

# Martial Arts in Healing and Well Being

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## The presenter: Stamatia Daroglou, Ph.D.

- Licensed Psychologist PSY 20266
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- Experience in mental health
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## What we will do today:

- o What are Martial Arts
- o What is Karate
  - o Define Karate and identify different aspects of karate and how they are useful to development
- o Is there a difference between traditional and non-traditional martial arts?
- o Psychological benefits of martial arts
- o Physical benefits of martial arts

## When you leave this presentation today you will:

1. Have an understanding of what the recent literature says in terms of psychological and physical benefits of martial arts
2. Understand differences between traditional and non-traditional styles and the impact on the above benefits
3. Understand the basic philosophy of one of the traditional styles, namely Karate
4. Observe a demonstration and identify aspects of karate discussed

## Martial Arts

- ① How do we define Martial Arts
- ② Helpful or not?
- ③ What is your perception?
- ④ What is your understanding?

## Martial Arts-Defined

- we use the term Martial Arts to describe a wide variety of Asian combative systems and sports.
- But:
  - Are they all martial?
  - Are they all arts?

## Martial Arts defined

- ◆ Some are systems of combat
- ◆ Some evolved in religious and civil settings and used for physical and spiritual development as well as personal self defense.

## Budo according to Merriam Webster

- o Budō is a compound of the root bu meaning "war" or "martial"; and dō meaning "path" or "way"<sup>[4]</sup> (including the Buddhist conception of "path"). The term refers to the idea of formulating propositions, subjecting them to philosophical critique and then following a "path" to realize them.<sup>[6]</sup> Dō signifies a "way of life". Dō in the Japanese context is an experiential term in the sense that practice (the way of life) is the norm to verify the validity of the discipline cultivated through a given art form. Modern budō has no external enemy, only the internal one: my ego that must be fought.<sup>[7]</sup>



## Martial Arts and Martial Ways

### ◆ Bugei or Bujutsu

Developed by warrior groups for combat

Goal is to learn how to prevail in combat

Ending: jutsu

Martial Art

### ◆ Budo

Goal is to learn a system of physical, mental, and spiritual discipline through which the student tries to reach perfection

Ending: do

Martial Way

Way of life

## Martial Arts

Does it reduce aggression or  
does it increase it?

What does it look like in the  
entertainment industry?

## Martial Arts

- Differences in style
- Traditional versus non-traditional
- One of the ten most practiced sports by children
- One of the ten most practiced sports in a club context

## History

- ◆ China, Okinawa, Japan
- ◆ 1900's
- ◆ Itosu and Higaonna
- ◆ Students of the two masters developed traditional styles that fit with their body types
- ◆ Shotokan, Shito-Ryu, Gojo-Ryu, Wado-Ryu

## What do the Masters say about non-traditional styles?

- o Kenzo Mabuni: “I have seen kickboxing and similar disciplines but I consider them to be a sport, not a martial art which involves the aspects of Budo.”
- o “You must practice what you believe and believe what you practice.”

## What do the Masters say about non-traditional styles?

Is competition or sport karate bad for karate?  
“competition is not bad... [it helps you] learn to master fear, anger, and other emotional insecurities. The problem appears when you only train for competition or you perceive the art of karate only as a sport. To me this is a mistake and a diversion from the true origins and goals of traditional karate. “



## What do the Masters say about non-traditional styles?

Do you think that too much emphasis on kumite might prevent the student from reading the full understanding of your father's teachings?

“ I think Kumite practice is effective, but my father's teachings are steeped in tradition and it is up to us to retain those important aspects. If karate is to retain the elements of traditional martial arts, we cannot let it be reduced to a pure sport.”

## Where to find more information about Martial Arts

- o Journal of Asian Martial Arts
- o Archives of Budo
- o Journal of Chinese Martial Studies
- o Electronic Journals of Martial Arts and Sciences
- o Classical Fighting Arts



## 2 notable studies

- Veronghen, J., & Theeboom, M. (2010). The social-Psychological Outcomes of Martial Arts Practice Among Youth: A Review. *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*; 9(4): 528-537.
- Fabio & Towey. (2017). Cognitive and personality factors in the regular practice of martial arts.

## Vertonghen & Theeboom

- o Nice review
- o Reviewed 350 papers
- o Had stringent criteria
- o Examined whether there were positive outcomes in Personality traits and Aggression

## Vertonghen & Theeboom

### ◆ Personality traits positive among Martial Artists:

- ✓ Self confidence
- ✓ Autonomy
- ✓ General development
- ✓ Self esteem
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Social adroitness
- ✓ Self reliance
- ✓ Enthusiastic optimism
- ✓ Humility
- ✓ Self regulation
- ✓ Prosocial behavior
- ✓ Energy control

## Vertonghen & Theeboom

### ◊ Positive outcomes for Martial Artists on aggression:

- ✓ Aggression
- ✓ Hostility
- ✓ Attitudes towards violent conflict resolution
- ✓ Verbal aggression

◆ Conclusion: longer training was associated with lower levels of aggressiveness

## Vertonghen & Theeboom

- Wait! No negative impact at all????
  - Participation in “power sports” has negative outcomes
    - Boxing, wrestling, weightlifting, etc.
  - Unclear if it is all about the actual sport or the interaction with the “macho” culture prevalent in sporting clubs

## Vertonghen & Theeboom

- What about difference in styles?

Yes! Some of the studies revealed differences, but it looks like each style has its own qualities.
- What about teaching/guidance style?
  - Yes again! Traditional styles are ahead again!
- Motivational climates?

Self-referenced (improve by looking at your self) versus performance (encouraged to perform better than others)—the jury is still out! Though the masters say otherwise.



## Fabio and Towey

- 2017
- Most recent study I found
- 70 martial artists (beginners, intermediate, and advanced) compared to 70 non-martial artists
- Martial artists performed better in:
  - ◆ Cognitive: attention and creativity
  - ◆ Personality: self-esteem, self-efficacy, decrease in aggression
  - ◇ The two variables that did not show differences were: intelligence and school performance.

## Benefits of Martial Arts

- Physical/somatic benefits
- Psychological benefits

## Physical Benefits

- improve coordination, i.e. eye hand coordination
- increase strength
- understand depth and perception by developing awareness of one's surroundings
- improve body awareness
- flexibility

## Physical Benefits-continued

- improve balance/equilibrium
- relaxation
- awareness of space
- awareness of directionality
- awareness of distance

## Physical Benefits-continued

- increased concentration and focus
- teaching relaxation/meditation
- ability to avoid physical confrontation
- higher energy levels

## Psychological Benefits

- improve ability to work with others
- learn respect
- teach new students—comes with first rank—  
learning to teach others
- ability to commit to an action
- develop trust



## Psychological Benefits- Continued

- develop listening skills
- increased autonomy
- emotional stability
- reduced anxiety
- reduced depression

## Psychological Benefits- Continued

- reduced aggression
- having more control over one's life
- sense of belonging and support
- persistence

# Karate

- Self-Defense
- Empty Hand

Kihon (Basics)

Kata (Forms)

Kumite (Sparring)

# Karate how it works-I

- ◆ Parent does not have to be there
- ◆ Parent does not have to coach the coach
  - ◆ Inherently cannot do that
- ◆ Parent is not sure how well the child performs thus the problem of praise and love they provide to the child cannot be dependent on performance
- ◆ A child can't be lazy in karate class (laziness is a learned behavior)

## Karate how it works-II

- ◆ Request to come in the Dojo
  - ◆ Dojo
  - ◆ What skill does a person learn when making such a request? Think of the benefits we went over
- ◆ Each class starts and ends with meditation

## Meditation and the Relaxation process

- ◆ US Former Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy—last week during talk with NIH director:
  - ◆ Relaxation process improves behavioral problems with kids in schools.
  - ◆ Example of school: 45% decrease in incidents of violence, a significant decrease in number of days teachers called in sick, improvement in school performance (test scores)
  - ◆ All within the first year of introducing meditation in the school



## What do Karate masters say about meditation?

- Opinion on relaxation: “relaxation is very important in the art. Until you really understand how it works, and how beneficial it is for your body and technique, your training will be limited.” Kenzo Mabuni

## Meditation Video

## Meditation and Fluidity of Mind

Takuan Soho (Buddhist Monk born in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) : the mind should not be detained by specific aspects of observation or thoughts as it can be captured in that manner either by the observations or by its own contemplation.  
Example of spark and stone: the spark occurs without interval but it is still fluid. Focusing on everything and on nothing at all. Don't stop to think.

## Takuan Soho on fluidity

To think, "I will not think"  
This too, is something in one's thoughts.  
Simply do not think  
About not thinking at all (p. 24).  
o one keeps the mind in check, as if holding it with a string where the mind wanders and one simply brings it back to the center. This idea allows for contemplation but the mind returns to calmness and simple observation of all without one part being distinct or separate, signifying the connection between the mind and the body.

## Karate how it works-I

- o Kihon—Basics
  - o Repetition of basic movements
  - o Look at your list—what benefits do you pick?
- o Differences between coaching styles, in Martial Arts world→ differences between styles
- o behavioral conditioning and repetition—don't yell at student or tell them, simply have them do repetitions (200 punches to correct the way one punches), first slowly and then increasingly faster, with positive reinforcement each step.

## Neuroplasticity

- o Forming new neural pathways
- o video

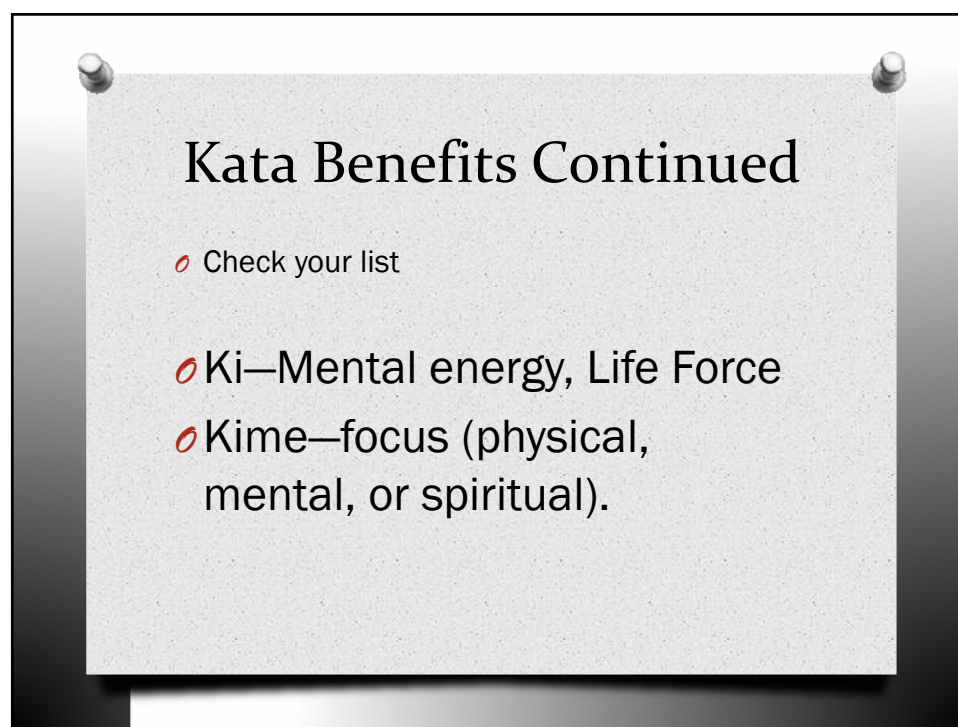
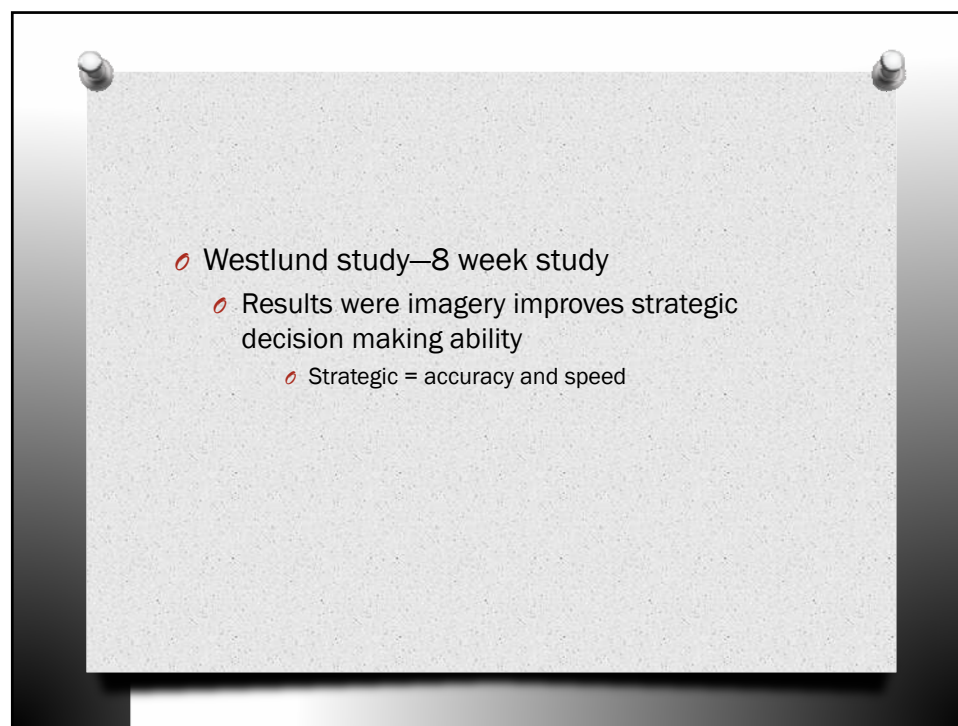


## Karate how it works-I

- o Kata—forms
- o Repetition
- o Blocking first
- o Imagery
- o visualization

## What do the masters say about Kata

- o Kenzo Mabuni: What does kata mean to you? “For me, kata is an expression of daily human conduct and many of the principles are understood from studying many kata. For a authentic karate-do practitioner, kata must be the first priority. My personal feeling is that the karate professional must spend three years on a kata and three months in kumite as a proper ratio.”



## Kata Benefits continued

- Check your list
- Let's talk about attention and focus

## Kime





## Kime



## Kata Video

## Why the emphasis on Kata? Why not Kumite? Winning by losing

Gichin Funakoshi—two incidents of almost fights

one as a student walking with Itosu Sensei

one walking with his wife and children

Philosophy: even though you do not have fear and are certain of your own capabilities or karate skills, you do whatever possible not to engage in physical altercation.

## Winning by Losing Dojo Kun

Itosu Sensei's instruction to Funakoshi and his other students translates to the dojo kun.

- ✓ He was clear in his request to avoid impetuous conduct.
- ✓ He taught them to use politeness and discipline in order to achieve their goals.
- ✓ He undoubtedly was asking for ethical behavior.
- ✓ He asked them to put the effort in the negotiation process.
- ✓ And then and only then, one achieves perfection of character.



Young Karatekas



Q and A

## Did we reach our goals for today?

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