

Self-Correction: The Path from 75 to 90

Gil: We have to go from sage on the stage, to cheerleader on the sideline, to expert in shooting many times during the day in a clinic. And we have to take your gun and demonstrate how we want you to shoot the target and we have to hit the target.

I told my good friend Rich Colo today that when I'm in the zone, when I have to do that in front of people, it doesn't matter whether it's an 80-yard tower shot, or 50-yard chandelle, or a 30-yard incoming. It doesn't matter what it is. We have to be able to play that movie in our head, and with all confidence, and without thought, preload the shot, call "pull" and execute the shot successfully.

Now, to some of you that may not seem like much. But to have to do that every time over and over again is a big deal to me.

And I told Rich when I have to do that, I don't have to focus hard on the bird. My focus has moved from physiological focus, to concentration on, which means I'm combining physiological focus with mental focus. And my brain just takes care of everything.

All I've got to do is see it behind the barrel, left of the barrel or across the barrel. And as it comes to me, whether my head's on the stock or not, I'm going to make sure I'm going the same speed as that bird. When I'm going the same speed as that bird, I'm going to send it.

I said something last month that I think sums up what I'm looking for. I said that being able to self-correct is the pathway from 75 to 90. I'm not sure you all understand the gravity of what I've just said.

But when you're shooting below 75 percent in sporting clays, and I would say below 80 percent in skeet, you're still confounded with what the correction is. Because the brain has not been able to deal with the complex visual decision that it has to make to kill the target. You're still guessing at the correction.

To go from 75 to 90, or 80 to 98 in skeet, or 75 to 90 in sporting clays, you have to know without a doubt what the correction is. Once you know what the correction is, and it's not incremental, you begin this ascension to higher and higher performances. When you make the mistake and you instantly know what the correction is, you don't make that mistake as often. Sooner or later that mistake is out of your wheelhouse, and you solve that problem.

Getting into the 98s and 99s in skeet and getting into 90 to 95 in sporting clays is about not making the same mistakes over and over again. The only way you cannot make the same mistakes over and over again, is to be able to correct them on the next shot.

In one of those periods when I'm in the zone and I'm just saying what comes to me, after I said it, I stopped and said, "Wow, that's what I've been looking for." To be able to self-correct is the pathway from 75 to 90 in sporting clays, and from 80 to 98 in skeet.

However, I've added one caveat to that. In my thinking and in some of the gun fittings that I've done in the last two weeks, most people don't have a gun that shoots 50/50, straight on, centered up. Most right-handers are shooting a gun that shoots eight inches left and 12 inches high, and lefties are just the opposite.

Because of that, they wallow in the 75 in sporting clays, and in the 80s in skeet. And they don't understand because their pictures are not reciprocal.

When you get a gun that finally does fit you, without you having to put your head down hard on the stock, when you get a gun that absolutely shoots straight and dead-on left-to-right, when your pictures become reciprocal, learning increases two to three times what it has been. Because the pictures now make sense, and because the pictures make sense, self-correction is immediate and when you correct something, the correction works.

The reason people wallow in the mid-70s in sporting and the 80s in skeet is their gun is not shooting where their brain thinks it is.

When they try to correct, sometimes the correction is right. Sometimes it's not. And because most of the guns that people are shooting are shooting to the left if they're right-handed, they have to see twice as much lead on a bird coming from the left as they do on a bird coming from the right. This is what confuses the onboard computer.

I've come full circle in gun fit. And it's got to be flat, not high, 50/50, straight, dead-on, left to right. Whenever you achieve something like that... dude, let me tell you. You're on the way to ascending to the level that your time and financial commitment will allow you to ascend.