

## TRYING VS. DOING

The quest to be the best in any sport requires total dedication. Not from the point of view, "I'll give it my best shot" or "the old college try" but from the belief "I will be the best player on this planet." The latter represents the typical attitude of a champion, while the previous reflects the viewpoint of those who expect failure.

When you set out to merely try to be something, you fail by virtue of the agreement you've made with yourself. In other words, trying allows one to fail since it implies putting forth effort to achieve rather than achieving.

Trying provides the individual with an escape from success. For example, "I tried hard, but just couldn't do it." We are filled with excuses such as these and we react in this manner whenever our ego/self esteem is in jeopardy. Nowhere in the world is this more evident than in pocket billiards. Players at every level use every possible excuse to placate their ego, self esteem, pride, etc. This, a normal defense mechanism used by people in all walks of life, runs rampant in pocket billiards.

How many times have you heard, "I lost because he got lucky, faulty equipment, bad roll, noisy room, bad day, sick, ad infinitum/nausea. The truth is that the opponent played better in most cases. Once this excuse syndrome becomes habitual the player is at the mercy of the negative influences of the mind. He or she may even be devising excuses for defeat in the middle of a match resulting in the rapid degeneration of one's pool game.

When a player is so compulsively involved in creating reasons for failure, he/she can no longer create, period. When searching for reasons to fail, we can no longer objectively observe weaknesses and work to correct them through disciplined practice. Weakness and failure are perceived as things outside of ourselves. Players become victimized by the over use and abuse of defense mechanisms to the point where they can no longer maintain their "attention" on the essentials.

The next logical questions are: How do I overcome self-delusion? What are the essentials of success? The answers are simple, but the process of realization is long and arduous. Upcoming articles will address these questions and more along with helpful hints on every aspect of pocket billiards.

This is the first article in a series on pool psychology. PSYCH-TIP OF THE MONTH: Confront the demon within, not without!

NEXT MONTH - "Self, Enemy or Friend?" ♦