

Golf Flow: Master Your Mind, Master the Course

Gio Valiante

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Adopt a positive attitude to achieve “golf flow” and improve your game.

Gio Valiante, a sports psychologist and established mental-game consultant in the sport, speaks from a credible position in *Golf Flow: Master Your Mind, Master the Course*, having studied the topic for decades and worked with golf greats on the PGA Tour. In his second book on the subject (his first is *Fearless Golf: Conquering the Mental Game*), Valiante combines the approach of an academic—by providing scientific evidence to support his suggestions—with that of a practitioner; one who has worked as a mental game consultant to top golfers, the Golf Channel, *Golf Digest*, and the University of Florida.

In this motivational book, Valiante describes how flow state, or “being in the zone,” results when the golfer is fully immersed in the activity, not allowing any distractions to interfere. Some of the characteristics of flow state include time moving slowly, gaining control by making adjustments as needed, having patience, trusting in a positive outcome, and putting in the needed effort to succeed. Ample practice is vital, says Valiante, because greatness is the result of hard work and time spent developing abilities. To achieve golf flow, he says a player must strive to be a “mastery golfer,” who plays for the love of the game with the constant goal of challenging and improving oneself, rather than an “ego golfer,” who wants to play well in order to have others recognize one’s skill.

Using quotes from Phil Mickelson, Jack Nicklaus, Jim Furyk, and other pros he interviewed for the book, Valiante presents the real-world experiences of golfers who have experienced golf flow. He also describes the instance where he personally first experienced it himself, as a seventeen-year-old, while on a course in New England. In addition, he uses academic research in the area of performance psychology and other fields to illustrate the science behind the “golf flow” philosophy.

The suggestions, which are clearly described and easy to follow, are presented in a conversational and encouraging tone. They will be especially useful to young golfers who seek to compete as a professional, but all dedicated golfers who play regularly and can apply these concepts over time will find the information helpful.

The advice is not meant to instantly improve one’s golf game, and the book does not include specific tips about how to improve skills and mechanics. Instead, Valiante explains how golfers should strive to improve their mindset, both on and off the course, and why that will translate into a better golf game.

MARIA SIANO (Summer 2013)

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