



Episode 9 – Shihan Andy Campbell | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hello everyone and welcome to episode 9 of [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com). My name is Jeremy Lesniak your host and the founder of whistlekick where we make the world's best sparring gear. If you're new to the show you can learn more about whistlekick at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) and you can learn more about this show at [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). We try to keep it simple. On today's show, we have Shihan Andy Campbell, a karate school owner from Maine. I've only gotten to know Shihan Andy recently from the tournaments we attend. And it's funny that we've never crossed paths while I was growing up, because he lived and trained just an hour away from my home. But we made up for lost time during this interview, I really enjoyed learning more about what makes this man so truly dynamic. I had fun talking to him and I hope you enjoy listening. Shihan Andy welcome to [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com).

**Andy Campbell:**

Thank you, Jeremy, glad to be here.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's great to have you, I'm looking forward to this. I don't know a whole lot about you so, I'll get to learn about what makes you tick right along with me.



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**Andy Campbell:**

Well that's kind of a scary proposition but, let's see what we can do.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

We'll find out. So why don't you start telling us a bit about you and your martial arts background, and how you got started and all that.

**Andy Campbell:**

Well when I was 10 and a half and I say that because you know I kind of, you keeping track of how long you've been in this business. I was spending that summer at my aunt's place in Texas and my mom called me on the phone and it was the Karate Kid time. You know Karate Kid was out and the crazy stuff and my mom calls me and she tells "Hey, by the way when you get home I signed you and Collin up for karate class" and I said Ok, alright sure. So I was there for, I was there in Texas for about 6 weeks, I got home in September and she brought me down to my first class at a rec center in Westbrook with my buddy Collin and a gentleman named Tim Steinwachs who was teaching the class and Tim was actually ashiru practitioner so I got a little ashiru training on the side as well but he was teaching Shotokan because him and Tony Fournier had decided that ashiru is a little bit too tricky to teach to kids at that point and Shotokan was a little bit easier so we started with Shotokan and I went through and I was there for at the rec center with my buddy Collin and Collin was one of those kind of kids that you know started something quit it, started quit it you know he wasn't around long but he was in till we got till like his orange belt and he decided to drop out and I got stuck with it. Kept going and my favorite thing about being down there at the rec center was you know it was a 6-week program or an 8-week program so there's always kids coming in and out and when I started as a white belt it was Monday, Tuesday and Thursday classes and I did that up until I got my greenbelt and then Tony would come in and test us for anything from greenbelt and above and I was probably 12 or so, 12, 12 and a half 13 maybe and he invited me to come to his classes at USM and train there because I loved it so much so I was going 6 days a week and after it was all said and done when I started as a white belt there were probably 80 kids in the program and there were probably 25 or 30 brown belts that were ahead of me and I passed every single one of them and I got my black belt for any of those brown belts that were ahead of me when I started.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Wow it's a lot of dedication for someone that young.

**Andy Campbell:**



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It was you know it just it felt right you know I mean I liked what I was doing I enjoyed the camaraderie I enjoyed you know the friends that I made I enjoyed being part of something that was just you know kind of above everything else you know and I like the other sports I mean I was a huge football fan but I was small so I remember playing pee wee football for a year and I actually having a buddy of mine carry me about 40 yards into the end zone on his back so I figured that's a football wasn't going to be my forte so martial arts was just that thing that you know and I was a really a small kid not a lot of confidence. I got beat up, I got picked on, I remember spending 2 years in Gorham and it was just it was the 2 worst years in my life just beat up all the time, picked on all the time. If you were born in that, at that time, if you were born there, you didn't belong there, that's kind of how the kids that were in there treated you and it was miserable then we have moved to Westbrook things got better and that's when you know I started karate training and it really helped picked up my spirit. So, I mean I was the kid that literally, would walk the room with his head down didn't make eye contact, was afraid all the time and karate gave me that confidence to be able to pop my head up and not be afraid to look somebody in the eyes and you know stick up for myself.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

Do you remember how old you were or what rank you were when you were able to pick your head up?

### **Andy Campbell:**

Yeah, it was funny cause I had like probably orange belt you know and at that time the ranking system was white belt, yellow belt, orange belt, green belt, brown belt, black belt. You spent you know a certain amount of time in each belt or as much time as you needed and you could do a check off list we did a whole bunch of different ways of getting tested and so I probably been training for about a year and a half and found myself you know more confident, found myself you know getting up there and being able to perform a form in front of you know 60 other kids and have them all cheer you at the end was cool thing and it really got me to that point where you know I mean I remember being in school one time and have an you know the class bully come up to me and I had my tray in my hand I don't know what exactly the reasoning was but he came up and he was mad at me for something and he takes his hand and he smacked my tray of food out of my hand it went all over the floor and I was livid. I was hungry, it was just a rough day and I cold-cocked him I mean I was just I wasn't afraid and I hit him knocked him over and he just looked at me from the ground and I stormed off and I went talked to the principal and he's like you know you can't do that and I said I understand but you know I'm tired of this guy and that right there was a confident boost me and nobody messed with me anymore you know it was cool thing. I was able to stand up for who I was and I walked with my head and him and I became buddies you know it was pretty cool so.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Oh wow

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's neat.

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well not that that wasn't a great intro and not a good story in of itself but do you have if I said tell me your best martial arts story is there something that comes to mind?

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah and it's funny for me because you know I've done a lot of things, I've got a chance to train with a lot of different people you know a lot of smaller name guys that people might know not know but you know some bigger named guys you know like Mike Chat, Herb Perez, Larry Lam a bunch of those guys that were remember the martial arts masters show what was it called. It was a TV show on in the mid 80s early 90s and there's all these martial arts guys and there was and it was almost like a wrestling show but with all these karate guys they were all they all had these their own handles their own superhero names and stuff like that you know Larry Lam was on it and Herb Perez was on it and it's a whole bunch of these guys that had come in and we got to chance to work out with a bunch of Superfoot Bill Wallace that kind of stuff you know. I got a chance to train with a lot of the you know big name guys up there but my favorite martial arts story is happened last year. Last year my daughter and I traveled to Spain, it was just the 2 of us and it was one of those, it was for a we I belong to an organization called WOMMA which is the World Organization of Martial Arts Athletes and WOMMA has these events that go on all over the world and it was the Spanish open last year. So, we went over had a great time but my favorite part of it was her and I was doing synchronized Kata together and we beat the Polish team, we beat the Slovakian team, we beat the British team, we beat the Spanish team, we beat the team from Isle of Man, we won the gold medal and to do that with my daughter you know with my partner in crime, to win this stuff together. To do that with her was the best you know, the best moment for me because I mean I've won a lot. I've done a lot of you know local stuff, I've done a lot of



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national stuff and I've done a lot of international stuff and I've won 11 World champions from you know during these WOMMA events. But doing that with her was my favorite thing. The fact that we got out there and got to compete together and win a gold medal that's my best martial arts story.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's great so, how much of the joy of that, was that it was your daughter and how much of it was that I'm going to assume she's also your student

**Andy Campbell:**

Yup, yup

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So, you know is that 50-50 there?

**Andy Campbell:**

There is, yeah that's the thing because like I think it's more of the fact she's my, she's my kid. You know what I mean I think the fact that she's my student as well my black belt and she's been at this for a long time and it was funny because when she was little her and her she has a twin sister so Drew is the daughter that still trains and her twin sister Taylor got her 3rd degree black belt and is in college now studying to be a nurse so her time is just different and she still trains and she's still with me and as a matter of fact she's going to Wales with me in July to train to compete again but the fact that you know these, watching these two grow up and coming up for the ranks I mean I'm one of those dads that you know my kids they each had like 28 stripes on their belt. So, you get a stripe a month and they had 28 stripes on their belts before their black belt test. I just I wouldn't let them do it, that you are not ready and I had other kids that you know weren't my kids that were my students that passed them and tested before they did and you know some people were like well that's kind of mean isn't that? I said nope I will not have my kids go up there and do this unless I know they're ready for it and when they were ready, they were ready. Let me tell you she looked great you know and now she does it and she's out there all the time and it would paid off to make them wait you know. And so, I think the fact that yes, she was a black belt of mine but the fact that she was my kid that to me felt you know was better because the two of us did this together you know. It was an adventure that we took together, it was a journey that we went on together and it was an accomplishment you know being there with her it was just it was the coolest part it was definitely cool.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Oh, great are you guys going to compete again in Wales together?

**Andy Campbell:**

We are yeah, yup yup. We're going to try it again over there so...

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Awesome same form? different form?

**Andy Campbell:**

I think we're going to do the same form and we actually we're going to bring another boy he's a taekwondo kid from Freeport, Ben Morang he's going over with us and he's going to do the Kata with us so that'll will be the 3 of us doing, representing team USA doing it together, so it'll be kind of fun.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Oh well cool, well of course we'll have to let everybody know how that goes.

**Andy Campbell:**

Absolutely.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

When you come back so cool. So, when you think about your time in the martial arts, it certainly had an impact on you, physically, emotionally maybe even spiritually. How has the martial arts made you a better person with concern to those changes?

**Andy Campbell:**

Well I remember when I was a kid, I was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, I was 7 and my doctor said by the time you are 15 or 16 you'd probably be at a wheel chair. So, oh, ok, that's what you want to hear at 7 you know. And the arthritis was just bad, I mean it was my joints would swell, my knees were bad and it was one of those where I didn't run a lot, I couldn't do a lot of that stuff. When I got into karate my mom was, my mom again I credit her a lot with getting her, just getting me started. She put me into this thing just out of the blue and she had been talking to a bunch of different people and they thought you know try this and see how it works so I did it and for years you know I mean I just



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kept going and going and going and when I at one point when I finally went back to my doctor I was probably you know 13 or so and we do the yearly checkups and that kind of thing and then at one point he just said to me he said I don't know what you're doing and you know this karate thing is working for you keep it up and I did and you know the arthritis is one of those kind of things that's supposed to stick and it didn't. I mean I've had tests done over the past few years and you know been totally clean sort of beat the thing just by you know training and get my body out there and that's one of those things you know for me the spiritual end of it is to know that if I keep moving, if I keep doing what I'm doing you know my body's not going to shut down the way a lot of other people's do you know. When you stop doing certain things it changes stuff you know and I have vowed to myself that I won't change that. I'm going to keep doing what I do because you know I would have been at a wheelchair, I could have been at a wheelchair, I can't say I was but it's the possibility of doing that and I know that what I do now is one of those things that help keep me healthy and it's also helped you know like you said before being bullied, being picked on, getting thrown down stair, getting thrown, I had rotten tomatoes thrown at me as a kid in my backyard I mean I just went through a whole bunch of stuff and this has helped me become the person that I am you know. You've seen me at tournaments, I'm a goofball.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

Absolutely.

### **Andy Campbell:**

I have a lot of fun and that's my whole thing, I think that karate training itself should be you know for you but I like to have fun with it and I like to enjoy the people that are around me and one of the things that I really like about what I get to do is it changed me from being that introvert that shy scared kid, instead being more of an extrovert and being able to be who I really was and I get a chance to do that, I get a chance to be with not just my own kids and then my own students but some of these amazing people that I've met over the years and I've made so many friends from so many different countries that you know we still we talk each, we talk, I talk probably twice a week to a buddy of mine from the Isle of Man. I have a family from Virginia that I met 15:45 Atlanta that I met while we're over there in Wales the first year in 2011 who they come up here to train with me for a couple of weeks at a time. I'm always getting updates when they go to, when this family goes to a tournament, the dad calls me on the phone they give these kids a pep talk before they go. It's just all the things that I get to do and be and see are all attributed to the fact that I started martial arts when I was at such a young age and it's really broaden my horizons it gives me a chance to meet so many people and to do so many different things I just I can't imagine not doing it.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Wow, that's man you're just full of good stories, that's good, that's incredible. So, we're going to go the other, possibly the other end of the spectrum, something and maybe this is the bullying thing maybe we'll talk a little bit more about that but think about a low point in your life that you were able to move through or overcome or get passed or however you want to define it because of your martial arts training and experience.

### **Andy Campbell:**

Yeah, you know I would probably say the whole you know the breaking off from my instructor's pretty low point. Some of the things that I doubt with, some of the things that we've been through and not knowing where things were going to go and when I left I don't have a clue, I had no clue what I was going to do with my life where I was going to be if I was going to open up my own place. The rapport that I built with the students while I was there really shone through because I left there on Thursday night I was supposed to have, we're supposed to have a graduation ceremony the next Friday and I, that Friday night you know after the day I left and I wasn't there and I had done all the graduation ceremonies I have been part of everything and it didn't happen and you know people called me, people called me on the phone and on Sunday I had probably 150 phone calls from different parents saying if you go out on your own, we're going to go with you, we'd love you, we'd respect you that much that we want to be part of what you're doing we understand where you are we understand you know what you want from our kids and we want to be part of that and it was, that alone building that rapport with those people, having that happen so when I open my door I was lucky because I opened my door with 100+ students which doesn't happen you know most people are building there, you know it's like it's almost like American Idol, you know what I mean. Some of these guys go into American Idol and they get an instant recording contract you know because enough people have seen you and I locked out that way. To have that happen to me, and you know like I said my instructor and I had some difference of opinion we get a long great now we're friends I would say. But at that point that was a real low point in my life because I was very scared, very nervous you know I just had literally I just had another baby. I had 4 daughters and my youngest was probably 6 months old when I had broke off and went out on my own and didn't know what I was going to do and all of these people there were to support me was amazing. And you know there was another one other point where you know I had as a kid as a teenager I got these brain tumors I had 19:18 tumors and there's 4 of them, I had 4 of them through a span of 4-5 years and they are blood tumors so basically they were, they weren't cancerous but had they exploded they would've killed me and I didn't realize I had these things until over the first one, until I got a nose bleed in a class one time and then started bleeding again and just started bleeding out of the blue and when I went through the operations and the illnesses and stuff everybody at the dojo was very supportive. So I had a you know not just my own family but I had all these kids I know we're working with and all these people that would come up and bring you know bringing me presents and stop into they'd stop by my house and you know just kids would show up with their parents just to say hi and then make sure I was ok and you know it was so it wasn't the actual training itself but it was the people





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that were built around me, the people that I had as a support system that were there to help me get through you know a really difficult time you know it was it wasn't an easy process and the three other tumors that I had through the next few years they're all the same way. Every time I was down you know I had parents that are picking me up, I had students that are picking me up I had my guys helping me out I had all of that support and you know that you don't get that from other things you know what I mean. The martial arts community is so tight and the people that you are around and the rapport you build and the love that's there, it's a pretty amazing thing.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

I could not agree anymore that's some heavy stuff but yeah, you've certainly moved through it in a positive way and then you've certainly embraced that challenge and roll through that obstacle you know for anyone listening that hasn't met you, that hasn't seen you at a tournament on a weekend or something there you are a force of nature there especially with the children. You know you're kind of known for hoisting up first place victors so long as they fall into a certain weight range.

### **Andy Campbell:**

No, no wait a second hold on I hoisted up Larry Mortenson and Larry is not, no I'm not saying Larry is a big guy but Larry is an adult I have hoisted up many many grown-ups and it's funny because when I sometimes when I'm doing adult I have actually had adults look at me like you're not going to lift me? Okay, and I'll lift them right up, it doesn't matter how big they are or small they are I will do it and it's you mentioned that I wanted to say something to that really quick. One of my, a favorite story of mine happened a couple of like 6 months ago. A little boy who his first tournament, he's one of Andy Diamano's students, this little boy named Dawa and he at his very first tournament I had him in my group, he's at white belt and he won, kid's awesome and he's just one of the sweetest kids and he's just nice and he's friendly and so he was like 5 years old and I lift him up and I'm holding him and parading him around and then for years after that the kid's he probably like I said like 4-5 then I think he's 9-10 now still training and at every tournament I hoist him up whenever he wins we do all that stuff well his mother sent me a Facebook message like 6 months ago and he took second place in the division in each event and she said he was sitting on the bleachers and he had his head down and she said, I went over them, no what's the matter buddy you know and then he looked she said he put his head up and he nodded just kind of pointed his head over towards me to me and she's like yeah Shihan Andy what's the matter he goes no picking up today just like that and I thought that was the, you know what I mean, she told me that and brought tears to my eyes, it was just the sweetest thing. And so that is again that's one of those things that I love about what I do I mean if I could be at a tournament every weekend doing that with those kids I would do it. It's just, it that, it just means so much to me to be able to do that with some of these guys and that's me, that's you know kind of how I am.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That certainly is you, I think it's why there are so many people that love you, that you know I mean you mentioned that you opened your doors with over 100 students and who gets to do that, it's a testament not to your situation or luck or anything it's a testament to who you are, for sure.

**Andy Campbell:**

Oh, I'd appreciate that.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So now why don't you if we exclude your original instructors, is there someone that you could say was instrumental or critical in your martial arts upbringing not even as early as a child it could be somebody that's in your life now.

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah, you know beyond my mom dragging no you know I wouldn't say dragging me I wanted to go but she always went, she liked to sit outside and she didn't you know she didn't see a lot and when it was tournament time she wasn't really big on those things but she was there you know had got me to those things and made sure that I was at the dojo so I'd give her a lot of credit. One of my old, one of my first instructors his name is Tim Steinwachs he was the ashiru guy that I had initially started with that was teaching Shotokan at the rec center and Tim was one of those guys that I remember my buddy Collin was always brought up in front to demonstrate things and I said to my mom one time I was like you know I don't get it why does he always pick Collin? And she talked to him and Tim came to me and we sat down, listen the reason I bring Collin up is because he needs that confidence boost and he said you don't. And I said, what do you mean? he said you have confidence you just don't understand that you have confidence and once you understand it, once you see it, once it comes out of you, you don't need me or anybody else to tell you you have them and I was like okay and I was like again I was like 11 so it was a really hard thing to understand but then my buddy Collin dropped out and I did and I kept going, I kept going, I kept going and then I finally found myself being that you know that one like kids coming to me for things that asking me to help them with stuff so that built the confidence there and Tim and I became really good friends you know he brought me to meet his instructor who lived in East Aurora, New York and we went down there for a weekend and then I went out to an event with him out to New Mexico. I met one of his friends while we're in New York and he invited me to his wedding in Arizona so we went out to that you know and we just and Tim was always that guy that really helped me with that boost you know he really did that for me and one of the other guys that really stands out is Wayne Mello. I remember meeting Wayne as a kid and Wayne and you know Tony Fournier always looked a



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like. They always reminded me of each other because they had the same hair they had the same mustache and they were good friends. They even fight each other on the circuit I remember you know watching the two of those guys sparring one another and Wayne was just one of those guys that and he's going to kill me if he hears me say this but we always, we all think of him as like the god father you know. He's the godfather of the karate circuit that's out there now because everybody looked up to him. Everybody respects him and he's one of those guys that's so humble and you can sit and have a conversation with him and he will listen to you and then give you his opinion and whether you like what his opinion is or not here it is this is what I say and you know you can use my advice or not use my advice whatever you want to do is your choice but this is what I think and 90% of the time his advice is spot on. You know it's right there and he's one of those guys that just everybody respects so much and he is like I said as being humble he won, he finally won a gold medal out of the Ozawa cup a couple of years ago and in sparring and he came back and he didn't want anybody to know. He wanted nobody talk about it, he didn't have, it was and every time somebody bring it up he just throw his hands up and kind of roll his eyes like I don't want to talk about it you know. For what he could accomplish and what he did, he's just, he's one of those guys that I will forever you know no matter what happens I will forever remember him growing up as a kid throughout the you know the stuff the times that he would come up and the times that we get to go down there and seeing him on the tournament circuit and just the respect and love that he gives to everybody is just to me one of those things that I've tried to you know I've tried to do in his footsteps just because of the way he is and when I you know when I had my falling out with Tony I mean I could go to Wayne and talk to him about that because both Wayne, Wayne and Tony like I said were like brothers, they're really really close and really good friends and I could get he could see my side of the story as well as Tony's side of his story and he didn't pick sides, he didn't you know I, he didn't take you know the old friend of the young kid or anything like that. He would sit there and would talk to me about it and would give me again just great advice on how to handle things and anytime something would happen he's the kind of guy that you could always go to and really get some good stuff from like I said. So that's why we call him the god father, he's like yoda you know it's one of those kinds of things with him so Wayne stands out.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah well what you don't know is that I interviewed Shihan Mello few weeks ago, he's going to be episode 6.

### **Andy Campbell:**

Well very cool.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Which is not quite out yet as we're doing this interview, but the other piece that you may not know for me personally is that I went to college in Worcester Mass in part so I could train with Shihan Mello I was there for 2 years

**Andy Campbell:**

I did not know that.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I earn a brown belt with him and I like to tell people that this won't mean as much to a lot of people listening but I like to tell all the Shotokan guys from down that way that I knew DJ when I was taller than him and so for people listening that don't know me personally, that don't know these folks individually I'm 5'7".

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah and DJ is like 6'3"

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

DJ's 9'2", it feels like looking at him and I remember him when he must have been 11 or 12 years old and so I've been tied in with that group with Shihan Mello for a long time, they're wonderful, wonderful people...

**Andy Campbell:**

They really are.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I agree with everything that you're saying about them.

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah they are just, you know they are the epitome to me of what an organization is and also obviously you know Kancho Almeida who again I remember as a little kid being mesmerized to him because he was called, he was the hands of stone that was his nickname and he would break you know he'd break concrete blocks with his hands and to watch him at 10 or 11 year old was scary, that was scary cause he



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was so thick and now you know you see him walking around and he's just he's funny he's so, he's like a big teddy bear you know but he's so unbelievably gifted in all the things that he was able to do and the organization that he's got out there and the people that are part of it you know I feel while I'm not an AIKA member, I feel as a Shotokan practitioner you know the kinship to that but I feel as part of the family cause I'm very close to you know all of them whether it be Mike and Sue or Donny and DJ you know. I got to, every time I go down there for something, Donny puts me up in his house so you know it's just one of those...

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Good people.

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah, they are they are great people.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So, we talked a little bit about your time with martial arts competition you know obviously you've competed a bunch what's your favorite thing about competition, why did you, why have you and done it so much why do you continue to compete?

**Andy Campbell:**

You know it's funny I, when I came up, when I was coming up as a kid I competed up until I was about 17 or 18 and I will tell you I never took first place not once in all the training that I did as a kid and it bothered me and I got to a point at 18 when I got sick and I just couldn't train for a while and then you know the tumors were there and they told me if I had gotten hit in the head you know it could kill me. So, I stopped competing and I didn't compete again until I was 34. 34 years old that was my last year and the 18 to 34 year old division and one of my guys Randy had been competing all this time and I went with them and you know I was there for all the tournaments and was judging and being part of it and all that kind of stuff and you know at that point I was just a cornered judge cause you know I didn't have my own tournament, the rapport wasn't quite what it was and I was just, I was learning a lot of stuff and so Randy is like, Randy challenged me. He goes listen you know you're my instructor I want you to come compete with me at the next event and it was Allen Viernes' and this is it was the friendship tournament and I said you know what alright the hell with it I'll just do it so I got out there and I got to go, I went last which you know how that goes when you compete. You go last that's the best spot to go in, right?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Absolutely.

### **Andy Campbell:**

So, there was probably 10 or 15 guys in the division and I went competed and I took first place and it was the first, first place trophy I had ever earned competing in martial arts at 34 years old and I was like ahh this is great you know and all my kids were there, my students were there, my own kids were there my wife was there and that was it I mean boom from that moment on. I was hooked and I just competed and competed and competed and competed and competed and kept doing it and kept doing it and you know and kept winning and I realized you know I'm better than I think I am you know and I don't know what it was as a kid that whatever hump it was but when I finally got over that, it started to just flow for me and then you know I got a chance to be sponsored by a friend of mine that owned a place called Photo sports and Photo Sports was an org, it was a website and the guy that owned it had sponsored a few of my karate students and basically what he did you know he sponsored you to go around to different events and take pictures and stuff and then he would sell the pictures online and hopefully he would get offered to do like seminars and that kind of thing so I did photo sports for a couple of years and that's where I hooked on with Bruce from WOMMA and started doing some of the international competitions and the international competitions for me I enjoy them more than it did the local stuff and the only reason is, is because the local stuff I'm competing you know it's all guys that I know you know what I mean. It's all guys that you compete against you've seen forever or you're friends with and you know if I take 1st place 1 week and then Mike Sonia takes 1st place the next week and whatever, we're buddies switch back and forth. When you go over to these international competitions I'm competing against I have never seen before some guys now I have because it's been, I've been doing it for 5 years and well this will be my 5th year doing the international stuff so I've made friends and I've you know but there's always somebody different, there's always somebody new, there's always 4 or 5 guys that are new in your division so I might go in a division for they doing based on styles so they have hard styles, soft styles, Korean style, Japanese style, tai chi whatever so if I'm in my hard style Japanese traditional division so then they do a masters division so the only way to be in this division is if you're a third degree or up. So, when you're in those things there's always new guys coming in and it's always a challenge because I don't know, I don't know looking at these people. I've, I might have seen then warm up but I have never seen them do a form before, I don't know what to expect and that to me is that, it's that unknowing it's that, it's the hmm I look at this guy and you can see his build, you see the way he walks and that kind of thing and you say okay this guy is going to be this and sometimes they're fantastic, sometimes they're terrible and you never know and that to me is the fun part of the competing and the competition is A. keeps you young, B. it's good for you, your students to see you doing it because you want them to do it so you got to be out there doing it too and then C. it's the never knowing it's the surprise you know it's the you get in that ring and if I go first, I've no idea what the other guy is doing behind me. If I go last, I can see what everybody else doing and then I can kind of judge on you know okay that guy was really good I liked what he did, this guy was really guy, this other



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guy is not so much so you know I'll do this. I might change my form, I might change in my mind what kata I'm going to do 5 times before I actually get on the floor and do it you know so it's the not knowing for me which makes the competing part very fun and I tell my kids I still get nervous I walk at, the second I walk up on that stage and mostly international competitions now are up on big stages you know the second you get up there my get the sweat's, you know my eyes go glossy, my hands starts to sweat. I start to feel like I'm going to pass out and then you compete and you do it and you're in the zone and it's just there's nothing like being in that space where nobody else can touch you, you know what I mean.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah

**Andy Campbell:**

You're there it's you and everybody's eyes are on you and it's really a cool, it's just that cool feeling to know that all these people are watching and when you're done you know you get that oh men that was really cool and people come up to you and they go I don't even know how to say you know some of the things that some of these people say to you at the end of an event when you're sweating and you've just given 180% you've given everything you absolutely have and the sweats pouring off your body and you're breathing funny and people walk up to you and just high five you and they're like men that was fantastic, there's no better feeling than that, it's just cool.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

For sure yeah, yeah there are, there's little other than martial arts competition I mean there are some other things you know maybe dance competition but individual competition you know for that 60, 90, 120 seconds the world is yours.

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah you own it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

And everybody's watching you, they watch for good or for bad and to be in that spotlight is a feeling that outside of martial arts competition a lot of people don't get to experience.

**Andy Campbell:**



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Yeah and they never will, you know. And that's you say you know that the world is yours that's one of the you know that's you just, you're there you know and you no matter what you do 90% of the eyes in that room are standing right on you they trained on you and you have a chance to blow people away or you have a chance to make people go hmm okay, you know what I mean.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Absolutely.

**Andy Campbell:**

You know I tell my kids all the time, you want people to go that's a black belt not that's a black belt? So, you know it's you get that chance to put that with you and the people's eyes as to what a black belt should look like, it's pretty cool.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's right, so you've talked about a lot of different martial artist that you've had the opportunity to train with, you're certainly very fortunate, the number of people that you've done a chance to work out with but if you could train with anybody, anyone person living or dead who would that be?

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah, I would definitely have to say Funakoshi, you know I mean Funakoshi for me as you know the grandfather of modern day martial arts you know with that title the way everybody considers him and you know the fact that he was the guy that you know finalized our style I won't say created our style because you know there were guys that came before him and he put his stamp on it to make things what it is you know, most of what it is today. That would be the guy you know I look at him as you know the grandfather and again I use Yoda, he's like the yoda of martial arts to me you know with all the jedi's around him, that's yoda. that's the guy that everybody you know strives to not maybe be but to honor and that's how I look at him. I, when I do something, I want to honor that, I want to honor what he is what he was and things that he did and hopefully someday you know be that kind of force in you know what it is that I do. So, I would have to be pitching for Funakoshi.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Cool. I'm, it really interested, this might be the question I was most interested to ask you knowing your ties to well you've mentioned yoda a couple of times so I'm guessing you're a Star Wars fan but I know you as quite the comic book aficionado.





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**Andy Campbell:**

Yes.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Do you have a favorite martial arts movie?

**Andy Campbell:**

You know it's funny because I love the karate movies, I love all that stuff. I think that my probably my favorite one that I have seen right now is 13 assassins. Have you seen that?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I haven't.

**Andy Campbell:**

It is, it's one of those, the end of the movie itself is like, and see, like I mean I like Jackie Chan and I like you know Bruce Lee of course and all those you know all those guys, I love all of that stuff but for me this you know 13 assassins is one of those movies that and it's self-titled it's a Japanese film and it has it built the end scene between these 13 warriors and or these 13 rogue samurais that they put together to take down this shogun, it took an hour and a half and it's the battle scenes to end all battle scenes. It's just, it's phenomenal, it's just one of those movies that I could watch over and over again and it's funny because there's part of it that the reason why they're going after this guy, that guy was brutal and some of the events that take place in thing is just like oh my god I could even film that you know and to watch it was really disturbing and then to see this guy at the end what happens to him is just, if you haven't seen 13 assassins I highly recommend watching that movie because for me you know like I said Jackie Chan and all the stuff that he's done and you know and what's his name Blood Sport and all those guys you know what I mean Jean Claude Van Damme.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah, Van Damme.

**Andy Campbell:**



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Yeah, Van Damme, all that stuff I love those guys, I love it all I've seen them all. Jet Li, I love Jet Li, I love like Forbidden Kingdom with Jet Li and Jackie Chan, that's a good one, I love that movie but 13 assassins is probably my favorite martial arts movie because it's just, it's beyond everything else and it just gives you a real insight into the old days of you know what samurai warriors were all about. Crazy, crazy movie.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Oh cool, well, we'll link to that as well some of the other things you're talking about in the show notes on the website on [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) so people can see exactly what we're talking about and hopefully finding and watch that movie. So, do you have a favorite martial arts actor?

**Andy Campbell:**

Not really, nah you know like I said I like Jet Li a lot I think Jet Li is great, Jet Li's phenomenal and you know of course the Jackie Chan stuff you know Jackie Chan was one of those guys that you know everybody can like, everybody can love because of you know he had his serious time and then he went into the fun kind of family oriented stuff and you know all that kind of things. You know as far as actor per se you know I really don't, you know, I don't know it's kind of weird, isn't it?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It is a little bit, is there anybody you think's over rated?

**Andy Campbell:**

I'm going to get crucified for saying this.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's why I'm asking, cause if you would be willing to put yourself out there?

**Andy Campbell:**

I'm willing to put myself out there, I think you know I'm really tired of all the Chuck Norris jokes, the Chuck Norris' you know the on the 8th day or 9th day God created Chuck Norris you know all the Chuck Norris stuff. I think for what Chuck Norris was in his heyday was amazing and I think he was amazing and I just think what he's kind of gravitated into you know in the and again religion and all that stuff I hate talking about it because I have my own opinions in things and everybody has their opinions on things



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but it's one of those things where I really think that he's trying to force a lot of his religious stuff on people nowadays as he gets older you know. So, I don't know if he's quite a born again Christian or any of that kind of stuff but a lot of this stuff that he's gone into for me is just too much. I think that religion should be one of those things that you know it's your thing you do what you want with it, you enjoy it as you want and I don't need it forced on me, you know I'd rather watch his movies than you know walk in Texas Ranger cause I love that stuff and you know I loved all of his old flicks. I thought they were great but you know I would I don't know like I said I don't know if I'd say if he was over rated, I certainly wouldn't say that but I just think, I'm just kind of beyond

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah, I'm just kind of

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Okay that's fair, maybe to continue the meme I should say you know the opinions expressed of our guests are not necessarily those of [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com).

**Andy Campbell:**

Probably should.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Probably Chuck Norris doesn't beat down my door and kill me.

**Andy Campbell:**

He's a great guy I mean I didn't, when I was at a seminar in Vegas I was at the martial arts super show. The year that he got the lifetime achievement award and I thought he was very personal you know and I got a chance to meet him he was very you know there's a lot of people there and he kind of kept his distance which I can understand but he seemed to be you know quite down to earth and that kind of stuff, it just like I said it's all the other stuff that I'm kind of done with.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Sure, I understand. How about books, any great martial arts books you'd recommend?

### **Andy Campbell:**

Yeah there's a book, I'm just trying to find it it's called Shotokan secrets and I forgot the name of the author it's Bruce something, Dr. Bruce something and it's basically he takes a look at all the old Shotokan stuff, all the katas and he gives a sort of his theory on where things came from. It's a great book and 47:07 in there it's a really fun and then Karatedo my way of life is my, is probably my favorite karate book you know martial arts book. It's the autobiography of Gichin Funakoshi and it just, it gives great detail into him and how he was and you know where he came from and his philosophies and stuff like that and I really enjoyed that book, it's one and it's a short read it's you know it's something like 200 pages or something like that and I've read it numerous times and I enjoy reading that book it's one of those books that I go back to whenever I just need a little something, spiritual something you know what I mean. It's kind of like my Shotokan, karate bible so to speak so.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

Oh, great and of course we'll link both of those, so we're starting to wind down 2 questions left, any martial arts related goals that you have for the future.

### **Andy Campbell:**

Yeah, I still, when we do our world games I go to the world and games and I've gone the past 4 years now and you know just my 5th coming up and the elusive grand championship there has gotten me every year. I've been in the grands and I've come in second every year by half a point a tenth of a point something like that and it's been very close with some of these guys now I'm 44 years old and the guys that I'm over there competing against the guys that keep beating me, this guy named Jason Bared who is just, he's a phenomenal martial artist he's a pretty big deal over in England and he's, he does TV stuff he's been on. Man, he's a sponsor or is sponsored by some men's health magazines over there. He does some pretty big things, he's a great guy but that jerk has beaten me twice now I thought I got passed him and then I have another friend of mine and his name is Dave Pearson and in Ireland when they're in Ireland together it was him and I for the grands well there are there I can't say they're I hate to say it that way there were 5 of them. There were 4 or 5 us that were, had gotten chosen and what they do with these over there they take all the divisions and they take all the division winners and again there could be 50 into 20 division so they take the number 1 guy from each division and then they have a run off and then during the run off they take the top 3 and then you come back for the grand championship on Sunday night and so I've had, I've lost Jason twice in the grand championship and then I lost to Dave once so far and when I lost to Dave it was broadcast on this Irish website all over the world. It was cool because Dave beat me and then so there are 5 judges I get two 9, 9, 9 and three 9, 9 to 8s and he gets



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three 9, 9, 9s and two 9, 9, 8s you know so I lost to him on that and but the funniest part about that was it was you know 7 or 8 o'clock at night in Ireland but it was like you know 2 o'clock in the afternoon or noon time over here in the States. So my wife and 2 of my daughters were in a blueberry field watching it on an iPod, or an iPad, a iPhone my youngest daughter who's 16 now but she was 15 at the time but she was driving with her girlfriends down to Fenway park to see Justin Timberlake and she was watching in the car my other daughter was in Texas watching it with my aunt, my dad was in Florida watching me compete for the very first time, he'd never seen me compete before and he's watching it online streamed you know all around the world. I and friends of mine in Hawaii, California, all these people are sending me all these things, we're watching you, we're watching, we're watching we got it on and you know and I lost by the one tenth of a point it was frustrating but it was cool so that's my thing my elusive grand championship that's the one thing that I want to get and I'm hoping that this year's the year. I got my fingers crossed, we'll see what happens.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well I wish you luck.

**Andy Campbell:**

I appreciate that very much.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Because many of us will be following what's going on with you over there and the other folks that are headed over, so that leaves us with our last question, do you have any parting words of wisdom? Any advice for the people listening to this episode.

**Andy Campbell:**

The only thing that I would say is if it's something you love do it. Keep up, stick with it you know I mean it's so easy nowadays to back away to walk off something, to give up to quit and you know we have kids that do it they'd get frustrated you know and we're in a civil society nowadays of you know instant gratification you know with the way technology is and all the stuff that you know life brings you. If you love it do it, stay with it, keep it up because in the long run all that matters is how you feel. It doesn't matter what anybody else thinks. I'd tell my kids all the time, there's one person in this world that can make you happy, sad, excited, disappointed, and it's you. So, whatever it is that you're doing that is right for you, keep it up and enjoy it because that's what life's all about.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Very very well said, well now's your turn what do you have going on that people might be interested in. I know you run a tournament over the summer.

**Andy Campbell:**

Yup

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Tell us about stuff that you've got going on that people maybe interested

**Andy Campbell:**

We do have summer spectacular and happen this June 27th this year it will be XL sports World in Saco, Maine. We are the only tournament on the circuit that does, I call them circuit that does continuous sparring, so we have a continuous sparring division which had been a lot of fun and it's increased amazingly over the past couple of years. First year we had 8 competitors, last year about 55.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Wow

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah and then and we also do we have a demo team competitions we have synchronized katas, synchronized weapons so we do a bunch of different things with that and that's a lot of fun so for the big thing coming up. I'm trying to you know work on putting things together and getting our awards ready and all that kind of stuff right now so that's kind of what I'm doing at the moment.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Great yeah of course we'll link to your website into that there and if anyone wants to reach you is there a contact information on your website, links to your people too.

**Andy Campbell:**

There is.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Okay fantastic.

**Andy Campbell:**

Absolutely. All my information is right there on our website and you can you know I'm [senseiandy@maine.com](mailto:senseiandy@maine.com) that's my email address you know send an email or anything like that and questions anything you want to do, anything I can do for anybody else please feel free to ask.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Great, yeah, we'll link that and for people who don't want to hit the show notes, the website's dragonfire M E as in Maine .com. Well Shihan Andy I really appreciate you being on today I had a lot of fun talking to you. We probably could have kept going another a couple of hours if we had the opportunity but I know you've got some structural issues to attend to in your dojo.

**Andy Campbell:**

Yeah, I have a few things going on right now so, I got to work on that so I appreciate you having me on it's been a lot of fun and you know I look forward to. Even if we don't get to do this again you and I just sitting down and talking about some other things I got some, you know you got some lineage that I want to know about too so.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Oh well maybe someday we'll flip in you can be the interviewer and I'll be the guest.

**Andy Campbell:**

Sounds good to me.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Alright well, thanks so much and I'm sure I'll talk to you soon.

**Andy Campbell:**

Alright Jeremy take care.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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