

EBOOK-1

"UNIVERSAL MAN, UNIVERSAL HAND"

My lifelong quest for seeking shooting perfection has allowed me to play basketball on every continent and has cost me about 40 years of my life. It seems the older I get the more my mind wants to decode the mysteries of the "lost art of shooting". It has been a grand journey, not unlike life itself which along with the mastery of shooting is just like the pursuit of perfection in our own life.

Throughout this book I want you to be cognizant of one very important thing, and that is that this whole study is devoted to the mastery of one measly ol' second (give or take a few tenths of a second). This is similar to about the time that a golf ball has contact with a golf club as it is being struck. This has been measured at 4 thousandths of a second. It is within this period of what seems a fast forward moment that many of us dedicate countless hours, days, weeks, months and years to get some semblance of control.

To give you a different perspective on how difficult this actually may be, I have compared one's lifetime to the time it takes to shoot a ball. Let's just say the average man lives to about 73 years of age while women are a little more blessed with an extra few years. It amazes me how many men (women included) falter and flounder as they search for a perfect life as commanded by our Heavenly Father and yet millions of us fail while having so much time to correct our erroneous ways. "Once perfection is realized, it does not need change, but to reach perfection one needs to change". Quotation is mine.

On the other hand, my request within these pages is simple yet rather complex and within the complexity lies simplicity and the efficiency and perfection you seek. Free throw shooting perfection lies within the brief second or two that you have the ball in the "shooting pocket" (see definition in Glossary). Again I am amazed that after a century of basketball being played all over the world that the worlds' best players (NBA) can only muster a paltry percentage from the free throw line that hovers around the low 70th percentile. That's only about as many fingers on your shooting hand better than the national average of high school players. (5%)

My point here is that I want the reader to grasp the impact of the power of knowledge which is mentally induced and the direct relationship between one's understanding and applying perfect

shooting information to the physical capacity of the player which results in higher efficiency and consistency. This may sound rather complex but what I want you to understand is more mental than physical. By this I mean that your mind should be dedicated to and focused upon the actual mechanics or technique during the shot cycle and especially on the release and follow through which more often than not takes a second or less. Now do you see why the greater the knowledge you gain the longer the shot becomes because you become more “in tune” with your finer muscles in your fingers and arm(s) which are really the source of all shooting problems. I will devote a whole chapter to the power of the mind which involves the conscious, sub-conscious and the non-conscious which in itself is a fascinating study.

One big reason why free throw shooting suffers today (21st century) and this comes from the mouths of thousands of individuals I have worked with all over the world is in answer to my question “what is your thought process the moment you shoot the ball? 99.999% of answers are, can you guess..... Their answers are either in the affirmative or the negative. By this I mean that they say that either they are hoping the ball goes in or they hope that the ball doesn't miss. And this is completely wrong according to my thinking.

Let me embellish. Remember that science rules. Sir Isaac Newton even said so. “For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”. (I didn't know he played basketball). Logic plays a big part when shooting a ball. If you apply more energy to the right of the ball then the ball will tend to go more to the right. If you apply most of the energy from the hand directly down the center of the ball, then the ball will respond by going straighter. This doesn't happen all the time without mentally forcing the issue. (Mind over matter, process over product, beginning before the end). Our bodies, or more specifically our appendages, carpals and metatarsals tend to be floppy and wobble after the release of the ball which will sure enough lead to inconsistent shooting. That's why I am a big believer in strong hands and fingers (see DVD “Shooters Lab” dedicated to specificity of finger, forearm and shoulder strength for shooting, (www.freethrowmaster.com)).

Much more on this later. In the meantime, please take a leisurely walk with me on a journey back in time to the year 1490, during the incredible times of the Renaissance (which means – Renaissance-knowing or a renewal or revival of art, literature and science between the 14th-16th centuries). It is here that I myself was inspired by Michaelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci after I physically

saw the incredibly inspired and almost unbelievable work on the Sistine Chapel. I stood for hours gawking with mouth agape at this work in 1972 prior to playing in the Munich Olympics. Little did I know that this work left such an impact on my mind that it lay dormant for about 15 years or so before I started dabbling in painting walls and floors in gyms around the country and this later became my main trade after I quit coaching High School and have been involved in art ever since to this day.

As I take you on this journey of new learning to enlighten your understanding of the value of science involved in the free throw shooting process I want you to realize that perfection is built within each one of us. God made us and he did not make anything imperfect. BUT, we have the freedom and agency to choose who we are, and what we want to become. Ambition is a funny thing. It starts with a thought from some inspiration and I believe that we all want to be great in some way. And all basketball players want to be a great shooter but somewhere along the way they have missed the boat and shooting expertise was not in the cards for many reasons. Learning from great shooters is not readily available to everybody. Great shooting coaches and instruction is a rare commodity. There are many coaches who never played basketball and can not shoot themselves and subsequently can not teach shooting. There are other coaches who were good shooters who also can't teach shooting. Yet there are others out there who never played who become good shooting instructors. There are all kinds with no guarantees.

I hope most of you are familiar with the picture of a hu(man) being enclosed within a circle, square and triangle with his four arms raised up and his four legs spread. (see picture Fig. 1). This is called the "VITRUVIAN" man named after the originator Vitruvius. He is also called the "Universal Man" and has also been referred to as the "Perfect Man". It was actually Da Vinci who rendered and added to Vitruvius's original concept that we are all familiar with today.

My concept of the Palubinskas Perfect Shooter's Triangle is based on the Vitruvian man but it wasn't till February 7, 2007, some 43 years after I started playing basketball that this connection came to me in a dream that bounced me out of bed way before I am used to getting up. We have all had those scary dreams that leave a lasting impact. After I researched the Universal man I was stunned and invigorated by my new finding of the connection between my Perfect Shooter's Triangle and the Perfect Vitruvian Man. (see figure 2.0). The reason I was so pumped was because it

added much more credibility to my original thoughts in my pursuit of shooting perfection.

The fundamental idea behind the “Perfect Man” was the idea of “reason” governing “form”. The connection here between the two simply stipulates that there is ‘logic’ and ‘reason’ behind ‘form’. The ‘reason’ starts in the mind which originates from the ‘logic’ which transfers and is manifested in the ‘form’ or the follow through. But the ‘reason’ and ‘logic’ is assisted by the accumulation of new knowledge which provides the nutrition that forms the building blocks which leads to growth. It is after this that success kicks in and thus we experience the emotion called ‘confidence’. With knowledge you know you can make that dreaded free throw shot. Without relevant knowledge you ‘hope’ you will make the shot. And there is a huge difference between the two.

Da Vinci lived in a world on the brink of revolutionary change... the quest for knowledge had never been greater. This is not long after the dark ages reared its ugly head that the Renaissance period forged political and social upheaval and even scientific advances that would profoundly rectify the status quo of all living souls. Da Vinci was passionate about investigating and researching all he could about man and his ‘body’ in order to understand it and its relation to the cosmos.

It will be my legacy and a blessing to me to know that I have passionately pursued and created scientific advances which resulted directly with individual development and improvement on a global scale in the ‘lost’ art of shooting a basketball. My master’s degree thesis which I completed at BYU in 1981, was titled “Man’s worst tragedy in life is his failure to reach his greatest potential”. This has held true throughout my own life in respect to shooting baskets because I recognize that shooting perfection is attainable and it becomes an expected duty upon myself to be perfect on the free throw line all the time.

There are other attempts at utilizing the Vitruvian man as a representative of mankind, in general, or of the Universal man. After all he is often referred to as the “Perfect Man”. Another example was Victor Frankenstein, who in the Movie “Frankenstein” uses the Vitruvian man as a model as he fashions and molds his own creation of his ‘new’ and futuristic man, *Frankenstein*..

It is and has been my definite intent to fashion a new and more ‘perfect’ or rather more puristic shooting form, or one at least that could and should be a more standardized form that results in a

higher level of efficiency and consistency across the board. One that can and will make a difference and cause some noise at least on a national scale.

Back we go to the Renaissance where our good friend the Vitruvian Man was one of the most revered descriptions of a human composition. The description by Vitruvius is harmonizing the relation between parts of the body seeking perfection that would manifest itself in beauty. Many renaissance artists utilized this prescription and even tried to elaborate it until the minutest detail would be harmonized with the whole.

Now here's the kicker. Why do you think the particular compositional canon or general principles of the Vitruvian Man so popular at this time? The answer lies in the [rational relations between body parts](#), which means that the whole composition is not based on geometry but rationalization of geometrical principles. In general then I think we can all agree to the scientific fact that man's composition and make-up is perfectly symmetrical in its anatomical architecture. Da Vinci believed the workings of the human body to be analogous to the workings of the Universe. And I believe the workings of the hand and its finer parts are the Master Key to shooting perfection. This will be digested in a future chapter.

The mechanical or numerical breakdown of the Vitruvian Man is rather lengthy and cumbersome and I will leave it to the curious reader to do more research into this if it sounds appealing. Needless to say I will highlight some of the key elements because it is important to know the connecting relevancy to my own creation of the UNIVERSAL HAND if you will, or more specifically how the **"Palubinskas Perfect Shooters Triangle" (PPST)** metamorphoses into the 'Universal Hand'. (see figure 2)

The Navel or umbilicus is the exact center of the human body. If a man lies on his back with hands and feet outspread, and the center of a circle is placed on his navel, his fingers and toes will be touched by the circumference. Also a square will be found described within the figure, in the same way as a round figure is produced. For if we measure from the sole of the foot to the top of the head, and apply the measure to the outstretched hands, the breadth will be found equal to his height. Be aware that the center of the extremities of the outspread limbs will be the umbilicus, and the space between the legs will form an equilateral triangle.

Its no surprise that ancient architects with the information available to them from the Universal or Perfect man built Great

temples, Pyramids and colossal structures some of which are included in the Seven Wonders of the World. I think they could have added MAN and his divine creation to be the first wonder of the world. Well you can see by now where I am going with this. I am utilizing the wisdom of the sages to enhance my concepts and principles into shooting perfection. Scientific principles and natural laws rule the universe and must be respected at all costs or we will suffer the consequences.

As you peruse my figure of the 'Universal Hand' or the PPST, the main point I want you to absorb from comparing the two figures is that there is symmetry, power in the width, consistency of form, logic in the principles, ease of function, balance in the equilaterality (I just created this word) it sounds real good and it definitely gets my meaning across. (The equilateral triangle is as perfectly balanced as you can get). All energy flows from the low width or the wide base through to the top or the center point of the pyramid which as you will see is the tip of the index finger while the thumb and pinky form the lateral points of the base of the triangle which is the wrist . (more specificity in a later chapter.)