

EAST MEETS WEST
An Integrated Approach to Peak Performance
by
Desmond Oon, PhD and Scott Ford, USPTA

Ever since Timothy Gallwey first introduced Zen philosophy to tennis back in the mid-70's there has been a chasm between the Eastern and Western approaches to teaching and playing the game of tennis. This chasm is nowhere more evident than in the East's philosophical approach to "flow" versus the West's more scientific approach to the "human peak performance state."

Zen refers to flow as "satori," which is a Buddhist term for "enlightenment" or "understanding," and is often juxtaposed with a related term known as "kensho," which means "seeing one's true nature."

In the West we refer to flow as the human "peak performance state" or simply "the zone," and the chasm that has formed over the past four decades is largely due to the different perspectives taken by the East and the West with regard to creating this experience of flow.

The Eastern approach is more philosophical and involves a subjective or *interior* perspective on flow; *the higher-consciousness of human peak performance*. Conversely, the Western approach is more scientific and involves an objective or *exterior* perspective on flow; *the system dynamics of human peak performance*.

Both perspectives are valid and both perspectives can lead the player to an understanding of his or her highest-order performance state; the satori experience of flow that we know in the West as playing tennis "in the zone."

The objective of this Specialty Course is to bridge the gap between the East's interior perspective and the West's exterior perspective by showing how the interior characteristics of flow correlate directly to the exterior system dynamics of human peak performance.

Using *the Tao, Zen, Yoga and Sun Tzu*, Dr. Desmond Oon will demonstrate his Eastern model for getting into the flow, while Scott Ford will use his *Parallel Mode Process* to demonstrate a Western model for playing tennis in the zone.

The relationship between flow's interior subjectivity and its exterior objectivity will be discussed and experienced in a seminar setting as well as demonstrated and experience first-hand on the tennis court.

Each participant will be asked to take part in both the interior consciousness training as presented by Dr. Oon as well as the exterior system dynamics training as presented by Mr. Ford. The take-away by each participant will be an experiential understanding of the relationship between the interior state of consciousness of flow and its exterior mode of operation.

This integral training will help tennis pros to more effectively coach the human peak performance state (the zone) while enhancing their club's programming schedule with the introduction of a "peak performance module" that can be approached from either an Eastern philosophical perspective or a Western scientific perspective.

The Mind and Athletic Performance: the Eastern Approach of Getting into the Flow

Desmond Oon, Ph.D.

Introduction

The East and its Contributions to Mind Function and Control

Divergent Views: East is East and West is West

Straddling East and West

Co-existence and Integration

Part One

An Overview of Eastern Philosophy—the Tao, Zen, Yoga and Sun Tzu

The Tao, Universal Truths and the Cosmic Laws

- 1 Law of Polarity.
- 2 Law of Attractions.
- 3 Law of Perceptions.
- 4 Law of Intentions.
- 5 Law of Commitment.
- 6 Law of Spontaneity.
- 7 Law of Acceptance.

The Attitude of the Tao Athlete

He:

- 1 Uses wisdom and patience.
- 2 Enjoys athletic performance for its own sake.
- 3 Constantly trains the mind and goes inward.
- 4 Participates in a sporting activity to gain self-realization.
- 5 Focuses on how best the game is played (process), as opposed to outcomes, results and winning.
- 6 Is prepared to take risk and to learn from failures and seeks balance, moderation and naturalness.
- 7 Takes the path of least resistance and respects natural forces.
- 8 Uses “imagineering” to improve athletic skills.

The Attitude of the Western Athlete

He:

- 1 Treats sport as something to conquer.
- 2 He sets unrealistic goals and expectations that result in frustration and disappointment.
- 3 Constantly struggles for external recognition, rather than internal satisfaction.
- 4 Focuses his attention on perfection in every task, instead of accepting life as a journey in search of excellence.

- 5 Measures his self-worth as an athlete, solely on the outcome of his performance in sport.
- 6 Blames others when things don't go his way and failures abound.
- 7 Condemns himself for setbacks and has a poor sense of self.

Zen and its Teachings and Application, in respect of:

- 1 Silence.
- 2 Emptiness.
- 3 Awareness.
- 4 Concentration.
- 5 Fear.
- 6 Flexibility.
- 7 Energy.

Yoga and its Teachings and Application, in respect of:

- 1 Breathing.
- 2 Spirituality (See the Spiritual Road to Abundance and Success).

Sun Tzu and the Art of War and its Teachings, in respect of:

Winning Strategies

- 1 In planning, thoroughly assess the natural conditions.
- 2 The chances of winning are slim if you predict so.
- 3 Identify favorable strategic conditions and build your own strengths.
- 4 Wise up to when you can be offensive or defensive.
- 5 What your enemy does will determine whether you can win.
- 6 Use normal force to engage; summon extraordinary force to subdue.
- 7 Adapt quickly to changes in circumstances.
- 8 When you are winning, don't repeat the tactics that you have used.
- 9 Use appropriate actions to capitalize on advantages.
- 10 Seize the initiative when presented with an opportunity.
- 11 In the use of weapons, use the most appropriate ones available.
- 12 War can be likened to the quality of water which retains no constant shape.

Part Two

Understanding Flow (See the Anatomy of Flow paradigm)

The Characteristics of an Athlete in Flow

He is:

- 1 Sufficiently challenged by the skill in which he is engaged.
- 2 Acutely aware of what he is doing but not in conscious thought.
- 3 Lost totally in self-consciousness.
- 4 Strongly and effortlessly in control of what he is doing.
- 5 Lost in time; time has no concept.
- 6 In full, one-pointed concentration.
- 7 Crystal clear of his goals.
- 8 Thriving on feedback and in tune with movements.
- 9 Joyfully and blissfully engaged in the athletic task for its own sake.

Part Three

- 1 Understanding the Power of Water (See the Qualities of Water Chart)
- 2 Understanding the Power of Rituals (See the Rituals Chart)*

* The Rituals will be conducted on court. (The exercise will take 20 mins.)

Part Four

The Place of Meditation in Athletic Performance, with particular reference to Tennis

Aids to Achieving Flow through the following Meditations:

- 1 Breath Meditation
- 2 Claming and Energy Meditation
- 3 Walking Meditation
- 4 Healing Meditation**

** All four meditations will be done in the classroom.

Part Five

The invisible Inner Landscape of the East has a parallel with the visible Outer Landscape of the West.

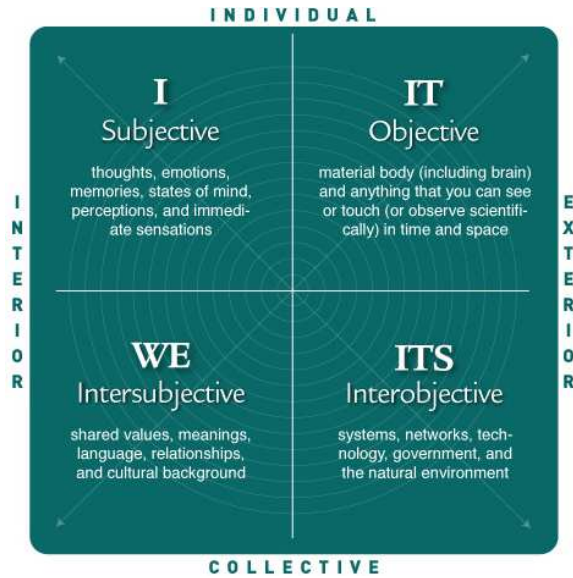
The specialty course will continue with the Western component presented by Scott Ford.

The Parallel Mode Process

By Scott Ford, USPTA

I. Integral Theory

A. Quadrants



B. Interior/Exterior Correlates Relative to Tennis

1. Interior/Subjective = State of Consciousness
2. Exterior/Objective = VCM Operating Mode
3. Interior/Intersubjective = Competition/“We Space”
4. Exterior/Interobjective = Rules and Tools of Tennis

II. About the Zone

A. Sports Psychology and Flow

1. Challenge-skills balance
2. Clear goals
3. Unambiguous feedback
4. Concentration on the task at hand
5. Action-awareness merging (automatic-pilot)
6. Sense of control
7. Loss of self-consciousness
8. Transformation of time
9. Autotelic experience

B. Playing Tennis in the Norm (PTN)

1. Serial Mode of Operation (Exterior)
2. Normal (Dual) State of Consciousness (Interior)

C. Parallel/Nondual State - Playing Tennis in the Zone (PTZ)

1. Parallel Mode of Operation (Exterior)
2. Higher-Order (Nondual) State of Consciousness (Interior)

III. Exterior State Training (On-Court Participation)

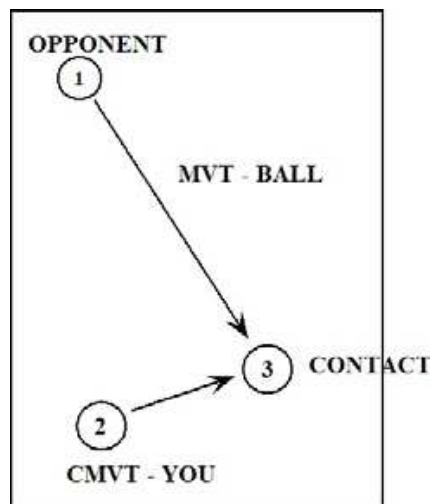
- A. Getting In the Zone
 - 1. Shifting from Serial Mode to Parallel Mode (Exterior Shift)
 - 2. A Simple Concentrative Task
 - 3. Pro Participation (Get on the court and do it!)
- B. Maintaining a Parallel Mode
 - 1. Forecourt/Midcourt/Backcourt
 - 2. Cooperative Situations
 - 3. Competitive Situations

IV. The VCM Pattern (On-Court)

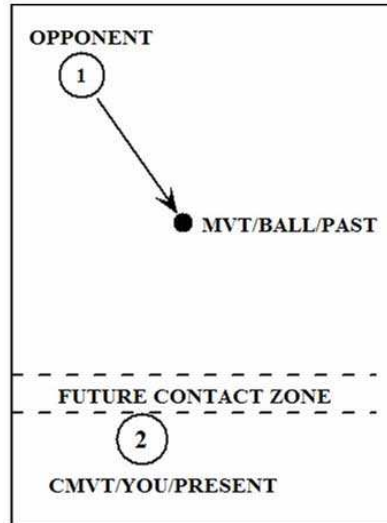
- A. VDF v. FDF
 - 1. The Difference in Visual Input Patterns
 - 2. Visual Efficiency (Prefocus vs. Refocus)
 - 3. Input Accuracy (Contact Location vs. Ball Location)
- B. What v. Where Pathways of the Brain
 - 1. What Pathway (Pros and Cons)
 - 2. Where Pathway (Pros and Cons)
- C. A Different Perspective
 - 1. Controlling Your Contact Zone vs. Controlling the Ball
 - 2. Focus on Nothing/See Everything
 - 3. Contact Awareness vs. Ball Awareness

V. Field Theory and Human Peak Performance (Off Court)

- A. The Fundamental Process in Tennis
 - 1. The Contact Sequence



- B. Temporal/Spatial Dimensions
 1. Mvt/Ball = Past
 2. Cmv/You = Present
 3. Contact Zone/Contact = Future



- C. Playing In The Present
 1. VDF: Temporal Information about the Past (Ball) **only** = “Playing in the Past”
 2. FDF: Temporal Information about the Past (Ball) and Future(CZ) **equally and simultaneously**
 3. Future/Past = “PLAYING IN THE PRESENT”

VI. Teaching Peak Performance (on court)

- A. The Parallel Mode Process Model
 1. Phase I: Getting in the Zone
 2. Phase II: Maintaining the Zone
 3. Phase III: Competing In the Zone

VII. Conclusion (off court)

- A. Integral Coaching
 1. Native Perspective
 2. Expanding Perspectives
 3. Quadrants and Lines of Development
- B. East Meets West
 1. Integrating Eastern Philosophy and Western Science
 2. Practice What You Teach
- C. Question and Answer Period