

***Write-Up and Commentary on Dr. Bob Rotella's Presentation  
To the Mid-Atlantic PGA Section's  
Annual Fall Meeting  
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***Introduction***

Dr. Bob Rotella, Ph.D, the well-known sports psychologist, began his sports career as a basketball and lacrosse coach. He also taught handicapped children how to swim. He found this experience in particular rewarding and invaluable in helping to form the basis of his future career as a sports psychologist.

Two of the great early influencers of Dr. Rotella were Vince Lombardi and Dr. Rotella's cousin, Sal Somma, the great high school football coach. Vince Lombardi was the high school football coach at St. Cecilia High School in Englewood, New Jersey. Dr. Rotella's cousin, Sal Somma, was the high school football coach at New Dorp High School and won eight New York City high school football championships and a Vermont State title. Somma and Lombardi taught high school football clinics and Sal would teach Bob Rotella what he learned from Vince Lombardi and what they both taught at these clinics. Bob Rotella was fascinated by the focus on attitude so clearly expressed by Lombardi. Lombardi was football star at Fordham and became Fordham's football coach before getting a job as the Head Football Coach for the Green Bay Packers.

Coach Lombardi believed that one of the keys to being a great football player was understanding and appreciating that to be great, a player had to be an "every day," and, "every play" player. In most football games (which have 100+ plays in each game) winning or losing the game often comes down to just a few plays, sometimes just one play. The great players know that every play presents itself as the opportunity to be the most, or one of the most important plays, in the game. For Vince Lombardi, how one thought, their attitude, their approach to playing the game was a fundamental and foundational aspect of how good the player could become. It was Lombardi's and Somma's teachings that led to Dr. Rotella teaching Mind Mastery to athletes and business executives in over one hundred companies all across the globe.

***Golf and Dr. Bob Rotella***

Early in his career, he had the opportunity, through a *Golf Digest* connection, to give a workshop on sports psychology to Sam Snead, and a great group of PGA tour players. He discussed how the key insights of sports psychology applied to competitive golf. The workshop was well received, especially by Snead, and Dr. Rotella was invited to give additional workshops for

professional golfers. Over time he was hired for one-on-one coaching by a large number of golf professionals. Now, 74 years old and the author of a dozen books, Dr. Rotella has been the Sports Psychologist at the University of Virginia for decades and has worked with many PGA Tour Pros and aspiring golfers of all levels.

During his presentation, he was asked a series of questions by Mark Russo, PGA, Vice-President of the Mid-Atlantic PGA Section. The session, recorded on video, lasted nearly an hour, and will be made available to members of the Mid-Atlantic Section of the PGA by Executive Director, Jon Guhl. The session was filled with key insights, wisdom and practical recommendations for golfers, instructors, and people working in the golf industry in every capacity.

### ***Main Points Made by Dr. Rotella***

The first point Dr. Rotella made was that a person's attitude or perspective about golf (and life) is a significant determinant of how successful they will be. Bob said right at the beginning of his presentation —

*“Good is the enemy of the great.”*

He then categorized those people who want to only do a “good” job (as opposed to doing a great job at what they do) as seekers of “safety and security.” He added that often, people who want to do a “good job,” are also people who want to “play it safe.” He said that those who want to be great at what they do must live by one key principle – *“They must separate themselves from others.”*

By separation from others, Dr. Rotella said this means they must:

1. Outwork everyone else
2. Appreciate the opportunities that they are given
3. Have great passion/love for what they are doing in sport and in life
4. Appreciate their customer

Dr. Rotella said what distinguishes the great players from the good or average professional athletes is that great players are always ready to seize the opportunity, or as my father used to say, “rise to the occasion,” to make that great play at any moment in the game. Being great means being ready on every play, or for every golf shot one hits, since being fully ready mentally before one takes on an athletic endeavor is essential to being able to take advantage of the opportunity that is presented to deploy all of your golf skills or your skills in any sport or performance based activity.

He continued by saying the polar opposite of the “every day, every play” great player is a person who views him or herself as a “victim,” who often blames circumstances for their lack of achieving greatness. When one is acting or thinking they are a “victim,” that person is not able or willing to see all the opportunities or take advantage of them. This ability to see opportunities others do not see is essential to being ready and able to take advantage of that opportunity.

Great players embrace and seek out the role of “Star,” wanting to be in a situation where to win they have to perform brilliantly when the game is on the line or when the opposition is fierce. It is

important to note that starring in one's role is very different from "accepting" one's role. A key contributing factor to successfully playing the role of "star" is to have the mindset and the goal of doing this role, playing the game *"better than anyone else has ever done it."*

When an employee does their role better than anyone else has ever done it, Dr. Rotella says they become "indispensable, get raises, promotions and have employment security." It is clear that even at the age of 74, Dr. Rotella seeks to be the best sports psychologist on the planet and has used this goal to drive his career and work ethic for decades.

Dr. Rotella suggested when one is young or is starting a career, do a lot of stuff for others for free. Walk the range and give advice/quick lessons to everyone there whether they are a beginner, elderly, good, or not a good player. Then, watch the golfer hit some additional shots to see if the advice you gave helps them. He further explained that doing this is a great way to learn and build your capabilities as a golf instructor. He also said that when you don't charge people for the help you are offering, you have more room to try or experiment with new things that you don't know will work. This also allows you space to make some mistakes while instructing without it hurting your career. After doing this for a time, possibly years, you will learn what works. As you prove that you can successfully teach golf and help people, people will take notice. Then, you will likely have the opportunity to teach someone who is good, and you can charge them. And when they improve, you can raise your fees and others will be seeking your instruction.

### ***Passion***

Dr. Rotella repeated the theme "passion" and said that if you want to do something well, you must do it with emotion and passion. Each person must know what they *know* and what they *do not know*. To be great at anything, people have to commit to learning the key things they do not know that are getting in the way of their achieving greatness, and not try to do or teach what they do not know.

He also said that "obsession" or "compulsion," when properly managed, can be a great approach to achieving greatness since both have the foundation of passion and love for what one is doing. The goal of teaching golf, or any skill, is to help people accomplish something they cannot accomplish by themselves. At every lesson one gives, and even between lessons, the instructor must think, "I have to find a way to help this person get better."

Dr. Rotella talked about his passion for serving others and for connecting with people. He shared that he often goes out of his way to "pick up people at the airport." This act of service shows them that he cares about them and wants to serve them. Additionally, when teaching, he makes it a point to get to know the individual before he begins to give them advice or instruct them. By doing so, he is able to make the person feel important, which is a state of mind that helps these individuals to be eager to work with him. Consequently, it also promotes their willingness to learn from him.

Once, Dr. Rotella was giving a workshop and he told those attending *"Don't work just 9 to 5."* He stressed the importance of being available to your people when they want to interact with you and to answer their questions when they have them regardless of the time of the day. At the workshop, Dr. Rotella got pushback from another Ph D. psychologist who said, "I did not get my Ph.D. to

have to work all hours of the day for my clients.” Dr. Rotella responded: “*Well, my people will beat your people because we are willing to do what you are not willing to do.*” He then said the key to being willing to work with others is simple: *Appreciate others and appreciate the opportunity to serve them.*

Dr. Rotella said he charges everyone the same and delivers one-on-one coaching, two-day workshops, seminars, and keynote speeches. He continued, sharing that all people need to understand that “*the world owes you nothing. In fact, you owe the world everything...* We serve people best when we not only appreciate them, but we love them.”

### ***Taking Success on the Range or Putting Green or in Practice to the Golf Course Playing in Competition – The Rotella “Counter View”***

Many golfers say they can hit the ball well on the range, but not as well on the course. They ask, “Why can I do it on the range and not do it on the course?” Dr. Rotella has a clear answer to this question. He began by explaining the idea of “transference” by talking about how many golfers have practice swings which are much better than the swings they use when actually hitting a golf shot.

The challenge in golf, he says, is to duplicate or repeat that driving range great practice swing when they have a real golf shot on a golf course, especially in competition. Dr. Rotella says he often sees golfers tense up on the golf course. In addition, prior to or even during the golf swing on the golf course and in competition, many golfers begin thinking unhelpful and fear-based thoughts. They care so much about hitting the perfect shot and producing a “perfect” result that they “tie themselves up in knots.” He discusses this challenge in many of his writings, including his best-selling book, ***Golf Is Not a Game of Perfect.***

When it comes to taking those great shots on the driving range or great putts on the putting green, duplicate them on the golf course, especially in competition, Dr. Rotella calls this “transference” as well. He then shared that the “entire idea that one should be able to hit a golf ball as well on the golf course or in a golf tournament as one does at their best on a driving range is a completely “flawed idea.” He says hitting balls on the driving range and hitting putts on a putting green are false environments that have almost nothing to do with playing an actual golf course and hitting shots in an actual competitive golf round. (Note: A competitive golf round is every round where one keeps score and wants to shoot a good score).

Therefore, according to Dr. Rotella, it is unreasonable to expect that you will regularly replicate the great successes one can achieve on the driving range while you are on the golf course playing for score. This is because the driving range and the putting green (or by analogy the golf simulator) are safe spaces for mistakes. As such, there are no negative consequences in these “safe spaces” for bad shots, like there are when you are playing on a regular golf course in a competitive situation. It is only natural that bad shots and bad putts will have negative, and sometimes extremely negative consequences on the golf course in competitive environments. On a golf course “fear” and “doubt” are common emotions, however, they are often less present, or much intensely felt, on a driving range, putting green, or golf simulator.

On a golf course, for example, when a person is one up on a match or tournament, or shooting their best score ever, with a tight driving hole on number 18, one's heart and mind are likely racing. They might get worried or fearful about the potentially negative consequences of hitting a bad drive. In fact, the golfer might tell him or herself "DON'T" hit it left or "DON'T" hit it OB right, or "DON'T" hit it in the water as their last instruction before they pull the club back for their backswing with the match or the tournament on the line. All of this causes tension, hurts performance, and distracts the golfer from the task of just making a good swing which is what ultimately determines how good a golf shot is hit.

In addition, driving ranges are usually simply designed while golf courses are very complex environments. Courses have penalty areas, require many types of shots that one does not often practice, are designed to fool the eyes of the golfer through camouflage, and have uneven, hilly, high grass and many other forms of bad lies. In comparison, driving ranges are usually flat, wide open, and put the golfer at ease, while the golf course is designed to instill fear and tension in a golfer. People think that professional golfers are just as good on the course hitting shots all the time as they are hitting shots on the range, but even golfers who can hit the ball brilliantly over and over on the driving range can hit a terrible shot on the golf course they never would have hit that badly on the driving range.

Dr. Rotella did say the driving range (and I add, the putting green or the golf simulator) is excellent for skill development, but it does not give the golfer the realistic training necessary to achieve a high level of ability to get the ball in the hole with a low number of strokes in highly competitive environments like professional or amateur tournaments or even Club Championships. That is why Dr. Rotella always recommends practicing on a golf course like the pros do in a practice round before a tournament. One needs to learn the course and be able to figure out the exact type of shot one needs from many different locations, especially near and around the greens.

In addition, hitting balls on the driving range is generally not able to stress emotions or bring out anger in a golfer like when a golfer hits a bad shot or gets a "bad" bounce on a golf course. There are no penalty areas on the driving range, no bad bounces with consequences, and frankly, no challenges that measure up to the challenges a golfer faces on the actual course when playing with something at stake.

To improve your driving accuracy, Dr. Rotella says go to the toughest, and the tightest driving holes on your golf course and hit three drives on each of those holes. It is a lot harder in this situation to hit the ball as well one can on the driving range, and is a better test of your skill in driving the ball accurately where there are real negative consequences to hitting a bad shot. Dr. Rotella then explained what he saw in the attitude and in the sports psychology used by Tiger Woods, the best golfer in history. Dr. Rotella said that Tiger Woods was not the best "driver of the ball," but that never stopped him from dominating the professional golf tour for decades. He never let this area of his game hurt his ability to score and win on the tour because Tiger Woods was able to come up with creative ways like his "stinger shot," (low driving iron shot) to keep the ball in play off the tee. Dr. Rotella then continued saying that Woods became a much better driver of the ball when he learned how to fade the golf ball successfully, thus taking advantage of his tremendous length off the tee as well as being able to hit more and more fairways in tournaments.

In Dr. Rotella's words, "a tee shot is like a second serve in tennis – just get it into play so you have a realistic chance of making a birdie." A recent golf instruction article by Max Homa in *Golf Digest* makes this same point. This point should be taught to and followed by all golfers. Distance without precise accuracy is usually not a winning approach in golf.

### ***The Concept of Systematically "Desensitizing" Yourself During a Golf Round***

All golfers know that golf courses challenge golfers in the following ways that goes beyond the basic challenge of ball striking and putting ability. Golf courses challenge a golfer's:

- Emotions
- Nerves
- Stamina
- Strength and physical fitness
- Ability to read both the speed and break on greens.
- Ability to calculate the impact of the wind, humidity, altitude, grass conditions, and temperature on ball flight distance with each golf club.
- Ability to be able to accurately predict the roll that will result when the golf ball lands on every shot.

In response to difficult golf shots and tough course conditions, golfers must be able to "desensitize" themselves to the challenging external stimuli, including the "pressure" of competition itself which can cause some golfers to "fold under pressure," "choke," or otherwise not perform up to the level they know they can perform when there are less stressful circumstances with lower stakes.

To desensitize golfers, Dr. Rotella teaches them how to build repeatable "pre-shot routines" that help quiet the mind and help the golfer go on "automatic" when they hit a golf shot. When a pre-shot routine is done properly, the mind quiets and the golfer trusts their swing and the type of shot they have selected. At that moment their subconscious takes over, and hitting the golf shot feels like "*no conscious effort*." Dr. Rotella says that golfers must stop trying to control every muscle in their body during a 1.6-second golf shot and let the subconscious guide the body, based on successful training, to produce a golf swing with rhythm, power, and precision. With the subconscious guiding the golfer, good golf swings become automatic and repeatable, even under "pressure" with tough external stimuli all around us. This quiet mind also allows the golfer to use their imagination, and can result in hitting great shots out of the woods or being successful with other very difficult shots or putts.

To reduce pressure and to quiet the mind during the act of hitting a golf shot, Dr. Rotella also teaches golfers not to be too focused on the desired result, and not *care so much* about the exact goal or desired result of the shot, but rather be 100% focused on the pre-shot routine process and the simple execution of the golf swing to eliminate any tension caused by being worried or preoccupied by thinking exactly where you want the golf ball to land and what you want the golf ball to do after it lands.

## ***Learning to Play Golf Versus Learning How to Score***

Learning exactly how to hit each one of the hundred different types of golf shots is a necessary skill every golfer needs to shoot low scores, but it is not sufficient. The key to scoring low is to get the ball in the hole in the lowest number of shots. Since almost no golfer regularly hits all par 4s and par 3s in regulation or hits all reachable par 5s in two, that means the key to shooting low is getting the ball up and down from relatively short distances off the green. Dr. Rotella then talked about one of the barriers to getting chips close to the hole and putts to go into the hole - the *Yips*. The Yips occur when we cannot reliably control our muscles to do what we know we want them to do. This involuntary muscle movement prevents golfer from producing the golf swing we want to hit the ball where we want it to go. Often, our inability to control our muscles pops up sporadically, or sometimes chronically or regularly in certain situations. Golf presents very difficult situations – the driver to a very tight fairway, the chip off a very tight lie sometimes over a bunker, or a shot to a green that slopes severely away from the hole causing a small miss of the shot to punish our score severely. In putting, changing the way we hold the golf club, our grip, may help us have better motor control and that is why there are so many popular ways to hold a putter today among golfers.

Dr. Rotella said that every player has at some time during their career encountered this problem we call the Yips and acknowledges that the Yips can be hard to overcome. He says that the primary causes of the Yips are, most often, fear and the tension caused in one's muscles and one's mind associated with that fear. When he teaches people with the Yips his first job is to help them improve their skill (and therefore confidence) in performing the shots that are most likely to produce the Yips. He finds that by helping them improve their skill, this learning and improvement of their technique reduces their fear, doubt, and the tension that causes them to have less control of their muscles. Improving golf technique includes improving the pre-shot routine discussed above so that it is reliable and repeatable. Second, he teaches golfers to trust the shot they choose to attempt to get the ball close to or in the hole. Third, he teaches them to relax and look for the enjoyment and fun in the performance of the shot.

Trusting the shot and being completely committed to the type of shot one has selected to use in that situation on the golf course can be improved by *seeing* or *visualizing* the type of shot you want to hit before you hit it. Dr. Rotella said that Jack Nicklaus used to say he could actually see or visualize in his "mind's eye" the entire golf shot exactly as he hoped it would go before he hit it, but most golfers struggle to train themselves to do this. Another way that golfers can ease tension and fear is to take very realistic practice swings. The purpose of realistic practice swings, especially on short game shots, is that a golfer can get a really good feel (comfort level) about the shot as they rehearse the shot numerous times.

One of the most unusual techniques Dr. Rotella uses with his golf students who struggle with the Yips with chips from tight lies or difficult short putts is to take a 2x4 piece of wood, stand near the golfer, and roll a golf ball down the wood towards the golfer. As the ball moves toward the golfer and rolls into the hitting area, the golfer then attempts to hit the ball. Dr. Rotella said that most of the golfers he does this with hit very good chip shots with the ball moving, thus proving they certainly have all of the skills, hand-eye coordination, and the right mental approach to hit a good

hip shot or putt under this extremely difficult condition of the golf ball moving while they attempt to hit it. He says that this exercise is especially helpful for golfers to “recover” from the Yips because this exercise often proves that the golfer does not have any disease or nerve damage causing the inadvertent muscle movements and poor performance in situations where they experience fear, doubt, and tension while trying to hit a chip or putt. In addition, Dr. Rotella says he sees great golfers experience the Yips over very difficult tee shots to tight landing areas. Since the ball is on a tee, he cannot roll the ball to them, but uses the same techniques to help the golfer improve their skill and make better and less risky shot selections like hitting a three wood or driving iron on tough tee shots to help them rid themselves of the Yips on tee shots.

Dr. Rotella also recommends for all players and those who think they have the Yips to practice their swing or putting stroke in front of a mirror. He tells his students to keep doing this until the golf stroke becomes so smooth and begins to look like the swing or putting stroke the player wants to have, that the students “fall in love with their pretty and rhythmic swing or putting strike.” This process confirms to both the mind and body that the student is fully capable of hitting very good shots chipping, putting, and driving into the right spots of fairways with tight landing areas.

In addition, Dr. Rotella emphasized that all golfers must “clear their mind” and never try to do too many things with one swing or attempt to do things they do not know how to do when hitting challenging golf shots. He says those who do this “tie themselves up” because their brain gets too “crowded with thoughts” to operate smoothly, efficiently, and in coordination with their body. In addition, he counsels golfers never to say to themselves, “I have no room for error,” as this thought is debilitating. He emphasized that more often than not, even a less than perfect golf swing can still produce a good shot even under the most challenging circumstances. In addition, while a player must properly assess the inherent risks of each golf shot, he counsels golfers never to focus on possible failures or what could go wrong. These thoughts, if they come up, must be dealt with quickly during the pre-shot routine, and be replaced by focusing as you walk up to address the ball on what one is trying to accomplish with a golf shot. Focusing on your general approach to the shot rather than potential negative consequences of failing to execute the shot successfully will produce less fear, doubt, and tension. In addition with this clarity of mind, it will help the golfer select the right golf shot for the situation and commit fully to the shot and club they have selected for the task at hand.

In evaluating the shot that you need to hit, during the pre-shot routine and during the golf swing or putt itself, Dr. Rotella counsels DO NOT BE SELF-CONSCIOUS in any way. Stop worrying about the golf course and instead, just calmly plan your attack on the hole and plan the shot that you want to execute in each situation. Never say or think “I gotta make this one,” or “Don’t skull” or “Don’t chunk” or “Don’t duck hook” or slice the shot. To improve or play golf well, Dr. Rotella says that to a significant degree, one “must not care or be overly concerned about the outcome of the shot.” Rather, he recommends that each golfer focus, while playing golf, on having fun and enjoying the circumstances regardless of what is at stake or the difficulty of the shot. He recommends letting go of “conscious control” of the details of the skilled physical effort we call a golf swing because trying to “control consciously” how every body part moves in unison over a 1.6-second golf swing DOES NOT WORK. Take the word “trying” out of all physical performance efforts, especially a multi-body part movement like a golf swing or a putt. Once you



get a pretty good smooth rhythm, the flow you create will guide your sports performance and allow you to achieve your full performance potential.

### ***Skill Development***

Dr. Rotella acknowledged that during “skill development” or training drills like on a driving range, or when you are practicing on a golf course as opposed to playing golf for a score on a golf course, one needs to identify and care deeply about the results of the shots you make in order to improve. In addition, one needs to have clear goals for each shot and care about the results of each shot in order to be willing to spend the long hours needed to learn a repeatable, high-level physical skill like an excellent golf swing. For example, a quarterback while practicing must focus on arm, hand, and body mechanics in order to learn how to throw different types of passes with speed and accuracy. But as CJ Stroud, quarterback of the Houston Texans recently said, in an actual football game on every play the quarterback just has to “let it fly.” Similarly, golfers seeking maximum performance capability need to have the attitude of letting the golf ball fly rather than “steering,” “controlling,” or trying to make the golf ball fly on some exact line or direction or some exact distance.

Dr. Rotella also said when youngsters or professional baseball players “play catch” they just look at the glove on the other person’s hand and throw the ball. That is the essence of trusting your hand-eye coordination. So, while golfers need to care during “skill development” and “while training” about improving, and care deeply about becoming great, golfers need to eliminate this type of thinking when hitting golf shots or putts while playing for score. While playing a round for score or while others are watching you on a course, just let the body do what it already knows how to do. (By the way, Brooks Robinson, the Hall of Fame third baseman for the Baltimore Orioles, had, on his throws that looked effortless from third to first, a consistent little “draw” on them which helped both the speed and accuracy of his throws and let the first baseman always know exactly where his throws would be when they got to first base.)

### ***Learning How to Shoot Low Scores***

Dr. Rotella said that many good golfers need the assistance of sports psychologists to create the mindset and develop mental attitudes necessary to help them to shoot really low scores and perform brilliantly on the golf course. He said that most golfers want to avoid shooting high scores (or make mistakes) as much or more than they “want to” shoot really low scores. At most colleges and universities, the golf coach loves the players they can count on to shoot consistently near par or better every round. These golfers never learn to shoot really low scores because shooting really low scores requires taking bigger risks on the golf course than these golfers are willing to or feel comfortable taking in competition. For golfers whose goal is to shoot really low scores, they must be mindful that on some days they will end up shooting really high scores because they will attempt a risky shot, hit it poorly, and their score will be penalized.

For those golfers, the first necessary change within their thinking needed to shoot a really low score is being perfectly OK with themselves when they shoot a high score and make a lot of mistakes and hit a lot of bad shots. A second mindset change a golfer needs to accomplish to shoot really low scores is to be able to use one’s imagination and live with the question, “How good can

I get at golf?” Gary Player used to say, “I stand on every tee asking the same question, regardless of the circumstances. I ask, “How can I birdie this hole?”

Mindset mastery training is often a very good way to help a golfer shoot really low scores and can help anyone whose work includes “performance skills.” Shooting a low score (or playing great golf) is achieved *with the eyes*, “seeing” opportunities for birdies and eagles while others only “see” risks, obstacles, penalty areas, and how to play it safe for a par or to avoid double bogey. Shooting really low scores often requires “taking dead aim,” as Harvey Penick used to say, even at tight pins from distances over 125 yards. It also takes thinking – “make the putt,” or “get it to the hole,” rather than thinking “I hope I don’t three-putt.” In addition, when one is playing well and near par, even par, or under par, the person must ask the question “How many more under par can I get this round?” rather than thinking “I don’t want to mess up this good round,” or worse yet, asking “What do I need to do from here to shoot a particular number like breaking 100, 90, 80, 70 or shooting one’s age?”

Trying not to hit a bad shot or mess up a great round is a “threat-centric” approach to golf. On the other hand, standing on the tee thinking “How do I birdie this hole?” and never thinking about previous shots or holes, or the score you have posted so far that round, is an “opportunity-centric” approach that helps one “be fully present in the moment” focusing only on how best to approach, plan, and execute the shot at hand.

### ***Distance Control***

This is an essential key to the success in the short game of golf. It cannot be achieved by focusing on the mechanics of a swing like how many millimeters one takes back a putter, or trying to figure out exactly how far a backswing should be on a chip shot. For distance control, one has to rely on “hand-eye coordination,” and a proper evaluation of the lie and the speed of the green rather than some mechanical approach that focuses exclusively on the “how,” or the mechanics of the swing or putt. “Hand-eye coordination” is another way of saying “play golf with your eyes.” See your starting line for every shot and realize that if you set your starting line as Nicklaus suggests for drives on a blade of grass just six inches in front of the ball, or as Stockton says, pick your starting line one inch in front of the ball on a putt, you know you can hit a golf ball straight for six inches and you know you can putt straight for one inch.

### ***Cell Phones on the Golf Course***

Dr. Rotella says “Never.” Don’t use cell phones to give you distance because it is too easy to see an email or hear a phone call coming in that will distract you from the task at hand, which is to play a great round of golf.

### ***Why Golf is (or Can Be) So Enjoyable***

Dr. Rotella says that golf is “your sanctuary” where the challenges and problems of the world or those you face in daily life can be held at bay and should never intrude into this great game. Golf is a very complex sport, and it should fill your interest completely during each and every round.

## ***How to Learn to Play Golf***

Dr. Rotella recommends finding one local, qualified golf teacher and taking a lot of lessons because there are many parts and dimensions to this game that one needs to learn in order to excel and shoot low scores. One cannot really learn how to play the game by oneself, by watching golf on TV, or by watching YouTube videos alone. Watching YouTube videos can give you some good ideas to test with your instructor who is watching you like a hawk when you swing the golf club and knows your physical capabilities and limitations.

## ***Conclusion***

Dr. Rotella stated that the same mental approach is necessary for excelling at golf (shooting low scores as well as not shooting high scores) as excelling at your job as a PGA professional. The number one rule is: ***Love what you do and do it with passion.*** The second rule is to set a goal of doing the best job anyone has ever done in that job and doing the best you can at every shot during a golf round.

Love the game you play, the job you have, the people you serve and pursue with energy and determination the opportunities you have before you. Know that you owe it to others, every job you have ever had, and every opportunity you pursue, and appreciate each and every aspect of your life. Technical skill is physical in nature. The attitude and drive you have to get better at every opportunity in all things that you do can only be produced with the right mindset. Low scores are achieved “with the eyes” which are essential for seeing opportunities when others can’t see them.

Dr. Rotella’s twelve books, hundreds of speeches, and thousands of coaching sessions have all been about helping people achieve their goals. There is no higher calling he says, and no one does this calling better than Dr. Rotella.

Thanks to the Mid-Atlantic PGA Section for its brilliant choice of both the speaker and format for an amazingly useful learning opportunity for all who attended his presentation. I hope I have delivered in some small way some the wisdom that Dr. Rotella delivered with his spoken words at the Fall Meeting of the Mid-Atlantic PGA Section in 2023. This “*write-up and commentary*” of his presentation has been written so his words and thoughts can last forever and be shared with a wider audience than the PGA members of the Mid-Atlantic Section that attended the Fall 2023 meeting. I appreciated the opportunity to spend an hour with Dr. Rotella and spend an additional several hours capturing some of his wisdom in writing.

For more information about hiring Bob Rotella as a speaker, having him work with individuals or golf teams or if you are interested in his workshops, you can contact him by sending him a message online at: <http://www.rotellaperformanceworkshops.com/contact.html>.