



Episode 290 – Sensei Bob Cherone | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

hello and welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio episode 290. today I'm doing my Sensei Bob Cherone. if you're new to the show, if you don't know my voice my name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm the founder here at whistlekick we make sparring gear apparel and training accessories and we also produce martial arts radio, the show that gives me the amazing opportunity to speak with some of the world's best martial artist and you get the opportunity to listen. if you want to check out the show notes, head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com in all of our products and links to all of our other projects whistlekick.com. today's gas comes to us via kinda this multipart introduction that will get into in the episode, so I don't want to ruin it here but it wasn't the typical way that we get guests and on today's show, we talk about Sensei's amazing instructor, we talk about a mutual friend, we talk about humility, and ego and his views on those subjects as well is so much more. had a great time talking to I'm sure you're going to have a great time listening, so here we go. hey sensei, how are you?

Bob Cherone:

good how you doing Jeremy?

Jeremy Lesniak:



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I'm doing great it's good that we're finally getting to do this. I'm looking forward to it.

Bob Cherone:

yeah, yeah, I'm excited.

Jeremy Lesniak:

cool so I got the spelling of your name Cherone, right?

Bob Cherone:

that's perfect.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Awesome. I was try to ask.

Bob Cherone:

yeah you know I do a lot of announcing and what not and you know, the tournaments and there's jeez, I probably get about 20% of them right I think.

Jeremy Lesniak:

yeah and you know it's amazing how much we, not so much because you know, Lesniak that's not exactly a name that rolls off the tongue or the people have heard and in fact if you try to type it in to any smart phone now it tries Auto Correct as lesbian. but there are a lot of people out there who really identify with their name the spelling of the pronunciation of their name, so I work really hard to make sure that we get right.

Bob Cherone:

sure, sure. I understand.

Jeremy Lesniak:

so, what's going on your way?

Bob Cherone:

just typical Tuesday getting started with my usual schedule and be off to work for little bit later on and then off to teach at my class tonight and so nothing too different than the than the norm well of course besides this interview.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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right you know and the audio sounding good and if it's okay with you, you know, let's just kind of keep rolling and instead of having the formal intro that we often I guess we should say used to do because we been doing more these lately were just kinda start from beginning of the listeners the entirety of our conversation really.

Bob Cherone:

sure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

okay. I mean if you have any questions or deep dark secret you want to talk about before we start the official interview, maybe We should do that off the record, but if not then then let's just kind of roll.

Bob Cherone:

sounds good.

Jeremy Lesniak:

well listers I'm here talking with Sensei Bob Cherone who you know, a lot of the guests that end up on the show it's there is much of a story there. it's I reached out to somebody or they reached out to us or somebody that's been on the show or listen to the show made a suggestion. I mean that covers 95% but in that last 5% we end up with some folks who have a bit more of an interesting story and you're in that 5% so, I would love for you to tell the listeners cause I think this kinda, will give us once were done with that we can we can kinda steer off a little bit and talk about your background but I think it's a good introduction to what's going on to why we're talking today, if you won't mind.

Bob Cherone:

yeah well, the way that the connection was made was made to friends through social media with Sensei Scott Lombardo who apparently is a friend of yours,

Jeremy Lesniak:

Because of this show

Bob Cherone:

that's right. that's right, because of the show.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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I didn't know him before we interviewed, honestly. there was a news article that popped out here we'll take a tangent off the tangent. there was a news article that popped up about a man in Portsmouth, New Hampshire which is just a couple hours for me who was doing some really cool stuff working with veterans with martial arts as a nonprofit and I said, 'this guy's got a come on the show' and so we just kinda hit off of become friends and I've trained with them in and he's come to some of our events and he's just he's a great guy. so, you met him via social media,

Bob Cherone:

yeah that's right I had seen a picture with him and my Sensei Fumio Demura in the airport they were both waiting for their flights and they got to talking and what not and I made a comment on the picture to the effect of, hey that's my sensei and from there on Scott and I just started in a communicating back and forth and it was amazing how many things we had in common and how many coincidences or likenesses that you know, came about it was just too amazing and so we continue to communicate and you know even though we haven't had a chance to meet in person yet, I can say from my end that I feel like we've known each other for an eternity. so, it's amazing how friendships and relationships developed through martial art connections like this.

Jeremy Lesniak:

they do they do and you know I mean out a little bit more into that because there was a piece there that that you may not have been aware of, so I let's see, episode 130 so we're, this is gonna be 290 something so a little while ago I had the opportunity to talk to Demura sensei on the show and just you know one of my, I don't wanna say crowning achievements but there's just, when I think about it you know there's still some emotion that comes up for me, the ability to talk to him just was so huge. I'm sure understand that being able to train with him, how important how much he means to so many people.

Bob Cherone:

yeah that's right it is a matter of fact, I listened to that episode and you know Sensei had told us about it and you know steered us in the direction to go ahead and listen to it and I can imagine the feeling you might've had interviewing somebody like him because he's done so much over his career in martial arts and has made so many friends and so many contacts and even though I've been a student of his for almost 3 decades, I still fill very privileged to see him, train with him, talk to him and just be part of his organization.

Jeremy Lesniak:

so here we are I get this this email or maybe it is a Facebook message from Master Lombardo and it's a picture of him and sensei at an airport and he says "look who I ran into?" and so we reached



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out and he said you know can you get this photo to him? you know, he knew that I had communication with him because of him having been on the episode so, I pass that on and you know it was just it was really fun for me to see another person that I knew a friend of mine who felt so similarly about his meeting with Demura Sensei and he just mean so much to so many people you know and I look at it you know, we'll stop talking about him and start talking about you in just a moment but I think that a lot of what we're going to hear from you, I'm completely speculating, will have some context for folks because you know we are who we are because of where we've come from because of who has trained us, who we have worked with, that way we are raised you know it takes a village, however you want to look at it for us as martial arts students to know where we come from is really important and for me as someone who is part of that karate kid wave, You know, there is nobody I look up to more than him.

Bob Cherone:

yeah, you're not the first person I've heard say something similar to that before. whether it's through his books or videos or seminars appearances, movies, whatever it is there's so many different ways that people have got to be exposed to sensei Demura in his teachings and philosophies and you know when I was just a young student training in his dojo, I would notice that when other sensei's would come to visit our dojo, they would all call him sensei and I sat and reflected on that and I realize that I was with a good Sensei and in a good place and this is where I was going to spend my time training in Karate.

Jeremy Lesniak:

and how to determine karate start? did you start with him or elsewhere? you know, give us some of the background.

Bob Cherone:

well I actually started when I was about 19 years old I was going to college at Saddleback College and I needed a PE credit so I took a karate self-defense class taught by Dan McGough and I signed up for the class and I did the semester and at the end of the semester there was opportunity to test for rank so I went ahead and signed up for that and Sensei Demura had come down to give the test and in those days he visited all of his dojo's and did all the testing and then after the test he would give you know a 15 minute or 30 minute whatever time was allowed kind of class and some training and I was so impressed with them that you know I went home that night and thought to myself I want to be like that man. you know, just his movements and his character and his charismatic way about him impressed me so much that you know it really, really motivated me to continue my karate training. so, I was I was training at Saddleback for probably about a year had taken another semester and started to meet other instructors within the organization like Bruce Butler, Greg



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Collier, were two of the people that I met through that class at Saddleback. and so, I also began to train with them as they had dojos that were close by my area where I lived in Mission Viejo at that time. and ultimately, when I got up to about a green belt level the outside dojo's typically you know send the students to our Hombu dojo in Santa Ana to tests directly in front of Sensei Demura in his dojo and they have what we call a recheck where you have to go back to the sparring class and they'll you know check up on your test and see if you're made any improvement and whatnot and at that time that's when I started training full time down at the Hombu dojo with Fumio Demura.

Jeremy Lesniak:

now, you talked about his charisma. one of the things that seems to be, I don't want to say universal but quite common among people when they start martial arts especially when they start older than you young children is that they find something that they were missing. sometimes people know they were missing it sometimes, it's something only in retrospect. what was it that you found in that self-defense class that kept you coming back?

Bob Cherone:

what kept me coming back was the benefit that I started to feel from my karate training. I started to feel that I had a little more confidence and I was somewhat of a shy person back at that time, still you know growing up and figuring out who I was and whatnot and so noticing the benefits of the self-confidence and then I started getting into better shape and making friends and ultimately ended up in a place that had a family like feel and atmosphere and I just got hooked on it and had to have more and more and more and I'm glad that I chose to do that because now I can say that's where I'm at in life and a lot of my successes stem from that early training in the dojo when I was younger.

Jeremy Lesniak:

what do you think life might have looked like without you know, say you would take up racquetball or baseball instead of that self-defense class?

Bob Cherone:

well you know why I still could have ended up you know becoming successful in one way or another but I just don't think that I would've had the extent of this family likes feel. you know I had played several different sports when I was growing up and in high school I was on the swimming team and water polo and I was even on the golf team for one year and you know there is a sense of camaraderie and whatnot in team sports but in martial arts training it's a completely different feel and like I say the best way I could describe it is like a family -like atmosphere and people support each other and where it differs from a team sport is, as you know in martial arts, you know it's you



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become dependent on yourself and you have to self-motivate and you have to check yourself and you know continue to improve yourself. so, I think that that's probably the largest benefit that I got from that as opposed to some other team sport was being able to depend on myself and trust my training and go into different things in life knowing that if I could do could not Karate and if I can get up in front of a tournament with hundreds of people and do a kata or do a sparring match that I could do just about anything else in life.

Jeremy Lesniak:

so, you have competed?

Bob Cherone:

yes. yeah, yeah. I competed a lot when I was younger.

Jeremy Lesniak:

and is that something that you stop doing consciously or became a time issue or rule or what?

Bob Cherone:

well it in our organization you know, competing is as part of what we do but it's not all of what we do. so as I was coming up through the colored belts working towards my black belt, I did a lot of competing and you know one of various trophies and medals and whatnot, I never moved on to be like regional champion or national champion or have any kind of a title or what not but what I did learn from that was as a color belt we learn how to do the kind of the smaller parts of running the tournament like scorekeeping, staging, charting, judging, different things like that so, going through various seminars that we would have prior to tournaments and whatnot, I learned how to do just about every aspect of running a karate tournament. so even though I never earned any titles or got to any level of fame for my competition, I did basically learn how to do every part that's involved in the Karate tournament and that includes announcing. as several years ago I started to work together with our announcer for many, many years Greg Collier, and he guided me through the different steps in and you know ways to announce and speak in public and whatnot and the amazing part of that is coming from a person who was very shy when I was younger and had a really hard time speaking in public and giving speeches in school and whatnot, now because of that I have this confidence that I can speak in front of any size crowd, I can announce the demonstrations tournaments and so even though I don't have the world champion trophy I have this ability to be able to go to a tournament and I can step in and help out at any stage in any aspect of running the tournament and that's my gold medal so to speak.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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one of the things that I've learned from hosting the show is that the ability to speak is a lot more than simply being confident. there's a lot of other stuff that goes into it and I'm going to guess I'm curious how has that skill set impacted your martial arts?

Bob Cherone:

the ability to present information live in front of people in a dynamic way when you're not reading from a script. yeah I was just Nero thinking about the different ways in my life where I've used public speaking to my advantage and you know there's just so many different ways from meeting people and making friends being able to teach being able to speak clearly and concisely helps to communicate your points better and when I first started speaking, I would make these notes and okay this is what I meant to say first, this is what I meant to say next and you know it almost got to where I was like reading from a script and one time we were I was going to speak for demonstration and I had the outline of what was going to happen and so I wrote up my script and then my sensei Fumio Demura, at the last minute throughout the script change everything and I had to shoot from the hip and that's what I learned the value of being able to speak without notes and without too much preparation just to be more natural be who you are and I think that that's the best way to communicate.

Jeremy Lesniak:

when I hear your description about that you know, shooting from the hip just kinda rolling with it, not having it be scripted or rehearsed, the first thing that was coming to mind was kata and for our non-karate listeners, forms. the idea that I see so many people especially in competition you can tell they've practiced it hundreds or thousands of times but every one of those times has been exactly the same and it comes off robotic. I don't want to listen to someone speak or sing that sounds robotic.

Bob Cherone:

right I think that's the key to being a good martial artist and you know, even though you know continuing into the aspects of our life is to do what's natural, to be natural have a natural movements, natural expressions and in regards to speaking having you know natural words, natural phrases.

Jeremy Lesniak:

is that something that you teach your students?

Bob Cherone:



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oh yes definitely. I think that's the key as you mentioned you can, you watch people you know, do their kata or their form and it looks so robotic. I think that when you practice enough and you go out in front of a group and you trust your training and just be natural and do what you've learned how to do, that's the best way to communicate a you know, or express a kata and same idea transfers into speaking.

Jeremy Lesniak:

makes sense. here on the show we like to talk about stories. stories are one my favorite things in the world so I'm wondering if you might share with us one or maybe a couple of your favorites from your time?

Bob Cherone:

sure. first story that comes to mind was I was I think I was at a greenbelt level and got asked to go and help out with a karate demonstration at the Honda matsuri Festival and the Buddhist temple in Anaheim with Sensei Demura and it was about, I think about a week before they assigned me to do a weapon and the weapon was going to be the Sai. so, I practiced and practiced and practiced and practiced and felt like I was really ready to you know show my kata and you know and in front of this audience. well it was a few minutes before we were behind the closed curtains doing some last-minute preparations, and Sensei called all the kobudo people that were going to demonstrate up together and he switched the weapons on us and he said okay Bob, now give me that he gave the side to somebody else and gave me the Tonfa and said you're gonna do tonfa and I had never done any kind of tonfa training before I definitely didn't know a kata so you talk about being put under pressure. so, what I ended up doing was I ended up you know when my turn was called, I got up on the stage and I just did a pinan kata which are you going in our style are very basic beginner level katas and I did the kata pinan [00:24:44.23] with the tonfa and actually pulled it off believe it or not.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm doing it right now and imagining tonfa in my hand and that actually plays out pretty well.

Bob Cherone:

it works out not too bad but that's one thing that I learned about Sensei Fumio Demura is do not get comfortable around him. with his students he you know, I think when he sees us getting comfortable, he likes to tweak things a little bit keeps us on our toes and back then, on that day when it happened I didn't appreciate that concept but now that I'm much older I look back on it my I definitely have an appreciation for the way that he changes things up on us in and keeps us on our toes.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

that was intentional. that wasn't just him thinking that things would go better for some of the other reason, this was forget the demonstration, forget the audience this is a teaching opportunity.

Bob Cherone:

yes, yes. I believe that that is the idea and you know having trained with sensei for so long I've gotten to know you know, better how is an and how he runs things and you know you just always have to be ready for anything and I think that's a key component and being able to you know defend yourself in any kind of a situation where you may be attacked or what not is to be able to adapt and be able to be ready for any kind of change and then adapt to that change. so what since as always taught us is you know if you put water in a square glass then the water become square, put the water and around glass then water becomes round and always level so even though at the moment you don't really appreciate being put on the spot and having all the nerves and whatnot but I think in the long run the benefit is tenfold on being put under pressure a little bit let's say or having to adapt to different situations. so, you know as at my stage in life, I really appreciate the different times that you know he's done that and that's not the only time there, you could talk to just about any of our students and they'll have similar stories like that about him.

Jeremy Lesniak:

and how you carry that lesson through to your students? we have a lot of school owners and instructors that listen to show so I always try and pull out those bits.

Bob Cherone:

you know, I use that idea with my students just as sensei always has done with us, I may have them turn around and face a different direction and do a kata in the way that they're not used to you know seeing different, let's call them landmarks or whatever to you what's front and what's back. sometimes we may practice a kata reverse instead of you know starting to the left we would start to the right and get them to be to be ready for just about anything and be able to act naturally rather than always assuming that everything in life is preprogrammed because you as we know that's not the case.

Jeremy Lesniak:

it sounded like you might have a second one that you wanted to share as you started this first one or did I mis hear?

Bob Cherone:



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let me think I can sure I could think of something.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I didn't want to risk cutting you off as we wandered around if there was if there was more good stuff, it's all good stuff. rather than put you on the spot and have you think of a second one, let's just kinda keep rolling.

Bob Cherone:

sure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

when did you know you wanted to teach?

Bob Cherone:

well you know it in in in our dojo you know we start becoming teachers very early on and how that, how that works out is you know, in a class situation you know, you may be a slightly higher rank than somebody and so you'll get paired up with a partner and you don't teach a kata to somebody not that you're necessarily running the class or you know you have a school or something like that but we all know how to teach because sensei has brought us up that way, to give back. so, he always tells us never forget where you come from and in Japanese martial arts we refer to that as shoshin, beginner's spirit or beginner's mind. so, we learn to remember where we came from and that we were once a lower belt or beginner student at one time and there were always people that helped us so the idea is to not just take what you learn and go but give back give back to the other students and give back to the younger generations and this way we learn how to work together as human beings and we develop friendships and bonds and were able to get along much better this way. so early on night I knew that I wanted, I wanted to teach and you know and I've trained in several different dojo's within our same style with different instructors and so each one of them had an impact on my wanting to teach because I wanted to essentially be like them.

Jeremy Lesniak:

what was it about them that you wanted to model?

Bob Cherone:

well it just ugh, like I had mentioned earlier you know in in a dojo there tends to be kind of like a family-like atmosphere. so, you know my early instructors were either some type of like father figure or older brother kind of figure to me so just much as is as you would look up to you know of famous athlete or you know even like your father, your older brother, that's what happened to me



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in my karate training this is you know, looking up to them and each instructor had a little different thing that I that I picked up on you know one was in a very professional in the way that he did things, one was more relaxed and added aspect of humor into his teaching and one was very strict and made us hold positions for a long time and so you know, we are where we come from so everything that we've learned in our early stages you know typically tends to come out in the later years of our training and so I could say that I am who I am today because of those role models and because of their examples and ultimately it has led me to teach karate and I enjoy every minute of it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

when we talk about that notion of shoshin, beginner's mind, the need to remember that we are perpetual students that we are not the first in any way to do what we're doing. that kind of dovetails into a subject it's come up on the show and I'm curious of your perspective. cause in the way you're talking it's your everything seems to come from a place of service and when I'm hearing you talk and it just, you know, maybe I'm wrong, I don't know you beyond you know that the emails and Facebook messages we've exchange and the 30 or so minutes we've been talking today, but I did I just I get that impression that you know when you step out on the mats are on the floor whatever you have in your dojo, that your there to serve your students. does that sound accurate?

Bob Cherone:

yeah you could say that .you know there is a there is a feeling of obligation me know to give back what you've taken out of martial arts training and so I definitely feel that way and you know even though you know somebody like my sensei Fumio Demura has been successful in so many aspects of his life, he's had a lot of support from his students and you know I'm sure that he would agree that you know it takes everybody doing their little part to make one big success and so I try to instill that same concept into my students that you know we have to learn to work together and you know be good at what you do and then use that to help build the organization and to build the group. so, for example it in our dojo you know we have somebody who's an accountant, we have you know somebody who's a woodworker, we have somebody who's good at sewing, we have somebody that does screen printing so putting all those skills together we're able to build a strong organization and each person contributes what their specialty is. and I think that's big success to creating a strong organization is being able to use all of your people to become one big success.

Jeremy Lesniak:

and I want to keep going with that just a little bit more. one of the things that I find myself talking about, one of the things that I get a tremendous amount of email about and I feel like you're a pretty good position to talk about this is ego and the ties between ego and rank and title and here



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your instructor, the man that I have referred to as the most influential living martial artist, I don't know if you would agree with that assessment, he takes the title of sensei. if there is anyone who would warrant a grander title in the world of martial arts today, I would say to him. where is that come from and how does that tie in if you see that it does with shoshin and perhaps maybe this is a question about culture within your organization and this is just as something that is personally very important to me so, listeners if you like this part may be skip forward but it just... I'm slowly trying to wrap my brain around this whole bailiwick of stuff this this ego, rank, title thing that keeps coming up on the show, that I keep hearing about, that I keep bumping into people who you know I can tell their "doing it right" and "doing it wrong" but I don't know that I yet have the words are the tools to talk about it.

Bob Cherone:

yeah you know that's definitely something that you always will hear people when they speak about Sensei Demura is his humbleness and you know a good example is you know, somebody was in the dojo and visiting the dojo and they asked him they said oh you know why do they call you sensei? he said and his answer was well I guess that's my nickname. rather than saying, well it's because I've done this and I have this rank and you know on and on as we see a lot of times in martial arts his answer was as simple as that's my nickname and he always demonstrates this, the sign of humbleness and I think that's a key, key point to becoming successful in the martial arts is to remain humble. one of the greatest signs I've ever seen in front of a dojo, first time I seen it was in front of the dojo in Ireland that's called the Bluewater dojo and as you walk in there was a little chalkboard and had a message on and it said students please remove your shoes and your ego before entering the dojo. and as a matter of fact, that was another coincidence that Sensei Scott Lombardo and I had shared and that he also has that same sign in front of his dojo.

Jeremy Lesniak:

yeah you had just posted that on Facebook, recently right? I thought I've seen that.

Bob Cherone:

and that you know I think it you know by remaining humble you open up the doors to learn a lot more and to absorb a lot more from the martial arts you know, ego can really get in the way of somebody's training and hinder their progress. when I was a brown belt first Q which is the last step before you test for black belt, I was really excited about testing and you know I was talking to one of my instructors at that time Bruce Butler, and he told me he said well there's no rush to become a black belt, he said, it's better to be a brown belt that looks and moves like a black belt than the other way around. and his words have kinda been a guiding principle for me to try to keep myself as humble as I can and not put too much emphasis on rank or you know, what level black belt that I



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might have or what not. at on the same note, I always try to respect my seniors in a witch and cannot they refer to is senpai and but I try not to put too much importance on numbers and ranks and titles and whatnot because I think a lot of times they just interfere with the progress in martial arts training.

Jeremy Lesniak:

is that humility something that is intentional in your organization's culture or is that something that just kinda happens more subliminally?

Bob Cherone:

you know I think that, in our culture there's you know, somewhat of a pressure you know, to succeed you know we go to school and you know you want to get an A and you know you want to get accepted to a good school and get a good job and make good money and there's this pressure to become this great person. and the in a karate dojo I think that martial arts tends to attract big ego sometimes so, for a lot of people it's not something that's natural even though what I could say that I feel I've met people that that may have been like naturally humble people, but I think for most of us it's a skill that we have to practice and learn just like anything else that we do. you know you have to do continuous training to become good at it and then become that kind of person. so, I think that being humble takes a little effort and takes practice to truly you know be that kind of a person.

Jeremy Lesniak:

it's hard and it seems like it gets harder as we get better as martial artist and that seems to be the piece that I'm observing you know watching because like I said, we talk about this on the show and I've had this conversation, have been exposed to so many amazing people and the common thread among the majority of the folks who have been on the show, now listeners don't write and I'm not naming names, won't do it, almost everybody that's been on the show has been really humble and there seems to be this inverse correlation the more people have achieved the less they care about their title and rank. it's almost like, actually no, I'm not to say because it this is your time in your space and I wanna hear what you have to say.

Bob Cherone:

in regards to?

Jeremy Lesniak:

anything any reaction. you started talking and I was finishing up and started to continue and decided not to.



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Bob Cherone:

yeah I think you know, as you are saying you know the more skill that we attain and the more experience that that we get it's really easy to you know let the ego build up you know behind it but I know we come back to that to that shoshin sheen to that beginner's spirit and remembering that at one time we didn't have those skills and we didn't have those abilities and you know, I think that's a key part in and working to become a humble person.

Jeremy Lesniak:

who's been the most influential person in your martial arts and if it's the name that I'm going to assume we're going to hear it and then maybe you'll give us more than one.

Bob Cherone:

you don't hands down my Sensei Fumio Demura has been my biggest influence and you know for obvious reasons but outside of him I would have to say that all of my dojo mates from my early years of training have been my greatest influence and the reason why I say that is because I remember being a younger student in karate and you know there was all these black belts you know around me and they were so good and good fighters and good performers of kata that it was almost seemed kind of out of reach, but having good dojo mates like I had in my early years I was a little more able to connect with them and some of my friends like Damon Pace and Nin HO and Ton Yen, Kristi Hines, we were all about the same about the same level coming up you know within a few years of each other and there was always like a friendly competition between us. you know, when we lined up to do basics, you know we were always trying to be one one-step little faster than the other and try to be just a little bit better than each other and challenge each other and I think that was a key to two growing up in those early years and having that kind of motivation and I don't remember there being a lot of you know let's say ego and between us. you know we were always kind of like a family support you know and I keep on coming back to that idea of family in the dojo because it really does give that kind of feeling and being a member of an organization, I think that's important to have that kind of a feeling and comfort and whatnot. so even though I had my senior students, in our senior black belts around as examples you know as a beginner it just seemed like they were so far out of touch and with your own dojo mates who are around your same level and you can relate to each other and support each other in and create this atmosphere of a friendly competition with each other and that seemed to be a key to good development and you know working towards you know, those higher levels in karate.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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and if you had the opportunity to train with anyone that you haven't, anywhere in time, anywhere in the world, who would you want to train with?

Bob Cherone:

the person that I would want to train with is Sensei Scott Lombardo.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Something tells me it's gonna happen,

Bob Cherone:

that's going to happen. he's planned to visit in sometime in July's, he's going to come out to California and spend some time out here and were going to get together and train together and he's going in a visit my dojo and train with my students and you know it's just so amazing you know as I told our story about how we met, just you know through that one picture in the airport with Sensei Demura you know we just have had so many coincidences and likenesses that it's just there's too many to name and you know one thing that I learn to appreciate about him is his dedication to working with the veterans that in VMAT, the veterans martial arts training. and the things that he does by giving those veterans a place to go to share camaraderie and you know use martial arts to help them and that's been something that I'm very impressed with him and I hope someday to be able to help out the same way that he does. you know, with his volunteer work and dedication that he gives to the veterans.

Jeremy Lesniak:

He's a good man and certainly is a wonderfully skilled martial artist. I'm jealous that he'll be heading out your way but maybe if you reciprocated some point I can come down and crash the party.

Bob Cherone:

that would be one heck of a party.

Jeremy Lesniak:

well you know what one of the goals is that whistlekick continues to grow and get really big, so I have this you know bizarre disposable income and then I know I'll fly everybody that's been show, you know, who wants to come you know, we'll have some big crazy training thing.

Bob Cherone:

awesome that would be amazing.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

wouldn't it? That's the stuff that I wanna do you know. people write in there like you make this product? sure, but that's not really what I want to do I just wanted I just want to train, I just wanna hang out with my new friends and train.

Bob Cherone:

yeah, that would be something.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Are you at all fan of martial arts movies? is that a requirement? are there other titles that you have to say that you love? because of who you train with?

Bob Cherone:

well of course you know, as you know, Sensei Demura has been involved in many movies over the years. you know of course is his most famous you know role was being the stunt double for Pat Morita in the karate kid movies, but you know he's done so many other movies and the few that I could think of, spend in the warrior within, Island of Dr. Monroe, bring them back alive rising Sun, ninja, Mortal Kombat, showdown in Little Tokyo, and I think that's probably about 1/4 of the movies that he's been in. but I'd have to say that my all-time favorite movie is got to be Enter the Dragon with Bruce Lee. I mean I remember being a little kid and just staring into the TV screen watching that movie and just wanting to be able to do all those things that Bruce Lee was doing you know in that movie.

Jeremy Lesniak:

and forgive me because I'm intentionally not doing math, I try not to figure out people's ages unless they want to talk about it we where did the first time you saw that movie enter the Dragon fit in with your martial arts career. was that before or?

Bob Cherone:

oh, long before. I was yeah, I was like still in I think probably elementary school during that time so I was still a really young kid and you know when I was growing up I always was interested in karate and I remember a flyer coming in the mail for some advertisement you know for a local karate class and you know I asked my parents I said you know, 'I want to do karate you know can you sign me up?' and at that time you know my parents felt that all will you know karate is just fighting and you know, you don't need that you'll end up getting in trouble in school and you know without having any knowledge of the different kind of benefits of martial arts training you know, that was just the



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way that they felt at that time so you know resulted that I did a lot of different sports, you know like baseball and soccer and football and swimming and things like that which I really enjoyed but I always wanted, I always wanted to do karate, and when I just, when I started college at Saddleback College and I needed physical education requirement you know, I saw that self-defense karate class and I said this is for me and that's where it all began was when I started college right after high school.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I have this theory that were all predestined into martial arts it just takes certain time. actually, I don't know that I believe to sound like a good thing to say at the moment. how about books? you know, certainly Sensei has written a number of books, people have a pretty polarized view on martial arts books especially when it comes to learning how to do things from books. What's your view? do you subscribe in a sense that martial arts books are worth reading or do you prefer to get out there and learn hands-on?

Bob Cherone:

well without a doubt, there is no better way to learn a martial art than with a qualified sensei in a in a reputable dojo. you know I have dabbled around with books and I do enjoy a lot of the older books from the early 1900s, like the ones written by [00:53:55.39] and Funakoshi and some of those even though I don't understand the kanji and the writing, I do appreciate the old photos and me being not much of a reader you know picture books are great for me. you know my first karate instructor Dan McGough told I remember him teaching the class when I was just a beginner, and he said if you want to learn how to defend yourself, you need to get out here on the mat and you need to do self-defense. he said when you were walking out in the dark parking lot, in the middle of the night and this stranger comes up to you and tries to assault you, he said you're not to remember what's on page 34 of how to karate, and you're not to remember what's on you know the time mark 3.47 on the self-defense video he said you're going to remember what you do inside the dojo. and so that's why personally I haven't put large emphasis on books. I collect them but they pretty much sit on my shelf most of the time and when I do flip through them it's mostly picture reading. but I definitely subscribe to the to that philosophy of gaining your experience in the dojo, making your mistakes in the dojo, that way when you go out on the street, you'll be more prepared to handle any situation that might come in front of you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

let's talk about goals. if you're training hard if you're still actively teaching certainly there's a reason and for most folks it seems that there are things that they haven't done yet. things that they're looking to accomplish so what's on your list?



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Bob Cherone:

my future goals in karate is I would like to continue to build up you know my classes that I have now and build up my students. but ultimately, I would like to someday build my own freestanding dojo and my business is I'm general contractor so I am a builder and I've always wanted to be able to combine my cut out they in my building experience to build what for me would be the perfect freestanding dojo and then you know teach and that dojo and use everything that I've learned over my years to create that and make that happen.

Jeremy Lesniak:

now folks who are listening if they want to get a hold of you, maybe they're headed out your way and they want to see if they can drop in for class or anything like that. how do people reach you?

Bob Cherone:

okay I'm currently teaching at the Montanoso recreation center in the city of Mission Viejo and we have classes several times a week there and I am also currently still training with the Sensei Demura his Hombu dojo in Santa Ana and I helped teach the cut the classes on Sunday morning with Dave and Kristi Hines. and I have a Facebook page for my dojo at the recreation center that's Genbukai Karate-do Montanoso and there's contact information and everything on that site and another source of contact would be my sense is website genbukai-hq.org that's the main website for Japan karate-do Genbukai which is since a Fumio Demers organization that that I teach under.

Jeremy Lesniak:

great and of course listeners will have the link so that in the show notes over it whistlekickmartialartsradio.com as we always do. I really appreciate being on the show today since it is been a lot of fun great finally connecting with you and what final words would you give the folks listening?

Bob Cherone:

practice, practice, practice. you know there really isn't any shortcuts to becoming good at Martial arts or anything else in life for that matter. so, you know we have all old saying in a Japanese budo, that's hiyaku ren jitoku, that means you practice 100 times before you understand and that's something that I learned from my sensei Fumio Demura. I asked him one time about some movements in a kata, and he said oh you don't understand that kata and I said no sensei I don't understand and he said you practice all the time when I said yeah I practice all the time he said go practice for 100 more years and then come back and ask me if you still don't understand and that's what I think is the key to becoming successful in martial arts and in life is to continuously practice,



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continuously research and use your training to gain your knowledge and experience and then pass it on into any other aspect of your life.

Jeremy Lesniak:

when we think about legacy in the martial arts, it's important to think about who is going to carry on the legacy of the people who are teaching. who's going to rise up and bring the system, the teachings of the instructors to the next generation martial artist? when I consider the role that Sensei Demura has played in the lives of so many in the world of martial arts, I don't know that I would ever consider myself to be qualified to pass on his teachings. but it seems very clear to me from talking with Sensei Cherone today that he is. thank you for coming on the show Sensei, I am still digesting and will be for a while things we talked about. listeners I hope that you got as much out of this one as I did. if you want to head on over to check out the show notes, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com check out whistlekick.com for all of our products. you can find us on social media @whistlekick and you can sign up for the newsletter at either really just about any of the websites we make. and if you haven't checked out martialartscalendar.com why don't you do that if you don't see some martial arts events that you know were going on please submit them we want that to be the most comprehensive website martial arts goings-on you can find and you know what you'll conveniently notice missing from it? any sort of advertising or pay or anything. I just want everybody have many opportunities to participate in martial arts as possible. that's all I got for today until next time train hard, smile and have a great day.