trade; infused with spiritual awareness; all integrated and channeled into execution and outcomes. We are each in charge of our life-energy and harmonizing our faculties. Applying new energy insights and skills, we can each work, play, and be our best.

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Dedicated to peak well-being and results on all life's playing fields, she provides innovative holistic trainings to Work, Play & Be Your Best! A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Stanford University, she is esteemed worldwide for her dynamic teaching style and unique gifts in guiding people to newfound well-being, connection and success.

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