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Orindawoods Tennis News

Orindawoods Tennis Club: 925-254-1065; Office Hours: M-F 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat./Sun.: 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., www.orindawoodstennis.com
"I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it" – Celia, *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene IV

Looking Ahead

Be sure to mark your calendar for some upcoming events this Spring and summer at the Club. First of all it is time to renew the **Ball Machine Membership**, if you are a ball machine user. The cost is the same it has been for years, \$100 for the year. Our **Tulip Tournament** is coming up (see side bar). **Monday Team Tennis** begins in early May. Sign ups begin next month. Be sure not to miss this one. In early June, we will be **resurfacing** six of our seven courts. This is the five-year-maintenance top coat of paint that keeps the court sealed and playing at a nice, slow rate. **Ace It!** our breast cancer awareness day is June 22 this year. Registration will begin in April.

Tennis Tip:

Change

Change is tough. Improvement can be difficult and frustrating. Whether desired or needed change lies in strategy, or strokes, or just your mental/emotional outlook, changing what you have been doing, especially if you have been doing it for a long time, is difficult. Our culture says, "It's hard to teach an old dog new tricks." And we believe it, even if it isn't true.

Compounding the problem is that our old habit feels comfortable. It feels good. And it probably works, to some extent. Many people would rather feel comfortable and lose, than feel uncomfortable and win. I know that seems totally crazy, but it is true. In fact, I see it all the time, every single day.

Timing: I watched a match recently where the path to victory seemed clear to me, but it required using a technique that the team I was cheering for was not comfortable with. So they played it safe, doing what was comfortable. Unfortunately, that comfortable set of tactics played right into the other team's strength, let the opponents get away with their weakness, and led to an easy defeat for the team I was rooting for.

If you feel comfortable, or uncomfortable, you feel it now, in the moment. The results of improvement are something that happens in the future (sometimes the near future, sometimes months or even years away). Changing something we do to a new technique, makes us uncomfortable, simply because it is different than what we are doing. This is painful, and represents short-term pain. If we want to improve, we accept this short-term pain in pursuit of a long-term gain (improvement or winning). Sounds easy / makes sense, if you are sitting here on the sidelines. It is a bit more difficult in the moment, when you are feeling the pain deep down in your gut of being uncomfortable and exposed. Right here, right now. Some abstract, ethereal dream of future greatness doesn't seem to be of much comfort right then when you are writhing in pain, fear and/or perceived incompetence.

Our Brains Disconnect / Our Emotions Run The Show: We often don't think rationally when we are uncomfortable, or find ourselves in an unfamiliar situation. Let me offer an example from my own recent craziness. I always felt that my backhand was my best shot. I would fire away, ripping backhands, feeling comfortable and in control, going for ridiculous shots sometimes, and always, in the end, make or miss, feeling like I owned my backhand. I may have only made 7 out of 10, but I knew I had a damn good backhand. So a few years back, I thought, "You know, I really need to work on my forehand." So I put a lot of work in, made major changes. I switched from an Eastern grip to a semi-western, and eventually to a full western. My flat, momentum-based 70's

The First, The Fantastic:

The Tulip Tourney

Lysbeth and Keith Productions, in the grand tradition of the Rainout – I mean – Reindeer Games and Monday Team Tennis, have decided that we should cause it to rain on Sunday, April 21st by scheduling our latest and greatest creation: The Tulip Tourney!

So mark your calendars for Sunday, April 21st from 2-5 p.m. at the lovely Orindawoods Tennis Club.

As always, bring nothing, do nothing, but be ready to play some fun round-robin tennis, and socialize with your fellow members and friends. To sign up, contact Keith at orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net or talk to Lysbeth next time you see her around the Club. And as always, this is a party with a tennis format. Bad attitudes need not apply. We're so restrictive.

Upcoming USTA League Dates:

Looking ahead to the upcoming USTA league seasons? Below is a brief outline of upcoming seasons and dates:

USTA Adult League 18+

Team Registration 2/4-3/3
Season 4/1-7/14

USTA Adult League 55+

Team Registration: 4/22-5/19
Season: 6/17-9/8

USTA Mixed Dubs 18+

Team Registration: 4/22-5/19
Season: 6/17-9/8

Important Future Club Dates:

- **Ball Machine Club Renewal 3/1**
Cost is still \$100 for the year
- **Ace It!** Breast Cancer Awareness
June 22nd. Register in April!
- **Court Resurfacing 6/2-10/2013**
- **Monday Team Tennis**
5/6-8/12, register in April!

style forehand turned into a modern, topspin forehand based on torque and leverage. This took a long time, and a lot of missing, and feeling totally clueless at times, to get to my new stroke. Somewhere along the way, I got to the point where the new, developing forehand was pretty good, but still uncomfortable, way more uncomfortable than my backhand, or even my old forehand. I could make 7 out of 10, but still felt years away from mastering the stroke. I would be shy about trying it in competition. I'd miss one and get scared. Of course, you can see the irony of this thinking as you sit there calmly reading this article with your morning cup of coffee. I was missing the same 3 out of 10 with my backhand, but because my backhand felt comfortable, I felt great with it, and lousy on the forehand.

Naysayers and Tough Choices: Some would say, "Change, who needs it? I don't want the suffering and the heart ache." It is an understandable conclusion, based on our experiences like the one related above. Except that most of us want to do better, want to improve, want to beat our old rival, Joe. After ten years and all this time and effort, we want to be better. So comfort with our present game doesn't really last, or exist. Even on the best days, we can see where we fall short, and want to tweak this or that and improve, if we can. The trouble is, we face a path that involves being uncomfortable, and feeling incompetent while we learn a new skill. The truth is, from this point of view, life kind of sucks. We're not satisfied staying where we are, and we are uncomfortable changing and moving forward.

It has been said that the alcoholic will only stop drinking when the pain of taking the next drink is greater than the pain of not taking a drink. I think this analogy applies to any learning and changing.

The Black Door: And even worse, we know today's pain, the pain of remaining the same. It is our friend; it has been with us all the while. But the future pain of change is somewhat unknown and uncertain.

There's a Middle Eastern story of a spy who had been captured and sentenced to death by a general of the Persian army. The general had fallen upon a strange and rather bizarre custom. He permitted the condemned person to make a choice. He could either face the firing squad or pass through the black door.

As the moment of execution drew near, the general ordered the spy to be brought before him for a short, final interview, the primary purpose of which was to receive the answer of the doomed man to the question: "Which shall it be - the firing squad or the black door?"

This was not an easy question, and the prisoner hesitated, but soon he made it known that he much preferred the firing squad. Not long thereafter, a volley of shots in the courtyard announced the grim sentence had been fulfilled.

The general, staring at his boots, turned to his aide and said, "You see how it is with men; they will always prefer the known way to the unknown. It is characteristic of people to be afraid of the undefined. And yet I gave him his choice."

"What lies behind the black door?" asked the aide. "Freedom," replied the general, "and I've known only a few men brave enough to take it."

So I commend those who can walk through the Black Door and face the uncertain pain of an unknown future, because they want to be better than the certain death of staying where you are. Do nothing, and you will remain in the same mediocre quagmire you find yourself in now. A couple months ago, I quoted Dave W. Smith. It is worth repeating here. "A player who hits 10,000 balls against a hitting wall or ball machine using bad form will only get good at being bad."

Onward! So you have made the spiritual or philosophical decision to make a change for the better. Maybe you are going on a diet, working out to get in better shape, learning that topspin backhand, or deciding to position yourself better in doubles. You go to weight watchers, or hit the gym, or take some lessons and learn what it is that you need to do. You are bright, intelligent, you understand what is at stake, and you comprehend the change quickly. Congratulations, you have accomplished the first 10%. Only 10%? This is a shock to most people. Unfortunately, in our society, which over-emphasizes intellect over almost everything else, we feel that if we understand something, we are able to do it. Sorry, not true, or even close to true. Here you thought you have learned, and you have just understood. Very different. Now comes the real work.

Fear: How many times have I known what I want to do, prepared well, lined it all up, and then helplessly watched myself do exactly what I didn't want to do all over again. This is the hardest part of the learning curve for me. In the heat of the moment, I forgot all my good intentions (out the window), and I fell into my old, comfortable habit. Uggh!!!! The emotion of the moment ("HIT THE BALL --- AAAAGH! --- DON'T MISS!!! --- I'VE GOT TO HIT THE BALL --- AAAGH!") overpowered my new stroke and my young, fresh, ungrooved habit.

Fear takes over, and we fail again. Rainer Maria Rilke said, "Our fears are like dragons guarding our most precious treasures." What are we guarding? Letting people know we aren't that good? That under it all, we suck? By continuing to play lousy? Who are we fooling? Sadly, only ourselves.

A Story: I was discussing this phenomena of being unable to change our old habits with a student one day, and he related the following story from Bob Newhart, much to our mutual amusement, and enlightenment:

Quote of the Month:

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is today."



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programs and much
more!*

A client came to Bob for some help. Upfront, Newhart, playing a psychologist, laid down the rules. "I only take cash, no checks or credit, I don't make change and I work really fast. Our session today will only be 5 minutes, and I charge \$1 a minute (a lot back in those days)."

Shocked, the woman said, "Well I have this really deep problem, and I'm not sure that five minutes will get the job done."

"We're down to 4 minutes and 30 seconds," Newhart replied. "What is the problem?"

The woman frowned, then minding the time by glancing at her wrist watch, explained that she had this very deep fear of falling asleep, being put in a coffin and being buried alive. She said it disrupted her whole life, that she had trouble sleeping and that it came up all the time. Newhart let her go on for a bit, talking about how tough it was, etc, and how she had seen this doctor and that doctor to no avail and then Newhart just put up his hand.

"I have two words for you," Newhart offered.

The woman waited, eyes on Newhart. Disbelieving but hopeful. Was this the sum total of all his knowledge, his entire remedy? Two words for all this money?

Newhart looked in the woman's eyes, and said in a commanding voice, "STOP IT!"

The woman fell back in her chair. A shocked look on her face.

"Stop it?" The woman was incredulous, sitting up again. "I'm paying all my money for that. That's obvious."

"Stop it," Newhart repeated, softer this time.

There was a stunned silence, then Newhart added, "Our time is up. That will be \$5."

The woman just sat there, overcome with disbelief. She took a deep breath, attempted to recover her composure, opened her purse, and found that she only had a \$10 bill, which she held up apologetically.

"I don't make change," Newhart reminded her.

The client surrendered her \$10 bill, complaining bitterly that she had now been overcharged for this less-than-worthless advice. Her latest rant went on for a minute or so, and Newhart held up his hand.

"OK," he said, "I feel bad. I'm taking \$10 instead of \$5. Let me add a couple of words."

The woman sat back in her chair, feeling somewhat relieved that she would now, finally, hopefully, justifiably, get her money's worth.

Newhart paused for a moment, leaning back in his chair, hand resting on his chin, then he sat up, once again looked the woman in the eye, and said, "Stop it, or when you fall asleep, I will put you in a coffin and bury you alive."

Change becomes about will. The will to do what you want to do despite all the fear and consequences. The will to just stop it. Stop the hurtful behavior. It has to be more important to do it right than what our fear is telling us to do: to "make the shot," or "win the point" or "win the match."

A Bad Temper: An out-of-control, sixteen-year-old teenager with a bad temper went to sports psychologist Alan Fox once to try to improve his play and his bad attitude. The boy admitted that he had a bad temper and that since tennis and competition were frustrating, invariably something would happen in a match that would set him off, and he would lose his cool, and his game would go down the tubes with it. The boy understood that his anger was costing him not only matches, but potentially a college scholarship and his whole tennis career, let alone his enjoyment of life and his beloved game of tennis. He needed to stop, but that he just couldn't do it.

Fox said he had a solution. The wise sports psychologist said that he would come to the boy's next match, bring a canvas duffle bag, which he would place on his lap and sit right behind the player. He told the boy that the duffle bag would contain a very large handgun, and if the boy lost his cool, Alan would take the hand gun out, walk up to the boy, and shoot him right there on the court. He asked the boy if he thought he could control his temper now. "No problem," was the reply.

Intelligence and Imagination: We have to use our vast intelligence to manage or control, perhaps merely guide, our just-below-the-surface raging emotions and fears. It's our only chance. Bring the actual consequences of playing it safe and comfortable, into the present, by using our imagination. The fear of change, of looking foolish, of not being

able to play, of feeling uncomfortable, has to be managed, so that we can move forward and get to where we want to be. We have to decide which pain is greater, what we should really be afraid of.

The Will: So where does the will come from to do the painful short-term tasks that lead to the long-term breakthrough, change and improvement. It seems in my experience that this will must be attached to some core value, something powerful, deep and dear to your heart and soul, so that you have the strength to power through the doubt, pain and suffering of the change in transition from the old to the new. We've joked here about fear of death, either by large handgun or buried alive, but there are other forces, less dramatic, at your disposal. Your beliefs, your values, your life philosophy, your mission. Your spiritual nature. Your emotional reactions are based on these core values.

This will can come from your drive, your core value, to always improve, to make yourself better. Or perhaps you want high achievement. Or you seek self-reliance, strength, security, teamwork, integrity, friendship.

There may be times when you just can't get to this deeper level. Then use something less noble, less powerful or lasting to motivate the change. Use your fear of losing, or looking bad or even your need to win to push you on.

What ever you use, it must be strong and drive you to change your behavior. Without this, when the path of change gets unpleasant, most people get off the trail, even if it condemns them to the comfort of mediocrity and losing.

Timetables: Getting to this point of just stopping a less desirable behavior and implementing one you want varies with every person, every student, every stroke, every idea. Sometimes we make the change easily, with so little fuss we hardly even notice what the big deal is. And other times, we struggle mightily to get to the point where we can change, or sometimes, even simply admit there is a problem. It depends on what is at stake under the surface.

Repentance, the highly charged word from our religious traditions, simply means to change your behavior. Replace a bad behavior with a good one. Repent and the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Joy is within our reach. So is that topspin backhand. Seems easy. It is easy. And it is hard. The best stuff is always simple, and yet infinitely complex.

Backsliding: Weight Watchers says that it is "perseverance, not perfection" that leads to success. This bad day or fattening meal is not the end of the road, it does not ruin the slow, deliberate steps that you have already made going forward. We will slip up from time to time. Lose ten pounds, gain two back, you are still eight to the good. Keep moving.

It has been said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Keep stepping forward, and you are getting closer. Every step back, delays the arrival. Steps sideways get you off the course. Keep walking, but don't worry if you trip from time to time. That's part of the journey. And besides, Alan Fox is right behind you, with that canvas bag draped over his shoulder. He'll help you get there. Good luck out there!

OWTC Spring Junior Tennis Program

March 19th – May 30th

The 2013 Spring Junior Clinics began the week of March 19th and continue thru May 30th. This 10 session will be led by Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa. **No class April 1-5 for Spring break.**

To sign up for the Spring Session, contact Patric at patrictennis@yahoo.com or talk to Patric when you are at the Club.

Class Schedule:

Level	Class	Time (s)	One day/week	Two
I	Lil' Ones <i>The Lil' Ones is for the always adorable 4-6 year olds. We will be developing the coordination and balance of these young players as well as giving them an introduction to tennis using age appropriate balls and court size.</i>	Tues/Thursday 3:15-4pm	\$125	\$195
II	Future Stars Group <i>The Future Stars Group is for our 7 to 10 year old players. The players will be working with Quickstart balls on 36" and 60" courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games, and match play are all part of the curriculum.</i>	Tuesdays 4-5:30pm	\$235	n/a
III	10s Development Group <i>In the Tennis Development Group we will work on refining technique, improving footwork and developing strategic awareness for successful match play. This class is for beginning through intermediate players ages 11 through 14.</i>	Thursdays 4-5:30pm	\$235	n/a
IV	Tournament Training <i>The Tournament Training Group is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.</i>	Wednesdays 4:30-6pm	\$235	n/a