



"I Came To Win"

By The Monk

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I CAME TO WIN:

Written by The Monk

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This book is dedicated to my daughter

Amanda Miller

In everything she does, she demonstrates the

“I Came To Win” attitude.

*Amanda traveled the road with me from
the east coast to the west coast.*

*No one could sing louder on a motorcycle
than Amanda Chatterton Miller.*

She will one day write the great novel that will be a best seller.

I could not offer this book to you without thanking the following people who helped me along the way:

Marcia Mallard, who gave me great advice in editing and copy.

Debbie Curtis, who put the manuscript together and designed the cover.

Bob Henning, who always encouraged me.

Tom and Marty Rossman who's friendship I treasure.

Ted Harris, who masterminded the production

Faye Kerr, who never let me get discouraged.

Jeremy Kerr, who married my daughter.

My Higher Power, the real author of "I Came to Win".

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Glen and Tammy who let me live with them for a summer.

Julie Johnson, my niece, who has total faith in everything I do.

Penny Genanis, my niece, who's courage is an inspiration.



"I Came To Win"

By The Monk

This will be the of attitude that will serve you for the rest of your competitive life. Those who come to win are the ones who walk away with the prize. The best players do not always win tournaments. The ones with the right attitude, an attitude towards winning, reach the final four. It is this skill, attitude skill, that helps them take the first place trophy.

Much has been said about the importance of setting goals. In one case, a large class was asked to write down their goals. Only three students took the time to do this exercise. Twenty years later, those three students were worth more than the entire rest of the class combined! So goal setting is important. It will help you focus on your skill development.

I had a problem with goal setting. It did not work for me. At first I was excited about my goal. It inspired me. Then, as time went on, I lost interest, and eventually gave up. So I set another goal, got excited, and watched it fizzle like all the rest of them. When it comes to setting goals, I am the master. I have set so many goals I think I should be in the record books.

If goals are so effective, why did my goals fizzle away the first sign of trouble? Obviously I was doing something wrong.

When you set a goal, you must ask why you want to achieve that goal. When you do this, the "why" becomes your goal.

Here is how it works:

My goal;	<i>"I want to become a world class player"</i>
Why;	<i>So I will win more tournaments.</i>
Why;	<i>So I will win more matches.</i>
Why;	<i>So I will win more games.</i>
Why;	<i>So I will make more shots.</i>

Here is your real goal. "I want to make the shot I am shooting". That is your real goal. This is something you can fully understand. You cannot understand what a world class player is. That is somewhere far in the distance. But the shot in front of you, now that is something you can understand. Let's take it further. Let's look at the benefits of the Why. Why do you want to make the shot you are shooting? To avoid pain. You want to become a world class player so you won't have to lose tournaments, lose matches, lose games and miss shots. You want to avoid the pain of this experience.

You can avoid the pain of failure by developing a complete indifference towards failure.

So now, you only have one goal in mind. And that is to make the shot you are shooting. If you succeed with that simple goal, all the rest will fall into place. And you can do that by adopting the attitude of "I Came To Win".

Those who possess the "I Came To Win" attitude also have command of a few important qualities. There is a correlation between this group of players. They all seem to possess a unique brand of courage. If we command courage, for instance, we can handle the pressure of a difficult winning shot. It takes courage to deliver the winning stroke in a critical situation. It also takes courage to maintain our poise and stay down in the shot. With courage we can handle the pressures of everyday life. That's a fact. Those who are driven to the pastor's bench lack the courage to see them through the hard times. How many times have you come up short on the critical shot? You miss a shot you know you should make. You walk away with the personal knowledge that you simply did not try hard enough to make the shot. You did not give it your all. You are aware of this shortcoming and you know that if given another chance to make the shot, you will try harder and find more success. The reason you did not try hard is lack of courage. You lacked the courage to give it your all. You lacked the courage to make a commitment to the shot, win or lose.

It is not so much that you are not a courageous person. It is only that, at that moment, you did not have the commitment skills to give it your all. You came up short because you were not committed. It is almost like changing your mind after you dive off the diving board. Your tentative attitude

brings you into a painful belly flop. You gave up. You did not offer your best. Courage is a quality we must strive for. It will serve us well in times of trouble. We are not born with or without courage. It is a skill we must all acquire.

When you are working on your skills be sure to focus on that exercise. For instance, when you are faced with a tough shot, take a moment to focus on your commitment skills. Can you be fully committed to the shot if it is a tough one? Can you view this shot with a professional indifference to either making it or missing it? Link success with this viewpoint. Be sure to establish your ability to shoot the shot with total commitment. No turning back. No hesitation. You have developed an indifference to the making or missing of the shot. But you are not indifferent to how you approach the shot. You came to win, therefore you will be fully committed to your efforts. You will act with courage. When you take the time for focus on your commitment skills you reinforce them. You make them stronger and as long as you can do that, you will improve your skills. The missing or making of the shot is not a factor. As you walk through your own development, your skills are what you are working on. Your skills are what you want to improve and it all starts with a commitment to the shot at hand. No holding back.

In the early days, while I was warming up for a tournament, I would almost have a heart attack when Kenny Foss walked in. As soon as he came through the door, all my concentration skills went out the window. I was afraid of him. And when Archie Henderson arrived, I was done for. I lacked the courage to face these two fine players and spent most of my time hoping they would not be able to make it to the tournament. Without this courage to take on all comers, I was a sixth place finisher month after month. It was not my skills that held me back. It was my lack of courage. When I finally overcame this problem, I moved into the final four.

I was a mess every time someone good came to the tournament. If someone was from far away, I would shake in my boots. I spent more time in mortal fear than I did in practice. One player showed up who was from Milwaukee. We were all afraid of him. We rolled over and he won the tournament. Then one of our local players got drunk and decided to gamble with this Milwaukee hot shot. Our local player cleaned him out. He ran him out of town. Our collective fear caused us all to grovel at a poor player's feet.

I actually would be afraid of some of the cars in the parking lot. If there was a run down, dilapidated junk sitting there, then I knew he had to be a good pool player. I was gasping for breath when I saw a shiny new pickup with the license plate "rackem" on it.

And the guys who wore those “1994 US Open Champion” T-shirts would scare the hell out of me.

When I would get knocked out of the tournament, I always tried to sneak out before someone could ask, “How did you do?” When players know you are knocked out of the tournament, they always like to ask, “How did you do?” They just want to hear you say the words, “I got eliminated.” It makes them feel better. And this was very painful for me. I hated to lose and I hated to admit I lost.

Occasionally you hear it from someone who really cares. In one event, I told a friend that I was knocked out by Kenny DiPietro. “You didn’t get knocked out by Kenny”, he said. “You got beat by Archie Henderson.”

“But I didn’t play Archie,” I argued.

“You worried so much about Archie that you could not concentrate on what you were doing. So you lost.”

It was plain and simple. I did not have the courage to face what I was really trying to do. I Came to Win, but did not focus on that task. So I had to develop the courage skills to see me through.

I discovered luck long before I discovered courage. Once, I was facing the best player in the house. It was a race to three in nine ball. I made the nine on the break three straight times. He would not shake my hand. In the next match, I won three games in a row – all on short racks. Now this guy would not shake my hand either. Then I slopped in the nine ball twice, and made it on the break to win. Another guy would not shake my hand. Now I am in the finals waiting for my challenger. I woke up and lost three to nothing. But I learned that you can win in this game in spite of yourself.

It was a lot of fun. There is no greater joy than to see the look of disgust come over your opponent’s face when you slop in the nine ball. In fact, I think I will ride the nine in my next tournament. I did that in Green Bay. I rode the nine every time I came to the table. And I was good at it. All I wanted to do was get the nine ball rolling. Keep that nine ball rolling. Keep it rolling around the table. After all, there are six big dark holes waiting to gather it in. After a complete slop job, you extend your hand out to your opponent. He is sick, sick, sick, and will not respond. It is joy unspeakable. I laugh all the way to my seat.

In addition to courage, we need to command concentration. If we do this, we can maintain our level of performance throughout the entire contest. How many times has our performance deteriorated in the face of constant pressure? When our consistency breaks down, we can always trace it back to our concentration skills. Once we lose concentration, we are out of control, subject to the whims and delights of Lady Luck. And Lady Luck never favors us. She is always on the side of our opponent.

Concentration skills are what separate the winners from the losers. Even if you are not a great ball striker, if you possess great concentration skills, you will be able to go far in tournaments.

Suzanne Bosselman won “Player of The Year” the first year on the All About Pool Tour in New England. She knocked off the three time “Player of The Year”. She did this because she mastered courage, concentration, and composure.

If we command composure we can survive a difficult set back. In every tournament experience, you will experience set backs. It is a natural part of the game. We can use this quality to come back from a losing experience. Composure will keep us in the game so that the rolls can even out. Eventually we will come out as the winner if we can stay the course and not lose our composure. How many times has a bad roll turned your fine performance into a losing slump?

If we can acquire the qualities of courage, concentration and composure, we can address the issues that cause us to lose games.

When you walk away from the table after a tough loss, think about it for a while. Take some time to reflect upon the cause your loss. Was it lack of courage? Was it lack of concentration? Was it lack of composure?

In a workshop in Cleveland I asked the class to relax for a moment, close their eyes, and bring to mind the last loss they experienced. After they formed a mental picture of this painful setback, I went around the room and asked each player to tell me why they lost the match. Not one of them said they lost the match because their opponent was better than them. Not once did they give their opponent credit for the victory. They told me they lost because they screwed up. And when I offered Courage, Concentration and Composure to them as reasons, they all agreed it was the lack of one or more of these three qualities that caused their loss.

When we take care of these problems, it adds up to many more wins. These three qualities give us a higher winning average and more tournament money in our pockets. At our level of performance, in any of the tasks we undertake, it is our Courage, Concentration and Composure that will carry us to victory. They are the motivational forces for success and prosperity. If any of these qualities are missing from our life, we are without a guidepost. We are left to struggle in the inconsistencies of our own performance. It is rare when we fail to win a game simply because we were not qualified to deliver the winning shot. Almost every setback can be traced to our lack of Courage, Concentration or Composure. If you master these three qualities, you will be a champion.

Remember, we do not win a championship. We are the champions. We do not have to win something we already have. And in the Voice of Silence we read, “You cannot follow the path until you become the path.”

We have a lot of work to do my friend. We will get there. We will make more shots. We will win more games. We will win more matches. We will win more tournaments. We will find joy in this game. All the rolls will go our way.

CHAPTER ONE



The Three Promises of Pool

In this walk through the game of pocket billiards, let us look for three things that bring us the most pleasure. Let us find the three promises of pocket billiards. They are ours to enjoy. The outcome of a match has no bearing on the three promises of pool. If our hearts are open, the mistress of pocket billiards will bless us with the three promises of pool.

FELLOWSHIP

In every contest you will experience fellowship with your comrades. Be open to this wonderful interaction with your friends. This is a promise. The outcome of the match has nothing to do with your relationship with others. Even in the contest of life, you will reap the joys of fellowship. Winning or losing, cannot rob you of the promise of fellowship. Neither will success or failure. As you journey through this life each day, look for the joy of fellowship with others. It has long been a tradition of mine to stop at a nice breakfast shop for steak and eggs before a tournament. I look forward to this time with my friends. It is a highpoint of my Saturday nine ball tournament. During the tournament, I make it a point to renew old acquaintances and make new friends. I can expect this to happen regardless of the outcome of the match. Fellowship is one of the promises.

KNOWLEDGE

In every contest you will learn something new about both this game and life. You need only to claim this promise. You will come away from the table with new knowledge about yourself and how you perform under pressure. As you experience this game, look for new knowledge. Find out what your game is trying to tell you. Open your mind to the promise of knowledge the next time you play. In fact, make it a point to learn something new today, not only about pocket billiards, but about life as well. Learn something about your own performance under the conditions that prevail in your life. Learning is taking yourself to new heights. When you learn something, you are forever changed. Your game takes on new meaning. You reach new levels. Only through learning can we improve the quality of our play. Keep your mind alert for this wonderful promise. Remember, learning is really the linking of positive keys to your mind. You make a conscious choice to link these experiences so they will serve you later on.

PERFORM

In every contest, we will be called upon to perform. This game will not cheat us out of this wonderful experience. When we enter the contest, we will be able to perform. We seek the performance; therefore, we experience the performance. When the tournament director calls our name we are eager to break the balls and turn in our performance. Remember, we can beat anybody. There is no one we are not capable of beating. The game takes strange turns – just as in life. It has its twists and turns. We pay our money to perform, and this game will not deny us that opportunity.

Reap the rewards of being in the battle.

We must be prepared to claim these rewards. All too often the intensity of the competition clouds the wonderful lessons being offered, and we leave the table with little or no growth. We do not develop and we do not receive a reward. If the lesson being offered is not received, we then find ourselves back in the same situation again. It happens to us over and over until we learn what this great game is trying to teach us. Remember, mistakes are lessons. They are lessons we need to learn. So if you keep making the same mistake over and over, you need to wake up and smell the coffee brewing. May you find that lesson in the arena of competition and learn what knowledge is being offered to you. This lesson is unique in that it is especially for

you. Get in the habit of looking for the three promises of pool every time you play. Make it a habit to look for these three promises in the game of life every time you get out of bed and begin your day. Claim your prize! There is something exciting for you to learn today. Remember, we don't have to win what we already have. Winning is just a result of who we are.

When you seek the three promises of pool, do so with courage, concentration and composure.

We are not always able to find time to practice. Our jobs and every day activities do not give us the amount of time we need at the table. So we must be open and alert for the lessons coming through our performance. Let us receive the lesson this game is trying to teach us. We can walk away with some valuable information if we are open to the gentle teachings of experience.

There are many lessons to be learned. And each is a *satorie* of its own. Each lesson is a gentle enlightenment within our intuitive mind. Each lesson, when received, brings us closer to that final prize. After every match, take the time to think about what really happened. Take the time to analyze your performance. Do not make a judgement. Don't actually try to figure it all out. Simply receive the lesson being offered. And by all means, do not make any excuses. Excuses are nothing more than blinders to reality.

One of my best students was a teacher in North Carolina. Marcia Mallard use to ask her class, "What is an excuse good for" to which they quickly learned to respond, "Absolutely Nothing!"

If you find yourself crying about playing conditions after a tough loss, then you are giving up on your own performance. You see, your performance is always a reality. Conditions have nothing to do with it. If we blame the conditions, then we do not take responsibility for our efforts. Whatever the conditions, we still need to perform. We can't quit. Whatever the conditions, we still need to play the game. If you blame everything on good luck or bad luck, you are giving up on your own performance. You are not claiming one of the three promises of pool. Exactly how did you perform? That is the question to be answered. What were your weaknesses? What were your strengths?

To what degree were the pluses and minuses of your performance? Steal away in your quiet time and add these up. Seek the lessons being learned. Always take the time to learn the lesson being offered just for you.

I've seen great pitchers in baseball fall apart after a tough call from the umpire. When a clear strike is called a ball, the athlete becomes confused and then serves up a home run pitch down the middle of the plate. He gives up five runs and is out of the game. In the dugout, he rants about the umpire and the bad call. He does not understand the simple fact that he lacked composure and lost the game. When we make excuses, we are not playing our game. A bad roll or a tough call has nothing to do with our composure. We have everything to do with our composure. And when we lose it, for any reason, we lose the game.

A losing streak can be attributed to the absence of Courage, Concentration and Composure. It is as simple as that. Make up your mind you will always be aware of the three C's in everything you do. Each day, each hour, each moment, the three C's will be part of your performance.

CHAPTER TWO



Make Each Match Count

If you engage in a meaningless match, where neither of you keep score, you will not be offered any lessons for your personal growth. If you are to receive knowledge about yourself, you must become a serious player. You must be a player who operates with a singleness of purpose. You have been called to this great game. Seek the lesson being offered in each and every match. Your competition must be in a match, such as a league contest, a tournament, or match play between you and a serious opponent. This message goes out to those who aspire to great heights. It goes to those who would find themselves in the final four of a Saturday afternoon nine ball tournament.

Receive the Invitation to Grow and Become a Better Player.

Gambling, for the sake of making money, is not a plus for this game. The idea of going out to hustle suckers is not pocket billiards. Hustling is finding someone who is not your equal and taking his money. It is a game in itself but it is not the game of pool. It is not the art of pocket billiards.

Gambling and playing for money can mean two different things. There is a difference between a gambler and a money player. If you put up money in a prescribed contest between you and your equal, then you are adding a condition to either winning or losing. This will help you pay attention to your performance. Once you focus on your performance, you then put yourself in position to receive the lessons being offered. So, in effect, you are paying for a lesson. Seek the knowledge through experience. Receive the invitation to grow and become a better player by playing a match that has

conditions on your performance. And when the contest is over, steal away somewhere and think about your performance. Measure it against the three C's.

I played a session with a gentleman and looked for the three promises of pool. In this contest, I had a hard time with my key ball. The shotmaking was good, but my performance on the key ball was terrible. I choked every time I came up against a critical shot. Sometimes the key ball in my run was the three ball or the seven or the nine ball. In any case, this is where my game broke down. I fell apart in the critical shot; the shot that would open up the run for me. The reason for this failure was my lack of practice. I was too busy playing golf and taking my niece and her great kids to the park. You might say, I learned a valuable lesson about myself. I was open minded and ready to learn. The lesson I learned was: when I am not at the table in practice sessions, I should not agree to a match with an equal opponent.

Most of the time when I suffer from "key ball syndrome", I entertain thoughts like, "I just cannot play this game anymore", or, "I'll never really be a winner." If I could get a dollar every time I hung my head and said, "I'll never really be a winner", I'd retire. But this is not the case at all. It has nothing to do with who I am. The simple fact of the matter is I do not deserve to win because I have not put my time in on the table. I am not being faithful to my practice. Key ball syndrome will always be the result of not enough practice. Once you master the strokes and shots, you need to condition yourself to perform. That's what practice is all about.

The lesson learned is not always applied. When I come off the road, the worst thing I can do is play a match. My road work consists of clinics and workshops with a lot of motorcycle riding in between. Therefore, I do not get the practice time I need. One time I returned home after two months of constant travel doing workshops and private lessons and decided to play a match with a league player. Two things were wrong with this. First, it was a social, meaningless match. And second, I had just come off the road so I was not applying the lessons being learned. My opponent won easily. He thought The Monk was a fraud for the longest time until he met me in the finals of a nine ball tournament. I shut him out and he was surprised I could play the game. When I was prepared for the match, my performance was much improved. It is always that way.

Knowledge Applied is Wisdom Gained.

Why did I agree to play this match knowing what I know? Seriously, why would I do something like that? It's like the cow who chews her cud while she walks up to the guy with the rifle in his hand. Dumb.

Knowledge applied is wisdom gained. I did not apply my knowledge, therefore I was not wise. The lesson was only in the intellectual mind. It was a body of words that I understood but still had internal questions. It was a lesson I needed to relearn. Knowledge and experience can only relate when we have received what the experience is teaching us. Key ball syndrome will always be a factor for me when I do not spend time practicing. You must remember, you get out of this game what you put into it.

Sometimes we learn concepts and accept the expected results of our actions. For instance, I am aware of my key ball problems when I am not practicing. So I can accept the key ball break down when it occurs. I will not resist the key ball. In other words, I will not lose my composure over a key ball break down. This is called "Knowledge applied, Wisdom gained." Because I did not lose my composure, I was able to win matches despite my shortcomings. It was amazing. This wisdom carried me through and gave me the composure I needed to win. Don't fight that which is true. If you have not practiced and key ball is a problem, let it happen. Don't fight it. Because if you do, you then become confused, bewildered and begin to beat yourself over the head with an emotional club. While you are doing this, your game gets worse. Lady luck has a heart of stone, and will not feel sorry for you. When you apply your knowledge, you gain wisdom.

I have a conditioning program for you. Find someone who loves the game as much as you do and is about your skill level. This must be the kind of friend that you would be willing to have dinner with after you lose a tough match. In other words, you have reached the level of play where you no longer take it personal. You can appreciate a fine performance even if it does not come from you. Put up a hundred dollars on the match. Now this will get his attention. This will also get you to stand up and pay attention to what you are doing. Then play six ahead. In other words, you can only collect the money if you win by six games. A match like this is tough. It takes a long time to complete.

I've played six ahead and took nine hours to win the match. It's a grinding affair with a million built-in lessons. Six ahead with loser breaking. This way, your opponent cannot run the set. If you lose, you come to the table to break, and you learn to win off another person's break. You are always in the match.

The Six Ahead Match.

The six ahead, loser breaks match teaches you to win off your opponent's break. Very often it is these kinds of victories that determine the outcome of a match. It teaches you how devastating a mental mistake can be. When you have a game in hand during a six ahead match and you blow it, you have really lost two games. During a match like this you establish a rhythm.

You rise to a certain level of play and attempt to keep it up all during the contest. If you can do this, you will eventually wear your opponent down and win the match.

I like to establish the type of game I am going to play. Is it going to be an offensive game where I will be taking risks, or do I want to play a conservative game and rely on my opponents mistakes? During the first few games I find out what kind of stroke I have for that day, and then I decide on my method of play. This gives me the warrior-like qualities I will need for the long and grueling match. If my stroke improves during the match, I will change my strategy. For instance, there are times when I see the balls very well. If this happens, I lighten up on my position play and go for the run out.

I also check to see how my opponent is playing. In one particular contest, I realized after a long and difficult session that my opponent was getting tired. He was distracted by the things around him. He could not make the long shot. Yet he was not aware of this. I gave up the risky shot and left him long and tough. Giving him a long tough shot, rather than a kick shot, encouraged him to go for the win. If I left him safe, he would try to safe me back. I closed him out using his own weakness to my advantage. As is our custom, we had dinner after the match—which the winner pays for—and we talked about our game. My strategy surprised him and he promised to never fall for that trap again. The investments we made in our games more than made up for the lost money. With the six ahead match, you will improve. The time it take to complete the session will give you the opportunity to improve.

Long after the day is done, I will think about how things went, and ways I could improve my play. In the six ahead match, I claim the three promises of pool. I had fellowship with my friend, I learned something about myself and I performed. And on this occasion, I had a nice medium rare rib eye steak. And since my friend lost, and I was paying, he had steak and lobster.

There are times when I know I cannot make certain shots. It may be a makeable shot, but at this moment, I know I am unable to make it. I will miss it and give my opponent an opportunity to win the game. Understanding myself has helped me a great deal. I back off and play a safety when I am in a situation where I know I will be unable to succeed with a particular shot. It has helped me win thirty percent more games, and this thirty percent is the very edge I seek. It gives me many more victories simply because I am playing within myself.

There is a certain type of player who travel the long, lonely road in an effort to learn this game. In fact, he will tell you that you must learn to sacrifice in order to get better. "You must be willing to play for your rent money, starve, get a divorce, quit your job and take some chances if you are to become a great player." This is not totally untrue. Traveling the gambling road will get your attention. And when you increase your focus, you become a better player. After all, when you lose your rent money and you are out in the street, you will take the time to think about what it was that cost you this major setback. So the advice is well meaning. It will work for you to risk it all and suffer the trials and hardships of the road.

The real lesson being offered, however, is to pay attention to what it is that causes you to lose. You don't have to go on the road for that. You don't have to play for your rent money. You don't have to get a divorce or starve. You can learn all of this right at your practice table in a six ahead match with your friend.

Make it your goal to get to the next level. It is simply a matter of choice. You make the choice. You don't need the road to make it for you. Develop a program that will give you the knowledge you seek. Remember, knowledge applied is wisdom gained.

*"Thou canst not
travel on the path
before thou hast
become the
path itself"*

The Voice of Silence....

CHAPTER THREE



The Last Stand

*When the contest
has begun, you are
the only one who
can perform.*

There are two paths laid out before you. First, the art of pocket billiards, where gentleman meets gentleman and a contest is engaged. Here, both players have respect for the grand game of pocket billiards. They respect each other. The other path takes you down the muddy road to destruction where gambler meets gambler and each tries to destroy the other. Woe to the player who chooses the second path.

Gamblers have little respect for the game of pocket billiards, they don't have any respect for each other. Think about what is lost here, this is a match where each player must destroy to win. Winning by destroying another human being is not winning. As you may know, a gambler does not care how he wins. There is no honor among gamblers. They live to hear two words and only two words. They do not want to hear you say, "I can't beat you", or "I quit", or "uncle." They only want to hear you say, "I'm broke." If you quit before you say those two words, he considers himself a failure.

On the other hand, the gentleman player will wager money on a contest, but it is not the money that draws him to the game. This is not his motivation. It is the fine art of pocket billiards. It is the match. He is a match player. He loves the art of pocketing balls, the art of a run out, the art of a fine performance. The gentleman can appreciate a great performance even if it comes from his opponent.

The Gambler Always Makes His Last Stand

The gambler's road is quite different from the gentleman's road. He stands alone in the heat of battle. When the contest has begun, he is the only one who can perform. It is a solitary contest between him and his opponent. For the gambler, the loneliness of the battle is his reward. When he lays his money on the line, it's not just movie time. A process has begun. A process that is bigger than the gambler himself. A cause and effect is put into motion from which there is no turning back. And while the action around him is fierce and plentiful, he is not exempt from the loneliness of the road. Perhaps this is what he seeks, to be one with the road, to be one with the match, to risk it all and put it on the line.

Even the greatest warrior is cut off from everyone else. The match is played out in a bubble with no outside connection. When a friend approaches a gambler, he is shunned away with the solemn words, "I'm playing for money." This phrase has gained universal acceptance and everyone is expected to understand immediately what it implies. Those four words will allow you to be rude and unfriendly and no one will be offended. They take precedence over any other four words. "I'm playing for money." sets you apart from the rest. Even relatives will scurry away from the table when they hear those words. The gambler who is gambling is in a world by himself.

The bright lights of the pool hall, the skimpily clad waitresses, the hard bodies in tight T-shirts, husbands, wives, lovers and friends, ball takers, house pros, bartenders, the steady beating of the music, and the click click of the balls seem to fade into a continuous montage of vague images as the gambler retreats into his own seamy world. All eyes are on the moment. In the solitary world of the gambler, no one is welcome. He stands alone, and when you hear the sounds of taps being played by a one-man band, you are in the land of the last stand. It is time for you now to make your last stand.

The last stand is a place where all gamblers arrive. The road of the gambler will eventually lead you to the last stand. When the match evolves to the negative side, you begin to doubt your own ability. This has never happened to you before. You have always been confident in what you can do. But now, for the first time, you are unsure of the results. You are insecure and even wonder if you can win or not. These are strange thoughts, but they are as real as the sounds of the pool hall, and they begin to take hold of you. They invade your mind.

All the matches in the past are beginning to pile up in your mind, and your denial system is challenged by a few missed shots, a few blown opportunities, a few bad decisions. For you, the gambler, the keys are different. You are linked to a different experience. The score no longer reflects the

reality. You should be winning. You feel like you have made a good bet, got a good game, but this movie has an ending you never planned. For now you have entered the land of the last stand.

You have become desperate and begin to look for good rolls. You hope your opponent will blow a game or two and make it easy for you. You begin to wish he will miss a few run out opportunities. You hope for his demise because you can no longer build yourself up. In the last stand, your dream becomes your nightmare. Little by little, as the match moves on, you feel yourself losing control. You do not have the ability to take the match. Here is where you lose everything. This is the place you have driven so many opponents. You are beginning to lose your ability to focus on the shot at hand. Like a hideous virus, you are more paralyzed with each bad decision. Your final dream has disappeared. You are alone, so you hide behind your thoughts of despair and try to find some courage.

Bravely you increase the bet. On your emotional knees now, you seek strength, but you know no one is there to help you. The more you reach for help, the greater your fall. You face the biggest test of your life and your skills have left you. It's strike three, the final out.

Your family has paid dearly for your gambling career. You have reached the last stand now, and all the sins of your past come back to haunt you. You don't deserve to win—miss the seven ball. The failure of past friendships are played out in your head—miss the five ball. Lost loved ones smile from your memory—miss the nine ball. A lost job, friends you owe money to—miss the one ball. This is the land of the last stand.

You circle all your wagons and hide behind the trees. Deep breathing, prayer and meditation bring no relief from the relentless pressures of your own demise. You have willfully followed the lonely battle of the fighter. No one to turn to because there is no one there. No one left to support your journey. You are alone now.

The match takes on its own personality. The good rolls of the game have left you. They are nowhere to be found. It is almost as if you are watching this happen to another person. Your trip to the table is filled with confusion. You are no longer the clear, cool-headed player you once were. The layout of the balls offer you no run out opportunity, so you try the impossible shot. There is no way you can run to the three ball, but you try any way. Your safety play does not work. Each attempt leaves your opponent an opportunity to win. Each trip to the table ends in dismal failure. Your courage is gone. Your focus is no longer there. You have been stripped of all your skills. You are left in the world of the last stand with no weapons. You are defenseless.

All the skills you call upon from your years of training are gone. It's time to dig down and use that championship strength you thought you possessed, but no strength is there. Nothing is there because you know you are in that final chapter of a very bad gambling career. Believing that, "Money won is sweeter than money earned," is like stumbling upon your best friend in bed with your wife. You are embarrassed by your own gullible ideal.

It's over now, and in this final contest you are not aware. All will be consumed by your last stand. The voice will rip that happy-go-lucky spirit from your heart and leave you numb, without feelings. Your face will tell the all too familiar story. Your sloping shoulders will write the final defeat. It will be in your eyes. Nowhere to hide. The last stand will finally be over when you give up, not on the contest, but when you give up on yourself.

She left you now. You're on your own. No more work, no place to live, no cue, no chalk, no stake, no more chances, and worst of all, no more fire in your belly.

There's no fight left. You are finished. You are finished because you have no money left. No one trusts you, and worst of all, you trust no one. Your world is coming apart. You are like the machine-gun toting bank robber who sips champagne in the finest resorts with the finest women eating the finest food, only to make that long walk to the gallows in the end. All gamblers come to this road. The neon sign says, "The Action Road", but the flashing lights lead you to darkness. It's the third out. Time to go home.

The choice must be made. Which road do you choose? Prepare yourself well my friend, for you must travel on alone. When you seek the grand purpose of this game, you become a grand player. When you seek the high road, leave the low road behind.

The path is within, for you are the path. Be aware of your passions. Your drive is what leads you on. The game of pocket billiards is a high calling. A calling for you to experience the joys of personal growth. It is not the running of racks that shines in this game, it is the finely-tuned warrior that you have become; the one who acts with singleness of purpose. Oh, what a grand player he is who can control his passions and perform with precision, for this is the true art of pocket billiards.

"Believing that money won is sweeter than money earned is like stumbling upon your wife in bed with your best friend."

The Monk

CHAPTER FOUR



Enlightenment in Wisconsin

In every contest there will come a time for you to perform. It will eventually be your turn, so you can count on an opportunity to turn in your performance. After all, this is why you play the game.

Sometimes your performance is found in the way you handle yourself while you are in the chair. How does your performance stack up when your opponent runs the set on you? How do you react when you become the victim of a hot streak? In the game of pocket billiards, the arena is a stage, and when the first rack is broken, you are called upon to perform. Your manner, both outside and within, is your performance. It is not always found in the way you pocket balls. The way you handle yourself in the chair is also your performance, and some handle it better than others.

Do you feel sorry for yourself? That is your performance. Do you celebrate your opponents fine play? Whatever you do, you have turned in your performance. Therefore, you must stand upon that expression as a measure of your self worth. Since we seek pleasure, we must be willing to find the pleasure in playing this great game. Rather than feel sorry for yourself, you should appreciate your unique place in this game. Our attitude is within our control even when we are losing.

In the early days, when my opponent would run the set on me, I would fall apart. I felt sorry for myself because I did not get a chance to play the game. He gave me no chance to win. It wasn't right. I was unhappy. This was my experience. When I was the victim, I felt pain. It was this reaction that denied me any lessons that might be learned on that day. I was immersed in my own pain. I chose to experience pain when things did not go my way.

Then one day I played a key match in Wisconsin. I learned a valuable lesson. It was a partner's match. I had teamed up with a classy veteran player from the Upper Peninsular of Michigan. Our opponent ran seven racks on us. We were playing for twenty dollars per game and I withered through those seven agonizing racks. Five times he left himself no shot and elected to smash away at clumps of balls, and each time he made a ball and ran out. It was pure blind luck! He was a shotmaker on fire. I could have killed him. He bothered me. I didn't like the way he looked. His hair style, his body style, his dress, his mannerism, everything about him bothered me. When he finally missed, my partner did something I could not understand. He walked over to him and shook his hand. Naturally, I had to do the same. I extended my resentful hand and it actually felt good to congratulate him on his fine performance. He smiled and I smiled. I was surprised by my good feelings. For the first time in my performance, I chose not to experience pain over my misfortune. It was an interesting experience because from that time on, I did not have to sit in my chair and experience fear of failure. I would not be in pain if I lost. I was in control over which emotion I would choose to experience. It was a personal breakthrough for me. By shaking his hand and congratulating him, I was a winner as well. I had class!

We played for three more hours. It was a great time. In the end, we came out sixty dollars down. But more importantly, we made two new friends in this game. Plus I learned a lot about myself that day. I grew up. When you can appreciate your opponents performance, you have matured and become a champion yourself.

Had I taken the low road, that is, gotten mad because my opponent was having some good luck, I would have missed out on the camaraderie this game offers. From that time on, I have always tried to enjoy my experience, win or lose. I do not condition myself to enjoy just the victories. The big picture offers us far more. From that time on, I could really never lose when I played because I would always get something out of my match. And this new found philosophy gave me the freedom to turn in a better performance. I will always be called into the arena to perform. And how I behave, both at the table and in my chair, reflects who I am. And who I am determines how much happiness I experience.

"Had I taken the low road, that is, gotten mad because my opponent was having some good luck, I would have missed out on the camaraderie this game has to offer."

CHAPTER FIVE



The Road to Pooldom Come

*When you seek
the grand purpose
of this game,
you yourself
become a better player.*

Something clicks in your brain and you're on the Road to Pooldom Come. You are excited about this game. Your feelings are unique. You are on fire. It happens suddenly. Others do not share your passion, but you are called. You have been selected and should consider yourself a very special person. Once you are called, it is how you handle this calling that determines both your personal growth and your personal happiness.

You will now journey down a road that is fraught with peril from all sides. It is also filled with memorable moments that touch our hearts and bring us joy that knows no measure. You can be sure you will travel a very interesting journey.

If you understand the ongoing experience of pocket billiards, you are an enlightened individual. This is a *Samsara*, ever changing, always in motion, never-ending and continuous. It goes round and round. The click in your mind that gives you the passion is your calling. You do not choose this game. The game chooses you. There was no dramatic decision you made to become a pool player. It was simply something you knew you would be doing. The game has reached out and touched you. It does not always lead to a championship, or to the glory of a victory. It is not always the glamour of the finals. It is simply the lifelong struggle for improvement. For in that search, you are enlightened to the many higher truths about yourself that would have laid dormant and undiscovered had it not been for this great game.

So press on my friend. Do not be discouraged. Do not doubt yourself. You are truly unique. You have been chosen by something far greater than yourself. Count yourself lucky. Keep an open mind for the lessons this game offers you.

We do not choose to enter this path. The path chooses us. Once we accept the higher calling, we then become the path. We become the journey itself and this should bring a smile to your face.

It is not the unending string of victories and losses that defines us, nor is it our performance or the level of our play. We are defined by our very existence in this game. A great and mighty player drinking a cold beer at the bar can engage in a one-on-one conversation with a beginner as if they are equal because, in fact, they are equal. Both are on the same journey.

It does not matter how far you have come. You are still on the path. So, whether you are a beginner or a veteran, you are just another straggler on the Road to Pooldom Come. Great is he who is set upon this course. Great is he who knows that he cannot go back. For though in front of him the trail winds out into an abyss. Up around the next bend is another great lesson in life.

Enlightenment is like a lamp unto his feet. It illuminates the steps in front of him. He takes one step at a time and is always mindful of the lessons learned, and each lesson is a step in his timeless journey. At any point in this journey, he can glance back and see the trail he has woven. He cannot go back, but he can see the steps he has taken. He can see the milestones of his experience. He can see how he has gotten to this place in his development and in this backwards vision he is grateful. He would not have drawn up the program as it turned out, for the program was far better than what he would have designed. And in this, he has become the path itself. He is the journey and he is glad.

Often we are changed by a knowing experience. When you were a child, you loved to play with your toys. At this level, you could not imagine a time when you would not love your toys. You could not imagine a time when you would lose interest in them and move on to other things. When the time came for you to put away your toys, you did so because you were no longer the same person; you had changed. You were someone else, interested in different things. The game of pocket billiards takes you to levels upon levels. As with any achievement, you grow and mature until success is almost automatic. Success is what you are.

I once knew a salesman who was a master of his trade. I envied him. I studied him. I learned everything I could about how to sell products so I could further my career. It wasn't long before I understood the techniques of successful sales. How to get the customer interested. How to paint a picture of him using the product. How to close him by asking for an order.

I attended a Dale Carnegie course and graduated at the top of my class. I studied sales until I mastered the technique and I made no sales calls. That's right. I made no sales calls at all. Not one call. As with any achievement, you grow and mature until success is almost automatic.

When I was forced into a situation, I was weak, poorly organized, and not able to successfully close a deal. What happened to the top salesman I was destined to become? What was I missing? It was simple. It was not what I was trying to do. I was not the Path. That is not to say I cannot become a great sales person. I can become a great sales person when I change the way I am thinking. First I have to become a sales person, then I can use my skills. I need to experience the inner growth that turns me into a sales person before I can go on to make the sales calls. It is so much easier to do something once you become the something you are trying to do.

Sales, much like the game of pool, is a condition of the mind. Great pool players who possess much knowledge have a hard time teaching this game because they cannot relate to the struggles of an unenlightened pool player. They are on a different level.

Just as you put away the things of a child when you became a man, you must put away the doubts and insecurities to become a great pool player or a great salesman. Take this to your next match: "I will not doubt. I will not be insecure. I will be strong and play the way I am capable of playing."

You can learn all about the dynamics of this game or the dynamics of sales, but never have the ability to apply them because you have never become them. Be the path you travel.

Learn all you can about this game. Accumulate the knowledge it has to offer, for you will never tire of this experience.

I have had many students master my material and never enter a tournament. They could make all the shots, but they did not become a pool player. After all was said and done, they were just good at making shots, very good at making shots.

When I entered the sales field, I was devastated when a customer turned me down. I refused to make another call for days. In fact, I always quit my job after a rejection. I depended upon my sales success for my self worth. An enlightened salesperson does not worry about rejection. It is part of the

game. It is not personal. Sales, like pool, is simply a condition of the mind. It is a level of understanding. It is a level so embedded in our hearts that we are what we are trying to do.

Whether you are the salesperson or the pool player, you should be able to perform with complete freedom and not concern yourself with the results because you are doing exactly what you are suppose to do. It is as natural as breathing.

You see, I associated pain with every sales call. That was my inner association. It was painful to fail, so every time I picked up that phone, I anticipated pain. I expected it. Even when I was successful, I felt pain, anxiety and stress. It is not normal for a human being to seek pain, so I was not committed to my work. I was tentative and gun shy. When I discovered this personality quirk, I began to change the way I was thinking, and now I can make sales calls without the stress. It was the way I thought about my work that determined my effectiveness.

Do you have trouble finishing your run outs? Is there a key ball that usually gets you in trouble? You miss the key ball or you miss position and fail to run out when you have the opportunity right in front of you. Is this happening to you? Here are two things that will happen when you run out: The game will be over and your opponent will be unhappy. Both of these experiences bring pain with them. No one wants the game to be over. We want to play forever. We hate to see it end. Pain. No one really wants someone to be unhappy with them. Pain. In our peculiar minds, ending a game with a complete run out is painful. We sense this, therefore have trouble with the key ball. Many times, even though we miss the key ball, we eventually win the game, not before we drag it out, and not before we give our opponent a chance to perform.

Take some time to reflect upon this concept. If you are missing the key ball, and not finishing your run outs, there has got to be a reason beyond your shooting ability. I once failed in run out opportunities over seventy percent of the time. That was not relative to my ability. There was a different reason for this behavior. It had to do with pain and joy. I did not want to experience the pain of the game being over, and I did not want to experience the pain of my opponent being hurt or angry with me. This reason was not on the surface where I could see it clearly. My behavior with the key ball must have had something to do with my inborn desire to avoid pain. Once I could see this clearly, I changed the way I viewed things. and my success with run outs soared through the roof. I did not miss the key ball as often as I did before. I finished my run outs and enjoyed the success I deserved. I changed my pain formula. Yes, it was painful for the game to

come to an end, but it was more painful to fail. Yes, it was painful for my opponent to be angry and resentful of me, but it was more painful for my opponent to beat me. So I changed the pain. I acknowledged what I was doing and placed a bigger value on winning and avoiding the pain of failure that losing brings. I have always said that the joy of winning comes in the fact that I did not have to experience the pain of losing. It was not the first place trophy or the cash prize that made me so happy. It was the fact that I did not lose that brought me so much joy. At some point in your game, you are going to have to define what is painful and what is joyful.

Once you are doing what you are suppose to do, you become far more effective. Learn all you can about this game. Accumulate the knowledge it has to offer, for you will never tire of this experience. Satori, bits of enlightenment are like shots in the arm. They boost you and take you to a new level.

Transcendental intelligence arises when you reach the limits of your intellectual mind. You begin to sense things. You begin to get a feel for it and experience the joy of right choice. If your learning experiences are founded in their true nature, they must come from a Higher Source. You can do all things when your energy comes from a Higher Source. There are no limits.

What is a growth spurt? It is a startling, life-changing experience. This is your intuitive mind—your learning experience. Your instincts are connected with the Universal Mind, something far greater than you. Intuition cannot be analyzed or debated. It is superior to our basic intellectual understanding.

*Once you acquire the knowledge
or the intellectual cognition,
you must accumulate this informational
foundation into your mind computer
and then move on to the intuitive
expression of your knowledge.*

For example, if you have mastered the complete Monk 101 Program, you have acquired this intellectual foundation. If you express the mastery of this experience, you do so with the “Intuitive Mind”, which is directly connected to a Higher Source called the Universal Mind.

It all comes down to self-realization which is achieved through a complete recognition of the material. Once again, it is an awareness that you are “On the path you have chosen to follow.”

This awareness is knowledge we possess but cannot express. Once we are unable to express our knowledge, we have entered the intuitive stage. A well-developed intuition will go a long way in the journey toward a championship.

The right choice comes to those who are prepared. Remember, the path winds out before you. How exciting this awareness is! Those who are aware are happy to practice and develop their game. They take comfort that every practice session is a step toward a new experience. One day, they will link up their Intuitive Mind with the Universal Mind. This is the guy who shows up at the pool hall on a regular basis. He is the one who loves to spend time in his basement. He gets joy out of it because it is. He is the path.

One day he will link up his Intuitive Mind with the Universal Mind, but first he must accumulate the knowledge that will allow him to call upon his instincts to make the right choice. How wonderful this training is! How great this experience of new growth is.

Do not be discouraged. Press on my friend, for the prize is just around the corner. I have seen the path and it is splendid.

It is pure joy to be on the path, but every once in a while, there is a shadow moving through the woods like a silent serpent. It is present, following you, attached to your every move, slithering along in darkness. You have a sense of its presence. It creeps, swells, and disappears in the darkness only to reappear in the light. It is your shadow outside the path casting a light upon your sins. And what the light reveals is the amount of effort you put into this journey.

My shadow followed me through the swamps, and, at precisely the right time, it revealed for me the pain of ending a game or getting my opponent angry at me. For a while, I listened to the serpent. I heard his disruptive message. Then I decided to close my ears to its mischief and left it in the shadows of the swamp. I changed my values, and went on to experience the joys of this great game. Every now and then the serpent reappears and I must deal with his slithering logic again. But I am ever mindful of his presence and have my intuitive mind firmly in the grasp of the Universal Mind, and this gives me my freedom. When the voice of destruction comes to me in the night, I am able to resort back to the Monk 101 program, identify the shot as just a shot, and deliver the winning stroke. I have my freedom and it is good.

CHAPTER SIX



Seven Portals of Your Journey

At some point in your development, you will have to consider your inner game, that is, the inner part of you that makes up the journey. You must become the path in order to follow it, so you will want to define who you are and what you stand for. Actions speak volumes about your intentions. When you want to strengthen the qualities of your life, you must go through their action. When you express a quality, you strengthen it.

The following are the Seven Portals of the Buddhist journey. If you follow them faithfully, you will shine a light upon your path. Make up your mind to exercise each of them at least once a day.

<i>Dana</i>	The key to charity. Please be generous to your fellow traveler today. Be kind. Be charitable.
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<i>Shila</i>	Harmony with yourself and those around you.
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<i>Kshanti</i>	Patience that cannot be ruffled.
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<i>Virag</i>	An indifference to both pleasure and pain, winning and losing.
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<i>Virya</i>	The persistent energy that drives you to the truth.
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<i>Dhyana</i>	The essence of your rugged path that leads to the linking of the Universal Mind.
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<i>Prajna</i>	The final resting place where you truly belong. You have arrived. "A pilgrim has returned from the other shore. Get out the best ham, set the best table, get the finest wine, for we are going to have a feast. "Another pilgrim has come home."
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To follow the Seven Portals of the Buddhist Journey, you must be conscious of your own personal effort each day. With each day, your exercises make you stronger. They prepare you for the tough battles ahead. You have chosen the field of competition. You desire the battle. You want to be a winner. Follow The Seven Portals and you will find that final resting place. Not only will you sink the winning ball, but you will win the hearts of your colleagues as well.

No longer do I agonize over the two alternatives. Right doing has been ingrained in my character. I act from obedience to an inner purpose. The choice is automatic. I may not succeed with the run-out before me, for there are irrefutable laws of this game. But I am happy with my choice. I am happy with who I am.

Through my intuition, and based upon the level of my journey, I know that I made the right choice. It was right for me and it was fun. My path is The Monk 101 program. I will apply the Seven Portals of the Buddhist Journey to The Monk 101, and each day I will take a conscious step towards Prajna, that final resting place.

CHAPTER SEVEN



The Golfer

*“Whatever happens,
whoever wins, whoever loses,
I know one thing.
I think God would
want us to be courageous.
No, I know God would
expect us to be courageous.”*

Tom Lehman, PGA Pro Golfer

During the U.S. Open in Golf, Tom Lehman and Steve Jones stood on the eighteenth tee tied for the lead. They had one more hole to play. Both were men of deep faith. Steve turned to Tom and asked, “What are we expected to do? How do we finish this hole?”

Tom Answered, “I don’t know what the outcome will be Steve. Whatever happens, whoever wins, whoever loses, I know one thing. I think God would want us to be courageous. No, I know God would expect us to be courageous.”

We can find the courage we need in a difficult situation simply by being courageous. Courage is what we are. We already have it. When I enter a match, I expect to act with courage. That is the very least I can do. Lay it on the line and act with courage.

Some time ago, I agreed to a workshop in Tulsa Oklahoma at Jim McDermott’s place. Tulsa is the hub of Midwestern billiards. Jim’s place is full of the finest players in the Midwest. When I entered the spacious pool hall, I experienced a panic attack. The first thing I told myself was that I didn’t belong here. I hadn’t paid my dues with long hours on the road. I wasn’t even a good player. How was I going to perform in front of serious pool players who made a living out of running racks? I fell into a panic. They even had chairs for spectators! People were here to see me play. “I am

really not a pool player,” I told myself. True, I have played in a lot of tournaments, many matches, but mostly, I am a teacher, a writer. Now they wanted to see me play. Spectators!

I had some time before I went on. Time before I either blew it or made a fool of myself. I had time to think about it. To think about what I had gotten myself into. It was time to meditate, do some of my breathing exercises, and do some serious thinking. I went into my motor home to ponder the situation. Then I thought of what Tom Lehman said. “What are we expected to do?”, was the question on the 18th tee. “What are we expected to do?” God simply expects me to act with courage. That is the least I can do. Go out in front of the players and act with courage. Courage is ours by being it. In other words, Courage will help us to not worry about the results. They will take care of themselves. Results will be just that. Most of the time, results are beyond our control. Act with courage and let the chips fall where they may. What a relief!

I entered the arena and shot all the shots to the best of my ability. I shot all the shots that came up, Kshanti. Most were shots from my book The Lesson. I simply followed my own teaching with courage and let the results be what they were. Good or bad, I would accept it with courage, Virag. I would be courageous, Virya. I would not make excuses nor would I complain. I would take on all challengers, Shila. I would play the game. I would perform, Prajna. And within this performance, I would share my knowledge with others, Dana.

After my performance, someone told me I played for three straight hours and did not miss one makable shot. I did play well. I played beyond my expectations, far beyond what I thought I would play. I was lost in the land of dead stroke. I was lost in my own performance. I was the path. All I did was summon the will to be courageous.

Courage breeds trust.
Trust breeds commitment.
Commitment breeds desire.
Desire breeds will.
Will breeds energy.
Energy breeds focus.
Focus breeds good results.
It all starts with courage.

During your next match, make up your mind you will be one with courage. This will be your focus. Find the spots in your performance that show lack of courage and fix them. For instance, if you make an excuse or get uptight about how your opponent is playing, that's lack of courage. If you feel sorry for yourself or yield to anxiety about any shot, or show an increased agitation with losing, you are not being courageous. At the very least, you can be courageous. Courage must be demonstrated in the face of failure as well as in the face of success. It takes inner courage to stand in the winner's circle and graciously receive all the accolades poured upon the winner. Pay attention to how you display courage the next time you play this exciting game.

Courage is a skill you can acquire.

The military goes to great lengths to teach courage. They have a well-defined program that instills courage in each recruit. It is a skill that becomes a vital part of your being and allows you to perform at a level you never dreamed you could. After a period of training, you suddenly have it. It is strengthened by its own expression. When you use your skills, such as I did in Tulsa, you increase your skills. On the other hand, if you shy away from a challenge, you weaken your skills. If I had backed down in Tulsa, I would have set the tone in my career for the rest of my life.

Sometimes the greatest contest is not on the table. It is found in life. It is found within ourselves. Can we overcome our own insecurities? Can we use the courage that is within each of us, the courage that is at our fingertips? This is what the Military is after. They hope to bring the courage we already have to the surface and teach us how to use it to win the battle.

I have heard so many times from players how they are frightened in a tournament because they have drawn a player who was far better than them. There is no way you can change the draw. If you are forced to play someone who is better than you, act with courage. Let courage be your friend. Simply draw upon the courage you already have. This is a perfect time to strengthen your courage by using it. You may be surprised by the results. Courage will always reward those who use it wisely.

During your next match, be one with courage. Find the times in your performance that show lack of courage and correct them. Courage does not depend upon the results. Courage is ours for the asking. Simply use it and be at peace with the results.

CHAPTER EIGHT



You Are Not Your Emotions

When the anxiety of the match, the fear, the intolerance, the emotions of anger, jealousy, or envy begin to take hold of you, remind yourself that you are not your emotions. They are not you. After a terrible loss, you fall apart and your friends say, “You didn’t act like yourself tonight.” People close to you know who you are and you are not your emotions. Your emotions are not a part of this journey. Your emotions are not the path.

If you are frightened and depressed, you do not have to stamp it out like a pesky bug. You don’t have to set up some kind of a personal war. You need to take dominion over these emotions. Learn to disassociate yourself from them. This way, you will be able to take control of them. Remember, if you let them take control of you, your life will be a mess. Do you know people who are controlled and destroyed by depression and fear? All the wonderful things that you are will diminish in the face of these adversaries. And yet you are not your emotions. Even if your emotions overcome you and take you to the Wayside, you are still not your emotions.

If you are to build your concentration skills, you must take control of your emotions. Remember, energy runs towards these emotions like a child chasing a new toy. This energy will not be available for use in your self development, if worn out by your emotions.

There is a burst of energy, Virya, in each personal growth step you take. Keep watch on your emotions. When a negative emotions arises, stop and say, “Cancel,” and spend a little time watching this emotion scurry like a rodent in the dark corners of your mind to hide among the shadows. Once the emotion is gone, you may use this energy to build your concentration skills.

If you become frightened or depressed you need to take dominion over these emotions. Learn to disassociate yourself from them. They are not you.

I remember one occasion while I was in central Missouri visiting friends. I got up in the middle of the night to get a drink of water, and as I walked in my bare feet across the kitchen floor, I could hear and feel crunching beneath my feet. When I turned on the light, a thousand inch-long cockroaches went scurrying for darkness. “Cancel,” I said to myself.

We are sometimes tempted to use negative energy as part of our everyday living. We thrive on it. After all, negative energy is still a burst—a shot in the arm so to speak. It could very well give us a sense of purpose. Like a neighborhood feud, we find an identity in our own anger. There are those who yield to this madness and spend their entire lives paying tribute to these negative emotions. They refuse to give up this energy even though it is killing them. They cling to it like an addict reaching for his pills. They get off on it. Why they continue to do this is beyond my comprehension. They poison themselves with negative energy. They lack the courage to overcome and fall victim to their own weakness. For within their weaknesses they are familiar and it takes courage to press out into the unknown. Even though what they know is painful and self destructive, it is still what they know, and they have become comfortable with it.

To cancel this energy and face the challenges of the living—really living—with all the pressures, ups and downs, thrills and heartaches, is often too much for those who lack courage. They would prefer to remain in the constant battle, to and fro, of the infighting, and be concerned more with their own rightness than the actual truth. I’ve seen people accurately analyze their problems for years and years and never do one single solitary thing to overcome them. Concentration takes more work than not concentrating.

CHAPTER NINE



Pocket Billiards Has Become My Mistress

*Pocket billiards has become my mistress,
For every time she takes me high,
there are three times she passes me by.*

Meditation is the source of our increased concentration skills. Through meditation, we free ourselves for our own self-development. When a thought drives you toward a decision, stop and ask yourself, “Is this thought mine? Is it totally mine?”

You must be possessed of your own comings and goings. What does it mean to be possessed? Let us use the word “composure”. Be composed when you enter a room. Be composed in all you do. Pay attention to the simple things, like getting out of a chair or getting a glass of water. Try to determine which muscles you are using. How is your balance when you rise up out of a soft cushiony chair? Be sure not to trip or stumble when you are walking down the sidewalk. Be composed. Whether you are bending, stretching, drinking, eating, talking, playing pool, walking, running, sleeping, or even making love, be composed. Composure is the sign of one who is self possessed.

We gain our self possession skills through meditation. But it can be dangerous if it does not find a direct measure of service to mankind. The is “Dana.” If you experience growth through your efforts in meditation, and you do not share this knowledge with others, all sorts of disharmony will follow you. Our growth comes from a Higher Source. This is an experience. Something happens within us—a change—a transition beyond our basic intellect. Something happens and we are no longer the same person. We get this growth through meditation. To increase our skills at concentration, you must meditate. For it is through purposeful meditation that we experience growth.

Very often it is our inability to sustain prolonged concentration that cost us our match. Poor concentration skills will defeat us every time. But what exactly is concentration?

Concentration is the focus on the field of attention for a time determined by the will.

Through meditation you can become a giant in composure. What a marvel you are, fully composed in all sorts of situations. Everyone admires you. This is a profitable quality to have. You are winning because you are self-composed. You are self-composed because you have meditated, and through this meditation, you have brushed against the wings of a Higher Source. You have touched souls and in return you have been touched. Indeed, it is a rare and wonderful experience, one that is to be shared with others on this perilous journey. Take the time to help a fellow straggler along the way.

Unless this quality finds itself correspondingly in the service of mankind, you will lose your steps towards inner growth. You will regress to your old ways. Trust me, if you are not willing to share your newly acquired qualities with those who travel this same road, you will be trampled under foot. You will be the Rose of Sharon that was stepped upon by the speeding horse along the trail.

You must eliminate the idle and purposeless activity during the intense moments of concentration.

Develop a one track mind through your daily meditation. When I am working on a book or an article, I think about it every waking moment of the day. When I was given an idea for a great ending for a novel in which I was working, I drove up into the wilderness of Michigan and worked on this idea for ten straight days. My daughter Amanda gave me the idea, and she wondered why I needed to seclude myself for such a long period of time. She wondered why it seemed like I could only work for a few hours a day. Why would I suddenly get tired and be unable to continue? Actually, I never really stopped working. I was thinking about this material all day long. I am totally single minded and consumed by the idea before me. It is the same with a pool match or tournament. I make the entire day an exercise in total concentration. I tell myself that I am going to concentrate on this task for a time prescribed, and then get on with the job of doing it. I forget about concentration and perform the task of my choice.

You must eliminate the idle and purposeless activity during the intense moments of concentration. I don't even want to see my own family when I am working on a specific task which calls for great concentration. This is why I ended up a single man. My wife could not take it when she was relegated to second place. If I were preparing for a tournament, my family took a back seat. It takes a lot of courage to stay the course. But this is the only way you will ever climb the mountain of success. At a great cost, I became a master teacher and author. I have no regrets. I am glad I made these choices. They were difficult. And once they were made, I needed concentration on the exact nature of my choice.

To increase your skills, you may be asked to make the greatest of sacrifices. I hope this does not happen to you, but sometimes you have to make a difficult choice. If there is competition between your choices, you must choose one or the other. If you chase two rabbits you will not catch either one of them. You do not have the energy to travel this rocky road with two things on your mind. You will fall apart. You need to experience growth and this takes energy. Energy that comes from focus. Stay on the course. You have been called. I am sorry to tell you this, but it may require the greatest of sacrifices. And in the end, when you reach your goals, you may not be totally satisfied. You may look back and wonder if it was worth it. Be that as it may, you will know in your heart that this was the journey you needed to take. This is what you needed to do. And you will be glad you did it.

I will make my decisions without a lot of thought. There will be very little debate and second guessing because it is the right thing to do. This is the way I live my life. Sometimes I travel this road with a heavy heart. Still, there was no other way for me to go. I was faced with standing still and experiencing no growth or moving on and experiencing personal growth. I chose the latter.

I needed to continue my journey. Life is a precious gift, a personal gift. We all have the ability to choose how we want to use this gift. My choice was the way it was. I do not look back. I do not grovel in regret. What's done is done. In the earlier days I was not a self possessed man. I was a lump of wasted energy and totally ill at ease. Something was wrong with me and I knew it. I am glad I had the courage to do something about it. Change, however it comes, is at a high price. Something must be given up to gain.

In the past I cannot say I really liked myself. I was wasting time. It is different now. I am at peace with myself. What I do now is good and right, so in my losing, I have gained. It's funny how things work out for us.

To increase your skills you may be asked to make the greatest of sacrifices.

I have a new mistress now. She is pocket billiards and all her glory! Though every time she takes me high, there are three times she passes me by.

One time in a tournament, I was faced with a tough safety. I needed to slow roll the cue ball to my fifteen ball and land just up against it. This would be a lockup safety and I would end up with ball in hand. I delivered the delicate shot the best way I knew how. The cue ball rolled slowly across the slate and hit the seams. It rolled off over two inches and I ended up giving my opponent ball in hand. It was not my fault. The mistress was not to kind to me that day.

There were other times my mistress treated me unkindly. I left an inferior opponent virtually no shot at all, and he slammed into a cluster only to sink the nine ball and win the game. Once again, my mistress kicked me out of her bed.

Still, there are times when I bask in the land of dead stroke. I am on a personal high of my own. I can see the patterns, I can make the shots, and I win game after game after game. At times like these I am self defined, I like what I see. I am happy with where I am and where I have ended up.

Part of being self-composed is the joy of more energy. You do not waste energy in useless movement of the hands and feet; therefore, there is less fatigue. Early in my career, I would win the first three matches of the tournament and then fall by the Wayside in the next two. After three matches, I would suddenly get tired. I was overwhelmed with fatigue and could no longer concentrate on my shots. For the longest time I blamed this on my age, my weight, my lack of exercise, etc. In reality, I was not self-composed. I wasted too many movements. Sometimes, I looked at a shot five different times. This was four times too many. In a basic run out, that would be thirty six extra looks – not to mention extra bends, extra squats, extra dips, and extra consideration. In a race to nine, that means three thousand looks at a shot. This is all due to a lack of self-composure. I was not sure of what I was doing. Of course I was tired. This would kill anyone! I was working too hard, so, towards the end of the tournament, I could not concentrate when I needed this skill the most.

You must learn to conserve useless movements of the hands and feet. Your mind and emotions need to act in harmony. They need to function as one. This way, there will be less waste of energy and you will be stronger for the finals.

CHAPTER TEN



Use Your “Will Skills” to Bring Desire

*Desire brings energy.
The stronger your will,
the greater your desire to
come back from a huge deficit.*

Through dedicated meditation, we cultivate the concentration skills we need to experience inner growth. The key words here are “Inner Growth.”

Remember what I said about inner growth? It is a spurt, something that happens within the mind. When you experience it, you are never the same. You rise to a different level in your game. You become a different person, and this cannot be done through the intellect. It is not something you can bring about through academic study. Inner growth cannot be intellectualized. It must be experienced, and it must be done through meditation.

Concentration is the focus on the field of attention for a time determined by the will. Have you ever heard someone say, “I lost my concentration,” For a time, his focus on the field of attention was determined by his will. He lost his will. His “will skills” were not fully developed. That’s why he lost his concentration.

Have you ever seen a gymnast on the balance beam do the intricate tumbles while the crowd is responding to other competition going on at the same time? This is the ultimate study in concentration. If a child can develop these skills, then you too can have this ability. You can blot out all the distractions around you while you use your concentration skills to finish a difficult run out.

Without thorough and sincere dedication to meditation, you will always be at the mercy of your will skills. When “will skills” leave us, all the concentration in the world will not help. You must be able to extend the time of your focus as determined by your will. Will brings desire. It breeds desire.

In the Dhammapada we read, “Irrigators lead the water where they will. Fletchers shape the arrows. Carpenters bend the wood to their will. Wise men shape themselves.”

You do not need a continuous effort on the shots and strokes of pool. Daily practice will take care of that. You need to shape yourself so you can handle the strokes and shots of pocket billiards.

In this journey towards self-development, you are at the mercy of the intuitive mind. It is in the intuitive mind that we find inner growth. Therefore, you must be willing to follow. You must be willing to increase your will-skills and create the desire to carry out this task. Will brings desire. The stronger your will, the greater your desire. They go hand in hand. Desire brings energy. Players with great comeback ability have a strong will. If you are to come back from a huge deficit, you must be able to summon the energy that comes from strong will-skills.

When you feel yourself weaken and become discouraged, take some time to visit another straggler on the road to Pooldom Come. Visit this person and talk about your game. You will find this will strengthen your will to continue.

You must be willing to share this experience with others. If you are not willing to do this, you will not grow. It is as plain and simple as that. I’ve seen so many pool players want to keep their skills a secret, and never go anywhere in this game. At the same time, I’ve seen players who were generous in the sharing of knowledge with others, and they rise to the top. Once you are truly on the path, answers will come to you. They will come to you in a special burst of inner growth experiences. And if you are to keep this flow going, you must be generous with your fellow traveler. As in all growth spurts, you are in transition. You are moving about in your own mind. You must maintain this perpetual motion. If you keep everything to yourself, you stifle the experience and stop the flow of knowledge.

Keep in mind that meditation is not the zoning in on your mind with chants and incense. It is simply the focus for a moment on nothing. It is the waiting for a revelation that is sure to come. It is a moment of silence, thinking about nothing. They that wait, shall renew their strength. They shall rise up with the wings of eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall move and not faint. Take the time to simply wait. Wait in quiet solitude.

The art of meditation is not hard to learn. Basically, you are trying to quiet the mind. You want to be still for a moment, and realize the benefits of what you truly want in life. There is a part of you that knows your dreams

and in the quiet times, during those moments of stillness, this part of you will make your dreams come true. For instance, you want to acquire the fine skills of concentration. Let's meditate on that:

Sit in a quiet place. A peaceful setting. Breathe in deeply. Quiet the mind. Draw your breath in full, from deep in the stomach. Hold it for a moment and then release it out of your mouth. Listen to your own breathing. Listen to your heart beat. Then be still. Quiet, Peaceful. You are one with the moment. Quiet the mind. Focus on the space directly between your eyes. See your stillness. See your quiet moment. Listen to your breathing. Stay focused for as long as you can. Be still as long as your mind will allow you to. Take this time to wait for the benefits that will surely come to you. Meditation is waiting for the rewards of stillness. Be still and wait. Do this every day and you will be happy with the results. You will be able to measure the results of your meditation exercises. Know what you want. Take the action of meditation and measure the results.

CHAPTER ELEVEN



Something Must Be Said About Karma

For some of you, your mind has withdrawn from its own playground, the world of senses, pleasure and compulsiveness. You are in an evolutionary stage and will be ready to invoke all sorts of past Karma. Through your meditation you have opened yourself up to this experience. It is fine. You are ready to deal with it. And by all means, deal with it. Do not resist. Welcome the challenge to make it right. Do not shy away from making the amends of your past wrongs. It is the only way to burst through to the top. You cannot arrive in the winner's circle carrying a lot of baggage. It won't work. Remember, winning is not just the sinking of the final ball. It is a way of life. It is who you are. Sometimes, when we refuse to right that which is wrong, we are stuck. We are mired in inertia and nothing good happens to us. We are in a slump, and this slump can be life long.

All debts must be paid and the sooner you recognize the resultant Karma from your past, the sooner you will be free from the bondage that holds you back. There is no way around it. Karma will follow you all the days of your life, and the direct willingness to even the score gives you the opportunity to do so in ways you could not imagine. Your simple willingness creates a great opportunity for you. I have spent a lifetime paying for my past Karmic sins. It has not been the drudgery or misery you would imagine. Actually, it has been quite interesting.

Karma can be fun!

My life reading revealed that I had been a Monk on three different occasions and each time I had abused my position.

Many years ago I attended a seminar in Virginia Beach at the Association for Research and Enlightenment Center of the Edgar Cayce Foundation. On the beach I met a psychic who was highly skilled in the art of life readings.

I had no real understanding of this ability, nor did I place a lot of value in it. But I was curious so I allowed him to read my palms. His first impression of the intricate lines in my hands were that I was dedicated to paying back my Karmic debts. I was here to pay for my past sins and if I could do that, I would then move on to further enlightenment and possible Nirvana.

His message rang a bell for me because so many times during my life experience, things happened to me that did not make any sense until years later. What I was engaged in seemed to be dumb, but I was sure it was right for me. Then years later, I would discover that it was right all the time. At the time of the reading, I had just enrolled in college and couldn't wait to get back home and begin my education. While he was viewing my hands he mentioned that very fact and that I would be a serious student. I would study like no other student and achieve the honor roll. Then he told me I would not ever take a job in my chosen field, which would be psychology. All I was really interested in was learning. At the time I thought he was wrong, but later, his predictions proved true. When all was said and done I ended up a Ph.D. – pool hall degenerate.

Then he went into my past lives. His eyes glassed over and he began to talk about me in other times. It was interesting. In one of my past lives I was a strikingly beautiful female of Norwegian decent. I was built like a goddess, so beautiful that men found me disturbing. In addition to this beauty, I was cruel to men. I tormented them.

The psychic also went on to say that I had been a Monk on three different occasions, and each time, I had abused my position.

This reading took place in the mid 70's when I was just beginning to study Buddhism. I was dealing with God on a personal level, at that time, and I was getting urges to become a monk. Often I would tell my wife, "If I turn my will over to God, He may want me to become a monk." This was my biggest concern. I was interested in Buddhism and studying the monk's way of life, but I did not want to become a monk. I had fears about that. Ten years later, however, I became The Monk, and it all started with those vague feelings that it was going to happen. Fifteen years later, I met Suzanne Bosselman, the cruel Nordic beauty.

Suzanne is a strikingly beautiful blond goddess. I spent five intense years with her, and, basically, my role was to be totally devoted to her personal growth. It was not easy to be with her. She was extremely competitive. Her own siblings would not even play checkers with her when she was a child.

Our roles were clearly defined. I nurtured her; she tormented me. To this day, I still dream of winning a match at thirty to nothing. It would never happen as she would quit if I were ahead.

Many years after my life reading in Virginia, I ran into the blond goddess who torments men. I devoted five years to her personal development. She became a world class pool player. Then she left me, married her high school sweetheart and went to college to become an engineer, never to play pool again. "What was that all about?" I asked myself as I took my first solo flight in my airplane. As I had the airport in sight, and was about to make my first landing, I thought about that life reading in Virginia, and realized that Suzanne was me from a past life! My five years with her paid the Karmic debts I had accumulated when I was a beautiful Nordic female who tormented men. Suzanne doesn't appreciate this explanation,

I spent five years with Sue. I was writing books, and teaching pool, conducting seminars, and paying back my karmic debts. I didn't plan all of this. I simply was willing to even the score. I had an open mind to what lie ahead for me. You should see what I am heading for after this is all done!

Once you are willing to make it right, the avenue to do so will open up for you, and it will always be interesting and exciting. You see, it is not a crime and punishment thing. It is simply paying back what you borrowed. Once you repay the debt, you are free. It is time for celebration because once you get your freedom, which is sure to come to those who are willing—life becomes more real. I hope there is another Suzanne in my future.

*If I was a monk
in past lives,
and if I abused my position,
then The Monk
is here now to serve
and pay for past Karma.
The Monk*

CHAPTER TWELVE



Thoughts Will Reproduce Themselves

*If you are truly
unhappy, understand
that is you who
decides to be this way.*

As you increase your concentration skills, you will see that the fact of any concern is of no real importance. It is the significance that really matters. Facts are facts. How you react to them is up to you. You are in control of how you react to the facts. It is your actions that really count.

If you are an unhappy person, then this is the reaction you have decided to use. A wise man will not allow outer circumstances to disturb his inner peace of mind. A wise man is not at the mercy of another's actions. In other words, he will not be controlled by the way another person acts.

I have shied away from certain people because they threatened my happiness. This was my choice. I choose how to deal with any threat to my serenity. Once I've dealt with it and made my choice, the threat still remains, but it does not affect me. It is still there as part of the facts. Since it will be my choice, how to deal with it, I have the power to determine the significance.

I am sometimes matched up against players with whom I am uncomfortable. They are obnoxious and unpleasant. This is a fact. I cannot get away from these match ups, so I decide I will not react to these players. I will simply play my game and let the results be the results. Because of my reaction, I have reduced their effect on me.

What I am suggesting is that you be one with your purpose. Whatever you choose to concentrate on for any given moment, be sure to narrow the field of focus to that endeavor. Do this for as long as you will it to be done. You will strengthen your will skills. You will strengthen your concentration

powers. Focus on strife and unhappiness and what do you get? Focus on confidence and what do you get? Whatever your field of focus is, you strengthen it for all time.

Thoughts will reproduce themselves. As you toy with a thought, you strengthen that thought. This is how you get seduced into doing something that is not good for you. It begins with a thought. You toy with that thought, and it grows to another thought, and finally, you are caught up in it all.

How many players have you seen set themselves up for a loss long before they even play the game? They talk about how they are not ready to play, have not had a good practice, did not get enough sleep, etc., and all this time they are preparing to lose. What do you think happens to these players in tournaments? As we think, so have we become.

Your brain is like a garden. Plant negative thoughts and you will reap a bad harvest. Once you allow the thoughts to take hold, you will be hard pressed to get rid of them. Once you allow doubts about your abilities to enter your mind, you will have to live with that insecurity until you finally overcome it. In some cases, therapy is required.

In my career, there was always that one person I could not beat. No matter how well I played, I just could not beat him. When you look at it realistically, I was better than he was. If I could avoid him during a tournament I usually won the tournament. I beat many players he could not beat. It was all in my head. I allowed the thought that I couldn't beat him occupy my mind. It grew and grew until I believed it and acted it out. After considerable meditation I was able to change my perception of the match, and went on to overcome my problem. My policy now is that I never know who is going to win the match. I don't care who I am playing, I have no thoughts on the subject. I will show up. I will play, and the results will be just that – "Virag." You would be surprised by how many fine players I have been able to beat. I have an indifference towards winning and losing. I am a player who plays the game. I get good rolls and win. I get lucky and win. I play good and win.

Be the guardian angel of your thoughts. Don't waste time worrying about results that have not happened. Feed yourself good positive thoughts and let them grow until they can serve you during the tough times. You deserve it.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN



Breathe Your Way to Success!

To improve your power of concentration you must develop your skills through meditation. We complain about our lack of concentration and yet we do nothing to change it. Here is how you can strengthen your concentration skills. When you do this, you will find yourself in the winner's circle far more often.

I have taken part in Yoga meditation, chants, and peaceful sittings. I have taken the time to seek a Higher Purpose. I have done all of this in order to increase my power of concentration. You do not have to enter a monastery and follow a structured form of mediation. There is no need for ceremony. In this case, you don't need a guru to lead you to a higher truth. Certainly, you don't need to join a cult. Meditation to strengthen your power of concentration is personal and private. Sitting on a log, basking in the sunshine is enough. What is important in meditation is to receive the healing warmth to the brain that the Higher Power offers. All you do is receive.

Sit in a quiet place. Focus on what you are seeking and let it happen.

You have heard the saying, "Ask and ye shall receive." In meditation, if we are working on inner-growth and concentration development, all we have to do is "ask" and wait to receive. Meditation is the opening of the heart. Wait quietly for the gift of concentration and it will come to you. It is the simple act of waiting peacefully for something that is rightfully yours in the first place. Do not get in the way. Simply wait. Wait while your strength is renewed.

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” I learned early not to define “Lord,” only to believe it as something greater than I. I learned early to define “strength.” The strength I seek is called concentration. So I wait. I focus on concentration and I renew. It really works.

We seek wisdom, not power. We seek to increase our ability to concentrate for a time prescribed by the focus of our attention. We want to increase that strength. We are not asking to win the match. We are not asking to shoot the lights out. We are simply asking for increased concentration skills. This is what we are working on through meditation.

In meditation we think about the subject all day long. In other words, if you are going to focus on your concentration skills, then you will need to think about it for the time allotted. This is your meditation exercise. Take a moment and stare at a spot on the wall. Simply stare at it for five minutes or however many minutes you are capable of. Sit without thinking. Clear your mind. You are here to increase your ability to concentrate. You have asked for it by your actions. Now you need only to receive. Close your eyes and count your breathing. See how many deep breaths you can take before your mind begins to wander. Remember, every time you practice this exercise you strengthen your ability to concentrate. You improve your skills every time you work out. In “[The Eight Ball Book](#)” I talk about “putting another brick in the wall.” You are building a sound wall of skills and each practice session is putting more bricks in your wall. Every time you play a match, enter a tournament, or put time on the table, you are putting more bricks in your wall. Likewise, every time you meditate, you are putting more bricks in your wall. In time, my friend, you will have a fine, sturdy wall, one that won’t break down under the pressure of intense competition.

In building this master wall, you need to focus on self-possession first. Make up your mind you will take control of yourself. Get composed. Begin as a self-possessed man, then build the skills to make yourself a champion.

Once you are self-possessed, outside circumstances will not whisk you away to the playground of impulsiveness. When you are composed, you can pursue the development of your concentration skills. You are the master of this painting. You are the master builder of this wall.

All masters of control begin their training with meditation. These are exercises designed to strengthen our will to focus on an object for a time prescribed. You can begin by using the following meditation exercise to bring your mind under control. Making time to meditate adds another element to your life.

If you grow through meditation and do not share this growth with mankind, all sorts of evil will befall you.

First you must learn the art of breathing. In breathing, we regulate the oxygen to the brain. I find that if I want to have a better writing session, I need to walk briskly in the open air. This stimulates my brain and I am able to focus on what I want to say. The “Zen Art of Breathing” is as follows. Begin by inhaling slowly and deeply through your nose with your lips closed. Draw in a deep belly-filling breath, filling your lungs to bursting capacity. As you inhale deeply, raise your chest, and in so doing, raise your diaphragm. This life-giving air floods your brain with fresh oxygen and supplies you with vigor and energy – energy to think, create and focus. Let the new air filter through your brain. This allows the brain to select what it needs to sustain life. With this new fresh air, you are supplying all the ingredients for good health and physical prosperity. As you raise your chest with new air, you are pulling your abdomen in. This brings up your diaphragm. When you release this air, your chest depresses, distending the abdomen and pushing the diaphragm down. This method of breathing is the exact opposite of most methods. As you inhale fresh new air, think of pulling up the wall of your diaphragm as far as possible. As you exhale, think of pushing your diaphragm down and out against the solar plexus.

As you increase your skills in the “Zen Art of Breathing,” you will be able to push your diaphragm down until the final pressure is felt just below your navel. Your mind will be most focused on the exhaled breath and for this reason you must exhale slower than you inhale.

Take time to meditate in a structured form of exercise. Do so with the counting of breaths. Begin with ten. Once you succeed with ten, go back to one and count to ten again. Do this continuously, as long as the will remains strong. Focus your mind on your own breathing.

When thoughts begin to intrude, and they will, don’t resist them. Don’t try to get rid of them. You would be responding to your thoughts if you did. Just keep counting breaths. When you focus on your thoughts, you create a disturbance. You create a conflict. You are setting up a resistance much like an argument with a child. You give them added life and energy. Patiently come back to the counting of breaths. Get yourself back on track. Focus on the counting of breaths. This is what you intended to do in the first place. Be composed here. Be focused. Sharpen your will skills.

Your goal should be three hundred counts. Thirty repetitions of ten breaths. These three hundred counts must be made without any thoughts of any kind coming in during the entire time of meditation. This is not an easy exercise, but it is a rewarding one. Soon, you will find your concentration skills soaring as you increase the will to succeed. Remember, concentration can only last as long as your will skills will allow. We strengthen our will skills when we practice meditation.

If you are just beginning this exercise, try to do fifty counts with a perfectly concentrated mind. Each breath should be slow and complete. Try to be in front of an open window when you go into meditation. If possible, face towards the east. Face the rising sun.

In the case of self-development, or the evolution of your being, there are intruding thoughts that fight for life of their own. Ask yourself the next time they arise, “Whose thoughts are these?” Think of them impersonally. They are not your thoughts. They are really not your thoughts at all. When the thoughts come up, note that they are now entering your mind and now they are leaving your mind. You are a casual observer to this pesky nuisance.

At one point I was taking my neighbor to the hospital for chemo treatments. While he was undergoing the radiation I sat in the lobby and meditated. This gave me an excellent time to work on my will skills. You can meditate any place where you have time and won’t be disturbed. I made great progress during his months of treatment.

There is danger in this exercise if you are not in control of your mind. The mind will chase after these intruding thoughts, much like a dog chasing a car, and your concentration skills will be under fire. Try to be an emotionless observer. If the thought are having their way with you, suspend your exercise and pick it up at another time.

As you watch the flow of thoughts, you must not become attached to them. This is the art of calm control or non-attachment. They are not your thoughts; therefore, they are not worthy of your attention. If the thoughts persist, you may want to stop and drag them out in the open for examination. Track them back to their source. See where they come from.

Sometimes when I drifted into meditation my mind would go on a plane ride. Then suddenly, the plane would begin to crash. Sometimes I would see myself walking along a quiet street then muggers would leap out of the bushes and rob me. Once I visualized myself riding my motorcycle throughout the canyons of Utah, when suddenly the brakes went out and I was hurdled down hill towards the hair pin turn. Each of these thoughts ended up in a disaster. What was going on with that?

I began to trace these thoughts back to the source and found that I was really not comfortable with success, such as flying, or riding my motorcycle or walking in the park, so I destroyed these thoughts because they did not fit my self image. This was a classic discovery. A great reward from meditation. I set about working on my self image so I would be comfortable with my own success.

However, it's a long long road. Just the other day I imagined myself fishing along the Diablo River north of Montreal and three escaped convicts came out of the bushes and tortured me. They took all my fish. Like you, I am just another straggler on the Road to Pooldom Come.

As you watch the flow of thoughts, you must not become attached to any one of them.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN



Practice Is Good

Even When You Don't Have a Table!

Let's set up an exercise in visualization. Set before you a pattern of balls on the table. For example, use one of the patterns in my book, "The Lesson". In meditation, the ability to form clear-cut mental images is essential to your progress. Concentrate fully on this pattern with your eyes open. Note the exact location of the balls. See them in their place. Be impersonal, and concerned only with where they sit. Do not go further than this. Breathe in and count your breaths. Continue to see the balls. Now close your eyes. Create a mental reproduction of this pattern. By doing this you are improving the image building facility of your mind. If any part of the pattern should disappear, open your eyes and correct the mental observation until it is again clear in your mind. This is simply an exercise in accurate observation and memory, which are qualities that are very necessary in your quest for a championship – a championship that you fully deserve.

In this exercise, we are concerned only with the development of focused attention on a series of objects placed before us. We must have the ability to see things clearly and impartially. Simply observe without judgement. Do not try to run the balls in your mind. Do not associate the pattern with my book "The Lesson". Simply develop the ability to see the balls, or the pattern of balls, as they lay before you. You are not focusing on the number of balls, the color, or the size. You are forming a mental picture of the exact layout before you. Every time you practice this exercise, you are strengthening your concentration powers. You are putting another brick in the wall.

At this point, I would like you to entertain your powers of consciousness. At first, you were in the field of mental observation. You allowed this pattern to become part of your subconscious mind. Now, you are looking at this pattern with your conscious mind. Here, we can move about. Rise above the table and look at the pattern. Come closer and see how the pattern looks from the end of the table or from the side. Move about in your consciousness for within the conscious mind there are powers yet untapped. These powers, however, lie in the future for most of us. We have not yet fully developed them. This exercise is the preparation for the use of these new skills as they are sure to become yours.

With your conscious mind, begin to run the rack in a professional manner. Imagine yourself shooting each shot with precision. Do not open your eyes. See each ball go into the pocket of choice, use the stroke of choice, and hear the sound that is associated with that stroke. Feel the stroke. Watch the ball roll over and over the table.

We are concerned only with the development of focused attention on a series of objects placed in front of us.

Listen to the ball rolling along the slate. See and hear it drop into the leather pocket. Run the entire pattern out. Count your breaths in between each shot and when you have completed this workout, open your eyes and feel good about your skills. From now on you will be your greatest coach. You will be your own mentor. Be sure to feel good about everything you do.

We can increase our conscious mind skills by seeing things in our own light. For example, when you see an airplane flying high overhead, imagine you are seated in one of the seats. The flight attendant is serving your dinner and there is jibber-jabber throughout the cabin. Smell the dinner. Taste it. You're on an adventure. Imagine yourself on a plane following that plane; each is doing the exact same thing. Spend some time in this mental playground. You will be working on your conscious mental skills as well as working on your visualization skills which will serve you well during a critical shot.

As we travel through this journey of pocket billiards we can become overly concerned with how things are going. We get caught up in all the activity around us, and eventually we get bogged down in the wins and losses. After a while we are bound by our own negative imagination. This has an effect on our imagination, our conscious mind. In turn, our intuitive skills come under attack. Our stroke begins to suffer; we miss balls, we miss position, and it is not long before we are out of the tournament. At this point, we walk around wondering what happened to us.

You have heard the saying, “What the mind can perceive, it can achieve.” According to one study, researchers divided a group of people into three parties. One group practiced basketball free-throws all day long. Another group sat in meditation and visualized themselves practicing free-throws, while the third group did nothing. This went on for several weeks. Each group followed the same procedure at the same time each day. Finally, they brought all three groups together to see what the results would be in a real contest. Group one, those who practiced free-throws, were matched shot for shot by group two, those who only visualized it in their mind. While group three was not able to keep up.

The mind is a powerful thing, a mind boggling thing. You can actually practice pool while you are sitting on a beach. You can shoot shots while you are laying in bed or resting on a park bench. While I was taking my neighbor for his chemo treatments, I would sit in the chair and practice my shots. Take some free time to work on the shots that have been giving you trouble. See the balls going into the pocket. Hear the balls going into the pocket. Feel them going into the pocket. Set up an expectation in your mind of a time when it is critical that you make the shot, then see yourself successful. Recall times in the past when you made this shot. Bring to mind the exact moment you pocketed the critical ball. Feed your mind with positive mental images. So often we spend all our time with the physical skills of pocket billiards that we forget the importance of mental discipline and what it takes to win.

Make it a point in your meditation to reflect upon the shot of your choice for the next few days. This will be your mental priority. In your idle times, your priority will always come to mind, so make your priority the mental visualization of the shot you are working on. That is your central theme. Call to mind the vivid image of you making that shot and being successful with your efforts.

If you are not working on some particular form of concentration, that is, a specific subject, then allow your mind to reveal what your priority is and determine if this is positive or negative. Your priority is like your dominant eye; it will always take over when your mind is idle.

We all have a dominant theme during each day of our life, and we should examine it closely to see if we are still on the right track.

My dominant theme today is _____

Remember to count your breaths between each shot and when you have completed this mental workout, open your eyes and feel good about your new skills. You are getting yourself in line with your own special talent.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN



The Four Types of Pool Players

At some point in time you must identify who you are. After all, if you cannot see yourself as you are, then you will have a difficult time sharpening your skills. There are basically four types of pool players in this game today.

The Social Player

The League Player

The Tournament Player

The Match Player

Match your chemistry and desires with what this game really offers you.

The Social Player loves the game for the social aspect of it. This player will not gamble because it destroys the camaraderie of it. He rarely enters a tournament or participates in the league setting. He is happy at the Civic Center or in his basement with his friends. The Social player just likes to meet the guys and bang balls around. He truly enjoys his turn at the table. When it is his turn, he is excited and will often share his thoughts with those around him. A highly skilled social player can reach world class status.

I've met many of these social legends. They break and run with the best of them, and are champions in all aspects of the game. They are remarkable performers and it is an honor to watch them play. But if you change the playing conditions, they will not be able to sustain their high level of play. Take them out of their element and they are lost. For instance, if the social

player were to enter a tournament, his game would deteriorate to about seventy per cent of his ability. This is not a knock on social players. In their own setting, they can be as good as Johnny Archer.

I played a social player in his basement. He welcomed me and showed me around his private pool room. He loved this place and according to his wife, he spent more time in the basement than he did anywhere else. After we talked for a while, he broke and ran eight racks! He was playing on a nine foot table with tough pockets. His friends tell me he does this all the time; however, when a condition is put on the game, such as a wager, he is just an average shooter and cannot succeed. His calling is to be a social player. He understands this and is comfortable in this setting. He finds great joy in that venue and meditates on it. He is as great as the masters of this game, for he is a master. He is rare and beautiful to watch. This Social Player has found his niche. He is always thinking of the game from the social player's viewpoint. He stays within his own element.

Match your personal chemistry and desire with what this game really offers you. When you do that, you are the master. That is what a master is. One who has matched his personal chemistry with his field of endeavor. This not only applies to the game of pool, it applies to life as well. It applies to our occupation and the direction we choose to follow. When you are fully focused, fully committed, free of distraction and secure in your own personal identity, you will increase your performance efficiency.

The League Player is one of a band of accomplished players who thrive on the organized setting of league competition. They do not fair very well in the tournament format, and are most happy when they participate on a team.

Many of the top-rated league players are specialized warriors. They have found a niche and have risen to the top with dedication and great focus. Very few league players do well in match play. They do not like the one-on-one competition. They do not like to make it personal. It is not a pleasant experience for them. They much prefer to be a star on a team and experience the direct support of their teammates. This is important to them. A trophy lasts so much longer than money.

The backbone of pocket billiards is dominated by the well-defined league player. He thinks about the league setting all week long. He prepares for his match and loves the respect he gets from his teammates. I've see many league players reach world class status.

There are over three hundred thousand participating league players in the United States alone who simply love the game and their weekly night out with the team. You will rarely see a true league player gambling for money in a match or participating in a tournament on a regular basis. They are most comfortable in the league setting.

The Tournament Player is a competitor with nerves of steel. He has been called to the tournament scene. His greatest skill is found in his ability to concentrate for long periods of time. He is predictable and almost always gets to the money. Tournaments are his specialty.

He finds his comfort zone when he moves through the chart. The social element of tournament play attracts him, for he loves the camaraderie of tournament action, and is often the most friendly of the group. In some ways, he measures his success with how well he does in the event. He measures his self-worth by how far he goes on the chart. A specialized breed of player who shies away from match play, a true tournament player fancies himself not as a gambler. He refuses to gamble because he does not like to engage in a long one-on-one match. He mostly enjoys the announcer calling out his name for a table assignment. The Tournament Player does not have a mean streak in his body. He is totally unlike the Match Player.

The Match Player is at his best when there is a lot of money at stake. He loves the match play format where he can compete one-on-one. More importantly, he loves the idea that he can play again if he loses. As long as he has money, he will not be knocked out of the contest. His game gets stronger and stronger the longer he plays, and this is his reward. Once he gets to a high level, the money loses its appeal. It is the one-on-one contest, when he is playing well, that gives the match player such a boost. The money he wins does not compare to the thrill of a fine performance. Often times, he cannot comprehend the value of the money he has won. It is not a matter of monetary units for the purchase of pleasure. A good match is a final test score in his midterm exam. The more money, the greater the thrill. He lives to risk it all.

Match play is unlike tournament play in that you are the center of attention in a one-on-one match. You are the focus. You can play as long as you have the money. It is you and your opponent battling until one is broke.

The difference between a Match Player and a Gambler is that the Gambler sees the money as his reward. When this happens to a seasoned Match Player his life becomes one continuous soap opera of misery. He has lost his way. His personality deteriorates until he is no longer fun to be around. There is nothing left to admire.

The Gambler is a greedy, conniving, selfish person, while the Match Player is a champion of the highest sorts. Every pool hall has one of these wayside Match Players who has lost his way.

I've known many Match Players in my day. They are fine gentleman, fine ladies. A good Match Player is a joy to play, win or lose. And I've known many Gamblers in my day. The Gamblers are not so pleasant. It is sad to see a Match Player become a Gambler. There is a fine line between the two and in Match Play, there is the risk of seeing the money as the prize. The inherent difference between the Match Player and The Gambler is their attitude towards gambling. The Gambler is after the money. The Match Player is after the game. If I were to categorize myself and match my chemistry to who I am, I would say I am a Match Player. My game is far better in a match play format than any other. And I enjoy the quiet battles in a nice setting.

When you match your chemistry and who you are with the game you chose, you automatically become an improved player. You have no limits.

The Match Player needs the pressure to test himself. He likes to arrange his matches by setting up a predetermined location and time of the match. He sets the terms and arranges the conditions. Just as you should never be late for fishing with friends, or golfing with friends, you should never be late for a match. You can be late for a wedding, but do not be late for fishing, golfing or playing a match. After the Match Player agrees to terms, he goes into training. This is his first payoff. He loves to prepare for a match. To him, the excitement is much like the person who is going on a blind date. He doesn't know what is in store for him, but he does know that he will be expected to perform, and it is the performance that defines his character.

I accepted a match with Willie Elder of Houston. He was a fine showman who met me at the airport and drove me to his house. We battled all night long and then he dropped me off the next morning. I traveled to Boulder, Colorado to play Jim McDouglas and got blind sided. He blew me off the table. It was a great contest. I actually enjoyed watching him play. He loved the part of ripping me into a million tiny pieces.

Then, while travelling through Indiana. I decided to stop by and play Tom "Dr. Cue" Rossman. I was in dead stroke and there would be no way for him to win in this blazing contest. When I called him, he did not know how close I was to his house. Nor did he know how well I was playing the game. He had no chance. But when I arrived at his house, his wife, Marty

began to use psychology on my weary mind. She is the master. And between them, they cut the legs out from under me. I never knew what was coming. The Rossman's performed surgery on me.

Later I got my revenge when they came to the East Coast. Marty went shopping, and left The Doctor all to me. When I finished with him, he needed a Doctor.

One hot summer night a road player from the northern midwest rode into town on his Harley looking for a game. It just so happened that I had a class that evening and could not play him. I felt bad as he had traveled a long way. So I offered to let him play Suzanne Bosselman. I put a hundred dollars on each race. Sue is the ultimate Match Player. She gets better and better the longer she plays. By the time the road player hit the road, he was broke with his tail between his legs. It was one of her finest victories.

In each of these matches, you will note that I did not talk about the amount of money won or lost. That is because it did not matter. The value of it all was to be in a situation where my qualities would shine in the game of pocket billiards. I could write a book on my match play experiences around the country.

With each of the four types of pool players, they play their best when they are in the setting that matches their personality. In other words, they respond to their own personal calling and excel beyond their dreams. Stay within your element and you will find success. Decide what type of pool player you are and spend all of your time working on that type of game. As I say in my book "Point The Way", "Understand what your goals are and become your goals."

The Social Player likes to show off.

The League Player loves his team.

The Tournament Player loves the chart.

The Match Player loves the performance.

Treat yourself special when you find your place in this game. Get a fine cue, a nice case, all the instruments of your trade and enjoy this grand game.

May all the rolls go your way.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN



My Mission Is To Follow The Monk 101

*When you can measure your
life by the moment,
you are ready to
reach any goals.*

We need to declare our mission statement loud and clear. We set the goals we want to reach. This is well and good, but neither the mission statement nor the goals you seek are who you are. They are who you want to be; therefore, we are creating a situation that is not real. What you are, on the other hand, is real. What you want to be is unreal. Goalsetting is almost like playing position before you make the shot.

When we work on our self-development, we do not work on something out in the future. We are not focused on a specific level of achievement we hope to reach. The future is not reality. All we have is the moment at hand. In fact, all we have is the breath we just took. When you can measure your life by the moment, you are ready to reach any goal.

All too often we keep our eyes on the prize and forget about the journey. Perhaps you can adopt a mission statement such as “I follow The Monk 101.” This will take you to any goals you might have. Simply forget about everything else and begin to follow The Monk 101, Which is:

*Right Thinking or Right Knowledge.
Right Doing or Right Action.
Right Mind Development.*

This is what you are doing, so this is what you are. The Monk 101 is your mission statement. When you spend every breath on the Monk 101, which is right thinking, you automatically begin to experience right mind

development. If you allow doubts and fears to enter your mind, you are not practicing Right Thinking. If you are overwhelmed with thoughts of winning a tournament, you are again not practicing Right Thinking. If you are rushing your shots or hesitating through fear, you are not practicing Right Action. You will see, once you adopt the journey through the Monk 101, you will be paying attention to the things that will really help your game. It all comes together once we get on the right road.

Master The Monk 101 program and you are practicing Right Knowledge. When you put this to use on the table, you are practicing Right Action.

As you embrace the laws of Courage, Concentration, and Composure, you are following Right Mind Development. We do not take this journey to win more games. Winning more games is not our specific goal. It is not our mission. If it were, we would simply find players we can beat and success would be ours. We are on this road to Right Mind Development. Winning more games is a natural result of our efforts. It is not our goal to be a champion. A champion is who we are.

In this book we are not just working on a better game. We are working on a better life. Be a better person and you will have a better game.

A story is told of an archer from a long time ago. He went into training with all the enthusiasm in the world. He declared, "I will be the greatest archer of all time"! He was dedicated to his training program. To improve his eye, he would lay on the table and allow a sewing needle to plunge down towards him until it brushed his open eye ball. He would actually see the needle press into his eye. If he could keep his eyes open during the exercise he would improve his concentration skills. Under extreme pressure, he could keep his eyes on the target. He did this exercise over and over every day. He stared at tiny objects until they became large and easy to see. This archer spent all his time working on his vision skills. And for a year, he did nothing but this. He never picked up his bow. He became the greatest archer in the world before he even shot his first arrow.

The world's greatest archer spent years perfecting his skills, and finally, he was declared the greatest of all time. He beat all the competition, often times splitting arrows of the arrows he shot, sometimes splitting them while they were still in flight. He was a legend, a marvel to behold. Great honor was bestowed upon him in the village where he lived. And he basked in the glory. He reveled in his great accomplishment.

But in his heart, he knew about another archer who lived high in the mountains. He thought he might just possibly be better than he was. He had heard rumors of this “Champion of Champions”. And he would not rest until he faced him one on one to settle the question of who was the greatest of all time. It is a big world but not big enough for two champions.

He climbed the high mountain and searched for this renowned archer. It took weeks of perilous travel until he finally came face to face with his adversary.

The wind whipped across his flowing beard as the World’s Greatest Archer declared above the roar, “I am the best archer in the whole world.” His arms outstretched, holding his bow in his right hand.

The old warrior of the mountain nodded.

“I want a match with you,” he roared more loudly than before.

The old warrior nodded again with a smile and said. “There is no need for this contest.”

“We will settle the score of who is best here and now,” The World’s Greatest archer replied.

“If I don’t compete with you, you will never know who is best,” the old man said. “If I compete with you, you will only establish who shoots the greatest shots.”

“That’s what I want”, said the Archer.

“That won’t bring you any peace of mind”, said the Old Man.

The World’s Greatest Archer and the Champion of Champions talked all through the windy night. Finally the World’s Greatest Archer returned to his village and never shot another arrow again. His family and friends were confused. What had happened on that mountain. “Did he lose? Was he so distraught that he would give up the game forever?”

They had their shoot-out on the mountain. Each matched the other shot for shot until finally, the Champion of Champions challenged him to hit the moving drop of water from a melting icicle one hundred feet away. Hit the drop as it fell to the ground. With one shot The World’s Greatest Archer shattered the tip of the icicle just before the drop left the end. He was a little too anxious.

He tried again and had the same results. He shot a little early and shattered the tip of the icicle just before the drop left the end.

Then the old man took careful aim. Just as the drop of water left the icicle, he shot his arrow through the tiny speck and splattered it on the rocks. It was a perfect shot. He looked up at the World’s Greatest Archer and said, “In my mind’s eyes, I could not see the icicle. I could only see the

falling drop of water. I could see nothing else.” He held his bow up high and asked, “But what does this mean? What have I accomplished by winning this contest?”

“You’re better than me,” stammered The World’s Greatest Archer. This statement came from the bottom of his heart. He believed that he was now the second greatest archer and he would be for all time. He had been beaten. He had lost. There was nothing left to pursue.

“But what does that mean? Maybe we have another contest and you are the winner. Then another and I win; then you win. What does it mean?” He questioned.

“We won’t have another contest. Ever. But you tell me old man. What does it mean?” asked the World’s Greatest Archer.

“The best is not the reward. To be the best is not what it is all about. Once you become the best, you have nothing left to do. Your journey is finished. You have no where to travel.” He hung his head and continued, “All you can do is retreat to the mountains.” He waved his arms around, “To this lonely place and wait. There will be someone who climbs high up here to find me. Someone who wants to find out if they are the greatest archer of all time. And I will send the arrow through the eye of the needle. They will leave. They will leave with a great lesson. They will know that being the best is to be condemned for all time.”

“I thought being the best was a great goal.”

“Once you are the best, that is all you will ever be.”

“If I give up this quest, what is left for me,”

“The joy of mind development. That is the real contest. That is what it is all about. Life leads us through many conflicts, inner battles, trials, tribulations, and challenges. He who does not conquer them can expect no victory. To send an arrow into the eye of a droplet does not mean a thing. It is merely an act and nothing more. It has no meaning.”

He paused for a moment and then reached into his pouch. He pulled out a copy of the Dhammapada and began to read. “Though one should conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, he who conquers himself is the greatest of warriors. You have dedicated yourself to the conquest of a thousand men and in this effort you have failed to conquer yourself. For you are driven to conquer others, and in this very act, you are not the greatest of warriors.”

“What do I do to become the greatest warrior?”

“Rise above the act itself. Overcome your compulsive desire to win every contest. Be at peace with who you are. The journey of a thousand miles leaves you with another thousand miles, and then another thousand

miles, and still another thousand miles. Only when you can be the arrow, the bow, the warrior or the champion, without the performance, then you have arrived at true self-mastery. You will not be the master if you beat me. You must conquer yourself. I have no reason to compete any more. I know who I am. I have nothing to prove.”

“Why did you compete against me,”

“I did not compete against you. I merely shot my arrows. I traveled with you for a moment on this road. But now you must go on alone. For it is your journey that is important. I have nothing left to teach you. All I can do is point the way.”

*Overcome your compulsive desire to win
every contest and be at peace with who you are.*

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN



Master The Way You Think And You Become The Master

This man, who is free will then move through tournaments with great focus, and success will follow him every step of the way.

When the whole strength of will is bent toward unselfish purpose, you then become the vehicle for self-development. The unruly lower self will pass away. This man, who is free, will then move through tournaments with great focus, and success will follow him every step of the way. Perhaps this will be the very reason he wins the tournament and receives the first place prize. It is not always the best shots that get you to the top spot. It is often times the mastery of self that is the greatest reward. To move through a tournament without conflict of the lower self is the greatest experience in the world. You are no longer out of control. You are free. There are those who call this euphoria “dead stroke.”

We have players now on tour who win tournaments, but still lose. Their lower self has run amok. They sacrifice everything that is good, everything that is fine, for a short-lived experience in victory lane. In doing so, they are not really the champions they seek to be.

One such champion was despised by the fans. In fact, he was run out of town. He lost the respect of both his peers and his fans. While another champion, who did not win the tournament, was revered and idolized by both his colleagues and the spectators.

Remember the desire to follow the Monk 101. Right Knowledge, Right Action, and Right Mind Development.

A rich man went to Jesus and asked him, “Master, what must I do to be a better man?” Jesus told him, “Go away and study thyself.” The man returned many days later having followed the instructions. “Now master, what

must I do to become a better man?" Once again, Jesus told him, "Go away and study thyself." The man again returned and asked the same question. "What must I do to become a better man?" Jesus told him, "Go away and study thyself." The man began to protest that he had already done that, and Jesus continued, "Know thyself and you shall be free. One trophy or a thousand trophies cannot compare with the steps taken by a self-possessed man."

I was contacted by one of the game's premier, up-and-coming players. She wanted me to be her mentor. I told her that if I agreed to take her on, she would be taking a one way non-stop trip to the top. I knew my way around this journey toward a championship, and I knew the way to a winning performance. I could help this eager young player.

You must give up the idea of winning to become a winner. This is exactly what she sought, to be a winner in every aspect of life. When her training was completed, she became a champion. But she did not pursue the game of pocket billiards. She was prepared to become a top-notch business executive who graduated at the top of her class, and is now the head of a large company in Florida. The journey is not always so easy to see. But once you pursue it with all the sincerity of heart, the answer will come to you along the way.

Once we understood our obsession, we could then begin the task to arrive at the finals. We did this through Right-Action, Right-Thinking, and Right-Mind Development. While it was true we were obsessed, we were not at the mercy of our obsession. In other words, we were not controlled by this overwhelming preoccupation with winning. It did not control us or take up all our attention. Our minds were open and willing to pursue the proper course to Right Mind Development. In the end, she chose to use her newly acquired skills in another field of endeavor. The field that matched her personal chemistry. Pocket billiards can lead you to the discovery of self.

The same was true with Suzanne Bosselman. When she became a champion, she decided to use her skills in the field of engineering. And to her credit, she has been at the top of her class all through college. She used The Monk 101 principles.

We were not like the World's Greatest Archer, who was obsessed with one thing and driven to the top of the mountain. We were free. We had mastery over self. This is what gave us the ability to gain the true championship, which, for my Florida student, was a career in the business field.

People think obsession and emotion are the same thing. This may not be so. Emotion is connected with instinct and intuition. Obsession is a will-driven force. It does not compare to intuition. It is a feeling that drives us. Instinct guides us. One would think that an obsession is a bad thing, even

with winning. It is much like a compulsive disorder. An alcoholic is on the trail to his own self-destruction. An obsession has taken control of the alcoholic and often leads him to self destruction. When I meet a student who is blindly obsessed with winning, I know this student isn't ready to pursue the real thing.

Obsession can bring about good results. Take the workaholic. He appears to be on the right track. After all, he makes a lot of money and gets things done. But if you look closely at this obsessive-driven man you will find he has a difficult time with relationships. He cannot connect to the ones he loves. He has trouble interacting with his loved ones. His obsession has filled his life with turmoil. He is not the mastery of self. The workaholic is on a downward path toward self-destruction. There can be but one end for the obsessed man.

Obsession is not even a cousin with emotion. It is in a class by itself. It is far better to operate out of emotion and instinct than to be driven by obsession.

I had another female player approach me who told me she was on a one way trip to the top because she had a pathological desire for hard work. Did this automatically mean she would become a winner? The pool halls are full of players who log monumental practice time. You see them all the time. You see the same person year after year, putting in a lot of practice time, and still not improving to the point where they can win championships. This person is operating out of an obsession. It is very hard, sometimes impossible, to reach this kind of person. They need to go on and experience this before their eyes are finally open.

Females are said to be more in touch with their intuitive nature than males. I will grant that they are more emotional than men, which puts them in better touch with their intuitive side. Very often, however, the voice of intuition is simply the voice of desire.

Long hours in the pool hall do not in themselves ensure success. Your practice time needs to be done with proper motive in order for you to reap the success you desire. Match your personal chemistry with what you desire the most and design your practice time to go hand in hand with that. The key is quality, not quantity. Your goals must be defined. Remember: Right-Thinking, Right-Action, Right-Mind Development.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN



INSTINCT...

Does the knowledge of the success or failure with the shot agree with past experience?

Let's consider the difference between instinct and desire. The mark of a fine pool player is in the ability to distinguish between the two. Both instinct and desire are linked to emotion. To reach the top of your game, you must sharpen your instincts and hone your intuition. They must be reliable to you, in order for you to succeed with the task at hand, which is to win tournaments.

Often times we mistake desire for intuition. We imagine ourselves to be drawn or handpicked by some grand and noble calling to a higher purpose. Our intuition is leading us on, so to speak. But this is not intuition. This is desire. A desire is beating in our hearts. It can be an unchecked desire, bordering on an obsessive compulsion to satisfy our emotions. Pot heads often talk about how the drug enhances them. They spend a great deal of time trying to put their self-destructive behavior in the intuitive phase to give it some higher meaning, when it is really desire masked as intuition.

There are those who enter into a destructive affair and try to pass it off as the intuition of a higher calling, when in reality it is desire masking itself as intuition.

You are faced with a very difficult shot on the key ball. If you succeed, you will be able to finish your run-out and go on to be the victor. You are suddenly struck with an overwhelming desire to go for it! Take a chance for the ultimate prize. "I've got a gut feeling I can succeed with this decision or shot."

Here is the test. Here is how to measure it all up. Does the knowledge of success or failure with the shot agree with your past experience?

If you are willing to take a low percentage shot, you are operating out of emotion; emotion that is at odds with reason and past experience. How many times have you returned to your chair and wondered why on earth you tried such a stupid, incredibly foolish shot? You actually wonder what is going on in your brain. The fact of the matter is, you responded to the voice of desire.

Let us call the “right shot” the truth. The right shot is the basic, unquestioned truth of life. This must come to light through your intuition. When you act on a feeling, you are responding to desire. You are not really in the intuitive stage, and this is why you do stupid, incredibly foolish things.

When you have a “feeling” about your game, you can actually increase your energy. You receive a burst. You can cultivate an ideal. If you are cold about an approach, you will be void of enthusiasm for your own development. So there is nothing wrong with feelings. We need to nurture these exciting feelings and get them into the intuitive stage where they stand up to the knowledge of past experience. This way we can rely upon them.

Intuitive perception of your progress supplies you with the driving force to reach your goals. Intuition can be a life-changing power filled with rational faith. When I work with a player, I help him organize his perceptions. You do not have to run a gauntlet or sacrifice your personality in order to reach a championship. You need to move through the ranks of the tournament with a keen sense of intuition that what you are doing is good and right for you. It is Right-Thinking and Right-Action. It is a strong conviction that your will is connected to an ideal and your actions are in harmony with your growth. You are not out of sorts, driven by emotion or obsession. Your instincts determine things based upon past experience. It all adds up. You will win the prize.

Remember, your will is where your energy comes from. If this is driven by intuition, or a gut feeling that what you are doing is right, you will receive the energy to perform a precise move. Shoot the ball. If you are using emotion to inspire you, you will be tentative because this does not correspond to your basic knowledge and past experience with the shot. Therefore you will miss the ball.

I said, “Your actions are in harmony with your growth.” If I try to do something I am not capable of, I will not have good results. Learn to be comfortable with what you are doing. Be free to perform. Do not be at odds with yourself. Bring your will into harmony with your skills.

CHAPTER NINETEEN



The Three Cylinders

Instinct, Intuition, Desire

There must be a balance between thought and feeling. We cannot run on one cylinder when we need to operate on three.

The three cylinders driving us on to victory are;

Instinct

Intuition

Desire

Emotions are not a part of these cylinders. Emotion is a waste of energy and does not produce positive results. Emotions often delude the mind into thinking it is intuition calling. This wears out the physical body because it does not stand up to the test of reason or past experience. As a result, you are in a constant turmoil with yourself. With intuition you are not wasting a lot of energy through the constant debate of indecision. Instinct operates on a subtle awareness mode and drives you onward with little waste of energy. Desire brings its own brand of energy to the table. It is not so with emotion. You are in constant turmoil; thus, the term, “emotionally disturbed.” When you allow yourself to be dominated by your emotions, you live in a world of unresolved conflict.

The three cylinders, Instinct, Intuition and Desire, create enthusiasm. Your thoughts go hand-in-hand with your feelings. They agree with past experience. There is harmony. You are in control, willing to take those risks that you know are essential to winning.

There is little room for unchecked emotion in a player who operates out of instinct, intuition and desire. Think about that. It is time to get your emotions under control. Remember, unchecked emotions drain the body. How many times have you ended up exhausted, late in a tournament only to be knocked out because you do not have the energy to continue? The enthusiasm, when it comes from the three cylinders, creates energy and allows you to finish strong.

Intuition is enhanced by our emotions. For instance, women are said to be more intuitive than men. Perhaps they operate more out of their emotional side than men. After all, they seem more emotional.

There is a fine line between emotion and intuition. Emotional desire is often mistaken for intuition. "I just know it is right for us to be together." Even though the union is morally wrong, a person will sometimes pass it off as the intuitive right thing to do. It is not intuition talking, instead, it is the subtle voice of emotional desire. Remember, intuition must stand the test of your past experience.

Let us look at desire for a moment. There are two types of desire. First, there is the "impulsive desire" to experience or own something. We call this a "compulsion." Second, there is the "desire to succeed" with a project.

The impulsive desire to experience something, such as an intimate encounter with a married person, the fulfillment of lust out of control, or the desire to own something even at the expense of reason, is quite different than the driving desire to improve your personal life by reaching goals and aspirations.

The impulsive desire is almost always destructive in nature. It comes from a lower source. Most often the impulsive desire overrides reason. It does not set up well with past experience. An impulse to steal something will end in disaster if one does not control his desire. To enter into a dangerous affair, comes from the lower self. This is desire that has lead to the total destruction of many individuals. If you follow the trail of an unchecked impulsive desire, you will see an unending path of hidden bodies everywhere. Even the impulsive desire to buy a new shiny car that you cannot afford, does not stand up to reason and past experience. This can bring about your own destruction. Once you yield to unchecked desire of the first nature, someone will always get hurt. Anything gained at the expense of someone else will not last. It never lasts.

Cultivate the driving desire to improve your life and reach your goals. Use this desire to stay on course. Learn to recognize the subtle difference between the two types of desires.

During the tough times, I appreciated my desire to succeed. I wanted to rise up out of my poverty state and enjoy the opportunities this great country offers us. I had a desire and I was very glad for that desire. Desire does not know discouragement. When you are filled with desire, you will not be discouraged during the tough times. Not once did I ever think of quitting.

I have a nephew who has written over fifty songs. He sings them to anyone who will listen. He walked into a night club and waited for the band to take a break. Then went up to the microphone and asked the audience if he could sing a few songs. They applauded and he was a big success. He does not know the concept of discouragement because he is filled with an overwhelming desire to succeed. All his focus is on his desire.

In your pool game you will meet a lot of disappointment. Don't let it get you down. Instead, focus on your desire. You have been given the gift of desire for a reason. Appreciate it and use it.

Desire is one of the three cylinders. It drives you on. Instincts sharpen your skills and give you the ability to feel the speed of your shots. When coupled with desire, instincts will serve you all through your developmental stage. When your instincts are well-developed, you have the ability to move the cue ball around the table with the greatest of control. Instincts are best when they are unclouded by emotions. For example, you have a difficult shot on the key ball. You need to travel three rails for shape on the winning shot. This is for the match. The importance of the shot, both in winning and losing, is foremost on your mind. You have become emotional about the shot. This emotion is in disharmony with your instincts. It is interference. As a result, you are not successful with the shot. You fail because emotion has robbed you of your energy – energy you need to get in touch with your instincts. Good instincts will give you the cue ball speed it takes to win. It is this turmoil, the conflict of conditions versus instincts, that wears you down in a tournament. This is why you become tired and lose. The shot does not change because it is the winning shot. It is always just a shot. The pocket is the same, the ball is the same, the cloth is the same. Once we classify it as a winning or losing shot, we lose our instincts to deliver the right stroke. This sets up a battle within us. It creates turmoil. We need to intuitively see the shot as just a shot, and instinctively deliver the right stroke to pocket the ball. Intuition is the awareness of what it is. We sense the reality of the dynamics of the shot.

Cultivate the desire to improve your life and reach your goals.

When you are out of sorts with the three cylinders, you waste energy. You are operating in the realm of unresolved conflict. Those who are in a bad marriage for a long period of time very often complain of fatigue. They pass it off as getting old. This is not the case. Unresolved conflict causes fatigue.

A bad marriage is easy to trace. You can see the unresolved conflict. But when you mix the higher and lower forms of desire, you cannot see the conflict. It is not so obvious. It will take some time and contemplation. When your desire does not stand up to reason and past experience, there will always be a conflict in your heart. You will be uncomfortable with what is going on. This discomfort will rob you of your energy. It can sometimes force you into drugs and other unhealthy substances to keep you going.

Sometimes, when your instincts are working, you may not be able to see the answer clearly, but you know that what is going on is not right for you. There is something wrong. Go with your instincts and change what is happening. When you make the change, you will then be able to see what it is you need to do.

The more exhausted you become in a tournament, the fewer instincts you have. When intuition stands the test of reason as related to your past experience, instincts give you the ability to feel the shot. Both instinct and intuition must be well developed if you are to survive the ever-changing challenges of this great game.

Before I understood these principles, I would get in touch with my instincts by listening to the sound of my hit. I would anticipate the crisp, clear sound of the cue tip going through the cue ball. "I may miss this shot." I would say, "But I will look good missing it." I had lost my instincts through fatigue. I was tired and no longer able to feel the shots. So I would use my mind. I would seek that which should be natural. When I lost my instincts, it was only a matter of time before I was putting my cue away and heading home. But I could extend my self destruction for a while by using my mind and listening to the sound of the shot.

The raw desire to rise to the top is perhaps the greatest gift you have. Without it, you are left to the whimsical delights of emotional turmoil. You will be burned out when things get tough. It will be your desire that carries you to the top where you belong. The lower form of desire will destroy you, but the higher form, the cold calculating desire that knows no discouragement, will drive you on to personal excellence.

Sometimes in my basement when I was most discouraged – my cue stick broken in two places because of a missed shot – I would actually sit down and thank God for my desire. I was more grateful for that than I was for the talent I had. I believe I have talent. In fact, I know I have talent, but in the end, it was not talent that wrote this book for you. It was the desire I possess in my heart to help others like me find happiness in this great game.

You must cultivate the desire to succeed. Be glad for your desire for excellence. It is this very quality that will lead you to the finals.

The sins of passion, such as gambling, sex, alcohol and mind-alternating substances are not to be indulged in by the one who seeks personal growth. These sins have a secret power of their own.

When I fell in love, life was over for me. I yielded to a power that drew me in and consumed my life. Once the passion was sparked, I was a goner. But that part of my life is over now. I am able to recognize the seductive voice of desire and see it for what it is. I am free and able to distinguish between emotion and instinct. Temptation only lasts for a little while.

The foundation of reasoning must be viewed by the light of intuition. How does this emotional desire stand up to the knowledge of past experience?

You must have control of these emotions if you are to survive in this fast-paced game. Still, you must have a burning desire to succeed. You are a traveler who moves through the levels without emotion. Your force is the three cylinders: Instinct, Intuition and Desire. Each cylinder must be well-developed and nurtured to serve you when the times are tough.

Contemplate each day on the three cylinders. Think about how they work in your life. Learn to recognize when they are out of balance and keep them in line.

Your motivating force is the three cylinders.

*Once emotional desire enters the
picture, factors cloud the
issue, making cool judgement
almost impossible.*

Do not take things personally. If you are matched up with someone who irritates you, do not make it personal. The match is never personal. No one can beat you. They simply win the match. It is not a victory over you. It is winning the match. Therefore, refrain from the rivalry mentality.

Emotions and personal feelings hinder a cool examination of the laws and principles that carry you to the finals. Pure thought is always impersonal. No one gets emotional during meditation or contemplation.

Remember, your emotions are often linked to an unchecked desire, an overwhelming whim for success that has not been earned. This is not success at all. Once emotional desire enters the picture, factors cloud the issue. This makes cool judgement almost impossible. Have you ever heard a trainer say, “You were not thinking right when you stuck your face in front of that boxer?”

Have you ever lost a match to someone you feared right from the beginning? It is not that they outplayed you. It’s that you allowed your emotions to interfere with your ability to act from the three cylinders: Instinct, Intuition and Desire. Once this happens, you have exposed yourself to the secret emotional powers of self-destruction.

You must build your skills on the foundation of a noble intellect. Once you experience nobility, you are not subjected to a personal experience between you and your opponent. Winning and losing is not a personal issue with the noble mind.

Your drive is an instinct that is not at odds with your feelings. This brings you to a profound sense of serenity of mind, which really lets you operate in the impersonal zone. It makes you a better player!

You must build your skills on the foundation of a noble intellect.

CHAPTER TWENTY



The Ultimate Tug of War

There are contending forces in this wonderful game. There are contending forces in this life. Let us call these forces, desire and repulsion. We live with them every day – want and not want. If you have cultivated a strong sense of serenity, you can look upon the two with complete indifference, “Silva”.

Serenity will help you train your emotions to mirror the ideal. If you are in turmoil – that is, responding to the impulsive desires of your personality – you have no chance for success. Once emotions get a grip on you, clarity of thought is impossible. You are not sure where to go or how to handle your desire.

Emotions and thoughts can have a far-reaching effect on the physical body. Anxiety can spoil your appetite, attack your digestive system, and make you sick. Anxieties are attached to thoughts. Exhaustion is directly linked to emotions. A hard day’s work in the factory can actually tear physical tissue, while a hard day rafting the whitewaters of Canada will cause no damage to the body. It will not tear down tissue. One creates worry and stress; the other creates relaxation. One tires you out; the other reenergizes you. Yet both demand the same amount of physical energy and effort. It is in the mind. It is how you look at it.

Do not try to repress emotion, for you cannot get away from it. Learn to live with it through the cultivation of serenity. You are not your emotions. You are not your fear. You are not your insecurity. You are not your hatred. You are not your sensuous desire. Once you realize this, you are no longer under the power of your emotions. You can be free to experience the joys of life that are yours.

Actually, you can lump your emotions under one of two headings: love or hate. Another way of saying this is to use the terms “attraction” and “repulsion.” These two forces are an important part of this universe. They are a universal truth. They actually hold the universe in equilibrium. The positive and negative forces – like magnetic forces – will stimulate our beings throughout our existence here on this earth. We will be governed by these forces one way or another. Do not try to run away from them. One is not going to replace the other.

Studies have shown that the human being needs magnetic stimuli to survive. Many athletes today are using magnetic therapy to further enhance their own performance. When one uses the magnetic forces properly, he will increase his strength and balance by a large percent. There will be a dramatic improvement.

For the longest time, sharks cartilage was sought after as a health benefit for the human body. Sharks have a wonderful immunity system. The best in the universe. They do not suffer the common illnesses known to other species. Scientist figured the key was in their special cartilage. Later we found out that the shark has the ability to absorb the earth's magnetic forces, and it is this magnetic force that gives the shark its incredible good health.

Love would be meaningless without the opposite. All of the principles of life would have no real meaning if there were not an opposing force. What would hot be without cold? How would we measure it? There is a God and there is a Devil. There's up and down. The opposites are a fact of life. And many times we forget to see this. We do not measure where we are, but rather simply accept it without trying to change. Too much of one thing means too little of another. When we seek a balance in our lives, we must be aware of what is going on. And, after all, to win championships or to be a champion, we must have balance in order to perform at peak levels.

We must use our instincts to choose which of the contending forces we most want to experience. For instance, fear is the opposite of courage. You cannot have one without the other, and you cannot have both. Therefore, you must choose which one you want to have in your life. It is your choice – a conscious choice. If you choose courage over fear, then you must actively practice courage. In order to stimulate your instincts, you must use them. Action builds the character you seek to have. If you fail to use it, you weaken it.

Fear shackles your growth. It stops it dead in its tracks. Courage, on the other hand, can be the vital link between success and failure. Fear grips your heart. It clings like a slimy liquid, inhibiting the mind from all action.

When you are struck with fear, you are unable to act. On the other hand, courage will provide you with the focus and desire to spring into action. Make your choice, for it is a conscious decision. You actually choose which one you want in your life.

I have often said in this game, “You are either going up or you are coming down.” We are walking through a journey in life, and even more so, a journey through the world of pocket billiards. Pocket billiards is more than just a game to us; it is an experience. It is a journey. There is one group going up and there is one group going down. Catch the group going down, while you are going up, and you will win money and tournaments. The group going down has yielded to emotion and is out of control. The group going up is making the right choices.

For some of us, we don't play this game of pool – we live this game of pool.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE



Dominant Thoughts Are More Important Than Dominant Eye

In your quiet moments, try to determine what your dominant thoughts are. What is it that you are thinking? When you take the time to be one with your thoughts, what are you thinking? This will give you a clue as to what you are all about. For example, I found myself thinking about one of my female students. We were having dinner and she flirted with me in no uncertain terms. She was far too young for me to consider a real relationship with her, based upon the things that last, and she was not interested in anything long term. It was a game. She was just playing games with me. I did not want to be the object of her fantasy game, so I shied away. As time went on, however, I found myself thinking of her. When we were in a session, I looked at her in a different way. I was attracted to her. These were my thoughts. As long as I held these thoughts, I was not her teacher. In this way, I was letting her down. I had no right to do that. So I cancelled those thoughts, and got back to who I was and what I was to her.

These thoughts did not fit into my overall plan. They did not fit into my mission. There were apart from what my goals were. I was drifting away. I was diverted from my course. My dominant thoughts were on her and the excitement she was sure to bring. None of this was her fault. She is who she is. I have the responsibility to control my own thoughts. I was much better when I got everything into focus. I saved myself some serious grief by understanding my way of thinking.

If you are to succeed with your goals, you must be aware of your dominant thoughts. They must coincide with your objective. They must be in line with your mission. Stay on the path. Carpenters bend the wood to their will. Irrigators fill the ditches with water, and pool players work on their

game. Wise men bend their will to themselves. Your dominant thoughts must be on one purpose. When your dominant thoughts do not match your goals, you are in for trouble. You will be diverted from the path. And it will be this tearing away at your purpose that will cause you to become tired and not have enough energy to carry out your task.

In your meditation, take some time to stop and think about your thoughts. See them and compare them to your journey. Do they add up? If they can reside in harmony side by side with your goals, then you must continue to think along these lines. If there is a conflict there, you must terminate the destructive thoughts immediately. As a man thinketh, so he is.

When you willfully do what you know you don't want to do, you have lost control of yourself.

Have you ever leaned into a key shot, one that could very well win the game for you, only to have someone pass by your table and stop? They hold their pose, and stand completely still, sometimes on one leg, not moving an inch. Not even breathing. You are disturbed by their presence and you should be. Their message to you is loud and clear, "I am not going to move until you shoot that shot. I do not want to disturb you," Without really meaning to, they have come into your space. They have come into your shot and the loud, clear warning is a distraction that breaks your concentration. If they simply walked by, there would have been no interference. The walking and movement is a natural part of the environment. However, when they stop and make a big deal about it, you will be lucky to make the shot if you shoot now. It would be like someone tapping you on the shoulder and asking if they would be bothering you if they tapped on your shoulder.

As soon as someone comes into my space while I am shooting, I back off and mentally deal with the situation. I acknowledge that they are there, offer no resistance, and then go about my task at hand. I don't want their standing pose to be my dominant thought.

There are those who chose to live their lives with a series of unending conflicting thoughts. It must be difficult to be subjected to your impulsive desires, to always be at the mercy of your whims and wants and ready to give in at a moments notice. Are you willing to chase one more goose or run one more race you cannot win? Sex on one hand, gambling on the other, work, play, drugs, all mixed together to keep you a virtual prisoner. You want to be free to do your own thing, and end up a victim of your impulses. You will not have freedom when you are riding the wings of your compulsive nature. When your impulses override your consideration of right and wrong, you have entered the world of the insane. When you willfully do what you know you do not want to do, you have lost control of yourself.

It is very simple. If I know that the ice cream is bad for me, dangerous to my heart, and I don't want it, but I eat it anyway, I am insane. I have lost control.

Remember the words of wisdom from the Dhammapada, "Though one should conquer in battle a thousand men, a thousand times, he who conquers himself is the greatest of warriors."

Concentration. When your mind is diverted to something else, you have diluted your concentration skills. If you yield to that which you know is wrong, you weaken your concentration skills.

Composure. This yielding to that which you know is wrong, is the loss of composure.

Courage. To do the right thing takes courage. Every time you turn a temptation down, you strengthen your skills in courage. It gets easier to do the next time around.

Those who give up smoking need courage. Every day they do not yield to the temptation to light up, their courage gets stronger and stronger. When we take a cigarette, knowing full well that it is wrong, we weaken our courage. In just about every case, action speaks louder than words.

Be true to the path you have chosen. For you and for me, we must cultivate these fine attributes, Courage, Concentration & Composure. Once we become the path we will conquer a thousand men a thousand times. But first we must conquer self. We must overcome the compulsive nature that drives us out of control.

Ever wonder why some gamblers cannot win no matter what they do? They are out of control. If they win a bet, they will only find a way to lose the money they won. Las Vegas was build on the backs of those who are out of control.

*"Though one should conquer
in battle a thousand times
a thousand men
he who conquers himself
is the greatest warrior?"*

The Dhammapada

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO



Take Care of Yourself

You must know the laws of your body and how to keep it fit, clean, and in a constant state of readiness. You never know when you will be called to battle.

The greatest mind cannot function through a faulty instrument. Your body is your instrument. You must know the laws of your body and how to take care of it. You must know how to keep it fit, clean and in a constant state of readiness. I am not going to give you some hard and fast rules of dieting. I only want to caution you that a sensible diet is vital to your well-being.

This is a side bar from me to you. I have found that champions, those who rise to the top, have a unique drive. There is a fine line between this drive and obsessive compulsive behavior. It seems like the champion fights a bigger fight within himself than he does on the battlefield; therefore, it is necessary to his survival for him to pay attention to the compulsive side of his nature. If he does not get it under control, he will not last long in the winners circle. It is simple. To win a championship, you must be a champion.

I asked a seasoned veteran what I should do to lose weight. He told me to cut in half what I am eating right now, then add one day of fasting each week. This will help you cultivate a keen mind. Sounds like good advice. Simply cut your intake. I wonder how we end up on these elaborate scientific diets that do us no good. In the end, it all comes down to self control. A day of fasting will help you focus on what your priorities are. It is difficult to think when you are eating ice cream. During a tournament, I eat very little. I have a big meal before the tournament and munch on carbohydrates all day long. Eating food interferes with my concentration skills.

When I was playing my best pool, I had complete control over myself. Sometimes when I would be traveling, perhaps an entire day, I would declare that day a day of fasting. I would not eat for that day. And there was no problem within myself. I was in control. As success comes our way, little by little, we lose control. You see it all the time with athletes and artists. Once the big money rolls in, vices and compulsive behavior take over. How many of our great stars have ended up on their bellies, throwing up, as the drugs sucked the last of their breath from their bodies. We must stay the course and conquer self.

Your body will put up a colossal fight if you go on a diet or change your habit. It will throw a tantrum, nag, spit and disrupt you in every way possible; but you are in control. You must establish this control in your daily intake of food. Try eating two portions of fruit in one day. A “fruit day” just for you. Seek a balance in the things you put into your mouth.

Make sure your daily intake is balanced from all the food groups. I have a friend who cooks a steak and has just that one piece of meat for dinner. Not good. Balance your food so you are getting enough vegetables, meat, and fruit. Don’t drink anything with your meal. Liquids actually hinder the digestive system. We talk so much about the intake of food, yet neglect to talk about the digestive system that processes the food we eat.

Digestion is the vital link in a healthy instrument. Some diet pills enable you to digest your food properly, thus helping you lose weight. So sad is the person who eats a wonderful healthy meal, then drinks a glass of wine and smokes a cigarette.

When it is all said and done, we may be uncomfortable with a healthy body. Sound creative energy can be a personal challenge. We seek an easier way.

Eating is a personal thing. It is part of your life, part of the life you have chosen. There is no ideal formula for what to eat. Look at individual cultures and the foods each chooses to eat and you will find an endless variety of ingredients. The world is a veritable buffet. Eat what works for you. That is the rule of life.

If you attend a barbecue, like the one my brother puts on, and you are basking in a sausage glow, take the next day off and allow your natural digestive system to get you back on track. Take the entire day off from eating. You lost it, now it is time to pay the fiddler. And pay the fiddler right away. After a round of pizzas take the next day off. Remember, you must have yourself under control if you are to stay in the winner’s circle.

When I am on the road, it is very difficult to maintain a good diet. We all know what those Las Vegas buffets are like. One visit to those tables puts you in cholesterol heaven.

Rest is another important element. Make sure you get enough rest. Rest is vital to a well-maintained body. Strain can cause serious digestive problems. Set up a schedule where you are getting all the rest you need. Without rest, you find yourself intolerant and moody. This is not a good way to approach a tournament or match. Sleep, rest, relaxation, and a good diet are the best ways to build a champion.

Also, be sure to include recreation in your life. When you are walking or just spending some quiet time outdoors, pay attention to your deep breathing exercises. The deep oxygen-laden breaths you take flood the brain with much needed nourishment and keep you alert to the demands of your time. A time well spent is a time to reap rewards. Long, deep, rhythmic breathing will enhance the winner in you.

Planned recreation is a must. Plan a hiking trip through the mountains. Plan a rafting trip down the river, or a day at the beach. It is not enough to simply wait for the good times to come. Plan to recreate yourself through relaxation and fun.

I paid eighteen thousand dollars for my motorcycle. It has served me well. I have found it to be a great way to restore my creative mind. Riding in the wind gives me a good sense of what I am trying to do. Sitting on the beach allows me to think about the skills on which I am working. When you are busy, you lose sight. Take time to steal away and enjoy the quiet relaxation of a fun event.

Yoga is a great way to maintain the body. Stretching has been known to help heal damaged tissue. It works on your inner organs as well. For example, a good stretch can stimulate your kidneys and make them work better. Your bladder will get a special massage when you stretch and give you greater efficiency. Taking care of yourself is taking care of business.

In this crazy world, we stumble upon things that absolutely make no sense whatsoever. For instance, I was uncomfortable when I lost weight and regained my health. How is it possible to be uncomfortable with feeling good? So I would put the pounds back on and felt like a blob. I sometimes needed to turn my entire body around because I could not twist and look backwards. That was not fun, so back on the diet I go. After a while, I start to feel better and guess what happens. Now that I am feeling better, my appetite comes back and food taste good, looks good, and I am back on that caloric road again. We need to take a chance. We need to reach a point where we feel good and ride out that uncomfortable feeling. You see, when you feel good, your taste buds come back, the impulsive nature comes back, and you are off and running all over again. We need to ride out this storm

and find the comfort zone in feeling good. Ride it out. Use action to strengthen your courage and conviction and soon, very soon, you will be happy being healthy.

It is not uncommon for people to be unhappy with feeling good. After all, look at the gamblers of Las Vegas. They win money, jump for joy, and can't wait to lose it all before they leave the casino.

Rest restores the body. When we go to the finals, we go first class. Bring a healthy fighter to the final match.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE



Yoga Positions

Find better health through the oldest form of exercise known to man. Yoga. Do the following exercises.

Vakrasana

Sit on the floor, legs outstretched. Lift the right leg so that the knee is firmly pressed against the chest. Place your foot over the left leg flat on the floor. Concentrate on the spine. Take three complete breaths. Pause, and repeat the same process with the other leg.

Yoga Mudra

Sit in a Yoga position. Take complete breaths and bend forward as far as you can until your head touches the floor. Hold your breath and remain still. Inhale when you return to the sitting position. Exhale. Grasp the right wrist behind your back with your left hand. Relax, and repeat this exercise. Stretch. Meditate. Expect good results. Treat your body to this wonderful exercise.

Viparita

Lying on your back, lift your feet above your head until they extend over your head. Remain in this position breathing slowly. Actually, the Viparita exercise is a great beauty treatment practiced by the beautiful women of the world.

Sarvangasana

Lying on your back, lift your feet until you are vertical and holding the small of your back for support. This should be done often during the day.

Halasana

Lay on a blanket and extend your feet back over your head until they are touching the floor. Remain as long as you are comfortable. This exercise is great for the elimination of fatigue. You can create more energy with Halasana.

Savasana

Thoughts on no thoughts.

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR



The Game is Like A Lamp Unto My Feet

*The light only shows one step in front of me.
I take one step at a time.*

We cannot tell what the future brings. It is an open road not yet traveled. There is a path winding out before you. Behind you stands a closed door. You stand upon the threshold of a new and untrained world, one that is a mystery, and you have no clear understanding of what is ahead.

Previous limitations have been mysteriously removed. You are free to soar like an eagle. You believe you can fly. You have suddenly transcended your own limitations and can now see a new direction for the first time.

Your vision is related to your willingness to walk out into that winding road, unchecked by inner reservations. You have linked up with the Universal Mind. You are not looking outward for signs or directions. Instead, you are looking inward for a sense of what to do. You have left the world of emotions. The world where whims and impulses take you to places unknown. You have left that tinsel world that dominates Las Vegas Boulevard.

Now you have entered the world of intuition. An intuition born from a place deep within your spirit. You find yourself in a world of silence where limitations are nonexistent. You are filled with infinite possibilities. There is a feeling of complete composure, of latent power, of innate serenity. Your habitual intellectual consciousness is then transformed into an equally habitual use of intuition. The intuition is a higher cognition. There are things you know in the intuitive mind that raise your awareness to a new level. The Universal Mind is your new awareness. Now you know things you cannot verbalize.

Here is the beauty of The Monk 101 program as found through my book "[The Lesson](#)". In order to merge with the Universal Mind, you must first fill the Intellectual Mind. Once the Intellectual Mind reaches its lim-

its, transcendental intelligence begins. If you are to understand the complete program, you must intellectually master the parts of the program. The accumulation of the whole gives you the ability to transfer this cognitive awareness to the intuitive mind. The intuitive mind is then the link between the Intellectual Mind and the Universal Mind. The essence of what we believe, the things we cannot see, feel or touch, comes from the Universal Mind. Intuition does not give us information we can analyze. It gives us a much greater self-realization through identification. When we reach this stage, our game begins to take on a new light. Our entire life begins to take on a new light. We have more power, greater effectiveness, and we are able to do things we could not do before. Sometimes, in the intuitive stage, we are able to accomplish things we never thought we could.

There are two paths going out before you. If you have reached the Intuitive Mind you will automatically know which path to choose. Remember, you must experience the totality of the Intellectual Mind. That is, you must master the material offered in The Monk 101 program in "The Lesson". Once you accumulate all the intellectual data, you can then enter the Intuitive Stage. Here you have no problem discerning which road to travel because it is an instinct. You have no problem with which shot to shoot because it comes from your instinctive mind. It is automatic because it comes from the intuition which is linked up with the Universal Mind. You can make the right choice because Right-Doing is ingrained in your nature from your years of practice. It is the natural thing to do. You have teamed up with a higher power and now you can see no limitations. This is a great experience, and it is yours for the asking.

Herein lies the essence of the passage from The Voice of Silence. "Thou can not travel on the path before thou hast become the path." You must become what you pursue, and you do this through long hours of training. You accumulate the skills. This gives you the instinct to do what is right, because you are what is right.

The essence of what we believe, the things we cannot touch or feel, comes from the Universal Mind.

Let me caution you here and now, my friend. When you reach the intuitive stage of your development, things once thought mundane take on a greater importance. In other words, you must avoid the hindrance of things left undone. A promise must be kept meticulously.

The negative reaction to the intuitive mind is far more potent because you are more in tune with what is going on. To break a promise, even to yourself, will cause you great unrest. Your journey now calls for you to live to a higher standard, and indeed, you must live up to it.

You are a bundle of pure potential, always unlimited possibility. The only hindrance you experience is within yourself. You are pure potential. How wonderful it is to know that you have no limits. Be free. Be free from the negatives of everyday life. Let the others be held back by their own doubts and fears. You are unlimited potential with an unfulfilled dream to follow. You are the dream, the path, the hope, the journey. Count yourself blessed to be in this grand and glorious game.

Do not concern yourself as to when you will take wings and soar to the Intuitive Mind. Be content with the knowledge that it will happen. You will be playing pool and one day it will all come together for you. The land of Dead Stroke is fueled by the Intuitive Mind. We have visited that place and it is good. Press on, for you have been chosen for greatness. Singled out by a Higher Power. You have been marked for something grand and special. Press on and the prize will be yours.

*Your journey now calls
for you to live up to a higher
standard. You have been called.*

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE



***If You Have Been Given a Dream,
Then You Must Dream It.***

In my earlier days, I worked in the woods of Northern Michigan as a lumberjack. The work was hard and the pay was very little. Still, that was all I had to do and I knew my job well.

Sometimes on Saturday I would spend the entire day all alone in the woods. No one showed up and I was left with the quiet solitude of the peaceful forest. The sound of my chainsaw was the only noise I heard on those lonely Saturdays. I cut down the trees, measured out the logs, cut them up, and shut my chainsaw off so I could pile them in a neat pile for the tractor to come by and skid them to the landing.

In the quiet of the day, you could almost hear me groan under the heavy load of lifting and piling those heavy logs. I wanted my road through the woods to be the best one of all the lumberjacks, so I spent some extra time cleaning it out. My stumps were very low, the limbs were trimmed neatly, and the piles were straight. The skidder, as he was called, would rumble through the woods and skid out my wood. He liked working with me because I made his job easier. He would drive through and stop at each pile of logs, lift them with the clam, and load them into his dray. He could load around eighty logs per dray. The sound of his big diesel grunted and groaned under the heavy load.

When he was completely loaded, he would drive slowly out of the woods and back to the landing where the trucks would come and haul them off to the mill. After a long day's work, I was exhausted and sore.

There were times when I would come home tired and weary, and I would purposely tell my wife lies. I'd tell her a story, perhaps, of how the main man at the mill came all the way out to my work area and comple-

mented me on how perfect my logs were. Sometimes I would tell her how I suggested a more efficient way to run the five hundred million dollar mill and how the main mill man had come out to my woods to thank me for the suggestion. She knew these stories were untrue, but she always smiled while I talked.

One particular day, I asked my wife to shop by herself with the kids, while I waited in my Volkswagon bus. I was simply too tired to follow her around in the grocery store denying myself the goodies I wanted. She took my three daughters and left me alone in the bus. I took some paper and went into the back and began to write. She was gone almost an hour, and all that time, I just wrote and wrote and wrote. When she returned, she slid the door open and asked me what I was doing.

"I'm working on a book," I answered without thinking.

"Don't be ridiculous! Help me with these groceries."

There were four of them and about seven bags. Why would they need my help? I suppose, writing a book was not in my character. At least, it wasn't in the way my family saw me. They saw me and loved me as a lumberjack, not a writer.

The condition of their love was that I remain a lumberjack. Don't rock the boat with a foolish dream. A change in any family is hard to take. They have things worked out, relationships defined, rules, parameters, boundaries and roles to play. Things are the way they are because each person fits into the puzzle we call a family. We like it that way. It is comfortable.

But I had instincts that bordered on a vision. I did not see myself as they saw me. I did not see myself as a lumberjack. My instincts would not let me settle for working in the woods and dying by the age of fifty.

For the first time in my life, I actually saw myself as a writer with something to say. When I sent my wife into the store with the girls, I hooked up with the Universal Mind and saw myself as a writer. It was a vision I was comfortable with. It felt natural.

In that parking lot, in the back of that Volkswagon bus, I began to write "Point The Way". While I was working on the manuscript, I could see myself as a very successful writer. I would help a lot of people with my work. I was sore from a day's work in the woods, still smelling like a lumberjack, and I could see myself as a successful writer. Where did this picture come from?

At some point I brushed up against the Universal Mind. I had been given a gift. The Universal Mind drifted through that logging strip and touched me while I sat there drinking the best cup of coffee a man could ever have. Coffee in the woods is a tonic for the spirit. The touch that I received at that point was a gift called desire. I had been given a desire. The

desire had nothing to do with my skills. I had no skills at the time. Actually, I was just a big dumb lumberjack. I was given the gift of desire. Here is where I separated from so many other people. If I have been given a dream then surely I will be given the opportunity to live it.

Everyone who is given the gift of desire will have a chance to fulfill that dream. It is in our DNA. It is there for everyone. I responded to the calling. I responded to the gift. My wife said, “Don’t be ridiculous! Help me with the groceries.” But when the whispering winds came through the trees, I asked,
“Why can’t I be a writer?”

From that point on, some twenty years in the making, I’ve worked on my life both as a successful writer and a fully actualized human being. I had been given the gift of desire and used that energy to see me through this perilous journey. Remember, desire has nothing to do with skill. Desire comes on its own. You need to have the faith to follow your desire and develop the skills to succeed. If you have been given the desire to play pool, and do not know how to play pool, don’t despair. You will be given the chance to develop your skills and become the best pool player in your area.

Very often I hear beginner pool players, who cannot make three balls in a row talk about becoming a pro and following the pro tour. They have the gift of desire and need only to follow their dream. The skills will match the desire and they will find success. It is not easy. Cling to that gift called desire. I cannot recall thanking God for my writing or pool skills, but I can recall, on many a lonely night, giving Him the soulful appreciation for my desire to succeed. It was my desire that carried me through. I cannot believe that you would be given the desire to accomplish something without, at some point being given the skills to carry it out.

*The touch that I received at that point was
a gift called desire. I had been given a desire
and that desire had nothing to do with my skills.*

All too often the conditions of life interfere with our personal desire to succeed. Before the winds of the Universal Mind come whisking through our hearts, we arrange a quiet little underachieving corner to our world. We settle in and find solace in our underachievement. In fact, we invite those around us to share in this series of half-measures. We invite people who would be comfortable in our “settle for less” attitudes. It is unchallenging to be an underachiever. Easier to “take in the groceries” than to embark on a new and exciting challenge. We marry someone who will support our mediocre life-style, so when the challenge comes to us in the night we can

say, “I would have done it if it wasn’t for my spouse.” We raise kids who are comfortable with the way things are. We make friends with those who accept us for what we are, and get jobs that don’t challenge us to better things. In all our efforts, we are fighting the nagging influence of the Universal Mind.

“Oh, the joys of those who do not hang around with sinners.”

All too often, the conditions of life interfere with our personal desire to find success.

We invite all the distraction we can handle and continue to reinforce this negative influence. We do this until desire is completely subdued. How sad it is when we reach this state of mind, for we have found success, not in the full expression of our true nature, but in the smothering of the gift called desire. We have succeeded in strangling the very thing that could lift us to a better life.

Sometimes I look at a magnificent horse running in the pen and think how sad it is that this horse has settled for fences and limitations just for an easy meal. One time I sat on my motorcycle, high in the mountains of Nevada, and looked down into the vast meadow far below. There was a band of wild horses running free. For a brief moment, I worried about who was going to feed them. Then I realized, they are free! They are free to celebrate life with no limitations. Suddenly they were grand. What a spectacle. Wild horses running in the meadow.

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX



*If You Pile Rocks upon Rocks
and Keep Piling More
Rocks upon Rocks, You will Soon
Have a Big Pile of Rocks.*

The qualities of a great champion are not so easily attained. They are not for everyone. If you are to reach the finals, you must be of a special nature. You must be willing to pay an enormous price.

In my basement, I would have literally chopped off my arm for someone to have stepped up and told me the step-by-step requirements to acquire a championship level of play. I would have done anything to become what I had dreamed. All I needed was direction. I needed direction badly. In all the books and tapes I read and viewed, I could not find the answer. No one could give me this vital information. What does it take to become a champion? What does it really take to make it to the winner's circle? Give me the answer and I will follow it until I reach my goals. No sacrifice is too great for me to make, if I am going to get to a higher level of play. I want it that bad. I will do anything.

A Buddhist Master once told an aspiring monk, "You must want enlightenment more than a person held under water wants air." I think it is the same way with a championship.

In my desperate search for the formula I have found the answer. Better yet, I have found the way, and I will be glad to share it with you. When you talk about the level of play from a champion's point of view, you are talking about something that is almost impossible to verbalize. When two great players come face to face, there is an all-knowing exchange; a mutual understanding.

When you reach the championship level, you must be of a special nature. You must be willing to pay an enormous price.

Johnny Archer touches the hearts of all champions because he is a master. And when he meets another Master, there is instant recognition. Likewise with two Buddhist Masters. From one eye to another, there is a knowing interaction that cannot be shared with someone who has not made it to this level. They have completed their journey. They have reached awareness, and what they exchange between them is an understanding of this fact.

If you reach the championship level, you must have the qualities of Courage, Concentration and Composure. The hardest to acquire is concentration. Yet, it is the most sought after quality in life. Those who can concentrate well can accomplish great and mighty things.

You don't have to chop off your arm for this information. In the paragraph that follows I will "Point the Way" for you.

When a monk joins the monastery for the first time, he is usually assigned a difficult and monotonous task. He is seeking some dramatic enlightenment experience, but instead is assigned a menial job. He is asked to move all the stones from the long driveway and place them on the other side of the road. He is asked to weed a garden, shovel dirt from one pile to the next. He must do this day after day after day. The days of this tedious task go on and on. Days turn into weeks, then months, then years. For some monks, this goes on for decades! Simply doing the same thing over and over.

Remember the monk who wants enlightenment more than a man who is held under water wants air? Well, moving rocks doesn't sound so bad to one who is this desperate. He wants to reach this blissful stage, and is willing to do whatever he is asked to do in order to get there. So he goes out and performs his boring assignment secure in the knowledge that he is on the way. There is no doubting. He is sure that this is the way to all knowledge.

Day after day he moves stones from one place to another place and back again. At first, he resists within himself and wonders why he is doing this, but he persists because he has been told to do it. It is his assignment, and he continues to pile rocks upon rocks. "It doesn't make any sense," complains an untrained monk. However, the sincere monk presses on. He follows the orders from the Master. The complainer soon wearies of the boring task and leaves the monastery never having reached enlightenment. This happens to many monks in the beginning. They think they know what they are looking for. They think they know how to get it. When this does not happen, they grow weary and give up.

The complaining monk finally leaves because he does not understand the value of piling rocks on rocks and then piling them again. He leaves because his experience does not fit his expectations.

Meanwhile, the persistent monk, the one who wants enlightenment more than a man who is held under water wants air, continues to follow the orders. He continues to receive his instructions, which are to pile more rocks upon more rocks.

Then one day he forgets what he is doing. He goes about it with such habit of purpose that he forgets. It is no longer a struggle. It is automatic. Everything falls into place automatically. There is no effort, no work. In no time at all the rocks are piling themselves and the rocks are not heavy. There is no weight in the rocks. Everything is so easy. Among those rocks, he looks at the Master and smiles. The two of them have shared enlightenment together. The smile is an exchange of oneness that can only happen between Master and Master.

I have a pile of rocks for you. If you want to become a master more than a man who is held under water wants air, I have a pile of rocks for you to move. Throw the balls on the table and run off a rack. Throw them back on the table and run them off again. Shoot all fifteen balls until you are out of balls and then repeat the process. From now on, shoot twenty racks of rocks every day. Twenty racks without thinking.

Run fifteen balls. Run them any way you want! Run them without missing. Run them smart, run them with risky shots, and run them safe. Run them with only 2-7-2+5 shots. Run them out. Shoot all fifteen balls until you are out of balls, and then repeat the process. From now on, shoot twenty racks of balls every single day. Go to the table and run off twenty racks.

You will be piling three hundred rocks from one place to the next. Do this day after day after day. Do it as your honorable duty. This is your high calling – running balls. Do not complain or grow weary. There is no weariness for those who truly follow the way. This is your journey, your personal journey. This is your way to come up for air. You are called to run twenty racks per session. Pile the rocks!

Follow faithfully, for there is no other way. You must be on a regimen. You must be consistent. You must win through persistence. There is no other way. You are only fooling yourself if you think you are capable of playing your way to enlightenment. There are too many pitfalls along the way. You must train, and running twenty racks is the best way.

*There is no weariness for those who truly follow the way.
This is your journey.*

Every time you run off a rack, you are building the concentration skills that will serve you in times of need. This is vital to your success. When the rack begins to run itself off, you have arrived. When the shots shoot themselves, and you are just the servant moving the cue, you have become a Master. Do not rush your experience. Play it out until you are sure of your awareness. Run the balls without thinking. Run them without effort. Run them without missing. Run them off. Run them out. Finish off the rack. Let it happen.

Be aware of your mind and how it is working. I continue to be aware of how things are going in my mind. I am on the same journey you are. Perhaps, I have been assigned the task to “Point The Way” for you.

Be prepared to follow your personal journey when it is revealed to you. Be strong. Be brave. Press on.

I’ve always wanted to be a champion, and I did reach the championship level. I was World Class. I ran three hundred balls. I ran several racks in succession and won many matches and tournaments. When I was ready for the championship trail I was given a new assignment, one I am honored to perform. I was assigned to “Point The Way” for my fellow travelers. I did not foresee this when I began my journey. I did not expect it. I simply followed, and when I reached enlightenment – that is piled my rocks to the point of no thought – the way opened up for me. I am glad for my assignment. When I do my duty, the rewards are much greater than I could have ever expected.

When I reached World Class, I could not go on to the glory of competition. My job was to stand on the threshold of tournament play and direct those weary travelers to the path of success. I do not mind this assignment. I do not resist. I accept it with a humble heart. This is what I must do and I am happy.

There are times when I wonder what it would be like to beat Johnny Archer for the championship. I might always wonder if that were possible for me. And when I train and train and train, I seem to be directed back to my original task, which is to help others.

If you have discovered The Monk, you have been chosen for greatness. I believe that. You have the opportunity to reach your goals. Follow this program. Pile the rocks upon rocks until they pile themselves. For in your willingness to follow, you have assured yourself a successful conclusion.

*When the shots shoot themselves,
and you are just the servant moving
the cue, you have become the Master.*

Run twenty racks as if you are in the finals of a grand championship. Your practice session is a reflection of who you are. Do not rush it. The way you approach practice is the way you will approach a serious match. If you are lazy in practice, you will be lazy in a contest. Practice with a sincerity of heart. The balls will never shoot themselves if you are not fully involved with your work. Run your twenty racks with keen concentration until you are simply shooting one ball at a time. There is never more than one rock, one ball. There is always one ball. Those who look at the task and say, "I don't have time for three hundred balls," are not in touch with reality. There are never three hundred balls. If you are concentrating with the best of them, you are only concerned with the shot at hand. You are never ahead of yourself, and this is why you must follow the course. It is a training exercise designed to give you the skills to become a Master. You must shoot the balls until they begin to shoot themselves. And they will shoot themselves when they are ready to shoot themselves. You will not be able to make this happen sooner than it is suppose to happen. You are an arm of this experience. Keep shooting until it happens. Shoot, shoot, and shoot some more. Do your three hundred balls for six months. Do them for nine months. Do them for one year! You will know when you are ready to give up this particular training. You will know when the rocks are piling themselves.

After you reach the point where the rocks are piling themselves, I want you to shoot five special racks. This time, shoot them in a series of three balls. Call the three shots you are about to shoot. After you run three balls, call three more. Challenge yourself! Run threes until the fifteen balls are all gone. This is a fun exercise. Often times, I will pick three balls that require me to thread my way though clusters and go from one end of the table to another. This is just the final touch to a wonderful practice program.

Now you may begin to work on the shots and strokes that are in "The Lesson." You may play a match or simply exercise the mid-term exam. Be faithful in your practice and you will be rewarded. Concentration is improved when you reinforce concentration. Every time you exercise your skills in concentration, you are reinforcing them. It is like faith. You cannot strengthen faith if you don't use it. I have faith that you will be successful, and I thank you for this. Every time I step out, believing success will come, I am building more faith in myself. This is a program that works. We must be persistent.

*If you are lazy in practice, you will be lazy in the contest.
Practice with sincerity of heart.*

So what happens during your routine workout? Your twenty racks of non stop shooting? What are you looking for? First of all, you must pay attention to your set up. Each shot must be approached as if it is the winning shot. Never shoot a ball while you are in a poor stance. If you can come away from your workout with good stance habits, then you will be rewarded for your work.

During meditation in the monastery, the Master would walk around the group of trainees with a long stick, and whack them on the head if they were not paying close attention to the meditation. As you walk around the table, chalk up, take your time, and set up a rhythm to your approach to the balls. Consider the chalk your loyal and trusted friend. You will want to visit with your friend many times during a run out. You will want him with you at all times. Do not leave this friend behind on the rail at the far end of the table. Chalk up after every shot. Look at the shot. Decide how you are going to play it. If you lose your concentration, expect a whack from the Master.

When I was in my basement, I asked a friend to sit in the chair with a small air pistol. If I got down in the shot, and wavered at any point whatsoever, he was instructed to shoot me. You know where! I agreed to do that for him. It did not take a lot of shots to help us gain the most solid stance in the business.

If you are a Monk 101 graduate, decide how a shot is presented in “The Lesson”. Make a comparison. Almost all shots on the table are in “The Lesson”. Once you make up your mind on what stroke to use, the speed you will need to be successful and the type of shot it is, you must then be prepared to execute the shot. Remember, each shot presents its own dynamics, and this is what you must concentrate on.

See yourself getting into a rhythm, slowing down, pacing yourself. This is vital to the development of a sound mind. When you deliver the winning shot, which is every shot you take, experience the cue tip going through the cue ball. Feel it, hear it, sense it, and let it flow through the cue ball with ease. Allow your entire body to relax, release tension, and stroke the cue ball. This is part of your journey to the shot shooting itself.

Make it a point to read this chapter just before every practice session. You will benefit from this frame of mind.

Have you ever run a rack and didn't know it? Your opponent tells you, “Nice break and run,” yet you were totally unaware that you broke and ran that rack. Now you decide to go for two break and runs in a row. This time you fail. You had the opportunity but you came up short on speed, or simply

missed a shot. When you are not aware of your break and run, the shots are shooting themselves. You are free to perform because there are no conditions on the performance. You are free. When you add a condition to the equation, such as, "This will be my second break-and-run," you have entered the picture and reduced your instincts. You actually stop the shots from shooting themselves by putting conditions on them. This causes your performance to suffer. In order to be the Master, you must be free to perform. You must become the performance, not control the performance.

Once you decide on the shot, what stroke to use, the speed of the shot, the type of shot, then you must prepare yourself to execute the shot.

How many times have you come to the table and knew you were going to run out? You somehow got in the groove and knew that you would complete the run out and win the match. In this situation, you were glad to be you. You did not want anyone else attempting this run out because you knew you could do it. It is sort of like the confident shortstop who wants the ball hit to him in a game winning situation. If you look at this closely, you will find that you somehow reached the "one-shot-at-a-time" mode. You were focused on the shot at hand and the dynamics of each shot. You were not caught up in the conditions of the match. You need this type of attitude for success. You were ready to fulfill that expectation. You knew beyond any doubt what you were going to do with the shot at hand. The rest of the shots did not concern you. You were dealing with the one shot, and only the one shot. This is why your confidence soared. You knew what to do. Succeed with the shot in front of you. Stay at the table and succeed with the next shot. Then go on to the next shot, and the next, and soon you will run out of shots and be declared a winner. A friend of mine, Toby Vaughn sent me a mantra he designed which goes like this, "First shot, last shot, next shot, past shot, THIS SHOT." I have since put this mantra on a T-shirt, and it is available in my catalog.

In order to be the Master, you must be free!

You must become the performance, not control the performance.

This is what we must strive for. How many times have I talked about the shot at hand? It all comes down to the shot at hand. One time in a game, I was left with an unexpected eight ball in a game of nine ball. I was surprised by my unexpected opportunity. It was not expected at all, so I missed the shot. I was not prepared to shoot. I was sitting in my chair waiting to lose.

In a game of nine ball, I missed the eight ball five times, and each time I missed, I left my opponent with no shot at all. After the second miss, I really worked hard for the shot, but I was carrying the previous failure with me. The past shot. I was involved with winning. The next shot. I was running both the eight ball and the nine ball, and being very angry with myself for the previous miss. I was involved with two things on my mind.

Add to that the fact that I believed I did not deserve to win this game after missing my first opportunity. I blew five straight shots, and finally left my opponent an easy out. In each case, I was not in the “shot at hand” mode. I was not prepared to shoot the shot in front of me. My brain was somewhere else.

To improve your concentration skills, you must narrow your field of focus. This entire discourse is simply about narrowing the field of focus to what is directly in front of you. If you focus on the task at hand long enough, you will eventually come out the winner.

Come back to this assignment time after time and work on the piling of rocks. When you go through to the wonderful world of enlightenment, the shots will be shooting themselves. There will always be the physics of the game, such as where the balls lay, the clusters, balls on the rail, environmental concerns, etc. We will never be the perfect player. We will never master the game of pocket billiards, but we can become Masters.

The rolls go our way sometimes, against us other times. We are simply servants of the game. Once we reach the Master level, we can play anyone, because there are few Masters in this world. A Master will win most matches.

To be a Master does not mean you have acquired great shooting skills. Often times, a Master will beat a player who has greater shooting skills simply because he is a Master.

A Master is free. The shots are shooting themselves, and the master has paid his dues. He has reached enlightenment, piled a lot of rocks. He has run a lot of racks. He has spent his time in the trenches. The Master is ready, enlightened, and free. He will always enjoy his turn at the table.

*Pile rocks upon rocks until they
begin to pile themselves. Run racks
upon racks, until they begin to run
themselves. When the shots are shoot-
ing themselves, you no longer have any
reason to be concerned about winning
and losing*

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN



*When You Are Filled With Expectations,
You Are Not Free.
A Mastership Comes To Those Who Least Expect It.*

The Mastership does not come to us on our terms. It comes to us when we least expect it. It comes to us when we are not even aware of it. It comes to us because we are simply doing our job. We are sincere in our training. We have gone beyond the expectations and demands of our personal life. We have been reduced to simply training, with no thought for the future. We train. That is all we do. We train. We put in our time.

Enlightenment comes to those who are free to receive. When you are filled with earnest expectation, you are not free. You are groping for something. When you demand a result, you are not free. Conditions have been set up in your training. If we want to experience the pure joy of enlightenment, we must do our work and let the results be just that.

If you outline your expectations, you limit them. You keep your eyes on the outline and do not see the piling of rocks in the present.

I am not a fan of goal setting. Goal setting is okay if the goal is directly within your path. Keep in mind however, we are seeking something we don't even understand. You cannot understand enlightenment until you have it.

One time I was playing pool at the Bavarian Inn in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Up until that time, competing was always an agonizing experience for me. All of a sudden, during my run, I understood that I had reached a high level of play. It came to me suddenly. I was completely aware of a new way of looking at things. Tears came to my eyes because I had stumbled upon enlightenment.

Through our dedicated training we open the door to unlimited possibilities in which our work is simply to press on and see what happens. The unlimited possibilities can only come to those who have released them-

selves from preconceived expectations. What we can expect is limited by our own level of comprehension. This being so, we can only expect limits. Open your mind. Open your heart to what lies ahead.

When we open ourselves to unlimited possibilities, we must have the willingness to pursue the unknown. A Mastership is not something we can comprehend. It is something we can comprehend only when we have it. Once we are Masters we can understand it. And one Master will always recognize another Master.

It is similar to the salvation experience of a Christian. He does not understand it until it happens to him. Then, and only then, has he the all-knowing awareness of his redeemed condition. The Buddhist who reaches enlightenment is much like the saved Christian. He experiences something beyond intellectual understanding. There can be no clear verbalization of his experience.

When one Christian looks at another, they are aware of each other's walk. So it is with two Masters. Eye to eye, they know each other. It is only when the Christian tries to intellectualize his salvation experience that he loses it. He tries to overtake something that is beyond him. How foolish. Grab God and He is gone. Let Him in and He is there. The Master must walk on in the knowledge that all is well. He is where he should be. He is where he can fulfill his purpose. He is the fulfillment. He is the path.

So it is with this fascinating game. We are only players. We serve. We are part of the big picture. Let go and let it happen. It will.

When we begin our journey we would like to have a clear picture of how it is going to turn out. This is all well and good, but it does not guarantee we will reach our goal. Remember, the picture or expectation of what your journey should accomplish is the picture you are capable of seeing at the time. It is limited by your own inexperience. It is the only picture you are capable of drawing up. As you progress, you grow and change. This picture is bound to change along with your personal growth. Goal setting is fine as long as the goal does not replace your everyday training. You need to live in the moment. Live the moment. If your eyes are on the spot a hundred feet ahead, you might step in the big hole in front of you.

Too often we are living in the future. "As soon as I get this or that, then I am going to be happy," is what so many people say. They spend their lives thinking about the future and trusting to conditions to make them happy.

Begin with the end in mind, and then live the life that takes you there. How does a snail climb Mt. McKinley? Slowly, very slowly. Do you think the snail is focused on the high mountain in front of him? If he did, he

would never reach the top. He sees only the step he must take. He does not see the glory he will experience when he reaches the top. He only knows he must travel on.

Take a picture of what you want to accomplish in this game. Then begin with the assurance that you will one day be at the place you expect to be.

I rode my motorcycle through the central part of Florida. The wilderness was breathtaking. The air was a warm, gentle expression of how Florida can be in February. I was happy. Music blared through my stereo. It was great. I was traveling to the Cedar Keys to spend some time with friends. That was my end goal, and I had about eighty miles to travel before I reached my destination. The scenic wilderness, warm air, and rhythmic music made for a very pleasant experience. I got caught up in the moment at hand. All too soon, I reached my destination. The miles were lost in the unending joy of the moment.

So it is with our billiard experience. If we take the time to appreciate the journey – that is, where we are at the moment – we may find the joy so overwhelming that we do not want to reach the end. Begin with the end in mind then focus on what you are doing in the present. You will be pleased with your progress.

Perhaps you may want to create a mission statement. Your mission statement must be precise and in direct relation to your pool experience.

I am a champion Pocket Billiards Player.

I am a Master.

I am a credit to this game.

I follow the path.

Whatever you decide, a ten-year old should be able to understand it. In other words, don't try to create some grandiose scheme that no one will understand. Keep it simple. Memorize this mission statement and repeat it every single morning of your life. Do not put any pressure on yourself to reach this goal. It will happen. The snail is not concerned with how high the mountain is. The snail is only concerned with the next step in front of him. He knows where he is going.

Keep in mind, we are not talking about your personal life in this mission statement. A Pool Player is not necessarily who you are. Just as I am not totally a writer. Writing is something I do. It is not who I am, but I have

a mission statement regarding writing and I follow this path faithfully. In this context we are talking about a mission statement concerning your pocket billiards experience.

Your mission in this great game is the game. So your statement is precise and accurate. It does not matter what level you are. You are a champion. A credit to this game. We may rise to great heights in the art of pocketing balls and winning matches, and this is fine. But we are not confined to our mission statement. Our mission is what we do. There is a fine line here. Remember, you cannot follow the path until you become the path. Pool, and our accomplishment in this game, is a step along the path. We pocket balls to reach the top of the mountain. Is the snail the mountain? Certainly not. The snail is the path to the top of the mountain.

Begin with the end in mind and then focus on what you are doing in the present. Then make sure that what you are doing reflects the end in mind.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT



*Follow the Laws of Nature
to Make Your Dreams Come True.*

*Look at the dandelion. It is not trying to grow. It grows!
Look at the sparrow. It is not trying to fly. It flies!*

In many ways, we are the servants of our own world. We see the world, sense its triumph and pain, and know that we are here to serve. When we can be servants, we can then go on to experience the real joy this life offers us. This is not an easy lesson for a selfish generation to learn.

Look out over the pool hall sometime and observe the players. See their struggles and pain. Notice how hard they work on their game. Understand their struggles and show your compassion. When you can combine practice and hard work into play, and share your talent with others, you have united your efforts for the future of all players; therefore, this is our mission.

Somewhere along the line you have to become the entire program. You have to enter into the law of least effort. You must make it easy on yourself. You must know things without seeing them. Sharpen your senses so you don't have to stop and think about it. You already know it.

There are those who simply go about their business much like the animals in the forest. They celebrate life and live it to the fullest without the irritation of debate. There is nothing to argue about. Nothing to debate. They operate on an all-knowing mentality and have found harmony with nature. This is the principle of least effort. They don't have to do anything. There is little resistance to this way of life. It is the combination of love and harmony.

Once the shots are shooting themselves, you no longer have to try to make them. Have you ever played someone in eight ball who runs the rack, only to get out of shape on the eight? They wrinkle up their nose and say, "I'll try cut it in the side." I hate when they say that. Either cut it in or don't. Actually, I do like it when they tell me they are going to try to cut it in because it means I will be getting another turn!

We do not try to do anything. Have you ever heard the saying, "Trying is lying?" Look at the dandelion. It does not try to grow. It grows. A bird would be in trouble if it spent all of its time trying to fly.

We spend our time doing. That is the very nature of life. As the stars naturally shine in the heavens, we follow the laws of nature to make our dreams come true.

One of my most prized students wanted to move from Florida to New Hampshire to enter my one year program. This was her heart's desire, but there were many complications involved in this big move. Her family was very concerned about her. Would she find employment while she was studying this game? Could she make it all alone in New England? Everyone around her was full of concern. After all, she had lived and worked in Florida all her life.

Then she told me that the doors opened for her to move all at once. It happened when she least expected it. The move could not have gone smoother. She made this transition in complete harmony with her "doing" side of self. She did not try to move to New England. She moved to New England, and the move was easy. It was easy because it was right.

What happens when you try to run a rack? If I come to the table and see the balls spread out, nothing touching a rail and no clumps, I sometimes say to myself, "I can run this rack and get the score to such and such." Now I have to try to run the rack because I have the entire rack in my mind. I am thinking about the score. I am out of touch with reality.

If I am in dead stroke, I don't even think about running the rack. I simply look for the right shot and proceed from there to the next shot, the next shot, and the next, until I have run out of shots. I am not trying to do anything. I am doing it.

Can you tell the difference between the two statements, "Oh, I tried so hard to succeed," and, "Oh, I did succeed," Which one requires the most effort? In nature, effort is lost in the doing. In nature, where the laws are followed, everything is done in harmony with little resistance. Resistance in nature is simply a normal part of everyday living. It is not agonized over.

To ease your life into an "all doing and not trying" mode, you must focus on loving all creatures. When you follow the principle of love, you waste no energy. When you get caught in the web of seeking money and

power, you cut off the flow of love. You cut off your energy flow. In competition, if you hate your opponent, you try harder, thus you use more energy.

How many greedy people do you see at the psychiatrist's office? When you seek money for personal gain, you cut off the natural flow of energy. This creates stress. Stress creates sickness and wears down the body.

If you are acting out of love for others, you receive energy and a clear sense of direction. You can actually build up a surplus of energy which can be channeled into a source for ultimate success. This translates into monetary wealth.

Have you ever been lost on the highway and not sure if you are going in the right direction? You are stressed out, tired, not able to concentrate. Then you see a sign that tells you exactly which road to take. At that moment, you receive a burst of joy, energy, and a new resolution to follow the road. So it is with life. When we know we are on the right trail, we are more healthy. This way, we are better able to run racks and win more games. In order to be sure of what you are doing, you must be sure of who you are.

If you are caught up in the seeking approval from other people, then you are operating out of the ego. You will tire and experience all types of physical ills. If an abused wife comes to a counselor and complains of her ills, he works not on the abuser, the one who is supposedly causing her all this trouble. Instead the counselor will try to help this woman find value in her own self-worth. He will seek to lead her away from her compulsive desire to get others to approve of her. Once she can stand on her own two feet and gain her measure of self-worth from within, she will no longer tolerate the abuse. Her good health comes from within. It comes from how she sees herself.

When you seek power and control over other people you set up a conflict within yourself. You create your own turmoil. This is called the "laws of resistance." In order to gain, you must maintain complete control. You must fight to stay ahead of your subject at all times. You are setting up the laws of resistance, and, sooner or later, you will inevitably break down. The struggle is too hard. You cannot hold up under this constant pressure. Remember, with seeking approval or controlling other people, you are in a perpetual "trying" mode because nothing is ever complete. There's always a conflict.

No one can control another person. Seeking approval is a form of control. Do it the easy way. Seek the laws of least resistance and live a healthy, happy life. When it comes to living life, live it. When it comes to running racks, do it. Leave the "trying" to the less informed.

In the martial arts, the greatest weapon is that of acceptance. You do not resist the oncoming blows. Instead, you receive them and use that burst of energy to defeat your opponent. You use his efforts to bring him down.

Likewise with the moment. You accept the people and the moment just as they are. This is the way it is. You accept it. The circumstances are as they are. You do not resist them. Thus the AA prayer, “God grant the me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Acceptance offers the least resistance, and enables you to create the energy to effectively deal with each situation and challenge. Actually, when you think of it, this moment you are experiencing right now is the combined total of every moment you have experienced before. You might as well enjoy it, relax, and receive the knowledge it is trying to impart.

Moments linger in time. They are experienced in their own totality. If you are willing to enjoy them, precious memories can fill your soul.

There are those who come to the tournament and worry about who is in it. “Why did they let that guy in the tournament?” They ask. “He’s a pro. This is suppose to be an amateur event.” This player is setting up a resistance before he has actually played the match. How far do you think he will go?

There are two things my motorcycle will not pass by. A Dunkin Donuts and a scenic parking lot. Sometimes I try to close my eyes if I know I am coming up on a Dunkin Donuts coffee shop, but it doesn’t fool my motorcycle. It turns anyway! There are times when I just give in. I turn into the parking lot and sit there for a few moments. My motorcycle seems to be happy and I can continue my trip.

When there is a scenic overlook ahead, I must be prepared to pull in. Most of the time, when I enter the parking lot, I see that one person standing alone, looking out over the panoramic view. Most of the time it is a woman. There is a sense about her. She wants to be alone, undisturbed to reflect upon the moment. I think she may be in touch with a series of personal moments, and standing there gives her a greater sense of what it is. She melts into a oneness with the vastness of nature. It could very well be she has been touched by a Higher Power – something so much greater, yet an intimate part of her.

How can you stand on the seashore and view the ocean without thinking of the Grand Plan of the Universe? Stand at the edge of the Grand Canyon and you will be proud to be a human being, part of this experience. When you are at one with the awesome splendor of life and this earth, you have become one with this moment, and have then set up the laws of least resistance.

Do not struggle against the moment. The moment is as it is. You can wish for things to change in the future, but you cannot change the moment you are living. Accept it as it is.

If someone upsets you, you are reacting to your own feelings about this person and the situation. It is how you feel about the situation that causes your reactions. Many of my opponents claim that I have no personality when it comes to playing pool. If they act like a jerk, I do not react. I simply go about my business. I have the ability to choose how I am going to react.

What they do has nothing to do with me. I have no feelings about their actions, thus, I do not react. If you respond to a pool shark, you are responding to your own feelings about his actions. Your feelings about anything are not someone else's fault. They are your own feelings.

When you hate your enemies, you let your enemies win.

"But that person makes me so mad," you argue. It is your choice to get angry. You can choose whatever response you like. You can choose to ignore them, set up a counter-move, or simply walk away. Whatever reaction you express is your choice.

If you listen to someone long enough, you can believe anything you desire. A man knows that his girlfriend is lying. She is lying with a straight face. Tears run down his cheeks. And yet, he looks for a reason to believe her. He is choosing his reaction. He chooses to believe a pack of bold face lies. This is powerful stuff.

In order to bring harmony into your life, you must accept responsibility for everything that happens to you. Take the responsibility and find the solution to your problems. Once you take responsibility, you then have the opportunity to find a solution. As long as you leave your problems in the hands of someone else, you will never solve them. They will always be around to drain the energy out of your body. They will always bring you down.

If you deny responsibility and blame it on others, you will never find a cure for the problem. Taking responsibility for your actions is the first step to a harmonic life. You are not going to blame anyone else. You are not going to blame the circumstance, such as good luck, bad luck, good rolls or bad rolls. How many times has another pool player told you about a loss by blaming his opponent, the table, the lights, the waitress or the bad rolls? This is a common occurrence among beginner to intermediate players. They do not have the ability to take the responsibility for the situation that causes them to experience failure. They make excuses.

When the next player comes to you with this complaint, observe how much energy is being wasted by not accepting the moment as it is. This excuse-making resistance depletes his/her energy to succeed. It almost always guarantees failure.

Just as all problems contain the seeds of opportunity, all experiences contain the lessons for further growth. You can take this moment and transfer it into a positive by taking the responsibility for it. It is an opportunity to move forward, not a defeat to go backwards.

In my pocket billiards experience, I have faced and still face my share of tyrants. They upset me. They bother me. They bother me when they come into the room. They upset me even when I am not playing them. I wish they would quit the game. They bother me, and I don't like it when I am being bothered. I wish they would leave me alone. But they are not going to quit. They will remain in this game for as long as I am in the game. So I have to accept them, take responsibility for my own feelings, and choose the right response.

In dealing with this one particular tyrant, I chose to improve my game so I would never lose to him again. He was the source of my inspiration to train. I did not waste energy fighting the feelings I had. I simply increased my practice time and eventually destroyed him. I crushed him like a Praying Mantis hitting the windshield at seventy miles per hour. I dissected him like my fat frog in Biology class. I held him under water until he no longer wanted air.

In the game of pocket billiards we can rejoice that there are many teachers around to help us along the way. When you are confronted by a tyrant, remember to say, "This is a situation that is meant to be." It is your test to see how you choose to respond. My reaction was to become defenseless and spend my time on my own game. I do not waste energy defending myself to a tyrant. When I am ready, I will use sandpaper on his teeth.

If you feel the need to defend yourself, you are insecure with your position in life. If you can give up your need to defend yourself, you will be able to apply that wasted energy to something positive.

I like the way young people react to a situation they are not sure of. They say, "Whatever." My daughter, Donna, would drive me crazy with that response. She was putting all the responsibility on me. If I told her she was lazy and was incapable of keeping her room clean, she would shrug her shoulders and say, "Whatever." If I told her she didn't take care of her things, she would roll her eyes and say, "Whatever." Do you think she wasted any energy arguing with me?

I have no point of view to defend, therefore there can be no argument. There are times when a student will argue about a shot. I am fully aware that this student is wrong and I am right, but for some reason, he needs to experience the results of his resistance, and I will not argue. So I allow him to choose which way to go for himself. Since I am not fixated on one point of view, I am not disturbed. No waste of energy. I simply “Point the Way.” If he chooses to follow a different course, then that is his choice. It has nothing to do with me. It is not my failure when the decision made is a poor one. Lessons learned through your own experience make the biggest impression.

When you come to terms with the moment as it is, only then can you experience the joy of spontaneity. There is real joy in living the moment. Monks seek the incoming breath of life and experience the outgoing breath of life. They live the moment and give up the resentments, arguments, defensiveness and all the things that have nothing to do with the moment.

A child is lighthearted, free and dancing in the rain because this is the moment and she is taking advantage of it.

The Great Master Basho once said to the children, “Hey, look. It’s hailing! Let’s go out!”

Once you experience freedom from resistance and come to terms with acceptance, you will then be aware of the unlimited possibilities of your life.

You can have anything you want. You have the energy to pursue and gain any amount of success you want. This desire comes from your level of happiness and not your level of fear and anxiety.

You cannot motivate children by threats and warnings. You must motivate them through the joy of love, and there is a season to celebrate your success. All you do is simply experience the joy of the moment and await the dawning of a new season. It is all there for you.

Spend the next series of practice sessions working on shooting the shots with the least amount of effort. Simply shoot them and play for position on the next ball by getting close and having an easy shot. Shoot the shot with no fear or anxiety of failure. It is no big deal if you miss the shot. You are shooting the shots with the least amount of effort. This is your practice session and it will take time for you to implement this philosophy into your game – a lot of time.

In the beginning, you were content to be three feet away from your next shot. Now you want to be six inches away. Do not defend yourself. Go about your practice session content with the knowledge that you are on the right track. There is no need to defend.

When you come to terms with the moment as it is, only then can you experience the joy of spontaneity.

CHAPTER TWENTY NINE



Earth, Wind, Fire & Water Who Are You?

The only way you can ever find your divine purpose is to fit in with the plan.

It is important to define yourself in harmony with this experience we call life. After all, we are here on this earth, at this time, so there must be a reason. Our walk on this planet cannot be a mere coincidence of chance. There has to be a purpose. There is a reason for it all. We need to discover that purpose and when we do, we find harmony in our life. In other words, we are doing what we are suppose to do. Lao Tzu said in the Tao Te Ching, “To retire when the task is accomplished is the way of heaven.” I am sure when the time comes for us to put away this body we will be at peace if we have fulfilled our individual purpose during this cycle. And since you and I have found the game of pocket billiards, we know we are on the right road.

How do you find your purpose? Assuming that we came here to this earth to be part of a divine plan, how do we find out what it is? How do we go about doing the task? The only way you can ever find out your divine purpose is to fit in with the plan. You must become part of the overall plan of life. Harmonize with the Universe. Turn yourself over to the ebb and flow of this life.

How do you find your purpose? First you must find yourself. Who are you? Some of my readers ask me for my autograph at book signings. In reality, I should be asking you for your autograph. The person who responds to this work is a very special person. Time and time again I am amazed by the player who brushes past my life. I am a fortunate writer. I deal with gifted people. I deal with special people who have been selected for a mission, and who faithfully serve that cause. If you are to find your purpose in life, and thus gain the pure joy this journey offers, you must know who you are.

Once you are acquainted with who you are, you can then fall into the way that is right for you. It is unlikely we will ever rise to world fame or greatness. That is not our lot. Fame is a fleeting thing that often brings with it its own kind of destruction. We cannot save the world, for the world must save itself. But we can bring our lives into balance with the Universe. We do that with a clear understanding of who we are. And we are one of four things. We lean toward one of the four elements of this Universe.

*We are Wind. We are Earth.
We are Fire. We are Water.*

The Wind has a power of its own. The wind sweeps away old fears. It carries new ideas, and moves through and around obstacles. It does not settle. Wind is always on the move seeking new heights. There are times when the wind will knock down old barriers and sweep them away, and there are times when the wind will bring a gentle message to the tired and weary. Are you wind? Do you whisk your way on to new ideas, new horizons, and new beginnings?

Perhaps you are Earth, the stuff that supports and nurtures all of life. The earth is solid footing for those around you. The Earth is a place where both the strong and the weak can walk. My brother is a rare and gifted artist. He can sculpture great works and his paintings will take your breath away. He was overwhelmed by his talent and was living a tragic life of turmoil and unrest. Then he found his purpose, which was to serve by working as a janitor in a nursing home. He is most happy supporting the needs of other people. He is earth. Every day of his life, he sings a song. He sings as he cleans the floors. He smiles with his delight at taking out the trash. Those around him have no idea that hanging on the walls of his home, and in many other homes, are incredible paintings that come from the heart of a truly gifted man.

Are you Fire? Do you ignite the passions in others? Do you give power to those who struggle? Fire brings warmth on a cold, wintry night. Yet it can consume and destroy all around it when the fire burns out of control. Fire can also bring to this earth a new beginning. It can unlock the doors that have held back the personal growth. It can sweep away the walls that block your path.

Are you Water? Water is irresistible. No obstacle can stop it. Water goes over, under and around. It goes through and changes forms. Water can be stiff like ice or rage through a valley as a flood. It comes in gentle rain to nourish and bring life to the flowers. Every living thing on this earth needs water. It brings life wherever it goes.

At some point in your pocket billiard's growth you will want to come to terms with who you are. After all, you are the one who is trying to improve. You are being honed like a fine work of art – sculpted and shaped to perfection. When we have the definition of who you are, we can then bring you to the championship level of play. Remember, world class level of execution must be done by a world class individual. You do not win championships if you are not a champion. You just rise to the highest level of your own play.

Are you Fire? If so, then be sure to express this quality every single day. When you use it, you reinforce it. If you want to strengthen something, then you must practice it. Just like I practice being an aggressive player because that is my style of play, I also practice being Fire, which is my real self.

Are you Water? Irrigatable, bringing life wherever you go? In your morning meditation express the words, "I am Water. I am Fire. I am Earth. I am Wind," and see yourself fulfilling one of these concepts.

Form a mental picture of yourself so that you can increase your strength and determination. Get a clear vision of yourself. You will like what you see.

When you have come to terms with yourself you can truly create your own intentions. Intentions breed desire. During my long years in my basement "my monastery," I thanked God for my desire, for it was desire that carried me through the tough times. This desire was a direct result of my well-defined intentions. Narrow your field of focus on who you are. You are one of the four elements of this Universe. You are one more than another. Once you define yourself, your desires will come to life.

*Who am I? Let us assume that I am Fire.
Through my work, I ignite the passions in others, yet
I continually rage for a new beginning.
I seek a championship; therefore,
I am a champion.
My personal mission is to serve
others with warmth and encouragement, yet
I am still capable of
total consumption of my opponent.
I can rage. I can race with the wind.
I am fire, I am fire.
After my race is done, I have created
a way for a new beginning.*

The Monk

In my Focus on Winning series, I have a tape entitled, “A Walk on the Beach.” I have rerecorded that tape to help you find out who you are. Listen to it, and it will reveal the inner you: Earth, Wind, Fire or Water. You may order this tape, on it’s own, for just ten dollars from me. The Monk, P.O. Box 365, Orange MA 01364. I do not sell this tape on the open market. It is for those who follow the way and want to come face to face with who they are.

CHAPTER THIRTY



The Road to Success Is Paved With Good Intentions

You've heard that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. That's not true. This statement was made up by a frustrated parent, who demanded perfection from his children.

It all comes back to personal intentions. When you fully intend to do something, you are automatically filled with the desire to carry it out.

If you enter a tournament and fully intend to win it, you will have the desire to win the tournament. It is as simple as your intentions.

Having entered a tournament, Suzanne Bosselman and I were talking about winning the event. Our entire focus was on winning first place, taking it all. Another player came over and interrupted us. She had been listening to my talk with Sue and it bothered her. She told me I put too much pressure on Suzanne by my talking of winning the event. She went on to say that just putting in a good effort was what it was all about. "It is not the winning," she said, "It is the effort." Then she added, rather sarcastically, "I'm glad I'm not your student."

Suzanne went on to be "Player of The Year" with many victories to her credit. Suzanne had a clear understanding of her intentions, and was filled with the desire to see them through. The other player who was happy with a fine performance did not even win a trophy. She did not know who she was. She was one of those players who was along for the ride. As a result, she was not able to accomplish very much.

During a particular run out, I was concerned with the five ball, which was locked up with the seven. We were playing nine ball and I was about to begin my run out on the one. I was not clear about my run out because of the problem with the five ball. I did not have my intentions fully defined;

therefore, I did not have the desire to succeed. I could not see success in front of me. Without this desire, I was not sharp; therefore, after pocketing the one ball, I did not get good position on the two ball. Then I completely missed the two ball. I failed before I reached the problem ball which was the five. My concern with the problem ball left me without a clear plan. All I could see was the problem. In this case, I had no mission. It's like throwing your oars out of the boat because you are not sure where you want to land. In everything you do, you must be clear about your intentions. My "Consistency through Concentration" audio series includes a tape on how to handle your intentions and how important they are.

I should have intended to run to the five ball and play a safety. Had I said that to myself, I would have had the desire to carry it out, and I would not have missed on the two ball. If my intentions had been well defined, I would have gained the advantage on that rack even though there was a problem. I would have turned the problem into my advantage by playing a great safety. Suzanne was the master of this skill, the art of clearly defined intentions. I trained her, and many times we would discuss the value of a clear, concise, well-understood plan of attack, and then focus on the run out. She was a master of the one-shot-at-a-time. She focused her intentions, and automatically found the desire to carry them out.

You have heard me talk about one shot at a time or "present moment awareness." The key to everything is living the moment. Intention is the force behind the power. When you are in tune with your intentions, you are automatically in the present moment awareness mode. When your actions are performed in present moment awareness they become far more effective.

If you operate with desire only, you are overcome with the big picture. You become attached to the results. You are overcome with fatigue. Desire sees the mountain. Intentions see the hand hold in front of you. Desire is attached to the results. Intentions are secure with the moment. If you can combine intention and desire, you can have the best of both worlds. Not only can you be in line with a successful runout, you can also be in line with a life that is centered and happy – a present moment awareness existence. This will bring you much happiness and prosperity. You will find yourself in the finals when you can combine desire with your intentions.

I would like to sell 100,000 books. I sincerely would like to reach that goal. That is my well defined intention and I will pay attention to that journey. It is not enough to write a good book, just as it is not enough to be focused on a fine performance. We must focus on winning. I must have

100,000 sales. Now that I have my intentions clearly defined, I must go to the “one-shot-at-a-time” mode and work each day to achieve my goal. Remember, “To retire when the task is accomplished is the way of heaven.”

First, I will ask you to purchase “I Came To Win” for a friend of yours who has been struggling with the inner game. We talked about how sharing helps us to grow within ourselves and become a better person. So I am reaching for a hand held in front of me by asking you to buy another copy of this book and have me autograph it for your friend. Now, I’ve moved towards the top. I will place ads in all the magazines. I will do a mailout. I will be busy. I will be active. This is the value of my intentions. I will be so busy putting one hand in front of the other that I will forget about the 100,000 copies I want to sell. Suddenly I am filled with the desire to succeed. I am fire. I am burning up the turf.

My intention of selling 100,000 copies of this book is now, but the results are in the future. In other words, the future does not exist for me. So I will become detached from the results of my intention, and focus my attention on the moment at hand. After all, my attention can only exist in the present. As long as my focus is on present moment awareness, then my intentions will become a reality, for many todays are needed to create the future.

In your intentions, you must be totally clear about what you want to accomplish. You must be aware of the mountain you need to climb. When you become aware, you must be detached from this big picture and focus on the task at hand.

Suzanne was a master at this. When she faced an obstacle, which could be a missed position on her next ball and almost certain defeat, she never thought about the possible defeat. She never thought about losing. Instead she focused on the shot she had in front of her. If it was a tough kick shot, then so be it. She would give it her one hundred percent focus.

Quite often I see good players give up when they miss position and do not have a shot. The big picture for them is a loss. They do not have a shot and cannot run out, so most likely they will lose. That may very well be true. When you miss position, you probably are going to lose. But it has nothing to do with the task at hand. Many times I would end up with a tough shot, snookered on my next ball, only to swat at it in an angry attempt to kick it in. Actually, I was giving up. I felt sorry for myself and lost the game. Now, I face the shot at hand. Whatever the degree of difficulty, I always give it my best shot. I do that because that is my job. I must honor my intentions. If you honor your intentions, they will honor you.

Suzanne would not allow negative emotions cloud her judgement. Instead, she was detached from the results, and simply looked at what her next shot would be. Then she went about the business of shooting it. She left the results to her coach, me.

When she found herself with a difficult shot, she knew this may cause her to lose seventy percent of the games. The same degree of difficulty caused others to lose ninety percent of their games because they would not accept the tough situation they were in. Suzanne would not fight reality. She had the ability to accept the tough shot in front of her. She was able to salvage thirty per cent of her games from a tough position. She destroyed her opponent by winning games she was suppose to lose. She use to call a real tough shot "hopeless." When she was faced with an impossible kick, or double bank, she knew you had hope. When she made it, you had less hope. "This is a hopeless shot." She would say as she lined up a three rail kick combination. "Hope for you because I have it, and less hope for you after I make it." She knew what her intentions were, and these intentions gave her desire. A desire to excel! So, when an obstacle appeared, she was still filled with the desire to succeed. She was detached from the results. She was not filled with anxiety or fear of losing. She was simply in the present moment awareness mode, anxious to deliver the right stroke as the situation called for it. For this reason, I didn't like playing her. I rarely came to the table with an easy shot. She was a classic fighter until the finish and it carried her to the top of her game.

There are some bank shots that a D level player will make and an A level player will miss. The difference between the two is the D level player does not know the shot is a difficult one. The D level player places no value on the shot. His only concern is that he makes it. While the A level player knows he is faced with a tough shot. He places a value on it and delivers a tentative stroke. It is a known Monk fact that in the game of nine ball, the D level player will make more nine ball combinations than the A level player.

There is a difference between intention and the intense effort of trying. The effort of trying is often associated with stress-related health problems such as heart attacks and nervous breakdowns.

Trying is a focus on results with intensity. Intentions define the desired results and then detach from them. I can climb this mountain by putting one hand in front of the other and pulling myself up. My only focus is the step by step process gained by present moment awareness. I am not trying to climb this mountain. I am simply taking another step toward the top.

I slip into meditation. The air is clear, the breeze is warm, and the sky is blue. My Gold Wing is still singing the songs of freedom. I sit on a mountain top in a scenic turn out. I am alone. This is a great time for me to enter the silence. When I reach the silence, I quietly release my intentions and desires. I place them in the care of the Universe. I am Fire. I am steadily burning. In fact, my intentions and desires are flickering in my awareness. They are real. I can see them softly burning, ready to serve me well. I am not going to extract this intention and desire and play around with it. I do not want to pull it out by the roots and examine it. In fact, I want to release it and let it grow, nurtured to maturity to encompass my mission and bring me to the top.

With the soft, gentle mountain breeze flowing past my face, I become one with my true self. I will not see myself as the world sees me. I see myself through my intentions.

If my intentions are to be a champion, then I see myself as a champion, and this vision gives me the desire to take another step, grab another hand hold. I am content to live in the reality of uncertainty. This strengthens my will to succeed.

The uncertainty of my journey gives me power and tests my faith, and, in so doing, strengthens my faith in myself. I have placed my intentions in the care of the Universe and will let the Universe handle the details. It is for me to move on in present moment awareness. My Gold Wing calls me. I am ready to re-enter the highway. I turn the throttle and the Gold Wing responds. I am as sure of my success as I am sure of the next breath I take on this mountain top. And the breath is refreshing.

I will focus my attention on the narrow field of my actions. This is concentration. In each field of action, I will practice present moment awareness. There will be no outside interference to deplete my energy. The present is as it is. The present reflects my intentions.

I have placed my intentions in the care of the Universe and I will let the Universe handle the details. As for me, I focus on the here and now.

CHAPTER THIRTY ONE



Words to Shape Yourself By

This is a book on how to improve the quality of your life. We talk about a championship, and let's face it, if we find ourselves in the winner's circle, our quality of life has been enhanced both in the rewards of victory, and in the type of person we have become. Our hard work and training have brought us many rewards. In reality, we are using our love of pocket billiards to instill good habits in our life. It is easy to master the art of pocketing balls. It is quite another thing to master the art of winning. With this book, we are working to instill the qualities that will eventually make us winners. A well disciplined player will generally go further in a tournament than one who is simply skilled at making shots.

If I am to help you become a champion player, I must first help you become a champion. You can do this by paying attention to real personal growth by understanding exactly who you are and what you want.

Use my book "[The Lesson](#)" to master the shooting skills you will need. Follow your own personal journey to acquire the skills of a master.

How do you define yourself: Earth, Wind, Fire or Water? Once you answer that question, add some verbs to enhance that image. In the following pages, I provide you with a list of verbs to help you in your self-definition. Read this list over, keeping your self-image in mind. Then pick out several verbs that most relate to you. Write them down and carry them with you. Select new ones each day.

Accomplish

Moving through each level of skill development with the clear knowledge that you have no limits.

<i>Adopt</i>	Acquire the skills needed to win.
<i>Advance</i>	Move towards more personal growth with the least amount of effort.
<i>Affirm</i>	Establish your mission statement; your intentions.
<i>Alleviate</i>	Let go of resistance to new ideas.
<i>Associate</i>	Share your success with others.
<i>Appreciate</i>	Respect your fellow players.
<i>Believe</i>	Actively trust in yourself.
<i>Build</i>	Actively work on your game. Measure your practice.
<i>Cause</i>	Spend some time helping the billiard industry. If you hoard your seeds, they will not grow. Giving is the only way you receive.
<i>Choose</i>	Decide whether you are an aggressive or conservative player, and perfect that game.
<i>Collect</i>	Accumulate the skills you need to win through The Monk 101 program.
<i>Combine</i>	Combine your inner game skills with your shotmaking skills.
<i>Compel</i>	Insist on consistently turning in a fine performance.
<i>Complete</i>	Finish your run outs by getting closer to each shot. Learn to follow the law of least effort.
<i>Compete</i>	Embrace competition by seeking out the best players.

<i>Compose</i>	Pride yourself by always being in control under all situations.
<i>Confirm</i>	Believe you are ready to be a winner. You have no limitations. You are divinity in human form.
<i>Construct</i>	Build your skills the way you would build a house. You have a special gift and a unique way of expressing it.
<i>Continue</i>	Put one hand in front of the other until you reach the top. Find your Dharma and follow it.
<i>Counsel</i>	Help a fellow traveler in this game. When we set ourselves up to give, we automatically receive.
<i>Create</i>	Take a chance with a few shots.
<i>Decide</i>	Make a commitment to excellence. This is your real purpose in life. (Dharma)
<i>Delight</i>	Always experience the joy this game offers.
<i>Direct</i>	Move from one point to the next without wavering.
<i>Discover</i>	Learn something new in every match you play.
<i>Distribute</i>	Be generous with your fellow pool player.
<i>Draft</i>	Develop a simple, direct mission statement. There is one thing you can do better than anyone else on this planet, simply because you are you. Express yourself in your own unique way.
<i>Drive</i>	Call upon your inner strength to see you through.
<i>Educate</i>	Accumulate the intellectual knowledge you need.
<i>Embrace</i>	Embrace all your experiences.

<i>Encourage</i>	Be that special spark that helps a struggling pool player.
<i>Engage</i>	Step up to the table with confidence and perform. In all things, you will perform with the least amount of effort.
<i>Enhance</i>	Leave a positive lasting impression on those you play.
<i>Enlighten</i>	Let your actions teach others.
<i>Enthuse</i>	Get strength from your enthusiasm.
<i>Entertain</i>	Enjoy this game and all it has to offer.
<i>Evaluate</i>	Seek the lessons being offered in each contest.
<i>Excite</i>	Make a dramatic run out.
<i>Express</i>	Communicate your skills to others.
<i>Facilitate</i>	Be friendly. Be helpful to others.
<i>Further</i>	Help others by giving them this book as a gift. Life is a series of giving and receiving. In order to receive we must be willing to give.
<i>Give</i>	Make it part of your general makeup to help others. If you do not spread your seed, it will not grow.
<i>Heal</i>	Comfort the one who is knocked out of the tournament.
<i>Illuminate</i>	Highlight the skills you need to be a winner. Place them into your intentions and gain the desire to carry them out.
<i>Implement</i>	Be able to deal with missed position. Remember the law of cause and effect.

	Karma is unavoidable. If we do not deliver the right stroke, we will have poor position.
<i>Improve</i>	This is a never ending story.
<i>Inspire</i>	Our genuine concern for others will be an inspiration.
<i>Involve</i>	Be willing to help out in leagues or tournaments.
<i>Labor</i>	Practice sessions require hard work. Pile rocks upon rocks upon rocks. Put another brick in the wall.
<i>Launch</i>	See your career as ready to launch ahead.
<i>Light</i>	Become a beacon of good in this great game.
<i>Love</i>	Be active in this endeavor.
<i>Master</i>	Strive to become a Master.
<i>Mature</i>	Be mellow. Be relaxed. Know thyself and be free.
<i>Meditate</i>	Open your mind to a new beginning.
<i>Mold</i>	Build a fine champion within yourself. You are unlimited.
<i>Nurture</i>	Be patient with yourself. You are a prized student.
<i>Open</i>	Do not resist the way that is right for you. Find your Dharma and your Karma will be revealed to you.
<i>Organize</i>	Take action to stay on the right path. Detach yourself from preoccupation with results.
<i>Participate</i>	Support the professional players by going to tournaments.

<i>Play</i>	Engage in the match.
<i>Practice</i>	Make this a part of the “doing” side of your life. These are your intentions. This is your “purpose in life.”
<i>Praise</i>	Compliment a player by saying, “Nice shot.”
<i>Prepare</i>	Be ready to perform.
<i>Produce</i>	Get the results you strive for.
<i>Progress</i>	Believe that you are going to grow in this game.
<i>Promise</i>	Always keep your promises.
<i>Promote</i>	Do something exciting for this sport.
<i>Pursue</i>	Follow your dreams.
<i>Realize</i>	Receive the improved skills.
<i>Reclaim</i>	Practice with the belief that you are going to win.
<i>Refine</i>	Sharpen your skills. Your game is a work of art.
<i>Reflect</i>	Always contemplate a tough loss. Learn where your game has broken down. Take this time to improve your skills through reflection.
<i>Relax</i>	Don’t be intense. Nothing good comes from it.
<i>Release</i>	Cultivate an indifference toward winning and losing.
<i>Renew</i>	Refresh your desire for success.
<i>Respect</i>	Appreciate those who struggle with this game.

<i>Restore</i>	Reconfirm confidence within yourself.
<i>Return</i>	Give back the goodwill you have received from others.
<i>Sacrifice</i>	Want this game more than a man under water wants air.
<i>Serve</i>	Our higher calling is to serve others.
<i>Share</i>	Bestow your good fortune on others.
<i>Speak</i>	Tell your story to those who show interest.
<i>Support</i>	Stand up and be counted. Support this great sport.
<i>Sustain</i>	Become a winner with perseverance and persistence.
<i>Understand</i>	Do not doubt that you are on the right road.
<i>Utilize</i>	Be selfish with your practice. You are important.
<i>Validate</i>	Confirm that you are a champion.
<i>Value</i>	Realize that you are special.
<i>Venture</i>	Go forward with the knowledge you are doing right.
<i>Work</i>	Set the standard.

In doing this exercise for myself, I found many verbs that applied to me and my journey. When I narrowed my search to several verbs, I was surprised with the results. They fit my “Fire” self-image very well. In other words, read over the list carefully and note the words that jump out at you. Write them down and then go over this list carefully. Keep this list with you at all times. Consult it in the morning. Look at it at noon. Read it slowly out loud at night. Let the words fill your mind with visions. Let the words become part of your journey. Be one with the thoughts. Then go out and do it. In all your actions, express those words.

Not only will this knowledge become a concept within your intellect, it will also help create a sense of who you are. In other words, you can sense this because you intuitively know it. You are totally aware of yourself. Not only do you know it, you have become what you know.

Change is sometimes very difficult. We resist it. We do not like change. And change, by its very own nature, is not understandable. If it were, we would not need to change. So we press forward, and, at first, we are uncomfortable. We are tempted to fall back to our old self. But we trust The Monk and we are going to make this change. We are going to acquire the skills we desire. We will define ourselves and watch, as time goes by, this person we call “self” become the person we really are. Do not be discouraged. Change does not come easily. It is normal to resist. After all, this person we have been for many years must pass away before the new person can take over.

When you have the clear picture of yourself, I would love to receive an e-mail from you. State in clear concise words what you have discovered. Remember, we are on this journey together, all of us. May all the rolls go your way.

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO



Make The Right Choice And The Direct Result Is Total Success!

*If you can give up your attachments to results,
you will get the results you desire.*

Once we have come to a clear understanding of our personal nature, we must be willing to serve mankind in some capacity. This is very important to our own development. We are not in this race alone. I choose to help pool players along this difficult path. This is my choice. There are many other things that I might enjoy doing, but my choice is to help other pool players. I don't think I got up one morning and made a dramatic declaration that I would help pool players. I think this attitude came to light once I came to an understanding of my personal nature. It was a natural evolution; therefore, it was not a sacrifice.

I do not think of the rewards of this choice. I make this choice because that is who I am. And it seems as though prosperity, relationships, happiness, joy, travel and success came to me once I made the conscious choice to be of service to other pool players. This is how it works.

You list your intentions within the spiritual realm of the Universe, receive the desire to carry them out, focus on the present moment awareness, find out who you are, make a choice to serve mankind, and the direct result of this action will be to enjoy success. Success with everything you do.

This is the perfect time to ask you to list your dreams and then detach yourself from them. Do not be attached to your intentions. Let them go. Remember to turn them over in your meditation. Place them in the care of your Higher Power.

If you can give up your attachment with results, you will get the results you want. Have you ever played someone in a game of pool and decided you really didn't want to win? You suddenly didn't care who won. You had a big lead and didn't want to rub it in. Perhaps you were playing your girl-

friend or boyfriend and you simply did not care if you won or not. Suddenly, you can't miss! You are making everything from anywhere. At one point, you don't play a safe and elect go for a tough shot. It goes in! This is a clear example of what happens when you are not attached to results.

In a game of golf, I had my friend completely destroyed. He was in a state of shock and bewilderment. I was deep into his pockets, very deep. I had over six dollars of his money! His face was distorted. He was a sad case. So I decided to let him win some of his money back. I allowed him to tee off from the ladies tee. Naturally he loved that idea. It was a big advantage for him to tee off from the red tee. After all, the par fives would be easy to reach in two, as he was getting a hundred plus yards off the tee.

I did not care about the results. On one par four, he almost reached the green with his drive. While I, from the blue tees, was far to the left about two hundred yards away, behind a tall pine tree. As he was walking confidently up to his ball in front of the green, he got this unbelievable vision of my ball dropping from high out of the blue sky about six inches from the cup. I delivered a beautiful stroke, and because I didn't care, I stuck the ball near the pin. This disturbed him. He was preoccupied with results. The sight of my "gimmee" birdee bothered him. He took out his wedge and skulled the ball across the green and into the woods. When it entered the tree line behind the green it was still rising.

I let go of results and got good results. He was attached to results and got bad results. Keep in mind, I often forgave him of his financial debt after a tough game. I had no interest in taking his money. I just liked to compete in the game.

Let's go back to the story when Suzanne and I were talking about our focus on winning, and this other girl was talking about how she focuses on turning in a good performance. You might think that Sue and I were preoccupied with results. After all, we were focused on winning the tournament. But this is not so. We were focused on winning because that is who we are. Since we were winning, we didn't need to be preoccupied with it. We could simply be who we are and let the results take care of themselves. When you make a big effort to win a contest, you are doing so because winning is not a natural way for you. In other words, you must constantly remind yourself to win because it is not natural.

It is not that we don't care about winning. We care about it as much as the next breath we are going to take. It is simply that we are not preoccupied with it. It is already a natural part of our makeup.

CHAPTER THIRTY THREE



We Become Attached To Symbols Because We Are Insecure

Seek the world of uncertainty.

Uncertainty is the light that shines at my feet.

The search for certainty is an illusion. Success does not come to an insecure person. Wealth and prosperity are not necessarily signs of success. When you have it, you realize it has no value. Wealth, prosperity, and a high self-esteem are a clear sign of success and we can progress toward a high self-image when we are not hampered by attachment.

Our faith can never be tested (strengthened) if we live in a world of certainty. In reality, that world does not exist for any-one so why bother going to great lengths to find it. It is a world of illusion.

There are those who seek the certainty of an outcome in a match. These people seek out an inferior players and never take a chance on playing the game of their life. Their need to win is so great, they are willing to play only opponents who have little chance of beating them.

The search for certainty is an illusion. When you think you have it, you realize it has no value. You have attached yourself to the known. There is no merit in that. If you are Fire, Wind, Earth, or Water, you will not be attached to anything.

Uncertainty is the light that shines at my feet. I can only see one step in front of me. One step at a time. Herein lies the power of the creative mind. It is in the realm of quiet uncertainty that we get our best ideas.

Non-attachment gives us the freedom to perform. You must be willing to step into the unknown in every moment of your existence.

A gospel group performed the Kirk Talley hit, "Step into the Water," which was number one for eleven months. It is an incredible song urging us to "wade out a little bit deeper" and gain the freedom that comes with seeking the uncertain.

Relinquish your attachment to the known. Step out in faith and you will embrace the world of all possibility. This act, the willingness to “step into the water”, fills your life with mystery, joy, adventure and excitement.

If you want to experience uncertainty first hand, enter a tournament! You really do not know what is going to happen. Let go of the attachment to results and simply enter. As the songs suggest, “step into the water, wade out a little bit deeper.” Send in your entry fee.

If you are non-attached to results, you are almost always guaranteed a good time playing the game you love with your friends. Can you imagine that? Going to a tournament and having a good time? Wow!

Years ago, I could not imagine myself going to a tournament with a happy, free-filled heart. I was seriously bogged down in my attachment to results and I got good results, but I also got sick. I was unhappy. I was not full of joy. Even when I won the tournament, I was unhappy. Now I look forward to “stepping out in the water,” Next time, I just might kick in the nine ball and eliminate the tournament favorite.

My results are much better now, and my experience is more gratifying. I am having fun at tournaments. Isn't it great to have fun playing the game we love?

Perhaps, at one time or another, you have heard the saying, “Every problem has the seed of opportunity.” I know I have heard that a time or two. It didn't always lift my spirit. That is because I really did not believe it. Now that I know it is true, I can appreciate the value of, “Every problem has the seed of opportunity.”

There were times when the seed of opportunity was offered and I could not see it at all. For instance, my truck was broken down on the highway and I could not get to work. I would be fired if I didn't show up. Where was the seed then? It was during these times that I laughed at the rich and famous writer who was saying things like that from the comfort of his home.

In one instance, my chain snapped in half while I was working in the woods. It was on a Tuesday, so I needed to get it repaired right away, otherwise I would fall behind in my production. So I hitchhiked from the woods to town some forty miles away. At the time I was so poor that I didn't even own a car. The cost to repair the broken chain was twenty dollars. I had no money, so I went to the local tavern where I was known, and borrowed the twenty dollars from the owner. Then I went to get my chainsaw. It was not yet repaired, so I went to another bar down the street thinking I might as well have a few beers before I made the long trip back.

After a few beers, I decided to have a few more. Then I decided to buy everyone in the house a beer. Since there were only two people in the bar, it wasn't going to cost me much, and it's always nice to say, “Give everyone

in the place a drink.” It wasn’t long before my chainsaw money was gone. So I borrowed a twenty from this bar and went to another bar to spend that. It wasn’t long before I wasn’t worried about the chainsaw. In fact, it wasn’t long before I wasn’t worried about anything. Finally, after three twenties, I decided it was time to make a Herculean effort at using one of the twenties to get my chainsaw back. When I staggered down the street to the repair shop, I was greeted with a “Closed” sign. I took that personally. So I was forced back to the bar to ponder the situation.

This small problem, a link on my chain, ended up costing me my job. Everything conspired to end in disaster. If that guy had fixed my saw right away, I would have been back in the woods. If it had been fixed the first time I went back I would have been back in the woods, and if he did not hang the “Closed” sign on the door, I would be back in the woods where I belonged. As it was, I ended up sleeping down by the Tacoosh river. My legs were hanging in the water and my upper body was laying on the rocks. I was “on the rocks” so to speak. I could hear the birds quietly rustling in the trees, a peeper protested my presence, and the water rushed over my legs. My mind raced round and round, when I sank into unconsciousness. So where is the seed of opportunity in this story?

It was not until many years later that I learned to recognize how one who is not in control of himself can let it slip away in an instance. During my time in the woods, I was defeated. Finally, I was driven out of the woods and forced to deal with myself. Then I went on to find success in another field.

If you are truly open to the lessons offered, you are in a state of alertness. In other words, you are ready to deal with the moment at hand.

Remember, you have chosen to live in the field of uncertainty, and, in this field, the truth has a chance to make itself known.

You have entered your intentions in the Universal Self. Now, you are ready for the moment, and, in that moment, opportunities come to you. You welcome them. This book could very well be the opportunity you seek. You are ready to learn and from any obstacle that comes your way, there is a lesson to be learned. This is what keeps you enthused, excited, and by all means, curious. You seek out this experience called life. You are ready to receive.

If you are well-grounded in your intentions and ready to embrace uncertainty, the right answer or solution will always come to you every single time without fail. I am secure in my uncertainties. I am firmly planted in my intentions. I am safely traveling on this exciting journey and there are times when things go poorly. During these times, I remain alert to the lessons being offered.

Once in Las Vegas, I was not doing very well in my booth. There was very little traffic around my area. I thought, “Perhaps The Monk has played himself out. There are no more readers to buy my books and no more players to watch my videos. I am a thing of the past; a “has been”.. Honestly, I was discouraged. In fact, I was about to panic. I had a lot of money invested in this trip, and at this rate, I would be lucky to finance my return trip home. I was concerned because I was not getting the results I expected.

I was taking a shower in my motor home which was parked in the RV lot behind Circus Circus. A gospel song came on my stereo with the words, “Why can’t you trust me now? Have I ever failed you yet?”

My discouragement and anxiety came directly out of my lack of trust. I was attached to the results and not willing to experience the uncertainty of my own journey. Having heard those words I deposited my concern in the hands of the All Mighty Universal Plan and became detached from the results. I decided to go with the flow and trust that what will be will be. The results turned out to be far better than my pitiful expectations. Sometimes we need to, “Step into the water, wade out a little bit deeper.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR



If The Good Times Are All Gone, Then I'm Bound For Moving On.

Let's talk about some reality here. You have a unique talent. No one else can express your talent quite like you can. It is as unique as your fingerprint, your ear print, or your DNA. It is uniquely you.

You are a spiritual being who has taken shape in human form. Often times our lives get mixed up with others and this personal Dharma is lost in the turmoil of a relationship. One mate destroying another can hardly be counted as a "purpose in life." It is not easy to discover your own Dharma.

You may wonder what this has to do with pocket billiards. How does it apply to becoming a champion? We need to be free to express our true nature if we are to spend time in the winner's circle. In order to win a championship, we must first be a champion. So it is important to consider how our lives are made up and what is going on at this time in our lives.

As a result of our choices, sometimes it is not possible to discover your Dharma, as it must come from the receiving of a Higher Power. This is a true Higher Power. And for many of us, we already have a Higher Power, be it a mate, children, habits, desires, material wealth, or some kind of addiction. The divine within us will not express itself while we are connected to another Higher Power. The divine will lay dormant and buried under the rubble of our own confusion and we will never discover our Dharma. At least, not in this lifetime.

Often times our goals become our divinity. We seek a specific goal and lose sight of everything else. If our goal is to become a champion, then we have only to express our "purpose in life" through our living. If we are divinity in human form, then to express our talents in the service of mankind is as natural as breathing. Once you walk upon that road, riches and prosperity will follow.

A friend of mine suddenly died in his sleep. I loved this man very much and went to his funeral. I was shocked by how many people were there and they all thought they were his best friend. This man was generous and always had time for everyone. When he passed away, he was sorely missed. In his life, he had a vast assortment of friends. He was rich beyond all measure.

During the 60's one of the most popular phrases was, "Do your own thing." Many of us sought a quiet time in a stupor to "find ourselves." The 60's produced a break-out generation seeking to find their purpose in life. We marched against an immoral war. We fought for civil rights for everyone. We broke down the rigid authority of the government and fought for our freedom as individuals. We raced around with psychedelic music running through our heads, pot scrambling our brains, and a cause in our hearts. Many of us crashed and burned on the rocks of addiction and broken relationships. Not too many found their "purpose in life."

We were reckless and bold and I am not so sure we did a lot of good. We were not a positive force in this society, and now our children have sunk to an all time low. We live in troubled times today – times that bring disharmony from many sources. It is time for survival, time to really find yourself. It is time to reflect on who you are. It is time to come to terms with your Dharma. We have entered our personal challenge to ourselves, and that challenge is to have the desire to serve mankind in some form.

We are not alone. We are not on this earth by ourselves. We are here among other divinities, and it is our desire to serve them. Our desire to serve mankind distinguishes us from all other species. We enter this road, and the road is who we are. May you follow it to the fulfillment of your dreams. May all the rolls go your way.

Go beyond your ego and make a commitment to seek your higher self through the spiritual practice of helping others. This assistance to mankind is not a sacrifice of time and effort. It is a way of life. You do not have to volunteer to clean bedpans at a nursing home. You do not have to rush off to Africa and walk among the savages. When you go beyond the ego to a higher self, you automatically begin to serve others. It is your way of life, and, oftentimes, you are totally unaware of it. Make a commitment to seek the divinity in you. That divinity may very well be God, Jesus Christ, or Buddha. It is there and it is waiting to serve you in your own uniqueness. May you find it now.

Find a way to enjoy yourself. Make a commitment to experience the joy this life has to offer. I use to tell my friends, "If the good times are all gone, then I'm bound for moving on." It may sound a bit selfish, but it is not. Who in their right mind would hang around unhappiness? The Bible

even tells us to stay away from sinners. They will only bring you down. There are many who hang around unhappiness and I personally don't think they are in their right minds. If you're not making me happy, I am on my way down the road. "But I love him," says the battered spouse who has not yet found her Dharma.

What it comes down to, when you discover your higher self and understand your unique talent, is that you will be as rich as you have ever dreamed of being. This automatically happens. One follows the other. Your talent must match the needs of your fellow man. Wealth is automatic.

When I left Las Vegas, I headed towards Denver to do a workshop at Shakespears. Along the way, I knew I needed to write this book. If I write this book, I told myself, I could help all the players who had a tough time in the eight ball tournament. They were full of dreams and filled with excited anticipation, only to experience the anguish of personal disappointment. It was not so much the lost game that caused their intense despair, it was the breakdown in their own performance. They let themselves down and they knew it.

I never thought of the financial rewards of writing this book. I only thought about the struggles of my fellow pool players. Actually, the timing could not have come at a worse time. I was in the middle of my novel. I dropped what I was doing and devoted myself to this work. I did not think about soaring sales or the fine response I would get. I only saw the need to write it. That was "my purpose." My Dharma and the material wealth came to me in ways I could not have imagined, simply because I was willing to answer the personal call from my Higher Power.

What is your divinity? And what has happened to it? If you are to become a Master pool player, you must be totally focused on what you are doing. You must be one with your purpose. You must become the path. You put your attention for a time on exactly what you are doing. This is called concentration. You move boldly toward your goals. This is called courage. You have the serenity in the knowledge that you are a divine spirit within a body. This is called composure. With these three qualities, life has no limits for you.

I blew a tire on my motor home in Oklahoma one sunny afternoon. The tire mechanic arrived and began to work on it. He was a big burly man with a thick mustache and beard, bright eyes, and a large smile. He was a classic red neck teddy bear. He spoke with a thick Oklahoma accent. For some reason, I felt it was my duty to stand with him while he fixed the tire and "ooh" and "aah" about everything he did. We non-mechanics think we have to do that. In any case, one of the nuts would not come off easily. He just

shrugged his big shoulders, looked at me and said with a big grin, "It's gonna fight me," He paused for a moment, and added, "But it ain't gonna win." This man had his fine qualities down pat.

I have referred to this game as a "high calling." Chances are you feel as I do. I write these books for those of you who take this game seriously. You have found your way to The Monk because of your sincere desire for personal growth. This could very well be your Dharma, you're "purpose in life." It may not necessarily be pocket billiards. Pool may be an avenue to your own Dharma. If this is the case, then let us pursue pocket billiards with all the vim and vigor we can muster. Let us strive to be Masters of this game and in so doing, become Masters of life. It is all about personal growth in this game that leads us to our "purpose in life."

Those four years I spent in my basement, "my monastery" were times of deep reflection. They were times of trial. They were times of ultimate victory matched by ultimate defeat.

(Monk notes: sometimes it is four years in the basement, sometimes its three)

The true reality of life is its perpetual preoccupation with opposites. When I came up short of my expectations, I was filled with both rage and disappointment. To the degree that my triumphs gave me joy, my failures gave me a deeper degree of bitterness. Using pocket billiards as my avenue for personal growth made my journey all the more difficult.

Before I discovered pool, I often spent time in deep reflection trying to pull myself from the depth of confusion and despair. My depression was serious. It was an ever-present reminder that something was wrong with my life. Something was wrong with me. My disillusionment was a dangerous thing.

Many times I was forced to sit by the shores of Lake Michigan, trying to gather my thoughts and develop faith that I could survive. I would sit there, let the warm sun flood across my face, and simply wait for direction. This seeking led me to pocket billiards, and pocket billiards led me to my Dharma – my "purpose in life." They that wait shall renew their strength.

Your Dharma is your divinity. It is the spirit of your life. This divinity has taken shape in human form, and that human form is you. The spirit has taken human form to fulfill a purpose. Count yourself lucky to have discovered this great truth. When you enter the road that is meant for you, your talent is expressing your purpose in life. Wealth and prosperity are sure to follow you.

Now for a blockbuster of a thought! You do not have to rise to number one on the pool tour to fulfill your purpose. You do not have to meet some pre-established goal or lofty level to experience your Dharma. You simply

need to be on the right road. Once you are on the right road, prosperity will follow you. Once you are on the right road, you may very well be number one in your league.

The true Masters are number one. They are the Masters of the game. Johnny Archer does not get “Player of the Year” every year, but he is still number one. He is Master. I am Master. You are Master.

There is a divinity within you. You are human. You have a spirit. Your divinity is the spirit of your life. It all starts with divinity. This spirit, that was here before time, has taken shape in human form, and it is you.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE



The Wayside

It was a missed shot and time, motion, and reality were going to extend this painful moment for as long as possible.

The ball was suspended in time, moving slowly across the slate at a snail's pace. In the stark reality of my mind, all denial was swept away by the acute knowledge that this ball was not going to fall into my desired pocket. It was a missed shot, and time and motion would extend this painful moment for as long as possible. As the ball rolled off line, I went into a rage, and lifted my two piece custom-made pool cue above my head and hurled it across the table. It shattered the moving balls, splintered into several pieces, and sent me hurling through time and space to the Wayside. For a brief moment, while the cue was flying through the air, I felt ecstasy beyond any measure. I landed in the Wayside – a place for those who cannot handle a failed performance.

The next thing I knew, I was being led around by this wrinkly old wizard who had an eight ball and chain tied to his ankle. His smile was painted on his face. He had pleading eyes with big bushy eyebrows, and a long gray beard that came to a point. His hood pointed in the opposite direction. He carried an old crooked staff. He told me the staff would be used to kill snakes.

We journeyed through this misty land until we came upon some people who were in constant motion. Some were working on lights. Others were busy with the rails on the tables. Still others were busy trying to level the tables. It reminded me of an ant hill with tiny ants scurrying around in all directions. I wondered if there was any purpose to this frenzied activity.

No one looked up at us when we stopped to watch. Instead, they continued this frantic to and fro exercise in total silence. One would share a task for a brief moment with another, and then suddenly drop it to find something else to do. It didn't seem to matter because the activity was continuous.

I saw two players carrying a four-pronged light when one of them let go for another duty. Before it crashed to the floor, someone turned and filled the empty space at the end of the light, and they continued on. When they reached the table they were working on, they walked right on by. All this beehive of activity accomplished absolutely nothing.

Two players inspected chalk and handed it back and forth. Each examined the same piece of chalk and nothing was done with it.

"What are these people doing?" I asked

The old man looked through his dark cape and answered, "This group came to us because they could not take responsibility for their losses. They continuously blamed the equipment for each shot they missed.

"I've played lots of people who constantly messed with the pockets, rails, cloth, chalk, and lights," I offered.

"You are what you are obsessed with," he replied.

I saw a man lying under a table working on the ball return. He was an enormous man who just barely fit under the table.

"There's one," the old man pointed his bony finger. "He lost his mind when the balls would not come out of the return area. When a ball got stuck, he went into a rage." I laughed, and the old man continued. "We advised him to get a good table that would not give him trouble; however, he insisted on buying a cheap one,"

"What happened to him? How did he get here?" I asked.

The old man sat down on a rock and explained, "Two balls would continuously get stuck in the ball return. So he racked thirteen balls for the next game. Then, he ended up with eleven, then nine. On the next rack, he finally flew into a fit of rage and bit into the eight ball. He bit it in half!" The old man scratched his forehead, which I could not see beneath his hood, and added, "He will be working on tracks for the next Kalpa."

I asked him what a Kalpa was, and he got up and continued along the trail in silence. We came to a group of players who were trying to say something. There was no audible sound. They had no voice. I continued hoping that I would not have to be here very long and would be returned to my tournament and leagues. We pushed through a thin layer of mist, and with each step the old man dragged his eight ball and chain. The scratch, scratch, scratch was matched by his heavy breathing. He was resigned to his diffi-

cult role in the Wayside, and dramatized his plight with every breath. I wanted to ask him how he got here, but held my tongue. Instead, I watched him move. I followed and waited for my instructions.

We came upon a group of people who were engaged in frantic conversation. Each was talking to another player. I saw one man talking to a large woman, and in the middle of the conversation, she began to instruct him. Both gave orders at the same time. They were joined by a third person who was giving instructions. None of them listened to the others. Instead, they continued to talk. The large woman produced a chart and began to support her argument with graphics. Neither man considered her views, and continued to talk on and on. They did not even look at her illustrations.

I saw two very old men going over a mailing list. One was reading the names slowly to the other while the other was busy giving instructions. Once again, they didn't seem to be listening to each other.

There were several podiums and each was occupied by a man giving speeches and introducing new ideas. None had an audience. One man was passing out trophies to people who were not present. He would read off a wondrous list of achievements and then hand the trophy to no one. The crystal figurine would shatter on the floor. The entire hall was littered with broken crystal and shattered plaques.

"What are these people doing?" I asked.

The old man shuffled on and said, "Don't worry, you are not in this group."

"What did they do?"

"They are the type of people who take over everything," He said with contempt. For the first time I noticed a change in his voice.

"These people can't leave well enough alone. They take over leagues, they take over tournaments, they take over associations and all kinds of activity because they think they can do it better than anyone else." He went on to explain that this group would someday try to take over the Wayside. "I'm working on a separate Wayside just for this group," He added.

"What's so bad about wanting to help out!" I asked. After all, I had been involved with leagues, tournaments and all sorts of pool promotions.

"They don't want to help! They want to take over. They want to control everything."

We stood outside the gates and listened for a moment to the simultaneous instructions. No one considered the others point of view, not even for a moment. Each barked orders.

"Here's how it works," the old man said. "First they join a pool activity, and right away they think the director doesn't know what he is doing. It doesn't matter that the director has been there for many years. They can't stop thinking they know a better way of doing things. It just comes to them. Then, they run their mouth to everyone in the league, and running their mouth is one of the things they do best. They get enough people to doubt the director's work, and the league begins to weaken. People become divided. Eventually the league dies out. Then, they go on to another league and do the exact same thing. They join associations and destroy them."

He pointed to a well-dressed man standing in front of the TV cameras. "He had all the answers. He was a smooth talker alright. Instead of building up the industry, he led the usual mutiny among the top players and got the usual results. When this was finished, he set the entire industry back for many years."

The old man put his arm around me. The dark shadows hid his face. "Monk," he said, "The end of your journey is not far away. Do not concern yourself with this group. In order to reach the Wayside as a controller, you must have belonged to no less than fifty different associations. Most of these people had to create an association so they would have something to join. Controllers and know-it-alls are hopeless. Perhaps when all the words run out they will find out what they are really feeling."

We disappeared from the soft sound of a thousand voices and continued along in the Wayside. I followed the old man as he shuffled along in silence. The mumble of many voices blended into a soft, steady hum. Nothing was audible. I tried to catch a word or phrase so I could piece together some kind of dialogue, but it was not even possible to distinguish one word.

We journeyed toward the pale gray fog that was steaming up from the ground. All I could hear was the dragging of the eight ball and chain that the wizard pulled along. His heavy breathing was the threatening kind you did not question. It was as if he wanted you to ask, "Are you having a hard time?" just so he could answer, "What in the hell do you think I'm all out of breath for?" But I was not going to bite into his challenge. No sense in causing any trouble. This is the kind of place where you don't want to antagonize anyone.

A half-bent man appeared out of the mist. At first I could only see his silhouette coming through the fog. He was bent over like a speed skater. He offered me his cue. "Don't take that!" the old man said. "He used to steal cues at tournaments when the players would go to the bathroom. If he can get someone to take the cue, he will be sent back." The bent over cue thief

retreated into the fog. "The cue is part of his arm. If someone takes it, his arm falls off," the old man chuckled. This was the first sign of emotion I had seen from him. Maybe he was real after all.

When we walked away I could still see the half bent player trying to redeem himself. In some ways, I was glad he was here. There is nothing worse than someone who will steal your personal cue.

We came to a place that had a familiar look to it. The juke box was filled with music and bright lights filled the hall. There was a fine pool table in the middle of the room. A player was dancing around shooting balls. He was in a rhythm as he stalked around the table. The setting was very familiar. What a great way to practice! Music, clean environment, and no one to bother you. This guy was humming through every shot. He would get down in his perfect stance, line up perfectly, set the cue tip in the perfect position and deliver the perfect stroke. If I had to be stuck in the Wayside, then this is where I wanted to be: in the practice room with no one asking me to play for money. No one to bother me. No one else gets a turn. I shoot all the shots.

"We have lots of these fellows down here?" the old man spoke. "All they ever did with their gift was practice." The player we were watching never looked up. It was as if we were not there. "This guy will run one hundred and ninety nine balls at every turn at the table. He cannot get to two hundred balls because he never made a commitment to the game. He held back every time. All he ever really wanted to do was hit balls. He was a world class player in his basement. He couldn't stand competition because he hates to have other people take a turn at the table. He cannot stand to sit in the chair. He knows if he runs two hundred balls, he is going to have to go out into the real world and compete. So he misses at one hundred and ninety-nine. This way he can stay in his basement and work on his game."

I've seen so many players with great skills continuously find a way to lose the match. They shoot well, make tough shots, run tables, do everything, except win. If this happened once in a while, it would be understandable, but for certain players, they simply do not want to win.

"What a waste," I thought.

"His wife sent him here," the old man continued. "She shared his dream of fame and fortune. She even believed in him for a time, but when he always claimed he was not ready, she finally gave up and turned him over to us. It was a sad scene when she dropped him off. They had an argument before she left.

"But I can win," the old man mimicked the player.

"You can't win if you never enter a tournament," she reasoned.

"I'm not ready yet," He insisted.

"I cannot follow a man who will not even get out there and try," she replied.

"So she dropped him off here. She gave up on him and turned him over to us. He didn't mind. In this place, he is in a dream world. Practice, practice, practice. To him, it's better than drugs, sex, and good food. It all came to nothing. He has lost it all with his obsession to hit balls,"

I decided to offer my thoughts on the subject. After all, I am The Monk, and I should have some answers. "It's sort of like the parable where Jesus gave three men some money (talents). One person buried it in the sand so he would never lose it. One squandered it away. The third man invested it so it would grow and become more. I pointed to the player practicing on the pool table. "This guy is like the one who buried his money in the sand," I commented

"Brilliant!" the old man exclaimed.

I was on a roll so I added, "If I can get him to make the two hundred balls, he would have no excuse but to multiply his gift."

"Exactly," the old man agreed.

I turned to the player and called out, "Hey, fellow."

The old man said, "He doesn't know you are here. He doesn't know anyone is around. His wife came to see him and he did not respond. All he ever does is practice."

I could see that he was nearing the end of his one hundred and ninety nine ball run. So I added three more balls on the table while he was not looking. He hesitated in his perfect stance for a moment, scratched his perfect head, got back down and continued shooting. One ninety-eight, one ninety-nine, two hundred – and pop! He disappeared.

"You did it." The old man shouted. "He's gone. He went back. You cured him of his problem."

"Is there any chance I might go with him," I asked.

"Oh yes, but there is much more work to be done. Come with me," his voice changing as he motioned with his hand.

As we ambled along the rocky trail, my mind recalled experiences from the past. Each event transpired in my thoughts. I knew that there could be any number of things that sent me to this place. The old man did not want to talk. Each question was met with a silent rebuttal. He shuffled along in his own quiet world.

The trail moved from one level to another with a different type of pool player emerging at each level. Somehow, I knew I was not one of these lost and undone unfortunates. My arrival here was for a different reason. I was full of questions, but I knew the old man would not answer them.

After a while we came to a barren, flat place. The light was a pale gray, like a stage. It felt like a created atmosphere, environmentally controlled, like a wilderness setting at a city zoo.

"You seem like a wise old man?" I said. Perhaps I could butter him up. He was breathing heavily from the long climb, tugging his eight ball and chain. When he turned and starred at me. I asked, "Could you answer a question I have about life and pocket billiards?"

He dropped his tired body into a rocky chair and contemplated me for a moment. I continued, "You've seen a lot in this life, both here and in the other place. I'm sure you were in the other place at one time, right?" I waited for an answer, but none came. He just sat there looking at me through his cape. I continued, "You must understand things that other people do not understand?" Once again, I posed this as a question, but he offered no response. He just sat there and stared at me. "So," I paused for a moment, "is there a Pool God in charge of our game?"

For the first time I could see his eyes beneath the cape. They were full of fear. He staggered to his feet and said, "Let's go."

"No, wait," I said. "Relax. Let's talk for a while."

I noticed a soft yellow glow in the horizon and it occurred to me there was no day or night in the Wayside. There was no sunrise, no sunset, no moon, no stars. Nothing was in order. There was no pattern to anything.

He sat back down slowly and placed his eight ball in his lap. "There are some things some people shouldn't know," he began. "We're talking about pool players, he offered. "They only hear what they want to hear. You can say anything to them. They only hear what they want to hear."

He nodded under his hood and continued. "A long time ago a pool player locked himself in his basement to pursue the high art of pocket billiards. He swore on his mother's grave he would remain there until he could shoot all the shots. He became the perfect pool player. In fact, he was so perfect he could shoot any shot in four perfect ways. He could follow for perfect position, draw for perfect position, use a punch stroke for perfect position, and play a perfect safety. All shots would result in perfect position. He would not stand for anything less than perfection, and he attained it."

The old man placed the eight ball on the ground and continued his story. "Finally, he came out of his basement to enter a world-class nine ball tournament. Of course, he was the best player in the house. After all, he was the perfect pool player. It made him sick to his stomach when he saw players making shots and then getting bad position on the next shot. He was beside himself when a good player missed a shot."

“How could you miss that shot.” The perfect pool player shouted. “There is only one spot on the ball to hit!”

“Anyway,” the old man lowered his head and spoke softly, “he entered this world-class nine ball tournament. They used a shot clock to speed up play for the spectators. Everyone wanted to see this perfect pool player play. They all gathered around his match. When the opponent upended the rack, the perfect pool player came to the table. “This is going to be easy!” He exclaimed. “There are shots all over the place.” The perfect pool player stood there for a moment looking at the shots he could shoot in four different perfect ways.”

The old man grew quiet and solemn. I had no idea where he was going with this story. He lowered his face and moaned his next words slowly. “Since he had four perfect shots, and could shoot them all perfectly, he could not decide on one shot over the other. Finally, the ref called a foul. Too much time had gone by. He returned to his chair to wait for another turn. The same thing happened the next time he came to the table. He couldn’t decide on one way to shoot a shot that could be shot four perfect ways.” “Foul,” declared the ref. And so it went. The perfect pool player lost every game because he could not decide on one perfect shot over another.”

The soft yellow glow on the horizon beckoned a sunrise that never came. In the Wayside, all things were a promise of things. Nothing actually happened.

I had ears to hear his word. I had eyes to see his truth. “So, is he here?” I asked. “The perfect pool player. Is he here?” I waited for his confirmation.

He scrambled to his feet and whispered. “Of course he’s here?” Then he headed down the trail.

“Wait a minute,” I called. “What does he do here?”

He turned away from me quickly. His shoulders were hunched over and his back was square towards me. I waited for his answer but he didn’t respond. He didn’t have to because I already knew the answer.

For the first time I felt more comfortable in the Wayside. We passed so many types of players, and each time I was sure he would drop me off because I could see a little of me in each one, but we continued on. I was amazed at how many Wayside tendencies I possessed, but we ambled along the trail. The old man was silent. I asked a few more questions, but he showed no interest in anything I had to say. Instead, he ignored me.

We came over a hill and the trail got brighter and brighter until we came to a pool hall that was cut in half. Several tables were lined up in a row. The floor was nicely carpeted. It was a neat little pool hall with just half the walls. I don't suppose it ever rains in the Wayside, so why would one need all the walls?

A very small man was running racks. He scrambled around the table shooting balls with machine-like precision. Many times he missed and sent balls flying in every direction, only to end up with a ball going in the pocket. He splattered clumps and each time something went in. I was fascinated. He ran rack after rack.

On a huge bench in the corner sat a very large man. He was nine feet tall and weighed over a thousand pounds. All he did was emerge from that huge bench and rack the balls. He would put up the score and sit back down in the corner. I noticed that the score was seventeen hundred and six to zero!

I watched for a while. The little guy continued to pile up the score. Eight times he waited until the giant returned to his chair and popped the nine ball in on the break. Eight times in a row! Then he ran rack after rack with a "slopped" shot in every game.

"How can anyone endure all of this?" I asked the old man. "My God, this is awful." The old man did not answer. Yet he showed no interest in moving on. After a few hours, I noticed a strange reaction from the big guy. It took some time for me to discover it, but every time he got up to rack the balls, he was a little bit smaller. You could see the difference after twenty racks or so. He would shrink in size every time he lost a game. Perhaps a quarter of an inch per twenty racks. "What in the hell is going on here?" I asked.

Finally the old man decided to explain. "The big guy used to go around to pool halls and rob D-level players. He would pretend he didn't know how to play the game and then sucker them into a bet."

"Anybody that huge would have to be known," I offered.

"He wasn't that big when he came here. He was a small, arrogant, cocky son-of-a-bitch. We gave him that size when he arrived."

"So now what does he do? Get his brain beat out until he shrinks to the proper size?" I surmised.

The old man had a way of not answering questions when he knew I had the answers. He motioned for me to follow him. Then he picked up the eight ball and chain and handed it to me. "He'll be here a Kalpa or two," He said. "Carry this for a while. I'm tired."

I again wanted to ask him what a Kalpa was, but I held back and took the eight ball in my arms. It was heavy. As we continued along the trail he explained to me that this guy needed to lose twenty games for every game he had won in the past. When this happens, he makes his atonement for past sins and will be able to leave the Wayside. He would then be normal. "These are the only residents that leave here in a relatively short time," he added.

We traveled through the Wayside for a long time. I carried his eight ball while he stumbled along in silence. At first I thought I was here for a mere visit, a place I could study. But this did not appear to be a visit. It looked like I might be here for a while. "By the way," I finally asked, "What is a Kalpa?"

He stopped for a moment and peered at me from beneath that heavy hood. Then he spoke, "A Kalpa is how long it would take to brush away Mt. Everest if you swept across the top of it with a nylon curtain every six months."

"Good grief!" I replied in astonishment.

I tried to think of a reason I would end up here in the Wayside. There was that eight ball in Milwaukee, an easy shot. I missed it and lost the tournament. I remember a nine ball in Michigan. It was a partners tournament, winner take all. I ran a tough rack and ended up with an easy cut shot on the winning nine ball. I choked, missed, and we went home with nothing.

Perhaps those are the reasons I'm here. It doesn't really matter after all. It doesn't matter that I've written five books to help my fellow player deal with the difficulties of this game. I tried to "Point The Way" for others. I shared my strength, hope, and experience, and now I'm following this faceless figure through the Wayside. It doesn't seem right. Maybe I was selfish. My wife always told me some day I would pay for my selfishness.

How about that money game in Massachusetts? I lost all that money. I suffered through miss after miss and endured loss after loss. Everything went bad in that match. Maybe That's why I am here. I suppose I deserve to be in the Wayside.

Opportunity comes to you when you least expect it. It comes to all of us, not as often as we would like, but opportunity offers us our chances in a tournament. We all get chances to win and turn in a great performance.

When you fail to cash in, fail to take the easy victory at hand, it grinds at your nerves, chips away at your self-esteem until you don't even know who you are at the time. It is better to lose your job than to blow an easy opportunity in a game of nine ball. A blown opportunity is a direct hit on

your character. I've seen athletes bomb right out of sports after missing an opportunity. So why shouldn't I be sent to the Wayside? I've blown my share of chances.

There are times when I am playing that I put my right foot in the wrong place and move my grip hand back too far. When this happens, I begin to miss the power shots. At first I think I've had a relapse. The old "loser" is back in my head and I'm going to turn in my worst performance. Naturally, I draw a crowd. They want to see The Monk play pool. Not only do I begin to miss, I begin to sight crossways down the shaft. I can't see the shot, let alone make it. It is not long before I am hung out to dry.

As this is going on, I begin to assault my inner character until I would be happy for a Kalpa in the Wayside. Usually when this happens, I get my alignment back after the match is long gone. I play for pride. But everyone has left. They've seen enough.

I feel better about my performance however. If I can pull myself together and play for pride, I will feel better about myself. If you are down in a match, and know you can't come back, play for pride. Play to get your opponent's respect. It will make you feel better.

Now, I am in the Wayside. Perhaps this is where I will finish out my career. All I can do now is wait for my assignment. I'll wait and see where this old buzzard drops me off. I am not giving up. I'll play for pride.

I'll follow this old bastard for a while. Conversation is useless with him. He talks in riddles and offers vague hints of my future, nothing I can really depend on or totally understand. The further we traveled along the trail, the better things got. There was some vegetation, flowers, grass and the trail was beginning to look like a trail. I've seen the bright side of the Wayside and it did not offer me anything to get excited about. So, I'm not going to believe in anything at this point. I will feel no hope and begin my preparations to be assigned my eternal task in the Wayside. I deserve this. I missed that eight ball in Cleveland and almost had a heart attack. Why should I be spared? I really never have been normal. Even though I founded The Monk Billiard Academy and wrote those books, I never really have been a normal person. So I was not spared the Wayside after all. Well, I will make the best of it here.

There is no one who can help me now. You can't help people in the Wayside. If I were to ask Mike Sigel for help, he would just tell me to set some records. Johnny Archer would smile and tell me about his golf game. Loree Jon would just want to show me pictures of her children and Allison Fisher would tell me how difficult it is to dominate all the players. Players don't have time for distressed Monks.

We stopped at a small cafe. Think of it, a small cafe in the Wayside! This must be a mirage, a hallucination! The old man pointed for me to enter. Why not. What do I have to lose? I dropped the eight ball and walked in. The place was amazing. It was real nice and it was full of familiar people who were all happy!

The first one to greet me was Ben Carruthers, my all time favorite writer. Then I ran into Bob Henning, author of *The Pro Book*. Surely he can't be in the Wayside. He has helped many people. Perhaps it was the cigar he smoked on all book signing shows. Phil Capell was there to lecture on the game of nine ball.

My good friend Victor Maduro, who wrote the book *9bola* talked to me in Spanish. I couldn't understand a single word he said, but it was nice to hear a familiar voice.

Bert Kinister said, "Ding, dong, daddy! Here comes da Monk," I almost dared to hope. Then I saw Gregg Elliott of the Valley National Eight Ball Association and I knew I would soon be rescued.

Along came Paul Frankel, the publisher of "Professor-Q-Ball's National Pool News." Now he has been helping people for over a hundred years. "Time to come home," he said. "Time to get back to work." These words were music to my ears. I'll never get discouraged again. I'll keep writing my column and follow through until the end.

We sat around sharing stories. Everyone was talking at once; no one minded. We talked and talked and talked. I don't think anyone was really listening. That's the way writers are. Each wants to tell his story. Then someone made a mistake and asked Don Feeny a question about three-cushioned bank shots. Naturally, this would take hours to explain. You have to be careful when you ask Don Feeny a questions. His engineer's brain begins to churn out the answers. After he is done, you have a degree in engineering. He began with the story of his immigrant grandparents, and, in time, he was up to how his mother and father met and fell in love. His difficult birth would be next. Don "The preacher" Feeny would eventually explain the system but it might take a Kalpa or two.

I looked around the room and Phil Capell was showing Bert Kinnister his latest writings. Before he finished, he moved over to Jerry Briesath. Jerry seemed interested in the last half of his book. Don Feeny was up to the first grade now. Victor Muduro continued to speak in Spanish to whom ever would listen to him. Ben Carruthers sat there smoking his pipe. Tom Shaw showed up and wanted to interview me on pool hall designs. It didn't matter that I knew very little about pool hall designs. He would make up all the material anyway. As the small cafe buzzed with the sound of many

voices, in walked Tom “Dr. Cue” Rossman and his doll of a wife, Marty “Miss Cue”. Tom has been known for lengthy explanations, so we sent Don Feeny over to talk to him about kicking and banking. Tom was a World Champion kicking and banking specialist with three best selling videos to his credit. “Miss Cue” knew this was going to be a long one. “Any time “The Dr.” meets “The Preacher.” They will be there forever,” she said. By the time Don Feeny got to his experiences in the seventh grade, Tom was telling him how he and Marty met and what a great help she was. In time, they would talk about their favorite subject, kicking and banking. But first, they had to set the stage for the dramatic unveiling of the system of kicking and banking.

Jim Blaylock came in and sat next to “The Dog on a Leash.” They looked at each other and shook their heads. Neither spoke.

Suddenly the room grew quiet. Mike Sigel had just walked in. We were shocked. Everyone had the same expression on their faces. Eyes bugged out, mouth open, not breathing. We were in shock. He looked at us and said, “relax, gentleman! I’m here as a writer, not as a pool player.” We began to breathe a sigh of relief and he added, “I thought I’d join this little get together and welcome The Monk back to the real world.” It was nice to think I was in the real world.

Mike went on to explain the true meaning of life to us all. We sat in spellbound silence as he rambled on as only Mike Segel can do. Here was the greatest player this game has ever had. He won more titles than anyone, holds four world titles in four different games, and is here treating us like we were his equal. We were all mesmerized.

His speech lasted nine hours and seven minutes. There was a clock on the wall that had, “Length of Mike Sigel’s Speech” written across the top. As always, Mike was trying to beat his own record. As soon as he passed nine hours and six minutes, he finished with the words, “You see, gentleman, The Monk has stumbled onto a secret. We are all in the Wayside. We always will be in the Wayside. It isn’t so bad. At least we will be together.”

Bob Henning came over and talked with me for a while. He is a nice guy, very sincere, always willing to help you. His book, *The Pro Book* is a labor of love. Bob wanted out of the Wayside and thought I could help him. “I don’t belong here, Monk,” he said. A big cigar was sticking out of his mouth. It didn’t matter to me if he belonged here. “I should be back at my desk with my lovely wife, writing more books,” he pleaded. It meant nothing to me at the time. “I should be playing on tour.” Big deal. “I really think I can play this game.” So what. “I not only wrote *The Pro Book*, I mastered everything in your book, “The Lesson”.

“Yea, well why are you here, you big dummy?” I thought.

“I think I did everything right?” He lit his smelly cigar. Now I know why Bob Henning is here in the Wayside. He must have lit one of those cigars during a match. The smoke blew him all the way to the Wayside.

I did not have the heart to tell him why he was here in the Wayside. Besides, if I have to be here, he might as well join me in this happy land.

There is no way Tom “Dr. Cue” Rossman belongs in the Wayside. His wife, Marty “Miss Cue,” surely does not belong here. Never in a million years would the lovely “Miss Cue” do anything to be sent to the Wayside. I wondered if they could tell me what happened. Bob was still talking when I walked away to talk to Marty.

“Why is Tom here?” I asked.

“What about me? Aren’t you curious as to why I am here?” Marty replied.

I was very curious. Marty is a first class girl. One of the finest ladies this industry has ever had. She is a legend.

Marty explained, “After Tom created The Monk 202 Banking and Kicking tapes, he decided to hold seminars on his systems. We were very busy. At one stretch he wanted me to shoot all the shots. He got into a slump and missed every one of them. He missed every single shot. No matter how hard he tried, the balls just would not go into the pockets. I couldn’t take it anymore, Tim. So I got up and shot all the shots for him. Well, Tom’s the hero. I’m just the magic behind the hero.” She hesitated for a moment and continued, “When we had a role reversal we didn’t plan on, we came here right off,”

“So, now you’re Dr. Cue” I said quizzically.

“Sort of looks that way. I mean, it isn’t so bad. Look at him. It will take a long time before Don Feeny finishes his explanation. His eyes are going to glass over. Remember, that use to be my job. I’d have to listen to all the tales of accomplishments while Tom got to play the game.” She reminisced.

“How long do you think you will be in the Wayside?” I asked.

She tipped her head and looked at me as if I were the stupidest person on the earth. “Tim, we are all here because of you. You wrote the silly Wayside story. Now you need to write an ending so we can all go back to work.”

“Are you telling me I have control over all these talented people?” I asked.

“Sort of looks that way.” She quickly answered.

Just then the hooded old man stumbled through the door. He was handsome beneath the hood. His eight ball and chain bumped along the floor behind him. Dog on a Leash nudged me and said, “One of these days, the

perfect pool player is going to make up his mind about something.”

If it is up to me to write the ending of this saga, I think I’ll wait awhile. One should not rush into anything. The old man handed me his eight ball and chain and said, “I don’t have to be the perfect pool player anymore.” He turned and walked out the door.

If you are sent to the Wayside, you will see me. I am here. I will lead you on a meaningless journey through the Wayside. I am working on an ending to this story, one that will send us all back to the real world.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX



The Final Chapter

“I Came To Win” has taken us on a journey through the inner game of pocket billiards. Our minds have been opened to new possibilities in our game. A new sense of direction has been given to us and we can see our unlimited potential. It is so nice to have an open door to self development. No longer does it have to be closed by our own shortcomings. This is an exciting adventure that is ours to enjoy.

You will need to go back through this book from time to time and train yourself in the fine art of courage, concentration and composure. Not only in the game of pool, but in your own personal life as well.

If we can exercise these new found qualities in all our everyday affairs, we can surely benefit from it. We will find the joy and peace we seek. So often, prosperity leaves us with anxiety and concern about how to maintain this life-styles and hang on to the benefits. With our newly-found three qualities, we simply follow the path laid out before us and welcome whatever comes our way. We are Fire. We are Earth. We are Wind. We are Water.

Courage, concentration and composure give us an advantage over our competition. Those who lack these qualities are no match for our well organized skills.

I’ve used composure to win a tournament. It was my composure that kept me in the contest and gave me the opportunity to pull out the victory. We must practice these fine skills until they become knowledge applied.

I have a training exercise for you while you seek to perfect your concentration skills. First, you must quiet your mind. Our minds are like the wild wolves in the forest, always searching, they are sometimes

violent, sometimes docile, but ever on the prowl. A wolf will devour anything in its path. We must silence the circling wolf and bring it under control. Soon we will have a powerful predator at our beck and call.

In training we quiet the mind – our wolf. We see it gazing at the moon. It seems solitary yet powerful, ready to serve, under complete control, but at the same time, ready to pounce upon the enemy. We teach the wolf to lose its fear of us and instead, turn his fear into an intense desire to serve. We are the masters of this wild beauty. It is ours to use as we will. Think of your mind as that wolf. Think of the wolf as being in your domain.

It is time now, for us to train the “wolf”. Most of the restlessness comes from our insecurity and fear. We must teach it to relax and trust. We must give up the debilitating fear. Once we have it under a calm demeanor, we can then take it out to see how the wolf acts under outside influences, distractions, or changes in temperature. It is easy to sit on a park bench and train our minds to achieve peace and harmony. It is quite another thing to achieve peace and harmony in the heat of battle. So often we go into battle and do not even consider how the “wolf” – our mind is going to react. We don’t even consider how it is acting during the heat of the moment. We must be aware of what is going on. We cannot have our wolf out of control.

In a match with a friend, I was shooting well. In fact, I totally dominated him. He had no chance. It was only a matter of time before he would be giving up in defeat. As the inevitable end was nearing, he lost his composure and said some unkind things. His “wolf” was out of control.

Later, at four in the morning, I got a call from him. He apologized for his poor behavior. He was ashamed. I was happy he called me because he was aware of how his “wolf” was acting. It was a sign of personal growth for him to take responsibility for his “wolf.”

There are those who are not aware of how their mind is working. They drift in a sea of denial and seem content to never know what is going on. They are like the wild wolf. They are always searching, ever ready on the prowl, and each catch gives way to more hunger. The wolf does not intend to cast his shadow on the snow, and the snow has no mind to receive it. He rages on, unaware. It just happens.

Just as the howl echoes through the forest, the sound travels to no one. There is no order in the wild wolf’s mind. We must tame the wild animal and give it a life of joyful harmony with achievement as its personal goal.

We are always testing to see if we can maintain our mindfulness and concentration when we are in the field of battle. When strife and anxiety come into our camp, we must be able to maintain our poise and confidence that we will be able to prevail in both battle and life. We must be able to tame the interference.

We now have the “wolf” under control. We are able to walk with the wild animals for long distances without worry or fear. The “wolf” does not control us in meditation. We are no longer controlled by our wild thoughts. Instead, we can use the mind’s power for our higher purpose.

We are one with the inexhaustible powers of the wolf. We have combined our skills and run swiftly across the snow, knowing with pinpoint accuracy exactly where our prize is hiding. When we uncover his hiding place, he is no match for our ferocious attack.

We no longer see our mind as the wolf. Instead, both the wolf and you see your mind as one. This vision of unity brings us peace and harmony with the universe. No longer are they at odds with each other. In all of our concentration practices, we constantly come back to the unified wholeness of our source of power. We are one with the beast.

You’ve heard the phrase, “Go with the flow”? It is very hard to describe the concept of a connection to the Universal Mind. It is almost impossible to intellectualize about that experience. In reality, it is a marriage with the “wolf.” It is the quieting of the inner spirit. You have no limits on how far you can go when you reach harmony within yourself.

Close your eyes now and see the wolf. Bring it under control. Test it in the battle and be one with it at the end of your meditation. As you journey towards this union, you will know when you have linked up with the all powerful Universal Mind. You are no longer in control. Instead, you are willing to go with the flow, wherever that flow leads you. In doing so, you possess incredible concentration skills. Like the taming of the wolf, your skills are there to serve you.

We saw a pile of rocks – twenty racks of balls – and piled them from one pile to another. We did this until the rocks were piling themselves.

For some players, it took a long time to experience this. For others, it was relatively quick. Others gave up, never having experienced the shots shooting themselves.

Those who persevered were rewarded with great skills. Those who went further and tamed the wolf soon found themselves in the circle of champions. They smiled as the trophy was presented to them. They smiled because they deserved this trophy. They smiled because they had arrived in this exclusive circle.

There are no short cuts. There are no compromises. We smile because we have taken the right road to a championship.

I've seen winners complain about the conditions while they were getting their trophy, and deep in my heart, I knew they did not deserve to be there. They were not winners. Instead of the training and practicing to develop their skills, they have used drugs to enhance their performance. It is a huge price to pay for a few minutes in the winner's circle.

The winds of this world are blowing strong. They bring the temptation of pleasure, fame, and gain. Once we become attached to them, we are blowing about like the leaves in the autumn wind.

I've seen players throw away their ethical considerations for the briefest of pleasures, for the chance of financial gain, the high praise, or a fifteen minute stint in the winner's circle.

We must check our motivations on a regular basis. Are we responding to the desire for pleasure, or is the fear of failure tapping on our shoulders? Both imposters lead us to the shifting sands where it would be impossible to lay down a solid foundation.

An acquaintance once asked me why I continue to practice this game. I answered, "Because I want to be World Class."

She further inquired, "You are not going to compete, so why bother?"

I explained that there are forty million people playing this game. I wanted to be among the top three hundred.

"So what will that do for you," she asked. "You could win the Viking tour. You could win the Joss tour. You might even win a pro event. Big deal. You win six thousand dollars."

"I'd be in the top three hundred." I repeated.

"What's the big attraction?" She asked

"There are over five million players trying to get into the top three hundred. I'd be one of them." I answered.

"So what. I could see if it was tennis, golf, baseball or basketball. Then you'd make some money."

"What ever sport you chose, to be among the top three hundred in your field is something to be proud of."

"I'll never understand it."

"It is what you are. It is what you become. I would feel like a very special individual if I was one of the top three hundred players in the world."

When the "wolf" is quiet and under your command, you have made it to the top three hundred. May you quiet the "wolf" today.

*Once I realized that this pathway was like the shifting
sands of the dunes, I placed my faith in the Universal Wisdom
and let it go at that.*

I have visited with player after player who has complained about the inconsistencies in their performance. One minute they are at the top of their game, playing with great confidence, and the next they are mired in a slump, defeated, depressed and thinking about giving up.

Let me tell you, my friend, nothing lasts. We cannot hang on to things. “And this too shall pass,” is a biblical quote with great truth. It applies to hard times as well as good times. Our feet must be solid in the field of equanimity to help us not become overly invested in success or disrupted in disappointment. There is a difference between making a living and making a life. The right course to a championship is the inner journey to peace and harmony.

As Harry Chapin once said, “It’s got to be the going, not the getting there That’s good.” And I say, “It is the going that gets us there.”

When I started out on this journey, I did not know I would be the founder of The Monk 101 program. Nor did I know I would be The Monk. I began my journey towards the art of pocket billiards. I began with a faith that what I was doing was right, and with an open mind to follow it through. It was a journey filled with many visions, many goals, ever changing, always reaching for more levels. I place no limits on my travels, and along the way I created a new publishing company called Samsara Publishing.

Once I realized this pathway was like the shifting sands of the dunes, I placed my faith in the Universal Wisdom and let it go at that. This journey has helped me write five books, produce six video tapes, and create a series of motivational audio tapes. Each of these products leads us to the pathway of fulfillment. It is the right pathway for me. It is your path.

Now, with your goals so clearly in your hands, move forward. With your goals so clearly in your mind, move upward. Knowing who you are, experience the journey that is meant for you. You will be surprised by the unexpected twists and turns along the way. You will be delighted to know you did not direct this scenario by yourself, for if you did, it would not turn out this good. You could not have imagined a more perfect ending for your journey. You will travel this path, and you will become the path.

May the wind blow at your back until the silvery moon hears your howl.

THE END

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