



Episode 235 – 30 Days of Karate with Sensei Rob Domaschuk | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Sensei Rob, welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio.

Rob Domaschuk:

Thanks for having me Jeremy, this is absolutely fantastic. I've been a listener of the show for a long time so, it felt a thrill and an honor to be on the show myself.

Jeremy Lesniak:

The honor is mine because you did something and listeners, you may notice that this is kinda starting out like an interview show, and if you're listening to it right of the bat when its released, you might be saying; wait a second, this is coming out on a Thursday, not a Monday. Why is an interview coming out on a Thursday? Or, maybe you don't pay much attention but I'm sure, some of you out there asking that question and really, as much as we're gonna talk about sensei rob and what he's got going on, there were something really specific that he did that caught my eye, that I wanted to bring him on to talk about because I thought it was really cool. And without jumping into anything else, because I think this is the best place to start it off, you undertook, I don't know what we call it, an undertaking? That you titled, 30 days of karate.

Rob Domaschuk:



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That's right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, I witnessed it as post on Instagram. But I know, it's a lot more than you taking a single photo a day or something like that, there was actually a lot of substance behind it, so I just kinda wanna step back from the mic now and let you explain to the listeners what you did and more importantly, why?

Rob Domaschuk:

Absolutely. So, this was actually my second go around. The first one I tagged you, I think when you said I did something that caught your eye I think what I did was probably tag you in a post to begin with and it was one of your earlier episodes that got me thinking about journey's and struggling and pushing and stuff, what would you often do? And so, now this time around I'm gonna tag you in the 30 days of karate and you're right, I'm not sure to call it either maybe a personal mission or a personal discipline. Growing up I've been to someone who I 02:00 something and then I jumped in both feet and I really get into it. And after a while, the excitement can sort of wane a little bit. So, not that it was happening with karate but as I kind of find myself popping into a recognizable pattern I said well, that's not the way for me to grow. So, last April I guess, 02:22 ago, I was in my backyard practicing I thought you know what I should do this more, the next thing I knew I kind of grew this 30 days of karate. And then being an excellent exercise for me, got me in discipline, kinda rekindle some of that fire, finished it and then I thought I need to do that again and that's going to be you know I'm not sure when. Well, six months period 02:47 so September came around I thought okay, 30 days in September, 30 days of karate, that's a good match but what was really neat this time was, I was talking with one of my adult students in one of my classes and another person who I've never met him in person but I've become friends with him on Instagram through martial arts posts and stuff, and the two of them joined me and they did the 30 days of karate alongside me and that was just fantastic because now I have someone, actually two people who I felt accountable to for making sure that I completed all thirty days they felt the same way. So, what I decided this time around was to let it kind of grow organically, I wasn't going to really structured, all I knew was I needed to do 30 days my goal is to do an hour a day of karate and some days that's really easy because I was in the dojo for couple of hours, other days, it's been 4 or 5 days I've spent a long week at work, I'm tired. I put the kids to bed, it's 10 o'clock, oh man, haven't done with karate yet. And so, I have either do some meditation, I would do some reading, I would do some kata in the backyard. And the great thing about doing kata at 11 o'clock 03:57 is the likelihood of your neighbors would wonder what you're doing and calling the police is really low. So, all that kind of came together and said, alright, so that's the second iteration of 30 days of karate and that's the one that I tagged you and because again, a lot of the stuff I've been hearing recently on your podcast really ties in to my own philosophy and my own approach of martial arts, and it seem like a good idea at that time and thankfully you've responded and that's why I'm here today and were gonna talk more about the 30 days. But that's the history of it.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay cool. And that's quite an undertaking. I mean really and that's the word that's coming up because it's, I don't want to call it a challenge, because as you said, you weren't structuring it but in a sense, it was a challenge for the logistical reasons, for life getting in the way.

Rob Domaschuk:

Absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I know exactly what you're talking about looking at the clock and saying it's ten o'clock, I've got two hours left in my day to get one hour of practice and that doesn't leave a lot of variability. It kinda becomes, I have to do that right now.

Rob Domaschuk:

Well, you know, in the interest of transparency, I have to say sometimes, like I said, I'd have a long day at work plus I had to put the kids down to bed, I was really looking forward to a glass of bourbon, and I just would have to tell myself, no bourbon until I'm done with my karate and that help incentivize it some days.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Certainly, empathize with that, single malt would be my poison but I get it. Now, when you were doing these thirty hours of karate, obviously some of them were in the dojo, working with your students, I would probably get a sense as to what those hours look like but the hours you weren't home or training on your own, you know, outside of class, what did that time look like? What were you doing?

Rob Domaschuk:

Sure. First, I'll have to say like wow, no one had ever, has ever stop to say, so those thirty hours of karate you did in September, like wow, I've never thought of it like the totality of the number and I think it does got hit with the enormity of the challenge so. Anyway, it really varied, and that's the second time around I really needed to make sure I could vary it a bit. I try to incorporate some meditation every single day because that I found has been key to allow myself to center and focus and move away in my brain from the everyday into focusing on karate. I also, a couple of years ago, that's when I rediscovered, just to make your heart swell, I rediscovered the joy of kata. Before I think kata for one of those necessary evils that I had to do. Couple of years ago, something clicked and I thought okay so, this time, I'm going to practice in our school, we use the pinon hayon system and I just went with the first one and that's the one that I practiced over and over and over because I remember reading somewhere, you know the old masters would talk about three years of kata, I thought, well if three years of kata before I can call myself a master, 07:06 several times a day for thirsty days, isn't gonna get me closer but certainly isn't



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gonna make me master so I had to refocus on that and again that was part of the challenge and part of the discipline to say. You know I'm, really don't feel like doing kata today but that's part of the decision I'd made, part of the challenge I've given myself plus you know, sometimes I just had to say to myself, it's only thirty days and the challenge was you know, thirty days is long but its long enough as a challenge but not so long that you just feel like that there's no end to it. So that's a lot of kata. I also incorporated a lot more of my kobudo training. So, my first love are the tonfa and the jo. Years ago, I used to do aikido and that's where I fell in love with the short staff the jo. And kobudo is almost my treat, my reward for doing my kata and lot of the just basics. Iron shot bags, someday I would some ho ju wan du, strengthening my bones and let me tell you, iron shot bags, they hurt and I kept thinking oh man this really sucks but it's supposed to be really good for me. And I hope it stops and I've realized at some point I'm not trying to destroy the nerves on my hand, I'm trying to reinforce the bone structure so, I suppose it's never gonna stop hurting and again that's part of the discipline, part of the challenge. So really, when I say that, I changed up a lot, I'd say the only thing that really stayed constant throughout the thirty days was kata practice and meditation but I also wanted to free myself up to say you know, what, I'm going for an hour, if today I can only do thirty minutes and the last it starts it just slide and become sloppy, I'm not doing myself any favors by forcing myself through thirty minutes of bad practice. So, you just have to forgive yourself, move on to the next and I knew that there will be days that I will be spending two and a half and three hours in the dojo, and I would just make that time up. So, it's a combination of challenging myself and disciplining myself to do it every day but also being free to say, you know what, thirty minutes is enough today and I just for whatever reason anymore it'll actually be a negative experience and that's not helpful.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You've alluded to some of the emotional things that were happening during this you know, pain and maybe a little bit of foreboding as you looked into training later into the evening, certainly more positive thing. Were there any themes you know, I guess in the emotional response to doing this? You know did it start out all honky dory and in the middle, did really stink and at the end, you were glad it was over? I mean was there a path like that or was it more disjointed?

Rob Domaschuk:

A little bit of column a and a little bit of column b. The hardest part for me was day 7 through 10, the first week is easy cause you're so on that high of just doing it either you're excited by it you've done 7 days it's going great and you hit a bit of a wall at day 8 because you've been doing for a week now, you're not even close to halfway, you're not even halfway to halfway, yet right? And so that's day 8 though 10 to 11 those are the toughest for me once I got on the day 12 I said oh okay you know, what halfway is only a couple of days away I got this and then once I hit day 15 I was able to go and now is the countdown right, 15, 14, 13 so forth I was, I was happy that I've finished it. I was happy that I finished 10:48 part of it thought it was to let go on day 31 I also know that I needed to not do anything that day. I knew that I needed to take a break, okay I've done 30 days, I've done these 30 hours 11:02 break and



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rest and relax and give my body a bit of a break. So there's kinda the finishing was bittersweet it's probably the best way to put it but you know, I also don't wanna leave anybody with the impression that having you know several mates going late 11 o'clock and there were a couple of times where I subside midnight that's great thing here in the Chicago land in September if it's a Friday or Saturday night midnight it was like 68 degrees, 67 it was just beautiful outside so I had in mind and again busy day my kids were in soccer we had 11:37 spending time with them, spending time with my wife and so it wasn't necessarily a tough thing to stay up every single night and do sometimes that was something I look forward to and there are a couple of times I'll be honest whereas you plan my day that I wasn't gonna go out until 11 o'clock at night or even later cause that's my time that's me time and yes sometimes it's tough sometimes there's pain from some of the training but really provided I way for me to kinda get an insight into how I view my karate how I view mrts my dedication to it the fact that I am looking for me time so training karate isn't time away from kinda me and myself and but rather that's where I find myself so it was overall a very positive experience again come April I'll do it again hopefully you know, hopefully we have some of your listeners will wanna join me there's you know, nothing to it other than you know, post on Instagram every day picture this as tag it 30 days of karate and you know and hopefully we'll get a little community just doing this kind of thing twice a year. So again, it's a positive experience there were certain days that were tough and like I said we have days 8 through 10, 11 were tough again overall it was something that I had to look forward to as well.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice and certainly I think we'll have some folks from this community join you, I have every intention of joining you. I think it's fantastic what you've done and listeners we'll make sure that we remind you a few weeks in advance and I'm gonna ask Sensei Rob to help remind me to remind you a few weeks in advance so we can promote it and maybe you know, I don't certainly don't wanna co-opt it as martial arts radio thing, this is the thing that you started and you deserve credit for that but if it's something that we can encourage others to do and others can receive some benefit from it, some mutual support leaning on each other and posting and sharing hashtags then.

Rob Domaschuk:

Exactly

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think it's a good thing.

Rob Domaschuk:

Yup and you know what, they fit more from 30 days of karate to 30 days of martial arts that's even better. Alright, it's 30 days of karate for me because that's my art, that's what I study but I'll tell there's someone doing wing chun or aikido and they want to join, that'd be great.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool. Awesome. When you look back over these two instances of 30 days, what has changed for you?

Rob Domaschuk:

Oh wow, great question. I'm trying to think without leaving a lot of dead air for you, probably the biggest thing that has changed has been, probably my temperament. You know there were times when having to go to the dojo really did feel like a burden. Not a big one, but just like oh you know what, it's been a long day I'd rather just take the night off. 14:34 I could do that 30 days challenge, knowing that push comes to shove, I could reach down, find that energy, grab it and go, that really helped. And again, the whole experience kind of resparks the energy and that excitement for the martial arts and again, the meditation, I really want to balance things out so these meditations is something that I continued everyday as well. Sometimes its five minutes, sometimes its half an hour, sometimes its 2 minutes. But that's probably my biggest take away that I know what I'm capable of, or at least I got a better sense of what I'm capable of and I know how to reset and refocus fairly quickly if I feel the need to.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If someone is listening and they're all inspired you know, you've got them excited about this idea, but they don't want to wait for April to do it with others, they want to do it on their own. What advice might you have for them?

Rob Domaschuk:

Go for it. You know, presumably if people listening to this show, this is not their only form of social media, they're probably going beyond Facebook, obviously they're on Facebook because they'll be following the podcast on Facebook, too right?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hopefully.

Rob Domaschuk:

And of course, they'll be following whistlekick radio on Instagram so, get on there and reach out. You know it's easy when you start participating in some of the online forums and Facebook groups it's really easy to get discouraged by some the keyboard warriors who just want to troll and hate on anything you do, but there's a lot of us out there who want nothing more than to help and support each other. It doesn't matter if, again, my first art that was aikido, but I mean, I love kung fu, I love wing chun, any really good martial art I'd love and anyone who is practicing it and who's dedicated to it, man, I would love to talk to those people. So, go for it, if you think it might be good. If you're not sure, you can do thirty days try ten. Alright, try 20. And reach out just say hey, so I listen to the podcast sounds like a good idea, I'm not gonna wait till April so I'm gonna start it right now, I'm gonna do ten days, you know



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hash tag it, throw it out there, reach out because the people who listen to your show and others like it are typically are gonna be the kind of people who will respond to someone saying, hey I need some support would you mind helping me up.

Jeremy Lesniak:

One of the most beautiful things about the internet, about what this fantastic communication medium has done for the martial arts is its broken down a lot of those barriers whether geographic barriers or you know, confining arts to you know, to certain people to hide the knowledge. However, you wanna look at it, those barriers have fallen and there's so many of us doing so many different things and different ways yet, for a lot of the same reasons. My motivation with this show and with whistlekick and pretty much spot on to your motivation for thirty days of karate. We're doing it because of a passion for martial arts in trying to help ourselves and to help others with it.

Rob Domaschuk:

And you know, that not the first time you said that on your podcast either, and that's one thing that has attracted me and keeps me getting back to listen to your episodes over and over.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thank you. Folks, I promise, this was not the price to entry. I did not give him a list of compliments that he had to throw my way by the end of the show.

Rob Domaschuk:

You know, I do have a whole list written down that I want to throw by the end of the show.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey, I'll take them. Of course, we're gonna link the hashtag that you used and your social media whistlekickmartialartsradio.com under your episode but for folks that you know maybe aren't gonna make it over there, can you throw out, what's your Instagram handle? It sounds like that's the primary for you.

Rob Domaschuk:

It is. It's dad aint hip, its `dad_aint_hip` and that comes courtesy of my, well at the time, my seven-year-old son who kinda point out to me how I was no longer cool. I'm like, oh come on man, I study karate, I'm in IT, I drive a minivan, what's not cool about me? But yeah, I figured well, the best way to show how cool I'm not was to change the word cool to hip. Because when I said oh so I'm not hip and he said what's hip mean? Thanks for proving my point kid. So yeah, `dad_aint_hip` on Instagram.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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There we go, you are yet another martial artist involve in IT.

Rob Domaschuk:

We have to be, I mean, otherwise we are like the wounded gazelle's in the sarangeti.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright, we have to protect ourselves.

Rob Domaschuk:

Maybe that's it, there's a correlation because it's so many, there's so many of us and folks that might be new to the show may not know, I've mentioned it before but my previous career prior to whistlekick, I had an IT consulting firm. There's a bunch of us, there's a lot. There are and I think at least one of the two guys, maybe you don't mind me mentioning another podcast on your show...

Jeremy Lesniak:

No, not at all. Not at all.

Rob Domaschuk:

The two guys who do karate cafe, and at least one of them is in IT at the same time so, it's not a strange mixture. That is pretty common.

Jeremy Lesniak:

No, there's something in the mindset.

Rob Domaschuk:

I'm telling you man, it's self-preservation and that's what it's gonna be.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I love it. Well, I do wanna get one a little bit just kinda roll back and ask that very first question that we ask of everyone when they come on for standard show, about how you got started in the martial arts. I think that'll likely tie us up in a nice way.

Rob Domaschuk:

Absolutely. So, I started martial arts twenty-five years and probably a hundred pound ago, when I was in my early twenties. Ever since, I was a teenager, I grew up watching Bruce lee movies, jean Claude van-Damme and a little bit later on, Steven Seagal movies, and that always look cool to me. Especially again, not that I was an outcast but I'm certainly kinda nerdy guy in junior high school and high school and a lot of characters in martial arts movies, the hero is a bit of a social outcast, probably socially awkward. So, I



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kinda related to the characters and I idolized kind of how they ended up coming out, out on top. That's really cool and also you know, the one thing that all these characters have in common of course is martial arts, that's really cool. And then like I said, I wanted to finally 21:37 in university that I had an opportunity to signed up for something through the university and I'm also been the guy usually who's attracted to the less than common items so, you know, they're offering karate, they're several, 21:50 that I never heard of at the time, aikido. Well it's kind of cool so I looked it up quickly and I'll try aikido, why not and I fell in love with it. It was great, my flexibility was never as good at it was when I was doing that, it offered a discipline that I was looking for. I think a lot of us in the martial arts, I think a lot of us look for ritual in our lives because that's kind of lost I think in our day to day lives. I'm also a cigar guy, I like good wines, not that I can't afford to buy them all the time, but there's something to the opening and pouring a bottle of wine. There's something you take cutting and lighting a cigar. There's something to pouring a really good single malt or other whisky over perfectly formed ice cube. There's a ritual involved and when it comes to martial arts, I think that's at least for me, I know several people I've talked to, one big thing that we look for is some kind of ritual to bring back into our lives and aikido had that discipline and that ritual. Then so I fell in love with it and did it for about a year until I realize that being a fulltime student really didn't provide me with a budget to continue. And so, for years, I was really, I mean I watched, I need to watch movies, but at this point the web had finally come around and YouTube was starting to grow and I was able to watch videos online and people actually doing it not just, you know after. Always wanted to get back, and then when our son was bored it was very apparent that not only was my son gonna be following in my stem of nerdism, but he's gonna take it to the next level so well, you know, let's get him started early and we signed them up for a different art and 23:30 to well so, my wife found this group to local park district and I thought well 23:37 you know karate is kind of a mainstream thing 23:42 park district, how good can it be? But you know what he's six, if he gets some room out running around for half an hour, 45 minutes once a week, get him some exercise whatever, lets sign him up. First day, and I was amazed. The two instructors at the time, both of them had been friends since sensei joe and sensei ken, had this wonderful ability to balance the need to keep the kid disciplined and focused and training without ever letting them not be kids. I remember the first time 24:14 the kids were running around like crazy and all of a sudden sensei joe yells out for the kids to get in line then they like stop and attention, they run, they get into a nice formal stance and I thought wow, that's pretty cool. You know, I wonder if you could teach me to do that and wonder I you can come home and do it for me at home cause my son didn't respond to me like that and turns out that they had a parent program and the parent's program was you train alongside your kids, you test everything, there's some extra class with the kids and as a parent, it was free I just would have to help out in class once in a while and holding bags, 24:52 so forth and maybe that was six years ago now I guess and I was not expecting, actually 25:03 fair to say that I wasn't expected to get bit by the karate bug, I was fully expecting not to get bit by the karate but. It's something that my son would do but, within one or two classes, and I told my son look, you make your orange belt, your second belt, and I will join as a parent helper. Part of this was I need my son to, stick with something. So, we're gonna do karate for one season and then you're done and try something else so you're interested with something and if you want me to



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do this parent program, you have to make at least your second grade. So, he did. I said alright, well, here's the deal and I joined up and god, that was quite a while ago and now I run two locations along with some others really fantastic senseis and I haven't looked back but I guess I was really not expecting to fall in love with karate like I did.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Awesome. That's such a great story and there are so many out there who started because of their children. My mother started because she was tired of just watching me from the side. I talked to plenty of others who have had the same experience and seeing it now, friends, peers of mine, people my age watching their kids get old enough and they start and say okay, it's time for me to jump in too. But it's great that it's there's this actual structure to weave parents in at your school and I'm wondering if you might just tell us a little bit more about what that looks like? Because I bet we have some interest peaked in the listeners.

Rob Domaschuk:

Oh yeah, again if anybody's interested in starting up a program like this for their school, I can be reached on Instagram, I'm happy to talk about. We're proud of this. Each class because of the age of the kids, is about 45 minutes in length cause that's really for kids who are 6 and 7 and 8, that's about as long as you can really keep your attention and keep your focus going is essentially at the younger ranks so with the parent helpers, you know sometimes I just need someone to hold shields. Sometimes I need to help get the kids in line while they're lining up to do something. But what's great is after a while, after this program. In one of my classes, I've got I think six parent helpers in the program for about thirty kids. So, quite often, I am and I have other black belts who are instructors in the class, when there are times and I get to, this is a real treat from me, as much as I love training the kids, there are times that I get to train the parents. The other instructors, they got the kids, the kids are in great shape tonight, I'm gonna take you guys off the side and we're gonna train and we train a little bit harder and we'll go a little bit faster but the really great thing about the program, is that it gives the parent or parents an opportunity to spend some time with their kids. I mean, how often especially today 27:53 all the time with my friends of mine who have kids, you sign your kids up for soccer in the spring and the fall you sign them up for baseball, in the summer, you sign them up for some kind maybe basketball over the winter, and you will go to the practices, you will go to the games, you know watch and you'll encourage and do everything that you should be doing but you become a spectator in the development of your kids whereas karate, is an opportunity to actually engage at the same level. So, it's not that your son or daughter just gonna come home and say, hey dad I learned how to do a proper punch today, you know, your child's gonna go home and say to his mom or dad; hey we learned how to do proper punch today. So, you're doing it alongside your child and even for adults, there's still a lot of personal development and a lot of personal growth that happens and opportunity for that, and why not do it alongside while your child is doing that. So, it's an amazing experience to be able to do martial arts alongside your kids. Sometimes, they sit sometimes you separate the parents and we can do some stuff that we wouldn't do with the kids, but



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most of the time, they're right there and the other great thing and totally I can tell you, when kids have parent in the program doing it at the same time, the likelihood of them staying much longer in the program. Because we all know right, for every 100 white belts one of them is gonna test for black, chances are in our program, that one who test for black probably has a parent who's going alongside them in the program as well.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And of course, anybody that spent time in a mixed age class knows that the adults tend to bring up the focus and that they, the resolve of the children and the children tend to teach the children to have a bit more fun and be silly.

Rob Domaschuk:

And the fun thing too is, we like to incorporate games a lot in our class, because again, got to get the kids laughing and having good time, they have to want to come back to karate, right? Especially you know, again, any other sport soccer, football, baseball, those are short seasons whereas you're in karate, it's every week until you decide to stop and that's you know, 52 weeks a year. So, you have to keep engaging, you have to make them want to come back and we do that with games. And my one rule when we play games in class or two rules, number one is the game has something to do with building some kind of skill, whether it's just helping with their agility or focus, awareness whatever, but my other rule, the parents don't get to stand on the sidelines. If you're in my class, if you are a parent helper in the class and you're taking karate alongside, you're playing the game too. So, sometimes we play, you know dodge pads, we don't play dodge ball, we'll take sparring pads and we play dodge pad and sometimes we do parents against the kids. And by the way, the kids invariably win that one because the parents are like oh I'm a little too big, I'm a little too old the like suddenly 30:51 grab a pad and you know, kids have no sense of, you know they're just gonna go in there and grab that pad and just start hurling at their parents and the ability to throw something at their parents and not getting in trouble, so yeah. It's a great opportunity and again, if anybody has any sense of wanting to incorporate a parent program and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. We're, again we're proud of that, it's a big part of our program and I think every school would benefit from having some kind of a program like that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wonderful. Well folks, there are two wonderful reasons to follow sensei rob to Instagram to reach out to him if you're driving, or something where you can't jot down his Instagram handle, [dad_aint_hip](https://www.instagram.com/dad_aint_hip), which is probably in my top 5 for favorite social media handles of all time. You can find the link to that over at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com we'll link it out for you to see. Go right there. But he's on the show for a reason, he wants to share this stuff and he wants you all to join him, to reach out, and of course we will let you all know as April approaches, 30 days of karate, we can twist it into 30 days of



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martial arts for those of you that don't practice karate, and we can all work on this together and become better and lean on each other and discover these lessons together. Sensei Rob I really appreciate you coming on today and thanks for sharing and just do what you do.

Rob Domaschuk:

Thanks so much because again, I've been listening to your show for a really long time, knowing just the, you know, some of the guest that you've had I have to say, you know me being on your show it feels like kinda standing on the shoulder of giants and it's been a thrill.