

THE TROUBLE WITH TRYING HARDER



Just Try Harder

Three simple words. Often well intended. Sometimes useful. Occasionally true.

Far too often, these three words stifle and suffocate. They can even be dangerous.

They suggest that effort is the missing ingredient. That if something did not work, the answer must be more effort, more force, more determination, more teeth-gritting. They imply that failure is proof that we did not do enough. That perhaps we did not really want it enough.

Sometimes, of course, we probably did not try hard enough. I have no doubt there have been times in my life when a little more effort would have helped.

But effort is not always the answer.

Golf teaches this repeatedly, usually just after you think you have finally understood it.

Once we reach a certain level of competence, trying harder can sometimes get in the way. The mind fills with instructions. The body tightens. The rhythm disappears. What was once natural becomes mechanical.

A good swing rarely improves because someone tries to hit the ball harder or with more control. A good putt rarely drops because the player becomes more desperate for it to go in.

The same is true away from the course.

A good presentation rarely becomes better because the speaker grips the lectern more firmly. A good conversation rarely improves because one person becomes determined to win it.

There is a point where the work has already been done.

The practice matters. The preparation matters. The thinking matters.

But when the moment arrives, perhaps the task is not to try harder.

Perhaps it is to trust a little more.

Take it from me, that is easier to write than to do.

Which is probably why it is worth remembering.

Tony Bennett

06.10.2025