

ADP December 5th 2022, The inner Game of Tennis

"Equanimity" comes from the combination of "aequus" and "animus" ("soul" or "mind") in the Latin phrase *aequo animo*, which means "with even mind." Equanimity suggests a habit of mind that is rarely disturbed under great strain.

In order to achieve a high level of equanimity, while sustaining intensity and focus, we must first accept, not change, who we are. Allow for change, without force, therefore achieving this state without compromising our self beliefs.

One of the best books I have read, still to this day is "The Inner Game of Tennis." In this book, author Timothy Gallwey describes the mind as having two parts, self 1 and self 2. Self 1 is the conscious voice we hear or feel. Inner chatter that can lead us in the wrong direction. Self 2 is the unconscious "doer" that, if allowed, plays in flow with equanimity.

Our goal this week is to find our self 1 and self 2, utilize our strengths, **embrace** who we are and achieve a level of inner confidence and focus that we never knew was possible!

To resolve our inner conflict, we must quiet Self 1 and trust Self 2.

The inner game is so powerful in determining our behavior that, sometimes, we can predict who will win a match, fight, or competition before it's even begun. If you see a boxer stiffening before a match, they're often trying too hard and, thus, will lose.

The mental state we need to excel instead is exactly the opposite. Tim Gallwey calls it "out of mind." Not as in 'insane,' but as in 'not stuck in your own head.' What's good about this phrase is that it doesn't imply control. When we refer to flow as 'being in the zone,' we assume there's a repeatable process we can use to get into that zone. That's not really the case.

What we can do, however, to resolve this inner conflict, is to quiet Self 1 and trust Self 2. **Primarily, that means not judging ourselves, but observing what happens and then trusting that Self 2 will do the best job it can.** When you judge and scold yourself, you're making Self 1 stronger and more present, which is counterproductive.

The inner game isn't limited to tennis or sports in general, it matters everywhere in life.

As children, we're great at playing the inner game. We don't intellectualize everything. All we do is observe and then try on our own. This is called implicit learning. Basically, you memorize a skill without necessarily being able to describe what you're doing every step along the way.

As adults, we have to learn to focus on this kind of learning again, but once we do, we have a tool we can use to become better in all areas of life. For example, while all sports, including tennis, are competitions, champions rarely see their opponents as enemies. They merely represent an obstacle in a game. And to deal with that obstacle, the player has to win the internal match against themselves.

The players who are able to do that are less judgmental, have more fun, and aren't trying to control everything. Where else would that be helpful? Pretty much anywhere! Business deals happen faster when you don't obsess about every detail. You're more authentic on a date when you're not trying hard. Artists create their best work when they just let ideas flow. And so on.

So, before you set out to achieve your biggest goals, remember to stay cool, not give yourself a hard time, and always have fun along the way.

Homework: read chapters 1-3