

IMITATION

We often learn by imitation consciously and subconsciously

Language, in particular the 'mother tongue' we learn by imitation. Accents are imitated.

We copy our parents, teachers and peers subconsciously.

We learn habitual patterns by subconscious imitation, e.g. walking, breathing, cadence and rhythm of speech - facial patterns, visual patterns, use of the hands, etc.

We can use imitation as a learning tool. It is very useful when used well, conscious of the potential dangers.

If you are sitting in an orchestral section next to a brilliant player, allow yourself to imitate their playing.

Mannerisms are not the real thing.

Imitating use is normal, empathetic behaviour. We can override that empathetic pattern consciously (inhibition).

If we consciously imitate we should make sure we imitate the good use of the model, not the negative patterns. Be clear what you are looking for.

When we learn to recognise the negative patterns that get in the way of someone else's performance we can learn from that knowledge - avoiding imitation.

Heroes can be inspirational. 'Play this bit like

Find yourself in the most talented models by recognising what they are doing and what they are not doing.

Talent is a cover for poor use. Don't imitate the bad use of an otherwise brilliant player.

It is a good teaching ploy to imitate your student and then ask them to notice what you need to change.

It is most easy to see our own faults in other people.

Even when you do not intend to imitate you will imitate to a certain extent – it is normal human behaviour.

Remember that you are not exactly the same as any other person; imitation is only useful up to a point. Use imitation in so far as you find yourself.

If you are aware of your use imitation is completely safe.