

YOU CONTROL THE VOLUME

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GOLF FOR CAUSE

On November 21st, 1877, Thomas Edison invented the phonograph. How many of today's teenagers do you suppose have used a phonograph or even know what it is? Come to think of it, most teens probably don't know what an 8-Track cassette is either. Today teens and adults alike listen to music on



iPods, MP3 players, computers — some even listen on car radios! But whether you own a record player or an iPod, it's not important *how* you hear things but rather *what* you hear.

For example...When was the last time someone told you that you couldn't do something you wanted to do or believed you could do? Perhaps your boss pulled you off a project or wouldn't approve an expenditure that you anticipated would be a slam dunk. Maybe your spouse wouldn't join you for an event you wanted to attend. Did the "no" stop you in your tracks? Perhaps.

You hear all kinds of voices and messages everyday, thousands of them, and sometimes they even come from within — your own voice!

Imagine that you are on the green of the 18th hole. You really want to sink this putt — if you make it, it's a par and you'll leave on a very good note. Crouching behind the ball

you line it up. A four-footer. You're close enough to think you should make it without difficulty — and just far enough for it to be a bit of a knee-knocker. It's downhill and you believe the ball is going to break from right to left. Hmmm. How much break? Oh, and how firmly to hit the ball? Boy, you really want to make this putt! Four feet. *Time out!* Are you beating yourself up for not hitting your approach shot a little closer and below the hole instead of above it? Where's your confidence? The rest of the foursome is watching you. Watching you. Watching you. Do you see the line the ball is going to take or are you simply hoping it might go in?

As you encounter the variety of voices coming at you (especially your own), know that you can choose what you actually hear. Call it selective attention and selective retention. Just as with an iPod or radio, the volume and selection is in your hands. You can turn it up, and you can turn it down.

Here are two examples of people who have learned to control the volume — Amy and Steve.

Amy, during her freshman year at University, has learned the power of selective attention and selective retention. She is a student athlete at Bentley University in the Boston area. Blessed with height, she plays volleyball.

In case you don't already know, the recruitment process for collegiate sports is long and "interesting." Can you imagine needing to play well with the scouts' eyes on you! Like your tee shot on the first tee with everyone watching!

The Bentley University coach pursued Amy and did a great job of marketing the school and its volleyball program. Amy turned the volume on the Bentley University dial way up! She made her choice.

Yet it didn't take long for reality to set in. No longer being recruited, Amy began to have reservations. The coach had changed her tune. Did the coach truly like her? (*Unusual question for a teenager?*) Amy questioned coaching strategy and approach. By mid-season she learned that her coach was a yeller – not on the court but behind closed doors – in the office. Amy wondered, *Can she be demeaning me in an effort to motivate me?*

Selective attention, selective retention. How to turn down the volume of the coach?

Turn up the volume on another voice! Realizing that she wasn't being motivated by her coach, Amy not only turned down the volume, she also changed the station! She reached out to prior coaches for advice. One suggested that she self-motivate by focusing on her hitting statistics, which is what she did. She had a successful season – a regular starter, finished the season #2 on the team in hitting statistics and was honored on the NE Conference All-Freshman team. Turn up that dial!

Steve Nash (Phoenix Suns) is another athlete who knows how to control the volume. He boasts one of the highest free throw shooting percentages in the NBA. Each time he steps up to the free-throw line he executes a pre-shot routine. He bounces the ball several times, feigns a shot without the ball, focuses and shoots.

What do you suppose he tells himself during his pre-shot routine? *It's going in, it's going in!* Turn the volume way up! He knows the ball is going in. His high free-throw percentage is evidence of that. And if by chance he misses, what do you think Steve tells himself the next time he steps up to the free throw line? *It's going in!* He doesn't say to himself, *I better not miss this.* He's focused and says, *It's going in.*

Now it's your turn. You're back on the 18th green standing over that 4-foot putt. What are you saying to yourself? Do you see the line? It's inside right, and firm...right? Not sure? Are you clear in your mind as to how much break the ball is going to have? Ready? Do you feel confident that the ball is going to drop in the cup? Do you half expect to miss the putt? Turn off the negative and listen for the positive. *Listen!* Someone in your group is saying, *You got this, just knock it in.*

Thomas Edison's phonograph aside, there are all kinds of voices all around. Exercise selective attention and selective retention. Just as you do with your iPod or radio, your boss or a colleague, control the volume, It's entirely in your hands.

Debbie Waitkus, a business-golf expert, is the owner and founder of Golf for Cause®, LLC – business-golf education and events. Golf for Cause works with individuals and organizations, especially women, helping them use golf strategically to achieve their objectives. Contact Debbie to explore how you can Turn Golf into Gold.® dwaitkus@golfforcause.com or 602/722-3605.

