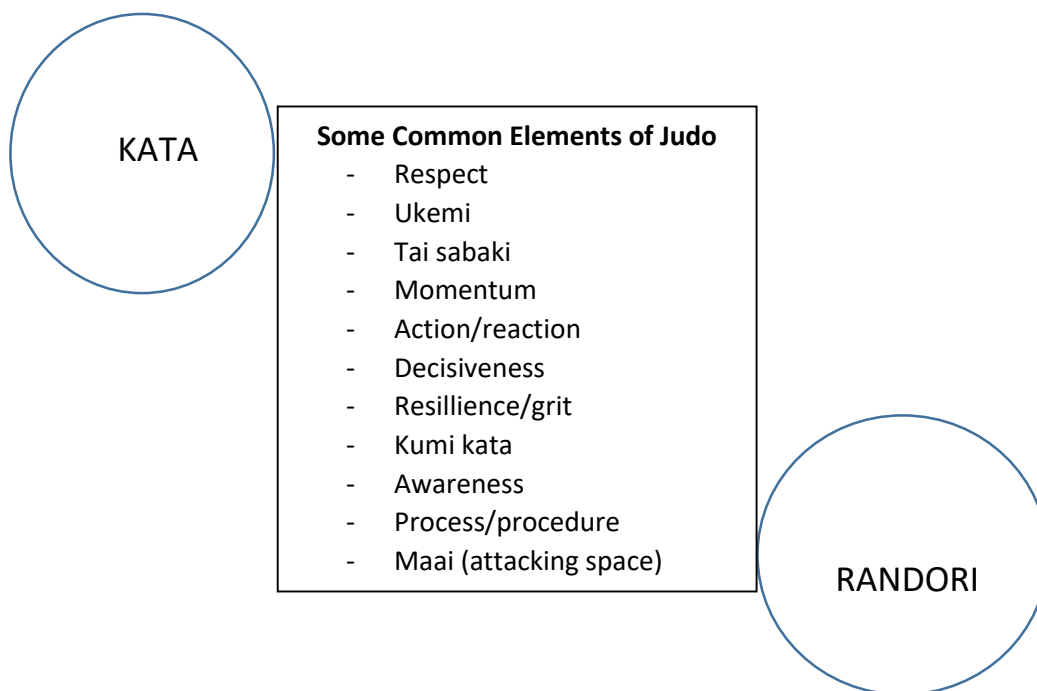


The Importance of Kata

The two primary training methods of judo are Kata (Forms) and Randori (Free Practice). They are the foundation of judo practice, so doing one without the other makes the practice incomplete, lacking body and purpose. Randori training is not limited to the specific act of free sparring but includes all the other exercises one will find in a *regular* training session – taisō (calisthenics), ukemi, techniques, sparring, etc. Kata training is more formal with predetermined moves to practice and idealized movements that illustrate specific combative principles. Most find the former more fun and as a result it is practiced more often. However, as indicated earlier they form the backbone of judo training and no judoka will have comprehensive judo training if there is no knowledge and practice of Kata. To illustrate, think of Kata and Randori as two images on a piece of tapestry. Although they are separate images they have the same elements that make them up, the fabric, thread, etc...furthermore they are on the same piece of cloth (consider that judo). The one thing that is common throughout this whole tapestry is thread (considered to be the elements of judo – respect, ukemi, tai-sabaki, etc.). Another way to look at it is to have two objects that are different yet similar in that they possess the same elements that make them up (respect, ukemi...).

The Two Primary Methods of Judo Training



The above shows that all of those common elements of judo are found in Kata and Randori. While Kata is practicing predetermined forms for the purpose of perfecting or refining them, Randori is allowing the *expression* of those forms by the judoka in free practice. The two complement each other because by doing Randori one is better able to appreciate (and refine) the techniques in Kata and vice versa. Please note that these are methods of training. Shiai (competition in all its forms) is not a method of training but it is a part of judo just like Randori and Kata. The same elements above are also part of Shiai. I call the three – Kata, Randori and Shiai – the *Trinity of Judo*.

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THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER 2020