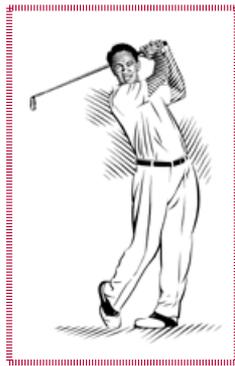


# The Seven Personalities of Golf



Discover Your Inner Golfer  
to Play Your Best Game

**DARRIN GEE**



**STEWART, TABORI & CHANG**  
NEW YORK

Published in 2008 by Stewart, Tabori & Chang  
An imprint of Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Gee, Darrin.

The seven personalities of golf : discover your inner golfer to play your best game /  
Darrin Gee.

p. cm.

ISBN: 978-1-58479-731-9

1. Golf--Psychological aspects. 2. Personality. I. Title.

GV965.G34 2008

796.352--dc22

2008005315

Editor: Jennifer Levesque  
Designer: Pamela Geismar  
Production Manager: Jacquie Poirier

The text of this book was composed in Monotype Bell,  
with Belizio and Trade Gothic.

Printed and bound in [country to be provided by production]

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

**HNA** ■■■■■  
**harry n. abrams, inc.**  
a subsidiary of La Martinière Groupe

115 West 18th Street  
New York, NY 10011  
www.hnabooks.com

*Dedicated to my children,  
Maya and Eric,  
whose beautiful, little personalities  
constantly remind me of what's  
most important in life.*

*THE SEVEN PERSONALITIES OF GOLF*

**The Intimidator**

**The Swashbuckler**

**The Methodologist**

**The Gamesman**

**The Steady Eddie**

**The Laid-Back**

**The Artist**

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## INTRODUCTION

“My ability to concentrate and work toward that goal has been my greatest asset.”

Jack Nicklaus

**WHEN** some people read the title of this book, their initial response may be “Is this about golfers with multiple personality disorder?” Not quite. It’s not about the scientific definition of multiple personality, but rather the many different styles and approaches a golfer might demonstrate on the golf course.

At my Spirit of Golf Academy in Hawaii, I often poll my students asking them to describe their own personality on the golf course. Some say they are apprehensive. Others say they are hyper or fast, while others describe themselves as relaxed or laid back.

Some golfers see themselves as aggressive on the golf course. For every shot, they give it their all, oftentimes leading to huge, monstrous drives, but at the same time, this approach may result in wayward shots out of bounds. If there is a lake guarding a green and they have 235 yards to the hole, they don’t lay up. They go for it. Anything less would not feel right. That’s a style, approach, or *personality* on the golf course. It’s how one carries oneself.

On the other hand, some may be very quiet, steady, and deliberate. They may calculate each and every shot, perhaps evaluating several options and then choosing the one that has the highest probability of success. On a hole with the flag tucked behind a cavernous bunker, this golfer will choose a spot in the middle of the green as the target. Some may call this conservative or cautious. Again, that is a particular style, approach, or personality.

The interesting thing about personalities is that they are multifaceted. If you were to describe your personality off the golf course, you might come up with one word that summarizes you overall. But at the same time, you will most likely think of several other words that describe the many aspects of who you are. It is important to realize that everyone has aspects of every personality type to a certain degree.

The key is to understand and identify which is your main or *dominant* personality type, understand the strengths and weaknesses of that particular type, and then learn how to maximize those strengths and minimize those weaknesses. In addition, it is just as important to understand the other nondominant or *secondary* personalities and know when to borrow traits from those personalities at key moments on the golf course to help you perform at your best.

For example, a conservative golfer can benefit from taking a more aggressive approach at certain times during a round of golf. Many of these types of players steadily plod their way about the golf course, rarely making a major mistake. They shoot for the middle of the fairway and the fat part of every green. They rarely cut the corner of a dogleg, and if there’s water, they shy away. Tucked pins are ignored, and oftentimes, they leave the driver in the bag in favor of a club that gives them a higher chance of hitting a fairway in regulation.

If this player was on the 17th hole in a tournament and was behind by two strokes, he or she would need to borrow from the aggressive personality. Let’s assume it’s a 185-yard par-3 hole where the pin is located just a few paces from a large lake fronting the green. Normally, this golfer would take a club and shoot for the middle or back of the green. That would get the ball safely on the green and away from the water, but leave him or her with a long attempt at birdie.

Yes, it's possible to make a thirty- or forty-foot putt, but with a much lower probability. This golfer needs to get the ball in the hole or, at the very least, close enough to increase the chances of making birdie. The player must get aggressive in his or her approach and go for the pin. Even though this type of shot, which brings the water into play, goes against the natural tendencies of the conservative golfer, this would be a time when it is warranted. The golfer must go for it to win and play his or her best golf.

This also goes for the player with a risk-taking personality. The "go for it" philosophy does not always serve the golfer well. For example, let's assume that a different player has a three-stroke lead with two holes to go in a golf tournament and is standing on the same 185-yard par-3 17th hole described above. The risk-taking approach would normally lead the golfer to attempt a shot just over the water and onto the green, setting up a birdie attempt. However, that particular shot brings the lake and potential trouble into play and, if not executed to perfection, could easily end up in the water and subsequently jeopardize the lead and tournament.

This would be a perfect time to borrow a trait or approach from another personality type. An aggressive shot is clearly unnecessary with such a large lead. At moments like this, the aggressive player must recognize that his or her dominant personality is a detriment or liability. He or she must choose strategically from another personality. Perhaps, the golfer can borrow the steady, calculated approach—aim for the middle of the green, thereby taking the water out of play, getting down in two putts, and moving on to the last hole with at worst a one-shot lead.

This philosophy certainly applies to the professional tour player. In the 2006 PGA Championship at Winged Foot Golf Club in New York, Phil Mickelson had a one-stroke lead standing on the tee of the 72nd hole. Par would most likely give him the championship.

However, his aggressive, go-for-broke approach got the best of him. He had hit only two fairways during the final round. Instead of hitting a club that would get him safely in the fairway when he needed it most, he decided to go with his driver. He proceeded to push the ball left, where it bounced off a hospitality tent and into the rough.

His ball was now about two hundred yards from the pin, with trees between him and the green. He had to cut or slice the ball around the trees to reach the elevated green, which was guarded by traps. Again his aggressive golf personality got the best of him. He selected his 3-iron and went for the green. The ball hit the trees and bounced backward, ending up in the rough again. On his third shot, the line to the pin was still blocked by trees. He went for the green again and proceeded to cut the ball into the left greenside bunker. He blasted the next shot from a buried lie in the trap through the hole, and then got up-and-down for a 6. On the last hole of a major championship, he shot a double bogey. He lost the championship by one stroke—a historic collapse.

There were several opportunities during the hole to downplay his dominant go-for-broke personality and adopt another that could have served him better. The tee shot—instead of hitting his driver, which was off all day, he could have been more conservative by hitting a fairway wood or long iron. That would have given him a higher probability of hitting the ball in the fairway. The second shot—instead of trying to slice the ball around the trees and reach the green with what would have been a miraculous shot, he could have punched out to the fairway, giving him great position to hit the next shot close to the hole. It still would have given him the chance to save par and win the championship. Even on the third shot—instead of going for the green, he could have laid up to a spot short of the green and out of the traps, where with his phenomenal short

game, he could still have gotten up-and-down for bogey, which, at the very least, would have set up a play-off.

Of course, it's easy to see all of this in hindsight. In fact, for all of us armchair players and coaches, it's always easy to formulate an opinion. The key is, when you are in the heat of battle during a round of golf, you need to learn how to recognize those moments when you must minimize your dominant personality instincts and adopt a more fitting approach in order to achieve a higher level of success.

The seven personalities that are categorized in this book have been chosen as examples that I believe are representative of the majority of golfers. They are not necessarily based on a scientific analysis or exhaustive selection of personality types as defined in the field of psychology, but rather on my general observations. This means that there are more than just the seven generalized personality types described in this book. Also note that the individuals mentioned as examples of each personality type are not necessarily solely and totally defined as such. In other words, this is all in fun.

After taking the survey at the end of each chapter, you may find yourself identified as a particular personality type that doesn't quite match how you want to view yourself. Please don't take it too seriously. This only indicates that you have a few traits of that particular personality. On the other hand, if you are convinced that your style surely matches a particular personality profile, but the survey indicates otherwise, that does not mean you do not fit that profile per se. It may indicate that while you have certain traits of the profile, you do not demonstrate them all the time.

After taking each survey, you may find that you identify strongly with one particular personality. This is your *dominant* personality. Some may see themselves possessing traits and qualities of several personalities. Don't worry; you do not have multiple personality disorder. Rather you carry qualities from different personality types,

which is desirable when you learn when and how to use each type in the most effective way. Most golfers will have one dominant personality or style, with traits from several other secondary personality profiles.

This book will help you play your best golf no matter your personality. Each chapter is dedicated to a particular personality type and describes the profile with examples of professional and amateur golfers who demonstrate it. In addition, you will be able to identify your dominant personality and learn more about yourself by using the survey at the end of each chapter, called the Seven Personalities of Golf Profiler, which will do the following:

1. Identify your own personality profile
2. Learn how to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of your dominant personality
3. Learn how and when to borrow traits from every other personality (considered secondary personalities for you) to play your best golf.

The personality profiler is a tool to help you determine who you are and how you play the game of golf. More importantly, once you know this, then you will be able to determine the best approach and corresponding shots to use at critical moments on the golf course, to help you play to your potential.

## OVERVIEW OF THE SEVEN PERSONALITIES OF GOLF

The seven personalities in this book are identified with descriptive words rather than scientific terminology. These seven personalities were selected based on the author's experience working with and coaching thousands of golfers at the Spirit of Golf Academy and through observation and research about past and present professional golfers from around the world.

The golfers, professional and amateur, used as examples have been chosen based on the author's own external observations. People were not interviewed or categorized based on psychological examination. The individuals identified as examples of a particular personality profile are not necessarily this way in actuality, either on or off the golf course. However, this is how they appear to the author when they're playing the game of golf. The following seven personalities represent a cross-section of the golfing world:

- 1. THE INTIMIDATOR*
- 2. THE SWASHBUCKLER*
- 3. THE METHODOLOGIST*
- 4. THE GAMESMAN*
- 5. THE STEADY EDDIE*
- 6. THE LAID-BACK*
- 7. THE ARTIST*

Now let's have some fun!

*CHAPTER ONE*

**THE INTIMIDATOR**

“Never let up. The more you can win by, the more doubts you put in the other players’ minds the next time out.”

Sam Snead

**THE INTIMIDATOR** walks up to the first tee with a certain air. Short on words. A quick, firm, almost bone-crushing handshake. It's all in the body language. The eyes. This person always wins a staring contest. His or her demeanor is all business. There's no time or space for idle chitchat or getting to know you. This golfer has one thing in mind: win.

The Intimidator is the golfer who uses a steely approach to stay focused on his or her own game. Whether intentional or not, this golfer's intimidating style and approach often have a strong effect on an opponent's focus and play. Opponents often self-destruct in the presence of an Intimidator. Physically, there is no difference and nothing has changed. The two golfers are playing the same golf course under the same conditions. The only difference is in how an opponent reacts and responds to the Intimidator's competitive nature. Many golfers allow the energy of an Intimidator to affect their own play adversely.

Look no further for examples of the Intimidator personality profile than two of the greatest players of all time—Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus. Their mere presence often puts fear into the eyes of their opponents. Many players give up before they even begin.

Woods's winning percentage, or close ratio, when entering the final round of a tournament with a lead or share of the lead is phenomenal. Of those tournaments, he has won over 90 percent.

Even more revealing is that in the four pressure-filled major championships (Masters, U.S. Open, British Open, PGA Championship), Tiger is a perfect 13 for 13 when entering the final round with the lead or share of the lead. No professional, past or present, even comes close on either ratio.

Many say Tiger just played better than the competition. If you base the results simply on the virtue of score alone, this is true. However, how and why he scored better is far more illuminating. Recognize that his fellow *final group* opponents had been playing great golf and earned their way into the final group. They were tied for first or second going into the last round of each tournament.

Woods's average final-round score when leading or tied for the lead heading into the final round of a major championship is about 69. His playing opponents' final round score average is almost 73. Close to a four-stroke difference! Not only does he win, he wins convincingly.

My conclusion: Tiger's intimidating presence combined with steady play had a dramatic effect on his opponents' ensuing collapse and falter. This led to large differences in score and ultimately to Tiger's victory. In other words, even though his fellow competitors played under the same golf course conditions, they fell prey to Tiger's aura.

The Intimidator has an awesome effect on others. His or her physical presence is surely intimidating. But the expert Intimidator affects others without being in the same physical space or even on the golf course. During Jack Nicklaus's prime, his opponents often admitted they had given up long before teeing up the golf ball. If Jack had a lead, they "knew" that he would never "let" them back into the game. His reputation preceded him, and half the battle was already won. Players were competing for second place.

The Intimidator does not necessarily view intimidation as his or her primary weapon on the golf course. In fact, many intimidators

may not even realize how their demeanor affects the play of others. However, they do know that if they stay focused on their game, then others will have to play their best to be competitive. That's a powerful existence. The most impressive aspect of this personality is that if the Intimidator stays focused, plays the best he or she can play, and still loses, this golfer is the first to admit that an opponent played better and deserved the victory.

Being an Intimidator can also have its shortcomings. The natural tendency for a person with this personality type is to be very intense and driven. At times, this can be a detriment. I worked with Michael, a single-digit handicapper, on managing his emotions throughout an entire round of golf. In general, being an Intimidator served him well and helped him play his best golf. As an Intimidator, he clearly had his goals in mind and was aware of his capabilities as a golfer. However, at times, when his opponent hit a longer drive or took a large lead, he became flustered and frustrated.

His competitive nature affected his game adversely. He would swing harder in an attempt to keep up. He would attempt shots that were out of his realm and skill set. His ego would get in the way. He allowed the play of others to affect his game. In these situations, the Intimidator was intimidated. He could not adapt and downplay his own dominant personality.

Intimidators, like Michael, can be too rigid at times. I taught him how to recognize when he was experiencing diminishing returns on his efforts. In other words, the threshold when more effort begot lesser results. If he reaches that point, he must borrow from another personality type to level out his play. Flexibility helps the Intimidator develop a more balanced approach to his or her game and, ultimately, leads to greater success on the golf course.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

### THE INTIMIDATOR

#### STRENGTHS

*High level of focus*

*Steady*

*Goal-driven*

*Wants to play best always*

*Blocks out distractions easily*

#### WEAKNESSES

*Rigid*

*Slow to adapt*

*Tries too hard*

*Difficult to maintain high level  
of intensity*

*Lack of emotional balance*

*Overly intense*

**SEVEN PERSONALITIES OF GOLF PROFILER**

Determine if THE INTIMIDATOR personality is your dominant personality by completing the following quiz/survey:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	5	4	3	2	1
1. I am highly focused on the golf course.					_____
2. I keep to myself when playing golf.					_____
3. I am an intense person on the golf course.					_____
4. I thrive on competition.					_____
5. I always want to win.					_____
6. I play better in groups rather than when alone.					_____
7. I play better in groups that are competitive.					_____
8. I play best when betting, gambling, or competing on the golf course.					_____
9. I don't mind if my opponent plays poorly.					_____
10. I enjoy beating my opponent.					_____
<b>YOUR TOTAL SCORE</b> <i>(add up all ten answers)</i>					_____

40-50 DOMINANT PERSONALITY | 30-39 SECONDARY PERSONALITY | <30 NON-PERSONALITY

**HOW TO USE  
THE INTIMIDATOR  
PERSONALITY**

**DOMINANT PERSONALITY**

If the Intimidator is your dominant personality, then you must learn how to best leverage it on the golf course. Always set goals for yourself, whether during a round of golf, a tournament, or even a practice session. For the Intimidator, there must be a purpose to everything. To trigger a higher level of performance, you need to maintain a higher level of intensity than most others.

Competition drives the Intimidator. An external opponent is not always necessary, as internal competition is equally powerful as a motivational factor. The Intimidator is very success- and results-driven. Thus, for every shot, hole, or round of golf, there must be a definitive goal.

If there is nothing “on the line,” the Intimidator often loses interest and intensity, which may lead to a lower level of performance. Naturally, playing in a competitive situation brings out the best in his or her game. To create this intensity, the Intimidator should play games such as skins, or make wagers against fellow players.

If the others in your playing group choose not to participate, then you can create pressure by challenging yourself to a match. For example, challenge yourself to

- Shoot more birdies than bogeys in a round
- Hit ten or more fairways and/or fourteen or more greens in a round
- Take less than thirty putts in a round

Make the consequences real and significant, enough to generate a definitive attraction (for the reward) and aversion (to the punishment). If you achieve the goal, you will reward yourself, such as by buying a new club. If you fall short, you must punish yourself, such as by doing some undesirable chore at home. Create a scenario that raises the level of intensity and, subsequently, your game.

On occasion, you may benefit from abandoning your typical competitive approach. This means that for 97 percent of the time, press on. However, for the other 3 percent, balance out your intensity. It is very difficult to maintain the highest level of intensity for an entire round, let alone an entire tournament. Periodically throughout the round, step back and loosen up between shots.

Loosening up can be physical or mental. When you loosen up your body physically by doing stretches, shaking out your arms, or simply moving muscles in a different way (e.g., squatting, bending sideways), it releases excess tension that may have been building up

through repetitive motions such as the golf swing. [1] Once you use a different movement, the body will loosen up overall, allowing for better golf shots.

Likewise, when you take a mental break for just a few moments from long periods of intense concentration and focus, it allows your mind the freedom to relax. As a result, you will think more clearly going forward and make better decisions in shot selection and course management strategy.

Ed was one of the most intense golfers I have ever met. At his best, he was a scratch player who shot in the low 70s and often crept into red num-



bers. After some health issues, his game changed significantly and his scores “ballooned” into the mid to high 70s. He was extremely frustrated that his body couldn’t produce the same shots as before.

I explained to Ed that one’s physical condition changes constantly. Some days you will feel stronger, and other days you will feel less than 100 percent. The key is to adapt and adjust to how your body is responding on that particular day. In other words, even if you are not at 100 percent physically, you can make up for that by being at 100 percent mentally, which includes strategy, course management, shot selection, and managing your emotions.

Ed found that his physical capabilities could no longer match the same level of intensity he’d had before health issues arose. He needed to alter his approach accordingly. Instead of powering every shot, he could be smarter and hit more strategic shots. To increase his physical and mental stamina, he needed to relax more and break up his intensity. I advised him to take a physical and mental break every four holes by stopping and getting a drink of water and/or a snack. That’s all. Just a few moments to focus on something other than golf would give Ed the necessary balance before shifting back to his game 100 percent. This helped him level out his intensity, and as a result, he became a better, more balanced golfer.

This type of technique is most effective for the Intimidator when he or she is heading into a critical stage of competition or stretch of challenging holes. Shifting out of the Intimidator personality profile at key moments will help the Intimidator become even more powerful on the golf course.

#### SECONDARY OR NON-PERSONALITY

If the Intimidator is your secondary personality or non-personality, you can benefit by learning how and when to borrow a few certain traits at critical times on the golf course. There may be a situation or two that call for a more aggressive approach.

Perhaps you have been playing inconsistently of late and have a lot of doubt in your swing and overall game. You play with hesitation and rarely commit fully to your shots, resulting in less than full-effort swings. This is a time when using the Intimidator personality profile can help kick-start your game up a level. Shift your attitude and approach.

Become the Intimidator by focusing on a clear goal, blocking out all distractions, calling the shot, and then going for it without hesitation or reserve. You may have to repeat a few words over and over again in your mind to get your energy and focus in the right direction. For example, repeat to yourself the words “Go for it” or “In the hole” or “Hit the flag.”

This situation is similar to an athlete who hits the “wall” or reaches his or her physical limitation and then applies mental focus to continue or even lift his or her performance to another level. Endurance athletes, such as marathoners or triathletes, utilize this type of mental performance technique to break through critical stages of a race when fatigue sets in. If an athlete is unable to get past these hurdles, he or she will see a dramatic decrease in concentration and performance. For some, it will spell the end of their competition. Using the Intimidator personality profile can be as effective as being your own drill sergeant or coach.

The Intimidator personality is also effective for the player who needs to raise his or her level of intensity. Some golfers play with a laid-back, happy-go-lucky style which follows their personality and is conducive to performing at their best. However, there will be times when adopting the Intimidator personality will help them get to the next level.

I recently played in a charity golf tournament in which my group consisted of four players with handicaps/indices of different levels. The tournament format called for the best score (gross and net) from the foursome on each hole to determine the group’s

overall score. With the handicap system, certain players were allowed extra strokes on the more difficult holes.

One of our players was a 20 handicap-per named Craig. He was the most easy-going guy in the group. In fact, he had stepped off a red-eye flight that morning and driven to the golf course, arriving just in time for the tournament. His hair was ruffled, his shorts were wrinkled, and he wore tennis shoes—not your prototypical country club golfer. His appearance was indicative of his personality on the course—just out for a good time and more interested in conversation than score.

On one hole, Craig was allowed two extra strokes. If he shot par, or 4, the score would be adjusted to an eagle 2. He managed to hit a good drive to the 140-yard mark. As he prepared to hit his approach shot, he was talking about this and that and appeared to be as unfocused as ever. At that moment, our forecaddie said, “Craig, focus. We need this shot right now. Put your best swing on it.”

You could almost observe a complete shift in his demeanor. His body language and facial gestures changed. [2] He immediately became a tour player, stepping back and approaching the shot with purpose. He nailed it and made his par for a net eagle. This is an example of a situation on the golf course when traits from the Intimidator personality can serve a player well. So on occasion, even if the Intimidator is not your dominant personality, borrow this technique and increase your level of play immediately.

