

THE INNER GAME OF TENNIS

The Classic Guide to the Mental
Side of Peak Performance

W. Timothy Gallwey



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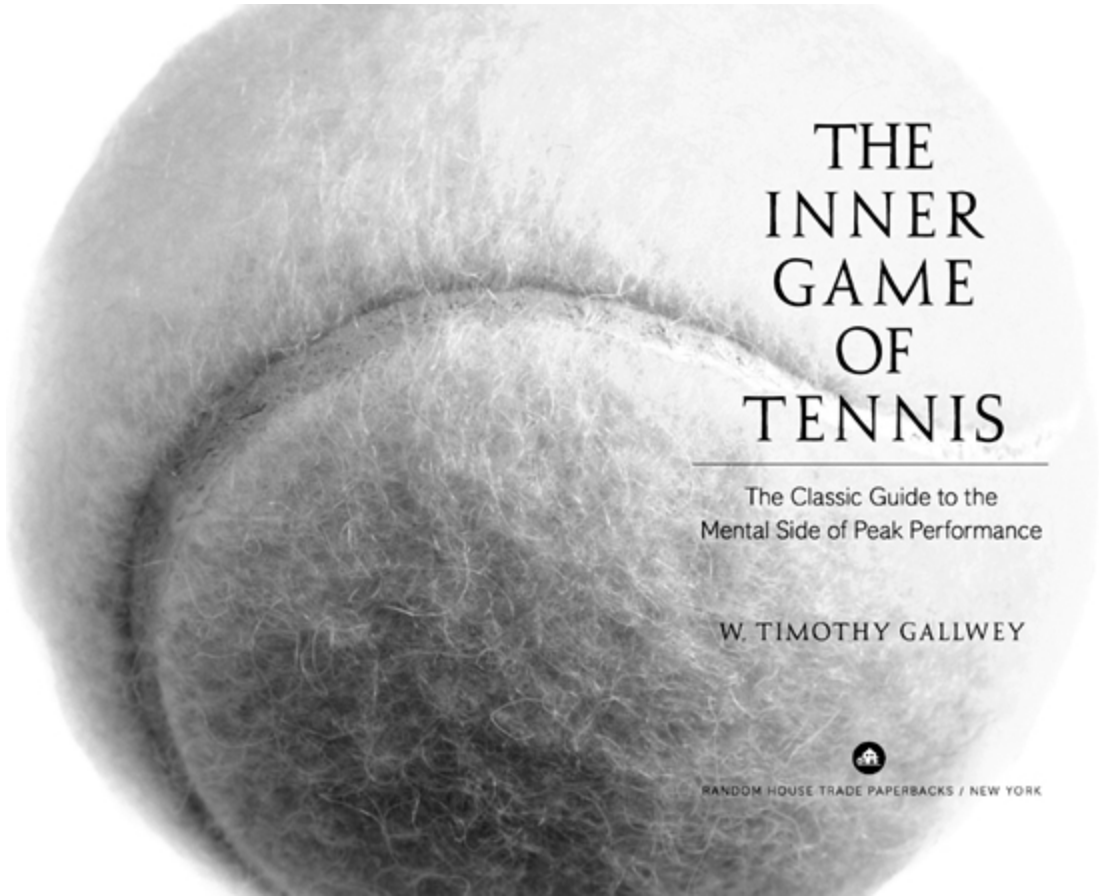
The Inner Game of Golf

Inner Skiing (with Robert Kriegel)

Inner Tennis

The Inner Game of Music (with Barry Green)

The Inner Game of Work



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*for my mother and father,
who brought me to the Game,
and for Maharaji,
who showed me what Winning is*

What is the real game?

It is a game in which the heart is entertained, the game in which you are entertained.

It is the game you will win.

MAHARAJI

FOREWORD

PETE CARROLL

Head Football Coach, USC Trojans

The 2005 National Championship game was a great stage for the University of Southern California Trojans. We had encountered many different challenges in the years leading up to this classic match-up. Billed as the “Game of the Century,” top-ranked USC and second-ranked Oklahoma would compete in the nationally televised FedEx Orange Bowl in front of a record-setting audience. What a night for players, coaches, and fans to celebrate the game of football on the greatest stage in college sports.

The game would be illustrated in a physical matchup of some of the greatest college athletes in the country. Whereas the game and the field would be highlighted by athletic prowess and memorable playmaking, a much more subtle battle would be waged in the minds of those very same players. The mental aspects contributing to this great physical performance would be crucial to the eventual outcome.

Tim Gallwey has referred to these contributing mental factors as the “Inner Game.” These athletes must successfully deal with the mind as they prepare to deliver top-flight performances. Coaches and athletes on all levels are confronted with this mental aspect regarding performance. They must clear their minds of all *confusion* and earn the ability to let themselves play freely.

Introduced to *The Inner Game of Tennis* as a graduate student years ago, I recognized the obvious benefits of Gallwey’s teachings in regards to performance in individual sports. As I grew more familiar with the benefits of performing with a quieted mind. I started to

cement the principles of trust and focus as characteristics that could also benefit teams.

The Inner Game is intrinsically connected to all facets of our program. The confidence necessary for performing at a championship level over long periods of time can only be developed on the practice field through repetition. Disciplined practice enables our players to develop trust in our coaching and in themselves. They also gain the confidence that allows them the ability to focus, regardless of circumstances or surroundings.

Whether we are preparing for an inter-squad scrimmage or the National Championship Game, these principles lie at the foundation of our program. Once you understand the principles of the Inner Game, you will be able to quiet your mind, focus clearly, and truly *play* the game.

PREFACE

ZACH KLEINMAN

Coach: Sports and Life

I have trusted Tim Gallwey—and the teachings of *The Inner Game of Tennis*—since before we met. This trust started in 1974, when I read this book that is in your hands right now. He confirms that the path I am on is true, and that I could go deeper. And I do. “It’s not about the tennis,” he reminds me. “It’s not about the win or the loss; if we’re here to experience, then we are free.” I still like winning more than losing. And after thirty years, he still shows me how to have faith and he has knighted me an Inner Game instructor. Tim lives his work and, as my mentor and a role model, he has entrusted me to see into and participate with him as he continues to learn. I appreciate him especially for this: He is a source of unconditional interest.

One day, he was even more right than usual. It was the last day of the first Inner Game workshop for tennis teachers. Though I had assisted him at an Inner Tennis clinic a few months earlier, during workshop week I had my first “private” lesson (thirty people were watching) with Tim. He suggested Authority. “Express authority. Become the author of your own shot,” he kindly requested. I found a presence within me who was able to project a new and accessible vision into the shots. Immediately my teaching and playing gained an added dimension, but not just from the authority; it could be anything I pictured. I became the writer, the creator of the next point, my life.

On Friday, December 10, 1976, at about 2:30 in the afternoon, Tim Gallwey changed my life when he so intuitively suggested,

“Zach, go home. Go and teach, then come back for the next workshop.”

“No way,” I responded with newfound strength and surety. Then a stronger instinct with me said, “I’m *here*. I’ll help, assist, and learn.”

Tim smiled.

I stayed. But what really made me stay? There’s a magic I feel being on the court, teaching and learning with Tim. His thoughtful, simple, provocative approach inspires the best out of me as a teacher, player, and person.

Since that life-altering moment of expressing a newfound authorship, I trusted and continue to trust Tim’s instincts. I am still in Los Angeles, working with and expanding the Inner Game process through clinics—group and private instruction on tennis courts and golf courses, and in music and billiard halls. And I continue to learn and grow and practice with Tim almost daily—on and off the court—expressing our inner and outer games.

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Head Football Coach, USC Trojans

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