

## ***The Inner Game***

Timothy Gallwey was a successful tennis professional and author of *The Inner Game of Work*. For Gallwey, the secret to successful performance has to do with the kinds of messages we give ourselves through our self-talk. Gallwey distinguishes between a “telling” self and a “doing” self. The telling voice is that noisy and annoying voice which we often hear when we are trying to perform a skill or do something difficult. This voice admonishes us with statements like “you are not yet ready...smarten up...don’t try too hard...” This is the telling self at work. It is the self-talk that criticizes, judges, corrects, provides commentary and offers reminders and advice to us on our behaviour.

The doing self, on the other hand, is the quiet and mindful self-talk that allows us to get on with the action using the wisdom, skill and know-how embodied in the brain, body and memory. While this self-talk is built through experience and practice (10,000 hours to gain mastery) it is largely beyond the reach of conscious awareness. Gallwey suggests that the doing self cannot function until the telling self is made quiet.

To achieve this state, quietly and non-judgementally observe your performance of the action, create a mental picture of a good outcome and then trust your doing self to perform the action. If you fail to get the result you want, calmly observe what is happening, re-imagine the desired result, and again allow yourself to make it happen.