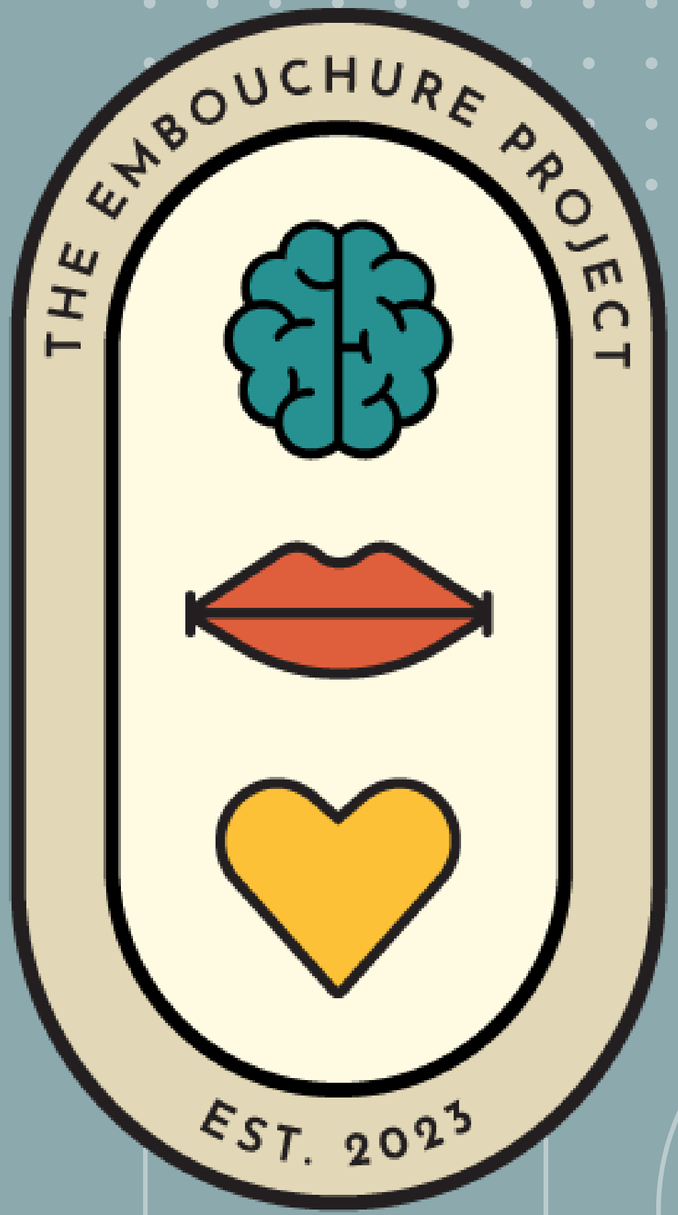


THE EMBOUCHURE

- *Preventing Problems*
- *Addressing Concerns*
- *Building Resilience*
- *So You Can Stay Focused on the Music*

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Horn, Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Instructor, The Glenn Gould School
Founder, The Embouchure Project

ARNOLD JACOBS:

THINK OF THE PRODUCT NOT THE METHOD TO AVOID

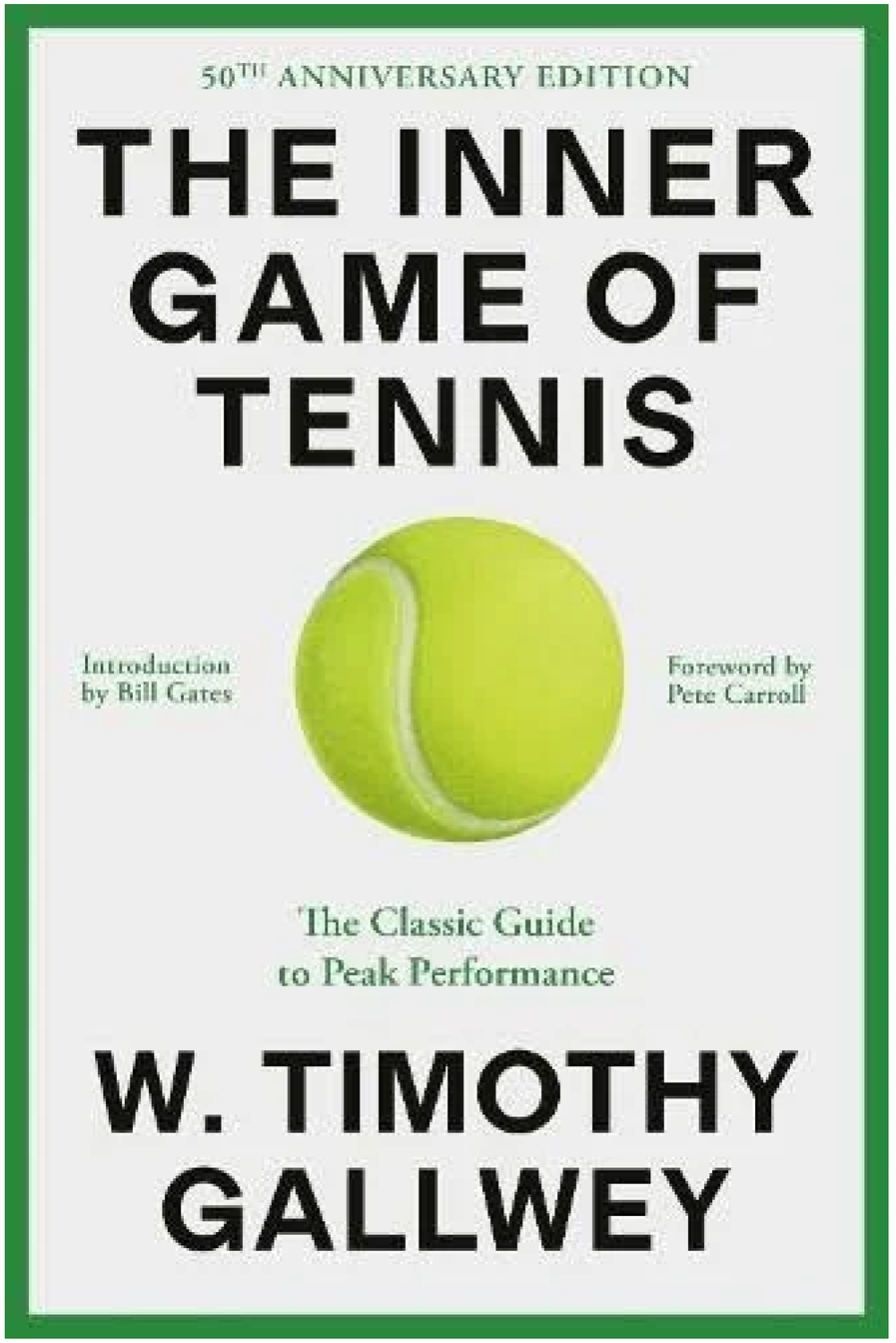
‘PARALYSIS BY ANALYSIS’

- A VIVID MUSICAL IMAGE
- FREE, GENEROUS AIR
- TRUST THE BODY’S AUTOMATIC MECHANISMS
- POSITIVITY, ANALOGIES, SIMPLE EXERCISES



TO QUIET THE MIND, TRUST THYSELF

- ANY TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE AN INVITATION TO EXPERIMENT - NOT A THING THAT HAS TO BE DONE *RIGHT*
- INTEGRATE THE INSTRUCTION INTO THE WHOLE PROCESS
- ADD IT TO WHAT YOU KNOW - TO YOUR PLAYING
- OBSERVE WITHOUT JUDGING
- BE INTRIGUED BY THE RESULTS



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO SET HEALTHY HABITS

- Focus on process, not results.
- Use practicing to make it easier
- Find perspective - Don't mix up self and playing.
- Learn what works for you and how you play
- Respect the risk factors.
- Play with creative freedom and ease, and care less about others.

PREVENTION - OBSERVED RISK FACTORS

Obsessive Practice →	Only what's needed
Overuse →	You are in charge
Confusing identity and playing →	You are more than your playing
Untreated Generalized Anxiety →	Seek proven strategies
Abrupt changes in load →	Know your limits
Technique change under stress →	Avoid
High Effort Playing →	Find ease!

COMMON ATTRIBUTES OF EFFICIENT EMBOUCHURES

Economy of motion → **Only what's needed**

Economy of size → **Larger when necessary**

Economy of effort → **Avoid habitual strain**

Balance → **Helpful muscles doing their jobs**

COMMON ATTRIBUTES OF LESS EFFICIENT EMBOUCHURES

- Excessive pressure or squeezing
- Persistent accuracy/intonation issues. Wide ascending intervals.
- Extreme fatigue in standard repertoire
- Weak mid-range and/or high-effort high range

The Plan

You've experienced unintended change. Now what?



1

ADDRESS STRESS

Improvement is difficult when you are extremely stressed.

2

ACCEPT

An opportunity to learn. You are going to be ok.

3

ISOLATE

What has changed, why, and what can I control? Where is the ease?

4

RETRAIN

5-A model or similar. Gradually form new habits.

5

OWN IT

Make this solution reliably yours.

The Five-A Model

A sports-psychology approach



1

ANALYSIS

Determine the specific element that needs change

2

AWARENESS

Make the old habit conscious. Contrast old and new, without strain.

3

ADJUSTMENT

Repeat the new version until it's consistent.

4

(RE)AUTOMATION

Simplify to a single whole movement cue.

5

ASSURANCE

Use the new version in gradually more important contexts.

Source: Carson & Collins 2011

PREVENTION: KNOWING THE RISK FACTORS FOR PROFESSIONALS - THE BIG 6 FOR WHEN YOU HAVE A GIG

1. **Change under stress (equipment/technique)**
2. **Abrupt changes in load/responsibilities**
3. **Overuse - Chronic embouchure fatigue**
4. **Perfectionism and mistake rumination**
5. **Untreated Generalized Anxiety**
6. **Playing through pain or injury**

Détári & Egermann 2022, Enders et al. 2011, Ioannou & Altenmüller 2014, Jabusch et al. 2004, Jabusch & Altenmüller 2006, Moura et al. 2017, Passarotto et al. 2023, Rozanski et al. 2015, Steinmetz et al. 2014, Stephen & Charness 2019