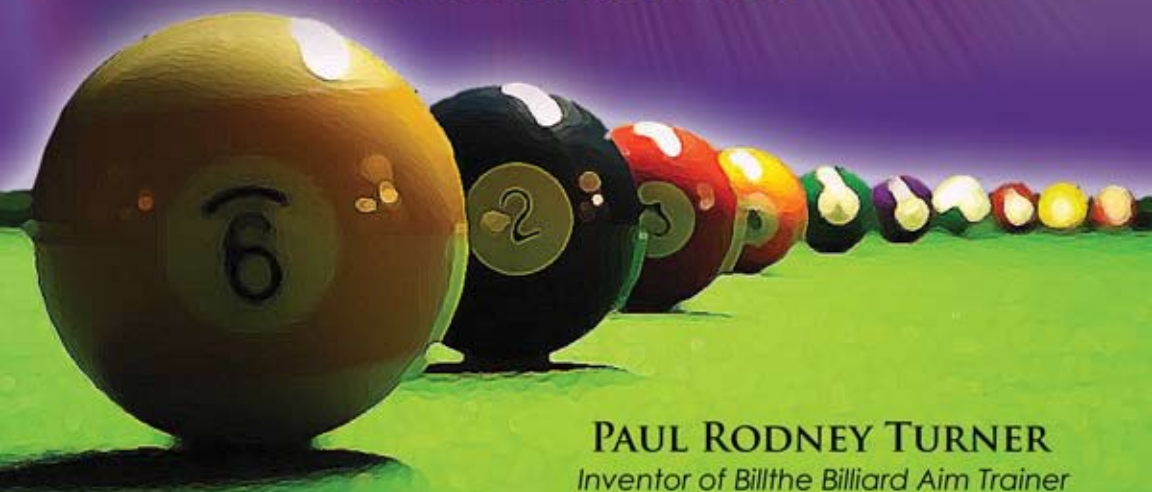


the
YOGA
of **POOL**

2 FREE CHAPTERS

*Secrets to Becoming a Champion
in Billiards and in Life*



PAUL RODNEY TURNER
Inventor of Billthe Billiard Aim Trainer

THE YOGA OF POOL

Secrets to Becoming a Champion in Billiards and in Life

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(BATman)

Inventor of the Billiard Aim Trainer™ (BAT)

The YOGA of POOL

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*Dedicated to my father, Rodney John Turner,
the "Phantom" (1940-2001)*

Introduction

If you're like me, you've probably read all the books on how to improve your game, including the classics from Phil Capelle. I don't propose that this book will cover every facet of the game of billiards; Capelle's books do a great job of that. However, what I will declare is that *The YOGA of POOL – Secrets to becoming a Champion in Billiards and in Life* will provide you **all the essential tools you need** to become a great player, while simultaneously helping to make you a better person.

The book provides the fundamental ingredients of what makes a great player. The chapters are concise and digestible and not filled with unnecessary fluff. The idea behind the book is to give you an easy-to-understand roadmap to success in the form of short essays describing key elements of the game.

I need to point out that the sections dealing with aiming are taken from my other book, *World's Best Aiming System for Billiards*. I felt it was necessary to include the same information for completeness of this book. If you already purchased my other book the *World's Best Aiming System for Billiards*, you may skip those sections. In any case, the knowledge contained within this book will certainly expand your understanding of the Three-Cut System and support your development in all other facets of the game.

One glaring omission from many books on billiards is a lack of information on the mental and spiritual side of the game, including proven techniques for visualization, mind management, and confidence building exercises. You'll find them in this book, and rightly so, because to ignore the mind and spirit is akin to ignoring the driver of the vehicle. Every world-class motor racing team knows that a good driver is *the* difference between success and failure.

As the subtitle suggests, this book is much more than the secrets for success in billiards; it is, in a way, a kind of "Covey-like"

directive for the billiards enthusiast on what makes one successful in life.

You may just come away from reading this book feeling a renewed sense of self-worth and optimism. I hope so. I promise you this: if you apply the following ingredients of success to your game, and in your life, ***you will experience monumental improvements*** in every aspect.

My hope is that the book will serve to make you the very best player and person you can possibly be.

You deserve it!

Paul Rodney Turner (BATman)

Manage Your Mind

The most important ingredient and therefore the first ingredient to becoming a great pool player is *managing your mind*. All the best fundamentals in the world will never compensate for a wayward or mischievous mind. You can have perfect alignment and know exactly what to do, but if your mind tells you “I can’t get this,” chances are you’ll miss.

Success in any discipline begins in the mind. All the world’s greatest monuments, masterpieces, songs, Olympic moments, and books on the *New York Times* bestseller list started with the right mindset. The point is that you must learn to see your success in your mind first, before you can expect to execute it in physical reality.

According to Eastern mystic traditions, the mind is the master of the senses, and therefore controls the physical actions and reactions of the body. All of us have at one time heard an amazing story of some person who was told they would never walk again, only for them to defy the odds and start running marathons. Lance Armstrong is a case in point: Bedridden for months, wracked with pain from the cancer spreading throughout his body and brain, he never considered failure an option, and with a level of determination that would be impossible for most, he fully recovered and went on to win seven *Tour de France* titles. In every example, those people who were able to surmount great physical obstacles have done so with the help of their minds. In other words, they ran that marathon over and over again in their mind, and then one day they actually played out that vision.

The same truth applies in pool; we have to see ourselves pocketing balls effortlessly in our mind. We have to actually envision escaping hooks with the greatest skill and confidence. With full clarity of mind, we have to see ourselves raising that trophy, accepting the prize money, being congratulated for a great win – and we have to truly believe that it is all fully possible. If you want

to be successful in pool, you must embrace positive thinking as if it is your only option.

The mind can be your worst enemy or your best friend. It is completely up to you because you (the soul), as the *driver* of your vehicle (the body), *always has a choice*. How so? The *Bhagavad Gita* explains:

The working senses are superior to dull matter; mind is higher than the senses; intelligence is still higher than the mind; and he [the soul] is even higher than the intelligence.¹

The basic function of the intelligence is to discriminate – a sort of “yes or no” function. Much like a complex computer is nothing but a series of on and off sequences or ones and zeros, the intelligence is giving a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down to literally millions of situations and processes inside and outside of our bodies daily, most of them without our conscious awareness.

Above the intelligence, however, is the presence of consciousness or spirit – the “I” factor – the sense-of-being we all have, regardless of our physical or mental status. This sense-of-being or inherent spirituality, is what makes us unique individuals, and is indeed the very essence of our existence. This consciousness or core identity is what determines all our actions. Essentially, if you can connect to your core identity, you *can* have full power over your mind.

Start to see your mind, therefore, as *the* most important tool for improving your game. Never again allow it dictate to you through negative thought patterns that only serve to consume your energy and sap your will. Rather, fully believe in the best possible outcome and tell your mind what *you* want it to do. Use your higher intelligence and free will to direct your mind to positive thoughts of success, confidence, and empowerment.

In fact, never underestimate the importance of managing your mind in every aspect of your life. How we relate to pool and the

¹ *Bhagavad Gita (Verse 3.42)*

way we respond to our success or failure in this game can easily be correlated to the way we conduct ourselves in our daily affairs.

When you understand the power of the mind to positively impact your physical experience, and know that *you* actually have the power to direct it, you align yourself with all the greatest thinkers, artists, and athletes in history. Every single one of them had or displayed great mind management.

How do we actually start to manage the mind?

The first thing is to start *paying attention*. Carefully note how your mind is reacting to things that happen to you when playing. Like a detached observer, start listening to what your mind's current chatter is. Make a concerted effort to separate yourself from what your mind is saying, by being the "observer". Carefully listen to the self-talk going on and then, if necessary, slowly start correcting it. The good news is that the mind can always be trained, no matter how old your physical body is! Don't be discouraged with your technique at this point; just start making a sincere effort. Good mind management will enable you to make better choices as well, and every good choice is a step in the direction of success. Success will breed more success, and soon you will be rolling along with an air of confidence you cannot even imagine right now.

The best way to correct negative thinking (which some call "stinking thinking") is to replace it with "success thinking". Earl Nightingale, considered the *Dean of personal development*, used to say, "*We become what we think about all day long.*" On the surface, this sounds like magic, but if we investigate this concept further, we'll find it has merit. Success thinking always precedes a successful outcome, while failure-thoughts prepare us for failure.

For success thinking to yield results, you need to develop a positive attitude toward every aspect of your life. Expect a successful outcome in whatever you do, but also take any necessary actions to ensure your success.

Effective success thinking that brings results is much more than just repeating a few positive words or convincing yourself that everything is going to be okay. The idea of success has to become your predominant mental outlook. It is not enough to think positively for a few moments, and then allow fears and lack of belief enter your mind. Some effort and discipline are necessary.

Here are a few tips to help you develop the power of success thinking:

- Always use affirmative and positive phrases when you communicate and only speak in the present tense. For example, from this day on begin all your positive and affirmative statements with: I am; I always; I can; I am able to; I will.
- If you have to speak about some negative event, speak about it *only* in past tense. For example, you could begin your statements with: I used to; in the past; I have in the past; it was; it has, etc. **Never** speak of past mistakes or misfortune in the present tense.
- Completely ignore negative thoughts. Outright reject them and immediately substitute them with constructive happy thoughts.
- Use only words that evoke feelings and mental images of strength, happiness, and success.
- Before starting with any plan or action, visualize clearly in your mind its successful outcome.
- Read inspiring literature like the success stories of great athletes.
- Minimize your exposure to negative news. Even better, stop reading or watching the news on television altogether as most of it is negative. Rather, practice scanning headlines to keep abreast of current events.
- Seek out and associate with positive thinking people.

- Maintain a success posture. Always walk with your head up and your back straight. Posture is important because if the body is not properly aligned the voice can't come out with the power, resonance and projection that it naturally has.
- When you shake hands, do so with confidence and look the person directly in the eye.
- Regular exercise can also help you develop a more positive attitude, as can deep meditative breathing.

You have to start training your mind to think like a winner by speaking like a winner. By simply changing the way you perceive yourself, you can expect and will allow good things to happen.

Just as sound can be the seed of creation or destruction, a single thought can be the seed of inspiration or discouragement. Each World War began with words, and every great achievement began with someone voicing their dream to a friend. Success has to be believed before it can be achieved.

When we think negatively we sow seeds of discouragement, which are initially expressed as negative talk. This negative talk sends our minds on a downward spiral and keeps us struggling. However, when we choose to be proactive, positive, and hopeful, and to exemplify this with confident speech patterns, we sow seeds of inspiration that in turn produce more confident body language and positive actions. These progressive actions germinate seeds of encouragement that fuel our belief, thus leading to a happier life and greater achievement.

The next time you miss a shot while playing pool, instead of losing your cool and claiming: "I am useless, I always miss," say to yourself: "I may have missed this time, but I am fully confident that I can make these shots." Then slowly replace these positive excuses with positive affirmations, like: "I always shoot straight; I am a great shot maker; I know how to run out; I am a winner; I was born to win; when I play pool, the balls always roll in my favor." Practice this on and off the table. You may like to incorporate other affirmations to help you in other areas of your life. Thoughts are

things and so the pictures you form in your mind will eventually manifest in physical reality.

Therefore, start making your mind your best friend and not your worst enemy. The *Bhagavad Gita* explains:

A man must elevate himself by his own mind, not degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul, and his enemy as well. For him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his very mind will be the greatest enemy.²

A mind that has been nourished with positive affirmations will automatically react positively like a true friend and be the source of inspiration for a perfect solution.

The best way to neutralize the “darkness” of negative thinking and any hint of fear residing in your mind is to allow the sunshine of positivity to stream in! In other words, if you fill your mind with light, there will be no place for darkness to reside.

Mind/Body oneness

It is true that through the power of mind management we can affect physical reality; however, because we are ultimately a combination of both gross and subtle energy (*yin* and *yang*), it is also true that the mind will follow what the body tells it.

Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh explains that by nurturing the oneness of body and mind, and by listening to our body, “we are able to restore our wholeness and as body and mind become one, we need only to calm our body in order to calm our mind.”

Just like the body, we need to feed and exercise the mind. Success talk is an effective way to do that. However, for this method to be truly effective, you must first understand that *the mind is not you*, but rather just another tool at your disposal that can either help you or hurt you. It can be your friend or your enemy. It’s your

² *Bhagavad Gita As It Is (Verse 6.5 and 6.6)*

choice. Just as a knife in the hands of a criminal can be dangerous, that same knife in the hands of a trained surgeon can save a life. The knife is neither good nor bad; it is how we use it that matters. The same goes for the mind. Make it your friend from now on; believe in yourself and start playing great pool!

The perfect yogi is of “steady mind” says the *Bhagavad Gita*:

One who is not disturbed in spite of the threefold miseries³, who is not elated when there is happiness, and who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage of steady mind.⁴

In the same way, a great pool player will be a master of his mind and will never become disturbed if behind in game or overly elated if he is in front. Free from attachment, fear and anger, his mind will be as calm as a great lake.

Later in the book, I will provide some confidence building exercises using techniques borrowed from Neural-Linguistic programming and other mind/body disciplines.

In the next chapter, we are going to focus more on the practical side of improving your game, beginning with learning the world’s best aiming system.

³ *Threefold miseries are the miseries pertaining to the body and mind, miseries caused by other living entities, and miseries resulting from natural disaster.*

⁴ *Bhagavad Gita (verse 2.56)*

The Three-Cut System

The aiming system used by the world's most successful players in all cue sports is most commonly referred to as the "Three-Cut System". Simply put, it is the most scientific aiming system there is, and it's based on pure geometry. There are really only three cuts you need to learn to master pocketing balls. They are: $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ cuts. All other cuts shots are slight variations of these three.

In geometry, the degrees of the angle these cuts correspond to are:

$\frac{1}{4} = 49^\circ$ (degrees)

$\frac{1}{2} = 30^\circ$ (degrees)

$\frac{3}{4} = 14^\circ$ (degrees)

The basis of this aiming system is to imagine the object ball having four equal slices, beginning with a perfect slice down the middle representing two halves of a ball and then to the left and right of the $\frac{1}{2}$ ball slice, thus creating the $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ ball slice (Figure 1).

Basically, this aiming method is to first identify the degree of the angle the object ball needs to take to enter the desired pocket, and then use one of these three "cuts" as our point of reference for aiming. However, as I will explain shortly, the edge of the ball is always our principle reference.

How this method works becomes clear once we apply the same "cut lines" to the cue ball and then superimposing our cue ball over the object ball, as if both were flat "paper balls"⁵. (Figure 2)

The edge is the only true reference point

It is extremely important to understand this one truth: on a perfectly spherical object like a billiard ball the only absolute

⁵ For this exercise it might be useful to actually cut out two equal-sized paper circles to represent a cue ball and an object ball.

reference is the edge. Absolute from the point of view of the observer, that is, which in our example, is from the point of view looking at the object ball directly behind your cue ball.

The half-ball cut shot

How is it possible that the only true reference point on a spherical object is its edge? Because every “point” on a ball is always relative to the position of the observer. In other words, as you move around the table, the edge of a ball changes relative to your observation of it. In truth, a ball does not really have an “edge” but rather a surface, but staying with our example of “paper balls” we will refer to the outer line of the intended object ball as having an “edge”.

In billiards, because the object ball and cue ball are the same size, the “edge” of the object ball (from the viewpoint of your cue ball) represents a perfect “half-ball” cut shot, and therefore an excellent reference for determining all other cut shots. Knowing that a perfect “half-ball” cut is a collision of the cue ball and object ball at a 30° degree angle⁶ can be a tremendous advantage over your opponent. Because once your eyes have been trained to recognize this 30° degree angle, you’ll automatically know that your point of aim is the outside line or “edge” of that object ball. In other words, your cue tip and the center of your cue ball must be pointed directly at the left or right “edge” of the desired object ball to successfully send it on the correct path (30° degree angle) towards the pocket. It really is that simple.

One crude way to estimate a 30° angle when playing pool is to create a “V” or peace symbol with your first two fingers (Figure 4a). With practice, and by using training tools like the Billiard Aim Trainer (BAT™), estimating 30° angles becomes very easy.

⁶ *Basic geometry tells us that 30° is one-third of a perfect right angle (90°). Use this information as a reference when trying to recognize a half-ball cut shot when you next play.*

To sum up: from the point of view of your cue ball the far left and right “edge” of the object ball represent perfect $\frac{1}{2}$ ball cuts either way (Figure 3). In other words, by aiming the center of your cue ball directly at either “edge” of the object ball you will send that object ball on a perfect 30° degree angle. Therefore, if you analyzed the angle correctly (which you will with practice), you’ll pocket the ball every time! The same rules apply for all other cut shots in a game, whether they are $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$, or slight variations of them. (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

I suggest you begin with the $\frac{1}{2}$ ball cut and progress from there. The best way to learn this system and to start recognizing the three angles correlating to the $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ cut shots is by using the Billiard Aim Trainer. However, even without the BAT™, by simply employing the $\frac{1}{2}$ ball cut shot into your game, you will build a solid foundation for all other cut shots.

An example of a $\frac{3}{4}$ ball cut shot is shown in (Figure 4) To make the object ball move on a 14° degree path, we simply need to adjust our aim to exactly ($\frac{1}{4}$ of a ball) inside the edge of the object ball. The same rule applies for a $\frac{1}{4}$ ball cut shot, only this time we adjust our aim to a ($\frac{1}{4}$ of a ball) outside the edge of the object ball (Figure 5) thus sending it on a 49° degree path. In both cases, the edge of the object ball is our reference and not some imaginary “ghost ball”. This one point alone should convince you of the superiority of the Three-Cut system.

Cue Tip Reference

If you find it difficult to visualize this distance ($\frac{1}{4}$ of a ball) you may use your cue tip as a reference (Figure 6). In our examples, the cue ball is $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide or 57mm, which is a standard size pool ball used in the United States, so the distance between these “cut lines” would therefore be 14.25mm.

From this illustration, we can see that a typical cue tip used in pool is 13mm wide, and therefore a good reference when estimating these 14.25mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ ball) “cut lines”. It may be hard to visualize a distance of 14.25mm, but it is relatively easy for any

pool player to visualize a fraction more than the width of their cue tip! And certainly a lot easier than an imagining a “ghost ball” on the table that has no reference point to start with. Worse still, the imaginary positioning of this “ghost ball” in relation to the object ball could be completely wrong, and if you are wrong, there is absolutely no way to correct this the next time you shoot. Quite simply, the entire “ghost ball” aiming system is based on imagining something (the cue ball) being positioned at a particular point on the table based on our assumption of what angle of trajectory is needed to send our object ball to the pocket. And if we’re wrong we just have to guess again. There is nothing to measure our success or failure against.

On the contrary, once you learn the three angles of the Three-Cut system, there is never any question of being perpetually wrong because you will always have the edge of the object ball as your reference.

To train your eyes to recognize these three angles (49°, 30°, and 14° degrees) I have given a number of training drills in the back section of this book.

FIGURE 1

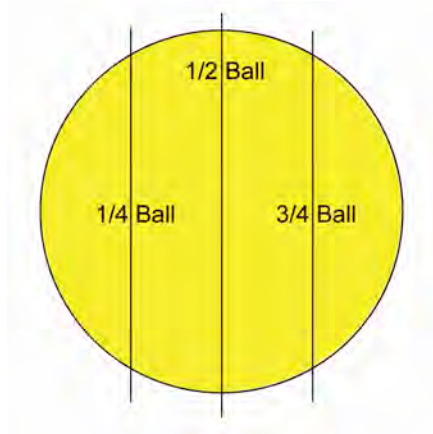


FIGURE 2

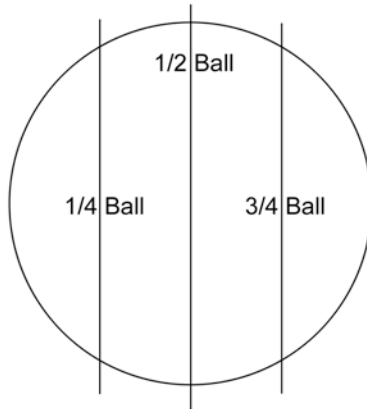


FIGURE 3

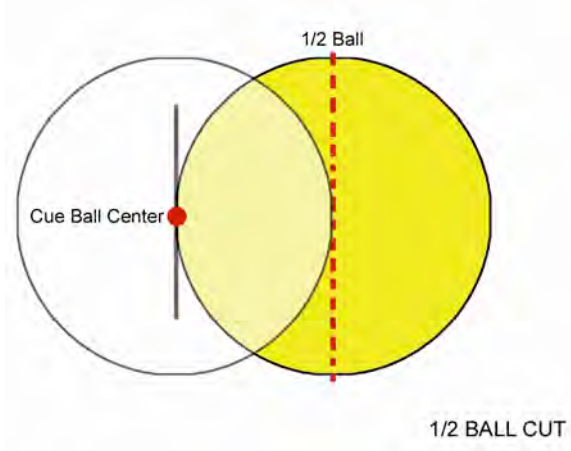


FIGURE 4

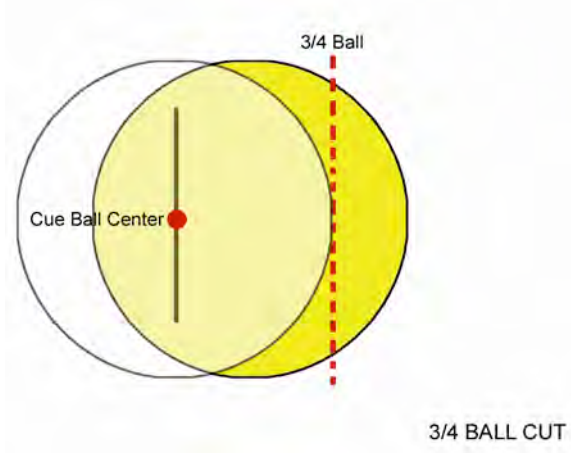
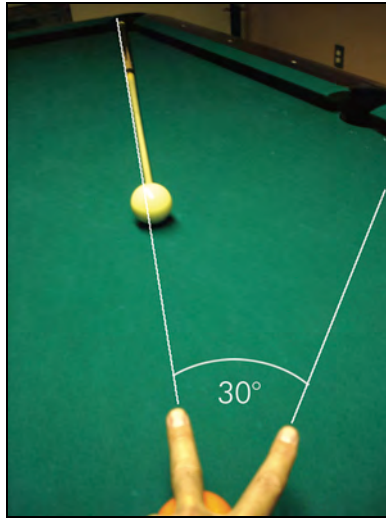


FIGURE 4a



The above picture shows my hand over the orange object ball, with my middle finger pointing directly down the line of the cue ball and my arm and pointer finger directly in line with the pocket I wish the orange ball to go into. It is the classic “spot shot” explained in (See Figure 13 for more details).

FIGURE 5

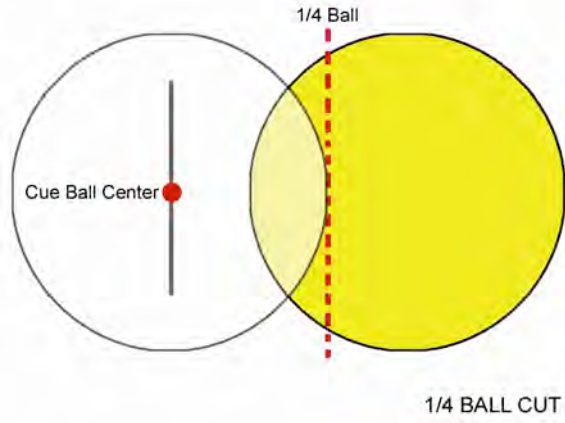


FIGURE 6

