



Episode 284 – Mr. Larry Zickefoose | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Good day to you! This is whistlekick Martial Arts Radio and this is episode 284. Today, we're joined by Mr. Larry Zickefoose. If you haven't been lately, please head on over whistlekick.com. Check out the new stuff we've got going on there. Check out the links to all the other projects that we work on day in, day out - martial arts calendar, martial arts memes. Follow us on social media or head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com and check out one of the other 283 other episodes. All available for free, going back several years now. You can find the show notes with links to the guest's social media or websites, sometimes email addresses, phone numbers, videos, personal photos. We really do our best to make those show notes supplemental to what you hear on the show. Words are great. We love the podcast format. But sometimes, you're looking for a little more. It's nice to know what our guests look like, how they move in some of the videos, links to the things we talked about - books, movie recommendations. And that's why show notes. So check those out.

Let's talk about today, though. Today's guest, Mr. Larry Zickefoose, transcends many generation of martial artists as a long-time martial arts veteran. He's always claimed his father as a major influence and even though his father's path isn't the one we think of when we truly talk about martial arts being handed down to a child, it's just as relevant, just as powerful. With over 50



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years of training, today's guest now shares his knowledge with the younger generations. Talking to him was fun with stories from humble beginnings to passion and training, and so much more. Let's welcome him. Mr. Zickefoose, welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio!

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Thank you!

Jeremy Lesniak:

And thank you! Thanks for being here.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

It's my pleasure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. So we were just talking a little bit, listeners, you know. Most of the time we have a little bit of what I call pre-show where we're just kinda chatting a little bit and... You know, you are our yet another person that we've got on from the mid-Atlantic who... You know we talked about martial arts, you know, there are certainly these hot spots. But it seems like there's a decent amount of martial arts down your way but maybe it's just not discussed on a national level as often.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah. I think there's a lot of martial arts schools in this... You know, I'm in a Greater Cincinnati area, actually. I mean even though it's north of Kentucky, there's a lot of martial arts schools here. I think none of the jurors [03:05](#) national coverage. We do have one instructor down here, Master Kim, in the martial arts Erlanger Kentucky and I think he is actually an Olympic-qualified instructor or referee. So he's in his 80's now and he's been here forever, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. But of course when we go back, you know when we talk about martial arts in the 60's, the 50's-60's, and the 70's, the landscape seems to be a little bit different about where people were, you know. Bill Wallace coming out of Indiana and that being kind of a hot-bed, and then



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Texas being a hot-bed for martial arts and for competition and now it's kinda... It seems like, at least attention-wise, it shifted more towards the coasts. And I find that fascinating. You know, I have no idea why that happened but at least that's where the attention is.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

I guess most of the Koreans and Japanese and Chinese people in the martial arts, most of them probably immigrated into the West Coast. I mean like you said, move-in to Texas and the coast get most traffic, I guess.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Yeah. Well of course we're here to talk martial arts so let's talk about martial arts and your time in the martial arts and... Why don't we rewind the whole way and how about you tell us how you got started?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Well I was raised in West Virginia and I've always had an interest in martial arts. I guess I bought my first Black Belt Magazine, I must have been 10 years old. And I saved up to buy it. You know, I was always interested and I took my first martial arts training with a Judo training, I was 17. And I'm 67 years old now so we're talking 50 years ago. And like I said, I bought a Black Belt Magazine and all the schools are listed in the back row - California and New York, Texas, you know. There were nowhere anywhere near me. But I was always interested in it. I'm saying I bought my first Karate book, as I called it, when I was probably 10. But I was, you know, I've been in and out martial arts for my entire life. Whenever I could afford it or whenever I was on a ship to prevent it. I didn't care what style it was. If there was one near me, I go down and workout, and try to take some lessons. At least in that way, [05:41](#) my entire life so...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now you said ship? Were you in the service?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah, I was in the service just for a little while, you know. There's nothing special there. No. That was for [05:54](#) service when I was in Washington, D.C. area. And Jhoon Ree, I think you interviewed Jhoon Ree, I went to one of his schools [06:01](#) I work right around the corner from its main school at that time. It was at 2000 L St. And a couple of guys I worked with actually



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trained with him. I would die if I met him one time. So... he was known for his commercials down there, you know. It's a... 06:16 a little 06:16 down there but today, again, my ship would change. And you know, I have to drop it. Too many schools had classes during the day because, you know, the instructor had a regular job, you know. Jhoon Ree was pretty well-known down. He trained senators and as a matter of fact, I think his health is bad right now.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It is. It is. He wasn't doing so well when we had him on the show which I was honored that he was willing to take the time. But he, uh... yeah, he's a legend.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

You know, him and I... Most of the instructors in the D.C. area, Taekwondo in that area at that time, I'm talking 70's now, that came with him are, you know, 07:04 there was one Falls Church Virginia at the town named Kwanro. And the heat had recently come with those in a group with Jhoon Ree. There was a master course, it always is Master Kim down there, very, very old schools.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Yeah and I've wondered if some of the reason for the heavy density of Taekwondo in the D.C. are all relates to international politics. I don't know if you've read the book A Killing Art?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

No, I don't believe so.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But you know, there's some interesting stuff in there that you know... It comes up on the show from time to time, the idea that Taekwondo for Korea was, you know, a political tool as much as a sport and some other things that spidered out from that with the Korean equivalent of the CIA and... There's some amazing stories and Alex Gillis is the author and he's been on the show. And he talked a bit about his process and researching in writing that book; fascinating stuff.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah. They had some major tournaments down there that Jhoon Ree and the others put on.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, yeah.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

I think they had an international championships under one year, round - '68, '69, something like that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Did you go to those? Did you compete?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

I didn't compete. No, I would and watch them whenever I could. Me and my wife would load up and go and... Always enjoyed to watch them. Sometimes, you know, you'd see major entertainers would be competing in them, you know, in a different style. I remember there was a show on back in the '60's called The Rebel. Nick Adams was the actor who starred and he [09:01](#) I was surprised to see him down there one time, competing in a Judo tournament. I didn't know he was a practitioner. And of course, Robert Culp was super active in martial arts, Bill Cosby, of course, Elvis Presley was in there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

So a lot of those people would, you know, when they come to these tournaments in D.C. area. A lot of people go, I'll go to watch martial arts to see and the entertainment was just a sidebar. People want mainly just to see what entertainers were in these competitions.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Have you been to competitions more recently? I'm curious of the differences 'cause, of course, I wasn't able to attend any competitions back then.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:



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I haven't been in any major competition. You know the old style of competition like we're talking about the big tournaments, you don't see a lot of them anymore. For one, instructors telling me it's gonna be a problem with the insurance but I don't know. They don't see a lot of the big ones. I used to... I went to a couple as a spectator or I had a relative involved in an [10:01](#) in Charleston, West Virginia. Now, this is, again, is in the 70's, there were full contact matches, there used to be before any of those... You know, they had this very minimal protective gear, and there were a lot of mock out [10:14](#) people who... What they don't realize that had happened [10:18](#) you know? In the PKA, originally, you know? That made television, you know... You don't see a lot of the big tournaments like that anymore.

Jeremy Lesniak:

No, we've got some bigger ones now but they're not... they don't seem to have the same, I guess, cultural impact? You know, you talked about not being a competitor but still packing up the car with your wife and driving to a competition. And that's not something you hear terribly often now. If someone's attending a tournament, they usually have a good reason to be there. There's a person, whether it's somebody... whether they're competing or somebody that they care about is competing, you know.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

It's always been that way, like I've said, all my life, you know. I've watched martial arts, you know. Anytime I could watch it, participate in it, anything to do with martial arts, I've always been interested in it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Where does that stem from?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

I can't really say. I had an [11:22](#) just like any the other kid watching it on TV, it's the [11:25](#) stuff and was always amazed with it. Like I say, I'd buy books and stuff and always wish I could train. And then, found out what I needed was standing in the next room. My father was served in a pretty elite airborne unit during the Second World War and I found out he was... I never thought anybody, to this day, that I think could teach me more about close quarter hand-to-hand combat than he did. They took [11:56](#) probably [11:57](#) him to do it but once... [12:01](#) rest of my life, you know. I needed advice on some technique, I could always go to him. He taught me more than all the instructors in the world. But you know, that was my interest in him, you



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know. Then like I say, when I hit 17, I actually had a martial arts training at a local college. A Judo class just started... Had a little guy that looked like Mr. Clean who was a janitor at the college and... A little quiet guy, didn't say much. He's sweeping up the gym from what I understand and one of the college football players thought they'll have a little fun so they ran up and grab him from behind. Well this guy was a black belt in Judo, trained in Japan and 12:47 Korean order that's still a little bit of combat 12:50 And you know, they took him a few days to get this, the football player, back on his feet. They say it took about a year to talk him into teaching Judo. So we were forced to train under him so...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now you mentioned that you've trained pretty much wherever you could. You know, variety of different styles. And I find that there's a bit of a difference in perspective from those who have trained in a bunch of different styles, especially if it's small chunks versus someone who's trained at, you know, one school under one instructor for several decades. What do you think you gained and what do you think you lost by being, well let's say, diversified?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

What you gain, I think, is just the perspective of there's more than one way that, you know, to do something. The different styles show that... People ask me about being a martial artist always say, you know, you gotta be a well-rounded martial artist if that's what your real objective is to be. You have definitely got to understand distance. And you see that in different styles, you know. You got a sparring distance with Taekwondo and then you got, you know, you take a step forward now you're boxing distance. Take another step forward and now you're inside his guard and you know, well things start getting ugly with knees and the elbows. And then you're gonna stand up grappling, and then again next you have ground fighting. You know, there's different... Technique's different, weapons, of course - kicking and punching and then just the lower kicks and closer punches. It's just completely... And you're gonna be able to work at all those distances. And in different arts, you know, in some of the Japanese arts versus Taekwondo, you know, they're much closer in sparring. Taekwondo, of course, emphasizes kicks. You know, you go to a Taekwondo sparring for an hour and never see a punch but you go to stuff like Shotokan or other Japanese arts, you'll see more punch. You'll see a lot of good kicks but you'll see more punch in it. And of course, Judo and Hapkido - Hapkido, there's an endless classifications. Our arms are actually, I guess, considered grappling arts.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Okay.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Now the cultural things... I got a cousin who's a Master in Taekwondo. I studied Taekwondo for a while under a Korean instructor but he's Korean instructor. They're a little touchy about that, you know. He's talked one time to his instructor about taking a different art at another school at the same time. Of course the Korean immediately, do you think you know everything there is to know about Taekwondo? He goes, well of course not. He says, so why do you need to go somewhere else? You know, he just... There is a cultural difference where they, you know, they expect dedication. 16:02 things like that. The students say they are different back then. There are more consumers than students. They expect something for their money. Their attitude is completely different.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That might be the best summary. You know, it's a subject that comes up on the how and we talk about the differences between then and now, the old school and the new school, however you want to term it. But using that word, consumer, that makes lot of sense. I think that sums it up pretty tightly.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah. You know, you have the old instructors, you know, they... And it's really sensitive that a lot of students now when an instructor says, y'all I need you to teach this class, you know, you need to start giving back, you know, that usually is pretty common to hear then. But you know, I've heard students that they say, give back what? You know, I wasn't given one lesson here I didn't pay for, you know. How much money am I gonna get back? There you go to give back. They don't mind helping but they don't like... They see more sense with you if you say that they have some type of obligation to do that. And it wasn't even... Back in the old days, it wasn't even an obligation, it's more a tradition, you know? I guess some people just abuse it. But they look at it more like I'm a consumer where I'm paying for these lessons, what am I getting, you know? I'd say no. I've seen people quit schools and stuff because the ways they're training was wrong. I walked out one school, cardio was really emphasized. You'll be soaking wet before you've done any martial arts from the cardio. And they lost students over there. They said you know, if I want some cardio, I'll go to the damn gym, you know. I'm not paying for cardio. I'm paying for this particular martial arts, that's what I want to learn. They thought that wasn't what they were purchasing, you know?



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. You've kind of got my gears turning a little bit because with that term gives me different perspective 'cause I have to try to empathize with that approach. 'Cause that's not me and I'm going to guess that that's not you. To me, martial arts is a lifestyle. I think to most of the folks listening to us talk right now, martial arts is a lifestyle.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah, it's you know... And you don't, you know... For us old timers, [18:26](#) I say, you know, this is John, he's a martial artist. If I call you a martial artist, I'm giving you one of the best compliments I know how to give you. Martial artist is not just somebody who studies martial arts, you know. There's a whole philosophy, a whole lifestyle behind that... matter of integrity and courtesy and... You don't see a lot of that anymore, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

My dad used to say, anybody can get a black belt but not everybody can be a black belt, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

You said your dad said that?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah, he said that. He was interested in it. He always... He understood martial arts. He was a martial artist and then he realized such a nice philosophy, just that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How interesting.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:



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The training he had... I can't talk martial arts without talking about him. When I got my black belt in combat Hapkido, he said, what did they teach you? And I just laughed 'cause he was still alive then. He was on a RDAs hospital. I said dad, the stuff that I had to know to test for black belt, is the black belt level, were things you taught me when I was nine years old. And I have never been able to find out who trained these guys. I mean, this was 1942. You know, the Taekwondo didn't exist under that name. I don't think Hapkido or Aikido, you know everything was basically Aiki Jiu Jitsu and like you said, everything was on the coast so now... I've actually researched and try to find who trained these guys. [20:15](#) they were trained well, I tell you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Tell us a little bit about that time with your father as a child.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Oh, my father was a coal miner, just trying to work wage for his family. He would workout and exercise and wrestle, you know what I mean. One time when I was taking Judo, of course I had to try it out on dad. So he got me go around the yard because we got... I got bigger, we were starting to break that furniture, Mama's gonna [20:50](#) both of us. So we're out in the yard and you know, and locked up [20:54](#)

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure. The sparring.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah. And we walked up and I threw him. And he got up, turns pretty good, he grinned. When he grinned, I should have took off running to dad. You know, if you can picture it. So we're locked up again and he takes his right arm and knocks my left arm down, straight down, and at the same time throws an elbow. And unfortunately, when he moved, I moved, and I moved towards him which means I caught the elbow at full force and he drop me like a sack of rocks, you know. So... I'm doing sports Judo in this guy's stole it to battle the bulk. So I'm at a great disadvantage here. While I was on the wrestling team in high school and of course I had to try that out. And if you've ever done any of that type of wrestlers, a lock called a cradle. We got them under the... they're on their back and I gotta get my arm under his neck and I got his legs pulled up and I got my hands locked which is called a cradle because of his position which is a good penny hold, you know. And that support, you're trying to turn their shoulders. So I got him, I got my legs spread out, I got [22:15](#) on him and you know, I got him now. And he



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sticks 22:18 Now we're jumping into 22:24 I guess. You know, that's a different 22:29 and that's why I have mainly stayed with arts like Judo and Hapkido. I was taking Taekwondo and you know, the self-defense you're taught in Taekwondo is usually based on one style of Hapkido, which is Korean art. Sin Moo, I think, is the ones that's least used. But when I took my first Hapkido class, self-defense in Taekwondo, I was like okay, now I'm unharmed. Now, this is what I'm looking for. And you know, I've been 23:02 to Taekwondo, 23:03 the other arts whenever I could but that's the type of art that I liked and... I was out for a while, out of martial arts for a while when I'm in bad physical condition. I said, I gotta do something chill. And I've seen combat Hapkido and I said, let me go look this up. So I took my brother along and didn't tell him I have any martial arts experience at all. I'm gonna see, you know, anyone trying to hand me a bunch of BS or anything. And I liked what I'm seeing, I liked where it was at so then that's when I got involved in combat Hapkido which is much different than my... it's traditional Hapkido I've worked with before.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Yeah, we've had Grandmaster Pellegrini on the show. It was a fun episode.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Oh, I bet it was. Yeah, I'm supposed to go to a seminar in October, I think. I'm testing for 3rd Dan and my 23:56 instructor at the school in that says, now what? Once you reach a that level, he likes to have hands-on work with you so I guess when I get up there, he'll put me through some paces with... Like I said, it would be an honor just to shake his hands.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Do you think that that... you know, I asked you where your kind of spark for martial arts came from and you didn't have a specific answer but I'm going guess, just listening to your stories and talking about your father, do you think it came from him?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah, I would guess so. People ask me who has the most influence on my life and that definitely would be him along with my father. That's my interest with martial arts come in. If you wanted to, you know, like you said, Randori, grab a hold of him. You know, with boxing he's, you know... Out boxing was interesting. And that was a mistake, too. He did that. He was just a natural, you know. It's the fuel instance 24:55 in his life where he's been attacked or somebody tried. He wasn't a big man. He was like 5'9" but people made a mistake as a couple of



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times trying to get physical with him. You know I'd always laugh about it now like, you know, boy that's the biggest little man you'll ever grab a hold of, you know. It's a... Like I say, he was out training into boxing or training in the martial arts training. 'Cause he was raised in a farm with five brothers so... He was the youngest so you know, he probably fight since he could stand, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, we hear a lot about people that start with you know, let's just say, innate kind of fighting instinct from, you know, scrapping with their friends or you know, unfortunately for a lot of folks it escalates beyond that and becomes something approaching serious, if not life or death. And their transition into formal martial arts doesn't always go well. You know, especially when there are rules carved out and it sounds like, in a sense, that your father could kind of be included in that group. You know, sticking his thumb in your eye and...

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah. Yeah, my father used to say, you know, he said you know son, I was raised in a completely different environment than most people. And I look back today and I find myself telling people, you know, I was raised in a different environment people raised my kids or my grandkids have been raising at. And back in their [26:33](#) country, you know, it's pretty rough people. Some places are right, well might made right, you know and... There's, you know, some was... They call him Honky [26:45](#) or you know... bad places to be. And dad was raised in a... He basically had to fight for a thing to earn it. I guess, I look back on it now, he's [27:00](#) a lot of ignorance from people they thought they'd solve problems but dad managed to get out of that environment. He knew, he could see it for what it was and he's trying to keep us out of that because there's always some. I'm gonna [27:15](#) Hapkido class now and I bet out of the entire class there's not two people there that have ever been in a fight. You know, a real fight.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

And that's you know... There's nothing more educational than getting your [27:29](#) kicked, you know. They don't understand a lot of the dynamics when you're teaching the techniques. You know, you gotta say, this is gonna happen now. This is gonna be quick. When you learn something at an instructional pace but the [27:44](#) like Hapkido, you can't do it at full



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speed, there's no [27:47](#) people up. But what you gotta understand is when you execute this technique, you have to do that now, fast. And they've never had been forced to work at that dynamics so you know, it's something you have to teach and then... if you teach it and their ground break falls well you can make it work is 70% of full speed, you know, safely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How important is that? For general martial arts instruction. You know, that push towards reality because different styles and even within styles - different schools - draw those lines so dramatically differently.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah. Well, you get down to, you know, you got competitive martial arts and where they call reality of martial arts. Combat Hapkido, with the way I understand, the way I understand Grandmaster Pellegrini, you're being trained for the scenario is I can't get out of it so I'm not gonna talk my way out of this. I'm either attack is eminent or is in I'm being attacked. That's a scenario you're training for. You know, it's probably gonna be over in 20 seconds - you hope it's over in 20 seconds, don't you. And well, you're teaching Taekwondo and I like Taekwondo. You know, it teaches self-defense but a lot of it... it's more taught as competition. And the self-defense is taught secondary. I don't see them pushing the reality of the scenario. You know, when I see it with kids, they care for about what to teach kids because you don't want them hurting each other on a school ground. I had a one student where I'm at, [29:45](#) to me and says, would this hurt him real bad if I've done this? And I looked at him and said, I hope so. And that wasn't the answer she was expecting. You know, the bottom line here is the person's hurting last is the one who walks away. That's the reality. And not to sound melodramatic but I've told many students, it's okay to be civilized. We have to be civilized to participate in society. But don't let yourself become domesticated. You have got to be able to raise to the necessary level of violence to survive if you're attacked at some parking lot or in some street corner at some place. You have to get as mean and as nasty as necessary up to, God forbid, lethal if that's what it takes. When you look a guy in the eyes and one is going home in 30 seconds and one is not. That's the motivating factor. And you know, you're scared, you're terrified, probably. But you gotta be able to raise to that level or, you know... I've seen people walk out and they could possibly get there - to that level. I think if they were attacked they'd just fall over. And then, I don't mean any derogatory manner, we're all different. That's why if my father taught me one things, there's that. Don't kick them on the ground or let them kick you to death. So you might make a meal out of me but I'm gonna get a sandwich on my way to the ground, you know.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

I think a lot of us can intellectually wrap our brain around having to hurt someone - having to hurt someone badly or maybe even lethal, as you said. But obviously, the practice is so often different as really, pretty much anyone who's ever been in a fight knows it's a complete disaster. I mean, it doesn't look like the movies. It's not pretty, it's not good and even if you win, you probably don't feel so great about it.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Absolutely. You tell the students that these, you see, these techniques on TV and say, nothing's gonna look that pretty, you know. If it works at all, you're lucky. You can understand, you know, this adversary is, if you grab a hold of me, his first instinct is to get away. He's not gonna set your mind to execute anything. Street fighters are the worst people in the world of fight because we are fighting another martial artist or something, you're in competition. You all basically get used in the same techniques and you learn to read it. You see that lead foot pivot to the outside, you know he's telegraphing a kick. You know, you learn to read people, your other martial artist, because you know their style, you know the weaponry. You go against a street fighter, he's allowed to come up with anything and just come on from the wrong angles, you know. His kicks are you know, done at [32:46](#) your training absolutely done wrong and you know, you can't anticipate them. You just don't know when you know... He stands flat-footed and throws the old-fashioned haymaker you know, you didn't see that coming. I could box with my dad and he could just sit there and look at your leg and box. He could just read your leg that well... you can throw in a punch at once and by watching your leg so he could block. Street-fighters are just, they're just a hard... you know, they will come up with anything.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How do people wrap their brain around that? You know, you had a bit of a different upbringing. You came from a different time as you said. How can someone, you know... I'm sure we've got a bunch of folks out there listening who may be are 3, 5, 7 years into martial arts. They probably started as an adult and most of us... And I am absolutely in this group, had... we didn't have to fight as children. We didn't have that rugged upbringing that I think can make it easier to go there. How do we deal with that? How do we become better at looking somebody in the eye and saying, one of us is going home and it's going to be me.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:



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You know, we've tried to develop society into you'd never want to go there. And that's been emphasized so much that, you know, the average person has been bred out, for lack of a better term. But unfortunately with our society, is also a fairly violent society as far as large crime goes. So you're right, you know. Like I said, be civilized but don't be domesticated. Because, you know, how do you teach somebody? It's motivated by fear, you know. You have to choose between a hero and a coward. Both of them are terrified - one must be able to control their fear and the other one wasn't. It's a...if you've never been in a fight, you've been stared, you've been hit, and you know... It's an old thing I tell students that you know, if you're in a fight, you're gonna get hit, you're gonna get kicked. God forbid, but if he's got a knife, you're probably gonna get cut. You just gotta [35:04](#) whether you're gonna cut on your arm or you're gonna get that thing buried in your inner belly. But you know, it's a motivation. There'll be a point. You know, [35:13](#) student doing ground fighting, she was on her back and she's about to give up so I said, don't you dare give up. You never give up. You know, winners never lose and losers never win. You're here for the duration, you know. Losing is not an option. Now, I'm talking about training somebody for street-fighting not competition. But it's hard, I don't know how you could teach somebody, you know, how you teach somebody how to survive, getting a [35:46](#) Sparring will take, you know, the people who think they're some tough guys or some bullies, you'd take martial arts using a couple of sparring classes and they realize they're not the toughest guy [35:58](#) I usually read them out. You never see them last too long. You know, they're getting sparrred with somebody who's as tough as they think they are, you know. And just not only [36:09](#) them but humiliate them. They'd just say no, I'll go back out on a block and talk tough. It's just hard to motivate people into rising to that level. You know the only thing that'll do is fear and so what you're doing in training... It's like the military, you know. They train you to react a certain way in fear. It depends on your training, you know. So you hope that, God forbid this happens, that they will instinctively through muscle memory and, what I... term I use in training, is positional memory just to react. And if your techniques are good enough, hopefully, you'll even surprise themselves on how fast it works. But it's hard to motivate, you know. It's something that you can't just say okay, you know, you're terrified.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right. Yeah, you can't just tap out of every scenario.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah, like there's no tapping out unless, you know. Just like mixed martial arts people ask me about death. First of all, the mixed martial artist to me has got to be the best conditioned athlete in the world. If you doubt that, get out there on a mat and just wrestle for two minutes.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

You know, I've seen wrestlers, you know when I was wrestling, I shouldn't crawl them off the mouth, their lips blue, sucking for oxygen, you know. When I first watched these guys, you've got to do 5-minute round. I'm thinking, I'm more impressed with the endurance than I am with their fighting going on out there. Not only they wrestle but you got somebody who's, you know, growling and pounding. Just amazing. But as tough as that, you know, we teach ground fighting. We teach them how to lock their wrists and how to throw a guy and you know... I'm telling people, if you don't [38:04](#) first of all, I'm gonna put my thumbs in your eye, you know, immediately - illegal in MMA. I'm gonna slap you across the ears - illegal in MMA. I'm gonna punch you dead on the throat as hard as I can, illegal in MMA, you know. I'm gonna grab your hair, your head and your chin, and you're either gonna walk with me or I'm gonna snap your damn neck, illegal in MMA. So I got all respect in the world for all MMA artists, I don't want to tangle any of them. But it's still different than surviving on the street. You know, [38:42](#) complicated, you know. You gotta injure this person. I'm sure you've heard the old thing, if you can't walk, you can't fight; if you can't see, you can't fight; if you can't breathe, you can't fight. So what are we looking at? We're looking at eyes, throats and knees, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I've actually not heard that. But you know, I've heard one... I've heard a few can't breathe, you can't fight. I don't know it's been articulated that simply. Again, boiled off pretty well and I think it does a pretty good job of summing up ways that, you know, fights end.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Basically, that's it. You gotta drop him or he's gonna drop you. And if you drop him, you don't want him getting up. You know, so you want to drop him really hard. That's saying about certainty, you know, in arts wherein you're actually taking people to do ground. You learn to be grateful so you don't get hurt. Hopefully, you're never getting caught, you're never gonna fight with another martial artist. I hope society doesn't degenerate to that. So you're hoping that taking that guy to the ground is a self-[39:57](#) technique, is a self-[40:00](#) fight-ending technique. If he hits the ground hard enough, either the wind's gonna go out of him or if he doesn't know how to fall, his head's gonna bang off the ground, normally if it's asphalt or cement. It's probably gonna end right there. You know, there's gonna be a lot of people. Just getting in a fist



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fight and have actually been killed because of the way they hit the ground. So you know, if you take your adversary to the ground quickly and efficiently... I tell people, take him down. In some techniques is I take you to the ground, I'll drop to one knee myself and that accelerates your velocity, you know, by a factor of 10. And when you hit the ground, you're gonna bounce. So that in itself is [40:49](#) ending technique - just throw him into the ground.

Jeremy Lesniak:

When you look at your martial arts experience, with you history and all the different tools you have in your toolbox, is there anything that you would want to add - whether that's training with a particular person or another style?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

I'm working with it right now. I love this, it's at 99%. I had to write a book report, for lack of a better term, when I tested for 2nd Dan for Master Pellegrini. He required it, he wants your opinion on his book. He also [41:31](#) history on me. And I knew a little bit about him from [41:36](#) Aikido has some of the finest footwork, you know. I actually practiced a little bit of that and had talked to other students about learning it as far as moving around your adversary. I noticed in training students where a move requires of them to turn. Maybe grabbed by an opponent and turned into [41:59](#) they had trouble with the turn. Their feet gets crossed. Aikido has some basic footwork. I think there's like eight basic moves and they're really... I watched those and I... one of the students at the class where I had to discuss this with, I'll tell her now you see what you've done now? You've done exactly a stepping turn which is the Aikido foot move. So I like the footwork in that, the way they move. I told her, I said, go home and practice. And said, then have your husband stand perfectly still and then just move close to him. It helps you move. There's a technique where you blocked a punch, you cross-locked to the inside and then move, step behind your adversary. And when I was first learning this technique, I would step it out a beat. Once I step behind and went to grab him by the head and try to take him down. I would step behind him and find that the distance wasn't right. I was a little bit too far from him when I stepped. I was stepping more to 11 o'clock than to 12. And I wasn't where I wanted to be. So from Aikido, there was a slight forward which instead of stepping with my lead foot, I pushed off with my rear foot. And I was right where I wanted to be. I didn't miss direction, you know. I [43:41](#) out there. So it's a lot of techniques in there. The Judo training I had 50 years ago, still the core of that, the balance disruption and closed quarter moving has stayed with me more than [44:00](#) I've probably done a million break calls. The Taekwondo course - the kicks, the distance there is a little different dynamic. One school I was at, you know, I talked to the instructor and I was taking Hapkido there. I said why



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don't you let us spar with your Taekwondo class? And to people who had no Taekwondo background at all, they do a little basic class and you know, front kick, side kick 44:33 basics of Taekwondo. And he was far with the Taekwondo team. Of course you'll get a bigger 44:40 black belt in Taekwondo. It's completely one of the most educational 44:44 kicking you ever had, you know. It was great for... It was just a win-win situation. The Taekwondo people are not used to having people crowd them. And we were, you know, we were in close art and they're not. So you know, like what I said about distance. You know, he had to analyze and adjust a little bit 45:07 same as we did. If I stay in this distance away from this Taekwondo guy, I'm 45:13 because I'm in his house now. So we were learning a lot about distances, sparring and Taekwondo. I cut myself a couple time, one or two, 45:26 take down with you. It's not that hard. So it's a play by their house rules.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. When in Rome, as we say on training.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

When in Rome, yeah. And learning the difference, you know, you learn to adapt. It's just like the basics, you know. You can try a wheel kick on a phone booth sometimes. You gotta work with your environment, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

So, as people call close in on you on a street fights you know. It's not television. The first technique you execute is not gonna be a wheel kick. I don't care. As much as I love Chuck Norris's martial arts background and respect him immensely, you know. He has to do what the television people want him to do. It's never... 46:20 people 46:22 can see that coming. You learn to work on, you know... what techniques work under what circumstances and when you're close with somebody, the weapons change. Like I said, from foot kicks, you're into knees and elbows and bring them gouging and whatever comes else, comes along.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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You've got some good stories. We've heard quite a few. One of my favorite pieces of this show is it gives me opportunity to ask people point blank for the great stories that they have. So I'm wondering, is there some favorite story of yours from your time in the martial arts that you'd be willing to share?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Well I told you more about my dad knocked me out.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Which is pretty good story.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

One that's first I remember, I was probably 10 or maybe 13, I was headed over at Walter Skating Rink at Fairmont, West Virginia and a fight broke out. And these people were much older than I am. And I recognized one of the guys. The black guy, named Willie Paul, he was from the same mining camp that I lived in. He's about 6'6". He's probably at least 10 years older than I was. And this guy started a fight with him. I can see this clear as a day. He had on a white shirt and black slacks. And Willie Paul front-kicked this guy, right square in the face and dropped him. End of fight. So I'm watching this then I realized, this guy's wearing roller skates. So I didn't know whether I'd be more impressed with the skating ability or his martial arts ability. I mean, I draw a front-kick, a half front-kick while you're wearing roller skates on top, you know. And I found out later that he was in the army and you know, he was overseas studying that Karate stuff, you know. That always leave a lifelong impression with me. I can still see him execute that. But you know, like I'm saying, it's different environment. You can go skating for the rest of your life and never see a fight, hopefully. I mean, you know, we bold up a higher man.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Did you ever try it?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Well, no. [48:37](#) that good roller skate. I mean, that would be just an exercise and break falls for me.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm gonna guess there aren't too many people that good at rolling skating. I mean the moment that foot comes up above the waist, your trajectory changes quite a bit.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah. I watched, you know... like everybody else I watched ice skating and you see that the professionals have a way of walking at heel down or the toe down or they get a block, a chalk or something, the back of their skate to stabilize them. But like you said, especially when it goes, like you said, above your waist. I'd be lucky to actually execute a snap kick to your shin and get away with it, you know, on a roller skates.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Definitely not my preferred method of locomotion if I'm going to get in a fight.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah. And you know, that was a skating rink you don't get a lot to see. There's an old joke about West Virginia bar, you know. A guy goes into a bar in West Virginia and the bartender say, you carrying a gun or a knife? And the guy says, no. So the bartender gives him one. That's a tough bar. That's a covered bar but there was you know. You see these fights break out. I used to hate if there was a pool table. Cause always some yo-yo gonna start throwing the damn balls, you know? All you could do is grab a chair to pull over your head and hide in a corner. And there's a guy worked in the coal mines with. Some people come up and... I think your son is right across the street. And suddenly his son was having trouble with some people and they come up there and his son wasn't home, busted a window at his house or something. And he told Frank about it. Frank [50:27](#) those people right down there [50:29](#) people right down there to bother shooting pools. He says, I've seen them go. So this guy, I knew him and his son, and he was nobody too mess with. He was down that bar, walks in and there's two guys shooting pool, Frank picked a cue stick up off the rack and pushed both of them in University Hospital. You know, with the heavy end of the cue stick as lethal weapon. Now the problem was, I'm one of two guys that's left and he saw two other guys shooting pool. So he asked to put him on [50:58](#) working on the wrong two people. I guess, you know, [51:03](#) to his life, he worked for the lawyers. But that's just to cut him involved. I knew with that bar that bar that I've never went into that place. [51:11](#) one time and he said, you ever been in there? I said, I tell you what, buddy. Any time you think you're overdue for a thorough butt-kick, just come on in there. Those guys are will catch you up in a hurry. In a real life environment, it's just not the whole clean fistfights and



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stuff. People throwing stuff bottles, cue sticks, cue balls or whatever you're hiding under the table, hoping it won't hit by shrapnel, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Do you think that external experience, that context for combat, non-martial arts combat - do you think that makes you a better martial artist because you understand fighting the way it really is better? Or do you think it makes you a more challenged martial artist because you're looking at things that are, I'm suspecting, are presented to you from a narrower perspective? What would work and etc.?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

I think it makes me a better martial artist because what you said, what will work, I'll see the techniques taught that [52:28](#) you know. I said, okay, you want me to learn, I'll learn it. But that will never work in a real world. A lot of them take too much of the assumption that you have a series on mind where you act in a certain way in your life and in real life, it don't work that way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

You go to lock somebody's arm up the minute that motion starts - you start with it or he gonna start restricting that arm. So, you know, that's the emphasis on the speed and just the simple arm bar brought you know, appeals to those who are... There's a counter for an arm bar. If I reach up and grab your hand, I can do this and that. And then you know, if you wanna learn this, I'll learn that but you know, that's... You're watching too much television. An arm bar is not a hole, it's a technique you use to get you from point A standing to point B on your face. You know, we're gonna stop at halfway or holding you. It's not a hole. In a lot of times I see that's taught that way - to hold them bent with over the waist. Well, any Taekwondo guy will sidekick your knee and break your knee if this is a street situation. So, yeah. He sees techniques and you stand down, that's... I can't see that working, of course. I'm not Master Pellegrini either so based from the experience and the background that I had, I see something I think, you know, a few altercations that I've been in, where I was raised and have got my dad a few times taught me a little bit about what really will work and what won't. You know, like I said, the Judo balance disruption helps more than anything else, seriously. If you're gonna try and take a guy



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off his feet, whether it's a sweep, a reap, a lock, a throw or whatever, you have [54:25](#) It's probably not gonna work if you don't control your bounce. You're not gonna take a guy standing flat-footed and thrown him to the ground. That's extremely hard to do. And people... that's why people try things they see on TV that doesn't work. They see the big reap, they always see the moment the guy steps to the outside and sweeps the guy's foot. [54:47](#) Judo or outside major outer reaping [54:51](#) Everybody see, you know, actually, talked to them say, okay what did I just do and everybody says, well you kicked his leg up and you reaped that leg. Yeah, what else did I do? And they all looked at nobody has seen my hand shift or the way I stepped. To disrupt the balance to put all his weight on that foot. What I reach is what's called a target. It's so subtle. Unless you know what you're looking for, you don't see it. In Hapkido, we have what's called the Hapkido Finger, if you've ever seen that, is your index finger. You do a technique and you [55:30](#) pointing so they can actually see the direction that you're... the way you're turning your wrist. Because a lot of it is just so subtle that you can't... It's hard. I do it on you, you'll know what's going on. But you can see which way I'm actually turning my wrist and whether a technique works or doesn't work, it can be just that subtle, just that outside wrist lock. [55:54](#) Because I said now, move your hand and point behind me and you would do that one. Boom, I'm down. It's just the direction of the pressure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Yeah, that finger point is something that I've used to demonstrate various wrist locks and everything. Because especially for beginners, can really help them focus on the movement.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah. Absolutely. I'd say it's an excellent instruction and I am how [56:27](#) do it with their cell. I had a student the other day who's trying to take somebody down saying why isn't this working? I said, cause you're finger pointing. She says, to that wall. I say, you're not trying to throw him backwards. I said, do it again and this time, your finger should be pointing where you want him to end up. If you want him on your back or on your feet, that's where your finger should be pointing in doing this technique. So she executes the technique [56:51](#) hand further to lock pipes and the guy goes down. So you normally want him at your feet, that way you can finish it. [56:59](#) come back up and we're gonna have to reengage again. I don't want that. I want him on the ground, I want this over with. I want to be able to finish him when he gets to ground. [57:08](#) then I will. We're gonna end this thing, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Now you mentioned that you're preparing for an upcoming testing. But beyond that, you know, I'm not getting any sense that you're planning to stop training or even slow down. So I'll ask you the question I ask nearly all of our guests - why? What are your goals? What's got you continued motivation as you look at your training?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

It's just a lot to martial arts. I play golf before, I wasn't any good at it, you know. I've done other sports. Martial arts, you know, it's like I said, I was out of it for a few years and got back in it. My dad was slightly sweet. I said, well I'm going back to martial arts. It's something I've always loved. He says, you know you have always been instituted in that, you know. In my age, you know I'm 67, if I got kilometers, I keep moving. I don't want to rush it up like an old can so you know... Now what I put my hands, what I've been doing, I put my hands on the mat to stretch you know. Something like a box of rice crispies, snap back, crack one, pop. That's you know, feels pretty good when it's over. So you know, it's just the love for the martial arts. I'll be 3rd Dan and then you know, the drill. [58:33](#) you know, the Lord given me the years to test for it again, I'll be 70 years old when I test for the next one but you know, I'll be there. [58:45](#) physical condition down. I got one problem so I've had pneumonia couple of times. You get some [58:51](#) working into coma [58:54](#) I'm not alter-sparring in Taekwondo. Taekwondo to me is a young man's sports and that's... Taekwondo's [59:02](#) what they say with the senior division that start at 30 years old.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I can see that. I can that that yeah. Yeah. I was just talking to a friend of mine who recently attended an AIU Taekwondo Tournament and he was the only adult male black belt.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Is that right?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. This was not a... and he told me how many people had attended. It was something like 400 competitors.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Wow.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

And I think he was the only adult male and there were three adult women.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Wow. Recently we had a tournament here. We [59:39](#) they have one in [59:41](#) We called a Bluegrass Games I've never actually went down. We had people, Taekwondo students from school I'm in right now that had competed down there. But there's only one or two adults that you can compete with them. It's kind of funny [1:00:00](#) my blood. I got a cousin in Charleston area, West Virginia. He's a 2nd Dan black belt. He's older than me. I got another cousin in Parkersburg who's a 5th Dan Master. His sister in **Wornall** is a 2nd Dan. Now we didn't all say hey, you know, let's just talk martial arts. We all done this independently of each other. I studied in [1:00:28](#) You know, Rick said [1:00:29](#) Really, I didn't know that. So we reconnected as adults, we found this out. Why I want to see my first combat Hapkido class, like I said, just to evaluate it. See if this is what I want. My daughter, I saw her watching TV. I said I'm gonna go to martial arts class. You wanna go all? She said, yeah. I tell everybody that I created a monster. She wanted to another. Can I take it with you? I said sure. She's my youngest so, you know, I wanted her to have some memory of some father-daughter type of stuff with her. So we started taking combat Hapkido together. Put on a white belt, you know. She did start from the ground up. And they talked her also into getting into Taekwondo. So in a three year period, she managed black belt in combat Hapkido, received her 1st Dan in Taekwondo, and also got her master's degree in criminal justice, all attained at the same time. She's taken seven martial arts classes a week. The senior instructor said, I'd show up at school when she's standing in the front door, patting her foot. Get it open, you know. But she's very good at both arts. She didn't like working with women in combat Hapkido. She wanted to work with a man. She's says ain't a woman attacking on the street. I want to be attacked and get beat by a man. And she'd just throw a perennial kick to your thigh and drop you on an instant. You're headed down to [1:02:15](#) And she took around fighting classes. I get on Facebook and I'd talk to some of them, believe it or not, that I don't know. I found you know... it's amazing the number [1:02:28](#) martial arts. There's one who's like a 4th Dan in a Japanese style. You know, I also have seen him on Facebook, testing for his 5th Dan somewhere in Michigan. I actually wrote a book on family genealogy. We had it published back in 1990. And there's a whole bunch of them in Oklahoma we didn't know about.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Maybe you need an addendum specifically for those people in your family tree that are martial artists.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Because it sounds like there's something there. There's something, whether it's you know, something cultural that was handed down. I mean, heck, maybe love for martial arts is genetic and we have nice [1:03:09](#) with that gene [1:03:10](#)

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Me and my cousin always laughs at it. Oh they're probably just searching for you know, both holes if somebody has to kick their [1:03:16](#) I said, well you know, that's always a possibility, too, you know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If folks listening, you know, they wanna get a hold of you or are you on social media at all or email? Or, you know... You've told some good stories and I've got a feeling some people might want to reach out.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah, I'm on Facebook.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

I'm on Facebook and I've got an email which is the first four letter of my last name - zick@fuse.net, which is [1:03:53](#). I've had that email address forever cause I didn't realize it but I give people my email address, they say man, that's cool. That's neat. I'm checking. What are you talking about? Then I filled out a form one time and I had to write my email, zick@fuse.net, and



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then below it I found my name and I found Zickefoose. And I said, hey that's cool, it looks the same!

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh! Now I get it, now I get it.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah! And these people talking about oh, [1:04:21](#) I'm thinking about what in the world are you talking about? And so, you know, all of my friends now remember my email that way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That is an easy one. But of course, anybody listening, if you aren't going to remember that or you wanna check out anything else that we've talked about today, we'll have the show notes over at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. So if you're driving or something, we don't want you to crash.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Okay. Yeah. I'm just gonna plug in also for Karate Town USA at Florence, Kentucky. That's where I work out now. It's growing [1:04:55](#) great people [1:04:57](#) good Taekwondo class and they teach combat Hapkido.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, great. And I believe you dropped that in the form that you sent in so we'll make sure that we link that at the show notes, too.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

I appreciate it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So if somebody's travelling through, maybe they can drop by and take a class and see the place that you've chosen to train. I think that's one thing that a lot of people don't realize. Those of us



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that have trained in a number of different schools, we don't just tend to end up at whatever is closest. We tend to be kinda picky. I'm gonna guess that you're in that camp, too.

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Yeah, it's not a good program. You're doing yourself a disservice.

Jeremy Lesniak:

This has been a lot of fun and we always ask our guest to wrap up the show with some parting words. So what advice would you give to the folks listening?

Mr. Larry Zickefoose:

Well, if you're training martial arts, decide why you want to take martial arts. Do you want to compete? Do you want to... if this is some self-defense, surviving on the street then you need to decide what you want out of martial arts. And we decide on where to go, at what art [1:06:08](#) If it's not what you want, don't be afraid to quit and go get what you want. It's not gonna be easy. Like I said, to be a well-rounded martial artist, you gonna be involved in more than one art because of the things I mentioned about distance. You gotta adjust to all distances. Train hard and train safe.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow. Thank you Mr. Zickefoose for sharing your story with us. It's such an honor that you'd open the door to your journey and I'm sure that I'm not the only one to take inspiration from it. And my dedication to the martial arts as well as your admiration for your father. Again, thank you for coming on the show.

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