

FORT WORTH

Star-Telegram

The Daily Ticket

A FAN'S GUIDE TO THE DAY IN SPORTS

CHATROOM

SPORTS FIGURES SOUND OFF
ON VARIOUS TOPICS



Susan McCombs
Sports hypnotherapist

Susan McCombs is a sports coach and board-certified hypnotherapist who uses guided relaxation and visualization techniques to help athletes' mental games.

McCombs, the founder and executive director of the Bedford Empowerment Center, has been in private practice since 1989. She has created a line of self-hypnosis CDs, including The Golf Enhancement Seminar, which is designed to help golfers relax, focus and visualize success on the course.

Before McCombs produced her CDs, she got rid of her Boston accent by working with a speech therapist from Amherst College. Her Web site is www.golf-hypnosis.com.

What is hypnosis? Hypnosis is a word a lot of people are afraid of, because they really don't understand the process.

Hypnosis is nothing more than a very, very deep state of relaxation. The person always remains in control. I like to sort of get that out there in the open, so people will get over their fears of hypnosis. Most people are familiar with stage shows where people are quacking like a duck. That's not what I do. ...I can't make anybody rob a bank or play like Tiger Woods.

How did you become a hypnotherapist? About 13 or 14 years ago, I was a smoker who had tried unsuccessfully for 10 years to quit smoking. I had tried everything -- the patch, gum, every program offered. Finally, someone suggested that I try a hypnotist. I sat down at a table with about four or five other people and listened to some music and followed some suggestions with my eyes closed. But when it was all over with, I thought it was a hoax, because I had remembered everything that happened and I didn't feel any different immediately. I left, and three months later, I hadn't had a cigarette. I called the man and said, "I need to learn how to do this, because I want to commit to helping other people quit smoking."

How did you get started working with golfers? A couple of years ago, I decided to get more focused in a specific area. The people who were coming to me, who were really having wonderful, wonderful success, and were truly, truly motivated, were the golfers. It was just natural for me to create a program that I could record, because I really wanted to go worldwide with it.

Why do you think you have seen such success with golfers?

Sometimes, in other situations, the people coming to me may not be as clearly motivated as the golfers are, as most athletes are, to tell you the truth.

So, is that why hypnosis works with golfers? Because they're motivated? I believe golfers are already aware that golf is 99 percent mental. I can help them to release that anxiety. I can help them to stay in the zone -- to get there and stay there. I can help them to be focused and to let go of any distractions. Golfers get distracted, and they get nervous and their muscles tense up. When their muscles tense up, their swing isn't as good. People tell me that after hypnosis they are truly relaxed throughout their whole game.

Do you play golf? Not well.

Maybe you need to listen to your CD. Maybe I need to.

Can hypnosis help the high-handicap golfer as much as the low-handicap golfer? It is geared toward the person who at least knows how to play, who knows what a good chip shot is or what club to use in each situation. They have to know how to play. But, I've found it helps the high-handicapper as well as the low-handicapper.

— Charean Williams

To order, call toll-free
866-275-0516.
