

## **MODULE 2**

# **How Your Brain Actually Works**

*Part of the Master Your Golf Brain System  
Powered by My Mental Caddy™*

## Introduction

Now that you know why golf is mental, let's talk about what to actually expect from your brain when you're out there playing. Because once you know the rules your brain is playing by, managing it gets a whole lot easier.

## Your Brain Is Not Broken

Here's the thing: your brain is not broken. It's not working against you. It's doing exactly what it's designed to do. The problem is, most of us don't know what to expect from it. So when it starts acting up on the golf course, we think something's wrong with us.

**Nothing's wrong with you. You just need to know the rules.**

## The Hamster Cage Analogy

Let me give you an analogy. Growing up, I had a hamster cage. A lot of kids had hamster cages back then. We had these tubes that would connect the cages, and we really didn't have any idea how to take care of hamsters. We were just learning as we went. And it was pretty much a horrifying experience.

I refer to the thoughts in the back of your head much like this hamster cage. I could wake up one morning, go look at the hamster cage, and they're all crazy. They're running around, beating their head against the wall. There's that little hamster going around and around on the wheel. And then sometimes I'd go in there and they're all sleeping. There really wasn't any rhyme or reason to it. Sometimes they were all doing something different.

**This is kind of the way your brain works.**

Some days your brain is quiet. Things are easy. All those little hamster thoughts are sleeping. But then we go on the golf course and we rattle the cage. Something comes up that we perceive to be danger or a threat — some way we might experience emotional pain or embarrassment — and we shake the cage. Now all those little hamster thoughts are talking, and they're going a bit all over the place. Sometimes they're a little crazy, doing some crazy things.

And here's what I want you to understand: **that doesn't mean anything about you or your game.**

Some days your brain is quiet. Some days it's loud. That's just how it works.

## The Rules of Your Brain

Here's what you need to expect from your brain:

### **1. It will look for danger.**

That's its job. Out of bounds, bunkers, people watching, your score — your brain sees all of that as a threat. Not because you're weak, but because it's trying to keep you safe.

### **2. It will be negative.**

Your brain isn't designed to cheer you on. It's designed to warn you. So when it says "Don't hit it in the water," that's not self-sabotage. That's just your brain doing what brains do.

### **3. It will be inconsistent.**

Some rounds, your brain is calm. Some rounds, it's a disaster. That's not about your mental toughness. It's just the hamster cage rattling on a different day.

### **4. It will get louder under pressure.**

The more that matters to you — tournaments, playing with certain people, being in contention — the louder your brain gets. That's normal. That's what brains do when they think something important is on the line.

**That's just your brain doing its job. Not a problem.**

## **You Don't Control the Thoughts That Show Up**

Now here's the key thing to understand:

**You don't control the thoughts that show up.**

**You control what you do with them.**

That's the skill we're building here. Not "how to never have a negative thought." That's impossible. Your brain is always going to offer you thoughts you don't like. The question is: are you going to listen to them? Are you going to take action on them? Or are you going to let them pass by like the ticker on the news?

Most of us — and this is what most of us do — we let those thoughts drive the bus. They pop up from the back of our brain, and we just listen to them. We react to them. We let them tell us what to do. And we don't like where that bus is going.

We want those thoughts to stay in the back of the bus. We want to drive the bus intentionally. That's thinking on purpose. That's managing your mind. That's hearing those thoughts but not taking action on them.

## Awareness Is the First Skill

And before we can change anything, we have to **notice** it.

That's the first skill: **awareness**. Being able to step back and watch your brain like you're a spectator. Not judging it. Not trying to fix it yet. Just noticing: oh, there's my brain telling me I'm going to mess this up. Oh, there's my brain making this putt mean something about me.

Once you can see it, you can start to manage it. But you can't manage what you can't see.

## One Brain, On and Off the Course

Here's the other thing you need to understand: **you have one brain**.

How you manage it on the golf course is very similar to how you manage it off the golf course. The difference is, golf rips the band-aid off. Things happen fast out there. You don't have time to sit on the couch and process your emotions for three hours. You've got to hit the next shot.

If you're struggling to manage your mind off the golf course — meaning you're not able to redirect your thoughts, you're listening to negative self-talk, you're not able to process your emotions — then when you go onto the golf course where things are happening quickly, it's going to affect each shot. It's going to affect the results you're having.

So part of the goal of this system — and for you, as part of your work in life — is to help you manage your mind. And the better you get at it, the quicker you're going to be able to do it before that next shot shows up.

**This is not only a golf skill. This is a life skill.**

This is you learning how to manage your mind on and off the golf course. I encourage you to take all of these tools and use them everywhere you can, because the more you do it, the better you get, and the better your golf game will get.

## Key Takeaway

Your brain is designed to see danger, be negative, be inconsistent, and get loud under pressure. **That's normal**. That doesn't mean anything about you.

You don't control the thoughts that show up. You control what you do with them.

And before you can change anything, you have to notice it. That's the skill we're building.

## Action Step

Next time you play, just notice:

**What is my brain doing?**

When you're standing over a shot, what thoughts show up?

When something doesn't go your way, what does your brain say?

Just watch it like you're watching the hamster cage.

Don't try to fix it. Don't judge yourself for it.

**Just notice.**

Because awareness is always the first step.

And once you see where the gaps are, we're going to fill them in together.

*Continue to Module 3: Your Preferred State — The Three Cs*