

Einstein's Golf Lesson: One Thing at a Time!

By Anne Cain, LPGA instructor, Anne Cain Golf Academy

When I began teaching, Dr. Robert Lewis of Princeton, N.J., was one of my first students who was an accomplished player. Lewis was a retired pediatrician, and at age 84 had scored below his age on many occasions. He was also a member at Royal Dornoch in Scotland, and had been a student and advocate of the game his entire life.

During one lesson, he said to me, "You know, I sure do like how you teach one thing at a time. I know I have many things I could change in my swing, but it sure is easier to learn this way!"

Lewis then told me this anecdote about Professor Albert Einstein, TIME Magazine's Man of the Century.

In the late 1930s, Dr. Albert Einstein was invited to join the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton University, which provided leading scientists an atmosphere in which to brainstorm, develop new theories and make discoveries. The founder and leader of the institute was a man named Abraham Flexner.

Flexner, an avid golfer, made great attempts to interest Einstein in the game of golf. Einstein initially refused, but after constant urging from his peers, he decided to give it a try and ventured to the nearby Springdale Golf Club to arrange his first golf lesson.

Einstein was assigned a young, energetic assistant pro by the name of Gigi Carnevale. Carnevale accompanied his new pupil to the practice green, where he intended to give a simple lesson of chipping and putting. The good professor was famous for the proficiency of his brain, but he was not so skillful with his hands and coordination. Carnevale soon realized he had a formidable task! After each of Einstein's failed attempts to contact the golf ball, Carnevale shouted more instructions. As the lesson progressed this way, Einstein became confused and frustrated. He finally set his golf club aside and asked his young instructor to

hand him a few golf balls. Carnevale quizzically looked at the professor, and then gave him four golf balls. Einstein quickly threw the four golf balls toward the young instructor

and shouted, "Catch!" Carnevale waved his arms furiously in the air, but failed to catch a single golf ball. Einstein paused a moment, raised his finger and said in his famous accent, "Young man, when I throw you one ball, you catch it. However, when I throw you four balls, you catch nothing! So when you teach, make only one point at a time!"

Unfortunately, Einstein never became a golfer. But this story has a great message for golf instructors and students alike. Keep your thoughts simple, and work on one thought at a time. Even the most complicated of tasks may be achieved quickly by slow, progressive learning. After all, if the brilliant Einstein could not digest more than one point or thought at a time, what chance do the rest of us have?



Anne Cain

Anne M. Cain, founder and CEO of Anne Cain Golf Academy on Amelia Island, Fla., attended the University of Georgia on a full golf scholarship and was named an All-American. After winning three individual titles, Cain ranked No. 11 in the United States during her senior year of college. From 1991 to 1996, Cain competed professionally and captured two professional titles. She was nominated in 1999 and 2002 for the LPGA Teacher of the Year Award, and in 2000 achieved LPGA Class A status. Cain received nominations from GOLF Magazine's Top 100 Instructors in 2002 and 2004. Cain believes in combining personal attention with leading technology in order to effectively coach her students.

