

## Six Strokes Under

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Book Review by Alma Elder, Ph.D.

Dr. Isleib is a psychologist who found a special niche, partly as a result of her own personal experiences. She is a golfing aficionada who has published in *Women's World of Golf*, *Golf for Women*, *Tee Time Magazine*, and *National Golfer*. She also comes with Ph.D. credentials. She was appointed the faculty advisor for the Yale University peer counseling service from 1987-99. Now she is in the process of retiring from her psychotherapy practice to write full time.

Her book, *Six Strokes Under*, is a blend of old-fashioned storytelling with spritzers of psychological knowledge and a dollop of humor. The traditional part includes the English 101 elements of attractive characters, development of the story, mystery, settings, sleuthing, denouement, and sex. One can recognize some Connecticut establishments, even though the setting is mainly in Florida. The writing is clear and concise, just like the main character, and this makes for pleasurable reading.

The story revolves around two murders. The first murder introduces the issues of borderline personality disorder, sexual abuse, and false memory syndrome. Not that there is a heavy handed textbook approach. No, the issues are fleshed out in characters. There is an allegation of sexual abuse, but could this prominent man in town be the perp? The false memory question is illustrated by a health care provider on one hand and picketing protesters on the other. A borderline personality is described not by definitions, but by actions, such as self-harm, affective instability, dysregulated identity.

Enter then the sports psychologist, not a main character, but a supporting character, who is able to show both detachment and understanding. No rescuer, he, just a participant observer who can teach visualization, pre-shot routines, and use of short-term goals.

The second murder is closely tied to the world of golf. Here Dr. Isleib shares her knowledge of the golfing world. For those who have played golf casually on a Sunday, the novel introduces the competitiveness that golfers who wish to participate in the LPGA must endure. Qualifying School (Q-School in the parlance of the book) is somewhat of a marine camp mentality, with rules governing the balls that are played, the seating of participants in golf carts, the times of appearances, and the responses to media inquiries.

Then there is the humor. It is possible to laugh out loud many times in reading this book, as we see the foibles and extreme interpretations that may arise. For example, the main character hopes that when she runs into a former lover, that he sports a receding hairline and a fat waistline. Or a person who has completed psychoanalysis states that she has developed "post-post-traumatic stress disorder." What fun to read this book! Dr. Isleib just returned from a book-signing tour and she will present at the CPA Convention. She can also be contacted at [www.robertaisleib.com](http://www.robertaisleib.com).