



Letting Go

By Debbie Waitkus, Golf for Cause®

Thwaaack. You could tell by the sound. John *crushed it.* Right down the middle of the fairway. None of us could see where it landed, but we all knew it was a great shot. “Best drive of the day, John!” He was beaming. A great shot does that to a person. Our foursome high-fived and we headed for the carts.

The drive had John thinking par, even birdie. He and his playing partner hopped into their cart and drove off. Stopping at the partner’s ball, which was snared in the rough just off the fairway, John tried not to be obvious about looking ahead to admire the thing of beauty that awaited him.

And then they reached it.

The great drive in the middle of the fairway had come to a bad end. The lie was slightly below John’s feet. In a divot. Great shot, bad lie. You can control only so much.

Bad lies aren’t confined to the golf course, either.

Linda is an excellent business development officer for a bank. After considerable time and effort to earn Frank’s business, she brought him to the bank with a significant loan request. It was a very doable deal. The upside would be his banking relationship, as well. But, the bank did not get Frank’s business.



I listened as Linda vented about how the support staff in the commercial loan department had muffed what amounted to a gimme. Their job was customer service and they had not delivered it. No customer service, no sense of urgency, no Frank. Linda felt that she had wasted his time and her own. She questioned whether she was with the right bank. She feared her integrity had been damaged. Her complaints to management were brushed aside. The bank had let her down. You can control only so much.

Bad lies happen to everyone. And always, it seems, when least expected.

Last month our daughter Amy, who plays club volleyball on a 16s team, was invited to join the club’s 18s team and play in the national championships in Minneapolis. She was assured (as were her proud parents) that she would see plenty of action. Our excitement was hard to contain. This would be a wonderful experience! So we juggled travel arrangements, and Amy sent emails to college coaches inviting them to come see her play. A feeling of pride and impending triumph filled our world.

It changed in Minneapolis. Amy spent most of her time sitting, and her disappointment was immense. "I contacted all those coaches so they could watch me bench?" She *did* play. Some. She played very well in one match, making significant contributions only to sit out the entire next match. The coaches didn't say a word.

We encouraged Amy to hang in there, to be ready, to maintain a game face, and to cheer on her teammates. We knew it was hard duty for her.

As Amy discovered, things do not always go the way we expect them to go (all teenagers on top of the world make this discovery, don't they?). And not just teens. Stuff happens. To all of us. Amy left Minneapolis wondering whether she should have been there at all, her self-confidence shaken. A wonderful experience it wasn't, but it surely was a learning experience. You can control only so much.

And so it is in golf. Every shot is over once the ball comes to a rest. Whether you have hit a great shot or one that is not so great, the shot is over. *Finis*. Let it go and manage the result. You may find that you have John's below-your-feet-and-in-a-divot lie. What then? How you approach it is up to you.

You may feel angry, or disappointed, or uncertain of your ability to hit the next shot well. Or, you can accept the situation and size up your next shot. Let go the last one. (When John saw his lie he commented that he could not have hit the ball any better and would be happy to hit it the same way again.)

Each time you address your ball, you have a new opportunity to hit a great shot. In golf, you get lots of second chances.

On the golf course, at work, in school and at home, all you can do is give it your best shot. If it doesn't turn out the way you expected, don't beat yourself up. Like John, like Linda, like Amy, you can control only so much. The rest is up to the golf gods, coworkers, teammates, coaches.

"You cannot tailor make your situation in life, but you can tailor make your attitudes to fit those situations."
-- Zig Ziglar

Your attitude can make or break you. Will you dwell on the divot or focus on the next shot? Take a swing and *Turn golf into gold.*[®]

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