



## Lesson 29 - Listening and Imitation

- Lesson 29 listening and imitation. Hello, and welcome to this section on discussions for this Improv 101 course. So now that you've dipped your toes into improvisation, saying this with a bit of humor, and even learned a little bit of theory, not too much, for what's behind what you're playing, now there are two really important things I want to discuss in this lesson that go on behind the scenes for you as you're developing these musical abilities. So point number one. You cannot learn jazz in a vacuum, especially not the improv side of jazz. You have to listen. I see these guys online all the time, they just want to gather information and go into their cave and then practice it and come out a jazz player. Jazz music, you have to listen to it passively, actively every day if you want to be able to play it well. You have to listen to your favorite guitarist, pianist, drummers, piano players, bassists, and horn players, and then think about what you like about them, or even write down what you like about their playing. And you have to take careful notes of what draws you into jazz. And you have to learn from your favorite musicians as examples like icons, right? It's important to listen to jazz every day because in order to play well, you need to really hear that sound in your ears. It will come out on your instrument eventually. So it's not a science, it's an art. It's a tradition and you have to listen to it. Which brings us to two, you have to internalize the music. In this course, I've given you a bit of vocabulary just to get you started. So although some of it might have seemed tricky at first, improvising music wasn't that bad. I think, anyways, for Dorian mode and pentatonics, right? However, improvising music isn't a game of fitting chord scales to the right chord. It's about expressing something within, so something in the moment. So the chord scale technique we worked on is just a small piece of vocabulary to help you get started doing just that, which is playing right notes but the real goal is to hear what you want to play from within and then play it on your guitar. So this is the difference between knowing the theory and really being competent as an improvising jazz guitarist. So reaching this goal requires an awful lot of listening to other musicians and to yourself and a lot of imitation. So that's really my second point. All that rambling to say that. You have to imitate your favorite musicians until the things you enjoy playing become

second nature. Now you could imitate just by listening and trying to do the same thing phrasing-wise, or you could imitate by transcribing. Some people find it very difficult to transcribe, myself included, but that's a whole process. So remember, listening is key. Imitation is key. It's pretty much the same thing that happened when you first learned to speak. So I learned French, of course, at first. So as baby, I listened to my parents speak for, what, the better part of one or two years, and then eventually you just try to imitate. I didn't know any grammar at that point. I didn't know anything but we all did the same thing. We all went through the same steps as toddlers, so I really like the analogy of jazz improvisation with language because basically that's what it is. It's all food for thoughts. So I hope you enjoyed this, and I will see you in the next discussion.