

殊途同歸

shu1 tu2 tong2 gui1

Terminator star Arnold Schwarzenegger was in Hong Kong to promote the Arnold Classic Asia Multi-Sport Festival. The 68-year-old former California governor said: "You maybe like gymnastics, I maybe like bodybuilding. But your exercise is as important as my exercise is."

There are different kinds of sports, but they all benefit health. His message is an embodiment of the observation in the idiom "殊途同歸" (*shu1 tu2 tong2 gui1*).

"殊" (*shu1*) is "different," "unique," "途" (*tu2*) "a way," "a route," "同" (*tong2*) "alike," "same," "identical" and "歸" (*gui1*) "return," "back," "to come to an end." Literally, "殊途同歸" (*shu1 tu2 tong2 gui1*) is "different routes, same end."

"殊途同歸" (*shu1 tu2 tong2 gui1*) means "to reach the same goal by different means," "different roads lead to the same goal," "there is more than one way to achieve an aim."

Idiom by Lon Yan

Equivalent English expressions include "all roads lead to Rome" and the cruel-sounding "there is more than one way to skin a cat."

"殊途同歸" (*shu1 tu2 tong2 gui1*) is generally used to describe how people approach the same problem in different ways but reach the same solution in the end.

When others dispute the way you are dealing with a problem, you can tell them your method and theirs are "殊途同歸" (*shu1 tu2 tong2 gui1*).

Life itself is a prime example of "殊途同歸" (*shu1 tu2 tong2 gui1*) – everyone takes his or her own unique path but the ending is identical. Yet, the idiom is not used this way.

Terms containing the character "途" (*tu2*) include:

途徑 (*tu2 jing4*) – a way

路途 (*lu4 tu2*) – a journey; a route

歧途 (*qi2 tu2*) – a wrong road

歸途 (*gui1 tu2*) – a homeward journey