

EXTERNAL vs INTERNAL TECHNIQUE



I am often asked by students, "What's the difference between internal and external systems?" Or, "What's the difference between internal and external techniques?" This is when I reflect on how hard it is to be a teacher, for each student's perception and interpretation is different, for a teacher, you may have to show a technique 50 different ways in order to get it into everyone's mind. So when they come up with this type of question (and they always will), it becomes very difficult to say **easily**. It depends entirely on what's happening in the Dojo that particular session as to what answer I will give, because there are many interpretations. The one I seem to use most is this:

EXTERNAL TECHNIQUE

Just training of the body; it is something that you can learn by observation alone – by watching someone else.

INTERNAL TECHNIQUE

A real study into the Martial Arts; it concentrates on principles that are mostly overlooked. Of course, internal power goes beyond the mind and our ability to perceive with our own intellect what it is or how it works. All



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true powers are actually an appropriate balance of two opposing forces. Any skill or ability depends on this balance. If this is done consciously, the power will be greater, and applicable to a wider variety of situations. Being conscious of the real, present condition and what it takes to affect it appropriately is the key to crossing over from external to internal.

You've got to make your students understand that one of the most important teachers they come across in life is themselves. Along with techniques, in class, I continually preach three things:

STUDY

Reading, research, discussion, observation and learning about individual aspects of movement. Reviewing and rethinking your movements in relation to the principles of movement, and consciously incorporating those principles to their extreme in what you do. Basically, it is examining and discovering what is at hand. Study is the "food" for understanding.



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PRACTICE

Practice is the active development – the necessary training; the repeating of single and multiple techniques. Practice is the "ground" for understanding and manifest development.

CONTEMPLATION

This is the source of understanding what is at hand, and possibly its absorption. Being open to an intuitive understanding until it becomes manifest.

Study, practice and contemplation should all be done equally and interdependent of one another. They are all one process within themselves.

James Muro

