



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey everybody, what's going on? Episode 302 of whistlekick Martial Arts Radio drops right now. Today, I'm joined by Kyosah Dennis Campo. I'm Jeremy Lesniak. I'm fortunate enough to have the best job in the world. I get to talk about martial arts with martial artists and then other martial artists listen to it and then sometimes, they reach out over social media, we're @whistlekick, sometimes they email me, jeremy@whistlekick.com, and say hey, thanks for doing the show! And that kind of completes the loop and makes me feel really good 'cause I'm doing something that I enjoy and other people are digging it. So hey, that's really cool. If you really dig what we're doing, you can head on over to whistlekick.com, you can sign up for the newsletter, you can check out the products that we make including a rapidly evolving line of apparel and training gear and I'd say I think this is gonna be the first time I'm gonna say this on the air, soon we will have uniforms. Those uniforms are almost done with development and a bunch of other stuff because you know what, the show airs once a week. What do you think I do with the rest of the time? We're working on, making cool stuff! But enough about that. Let's talk about today's guest. Kyosah Dennis Campo. He's a good guy. He's a fun guy, a funny guy and I've really enjoyed getting to know him. He's a fellow Superfoot Black Belt and he's tied into quite a few other folks that we've had on the air. He tells some amazing stories including some stories about one of his mentors, the late Joe Lewis, and I just had an absolute blast talking to him. So I hope you enjoy what is one of my favorite conversations on this show today. Check it out.

Dennis Campo:



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Alright. I think I did that correctly.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You did. You did, Kyosah Campo. How are you?

Dennis Campo:

Good. How are you doing, buddy?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm doing great! I've been looking forward to this.

Dennis Campo:

You know, me too. I actually avoid this kind of stuff but for you -

Jeremy Lesniak:

Really?

Dennis Campo:

Seriously. But with you, I enjoy it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thank you. Well, you know I have to admit so, I don't remember when I met you. And what's funny about that is there was no time where I didn't feel like I knew you.

Dennis Campo:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And maybe that's just because we have so many people in common and I think we have very similar personalities. But my earliest memories of you, which really aren't that old, are kind of us giving each other a hard time and just being goofy and playful.

Dennis Campo:



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Yeah, absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And with most people, that takes time. You know, usually if you meet someone and you're a little formal and especially in the martial arts world, right? Like that formality's got to break down a little bit as you become comfortable and know where people's boundaries are.

Dennis Campo:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And it was just, you and I goofing from probably like moment -

Dennis Campo:

Yeah. It was something that involved Wallace, you know. And after it was Teri or Paul but yeah, you're always there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And you were always there. We're becoming fixtures for good or for bad for those around us.

Dennis Campo:

Yeah. I'm not quite sure where would that land but yeah. One or the other.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Maybe there's a bit of a small man's syndrome here that we're trying to make sure people know that we're around.

Dennis Campo:

There it is.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You and I, neither of us were blessed with height.



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Dennis Campo:

That wasn't my blessing for sure. That's okay.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's okay. As I always tell people, I can stand on a ladder but you can't get shorter. I've been in a dryer, have you?

Dennis Campo:

I have been, actually. Not recently but -

Jeremy Lesniak:

No, no. I couldn't fit now. I think I've got 40-50 pounds on me when that happened. And the jerks turned it on.

Dennis Campo:

They turned it on?

Jeremy Lesniak:

They turned it on.

Dennis Campo:

Oh, I didn't get mine turned on, that was good.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well they only turned it one halfway and so there I am, I'm upside down in a dryer which was difficult enough to get in. We were playing hide and seek, no one found me.

Dennis Campo:

That's so funny.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And they were, where were you? I was in the dryer. No you weren't. I was. Prove it.



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Dennis Campo:

Were there clothes in there, too?

Jeremy Lesniak:

No. No, just me.

Dennis Campo:

It's just you and they turned it on. Nice.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know, in hindsight, especially with the group of people I was with, I should've known better than to voluntarily get back in the dryer.

Dennis Campo:

Right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. It was like 20 minutes to get out because they didn't dare turning it back on and it was a whole thing. There was genuine concern about my well-being at that point.

Dennis Campo:

I would think so, yeah. You had probably slamming into the top and the side and the -

Jeremy Lesniak:

It was only half a revolution so I started in a, in context, comfortable position, and then they turned it on and realized holy crap we just turned this on with Jeremy in it. Immediately turned it off and so I'd only done half a revolution so I was, I would say I was upside down. But of course, compressed in a very different way, my weight's on my shoulders and just trying to find a way out. I mean maybe I should have been a contortionist, who knows?

Dennis Campo:

There's still time.



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Uhm, there is not time for that role. I feel like if by the time you're, I would guess even in your 20s if you have not started as a contortionist, then you are unlikely to succeed in that

Dennis Campo:

I think those guys start at pre-teen, I would think.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Gotta take the bones out. Alright. Well we're not here to talk about this but that's okay cause I know that we're gonna wonder and then we're gonna have plenty of other goofy things so listeners, if you don't appreciate goofy conversations and wondering all over the place as we thread back and forth, talking about martial arts, you're not gonna like this episode. But I suspect most people are used to that kind of stuff by now. This is just gonna be a more extreme version, I'm guessing, and they're gonna hang around and they're gonna dig our conversation.

Dennis Campo:

I hope so.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So let's give him some context. Let's talk about you. This is your episode, this is your story as a martial artist. And stories, most of the time unless you're Quentin Tarantino, start at the beginning. So let's go back, how did you get started as a martial artist?

Dennis Campo:

Alright. Well I got started as a martial artist against my will in 1981. I say against my will because my father thought that my brother and I, growing up in The Bronx, were kind of soft. He probably isn't wrong, probably wasn't wrong, so he enrolled us surprisingly in the Tremont Karate Club, on the corner of Tremont and 3rd Avenue in the South Bronx and he had us go and watch a class first and I thought it was kind of interesting but not that I want to do it. But we watched a bunch of kids in these, to me it looked like white pajamas and all these different colored belts which didn't understand, punching and kicking and yelling. And we watched that for a couple of hours and when we left he said, what do you guys think? And I said I hate it. That's not for me. And he said, well that's good because you're starting next week. So I started in a system called Ji Do Kwan Taekwondo which translates to English means a way of wisdom which fast forward into 2018 or 2000 when I opened my school. The name of our school, remembering our roots, is Wisdom Way Martial Arts. That's where that started. But anyway, going back to the beginning, I started under a great man, name is Curtis Inniss who studied under Carlos Farrell who studied under Henry



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Cho, which most people know. I remember the first class I actually took, I went home and I was shaking literally. It was just completely out of my wheelhouse - punching and kicking and yelling. And I don't think I did much yelling, it's just that it didn't seem like it fit me. But as time went on I started to like the exercises, I liked the push-ups - I felt like I was getting stronger. And where it really clicked is when we started sparring and I learned, wow I can take a hit pretty well and I liked hitting people back and not in a violent way. Because as you know, in martial arts, it's a really big brotherhood and the folks you're training with, we care about each other and we push each other, we encourage each other, and when we spar and traded punches and kicks, we had a blast. And I realized it wasn't as scary as it was that first Saturday back in March of '81 when I watched the class.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well do you even remember when you started?

Dennis Campo:

March 21st 1981, yep.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You remember the date. Wow, okay. Are you generally good with dates or is it because this was so significant for you?

Dennis Campo:

I'm generally good with dates but this one is very significant.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You talked about that transition from this is not for me, the idea of doing this stuff like I hate the notion, to enjoying it. Was that a fast transition or did it take a fair amount of time?

Dennis Campo:

It took a few months. I began to become more comfortable with the thought of doing all the different exercises, the stretches, and hitting the makiwara, and learning the katas. It was okay. It felt good, I felt stronger but it was really when we started going beyond the one-step and three-steps sparring to free-sparring as we called it - and a lot of schools still call it. This was back in the early 80's. We didn't wear a gear. You know, it was bare knuckle, bare foot, so we really were whacking each other in the South Bronx. So we didn't hold back much, it was different world. And it was a lot of fun. We were practicing what felt like dances, the katas, and it made it very real and there was no hiding. I played baseball as a kid and on the street, we'd play stickball on the street,



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

and two hand touch football but you know, with the team, you always have somebody to rely on. This was... you're on your own. And when my buddy Ray or Carlos [10:41](#) were coming at me, they were coming at me. I had nowhere to hide behind. I had this either step up and face them or step aside and let the next person have a chance. So it was just a lot of fun.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How did this change the way you were outside of martial arts? You said your dad thought you were soft. Did you start to change?

Dennis Campo:

You know, that's a great question. I don't know that even to this day. I've changed that much. I've always been a little bit of a softie, if you will. You know, crying at movies, [11:16](#) when they pass, that kind of thing. I never really got hardened, so-to-speak. I'm not sure if that's what you're looking for somebody to be outwardly tough, you know. Certainly my time in the Karate Circle and the boxing ring, proved that I have toughness. But I think what I really gained from the martial arts outside of the training floor was discipline. And it transcended certainly into my studies. I was a good student as a kid - I did my homework and studies hard and got really good grades but I think it really just added another level of discipline to making sure I did what was important, at that time, what was important. And I think that's rolled into my full-time career. I've been working a day job for 28 years now for a **Fortune 65** company and I think the discipline is important. It keeps you focused and keeps your priorities in order and you wind up finding success in the things you do. Everybody defines successful differently. For me it's not about making your grandiose living. It's about the impact that I have on people. I work in a HR related field so I have a great opportunity to touch a lot of lives and try to that in a positive manner. I think that's what martial arts really bring to the table. A lot of people think martial arts is violent and if you ever heard Joe Lewis get very defensive about people calling martial arts violent. There's nothing violent about martial arts at all. When we talk about violence, violence is the absence of control. And martial arts is all about having control - self-control and of course controlling an opponent. So there's nothing violent about our sport or our art. It's really all about maintaining control, having discipline and in that way, you can have a very positive impact on people. That's my story on that one.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Let's talk about Joe Lewis for a moment because you know, I don't know you well. But if there's one thing that I know, one thing that you and I have had a couple of conversations about, it's about how significant he was for you. But I don't know how you met him, I know none of that.

Dennis Campo:

Sure.



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

So why don't you tell us about that?

Dennis Campo:

Sure. It's a long story but I'll try to shorten a little bit.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We've got time. Tell whatever version, whatever length.

Dennis Campo:

Sure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Convey it in the way you want.

Dennis Campo:

So I started in the Tremont School in 1981 and my instructor, Curtis Inniss joined the army in 1988 and left a bunch of us black belts there to run the program and we had a lot of fun teaching without him. We missed him but in the learning, we had to become better teachers and as time went on, I rotate out to a different school where I was learning Chung Do Kwan Taekwondo and helping to teach before coming back to Tremont in the late 90's, probably 1996. But I realized I was without an instructor for a while now and I wanted to learn. I didn't want just to be a teacher. I want to keep learning. I was a young, 2nd or 3rd Degree black belt and I thought there was a lot more to learn. And I'm looking for a Black Belt magazine and you know, as a kid, growing up in the 80's and early 90's in the martial arts, everybody was a big fan of Chuck Norris, as was I. But I really was very interested in Joe Lewis. He was my martial arts hero that unbelievable side-kick, the tenacity, the toughest [15:01](#), his look. He was what I kind of aspired to be as a martial artist. I remember as a brown belt, my kick was the side-kick. Just like Joe Lewis, I'd grab the arm and work the side kick. So anyway, in 1997, I'm looking for a Black Belt Magazine and in the back they had seminars that are coming up. I was like, well this is kind of cool. Let me see is there's anybody I'd recognize or something I'd might want to learn and add to my toolbox. And there it was - Joe Lewis was gonna be teaching a seminar in Cromwell, Connecticut which was maybe an hour from home. I said, I've always wanted to meet Joe. I've got to go and take this class. So I called the guy, this was back in the day before you had the internet. I actually called him on landline and reserved my spot and I went to take a 3-hour seminar and I met Joe Lewis. And he was a great guy. He was larger than life, certainly, but just a regular guy. And he's teaching a lesson and I remember the very first footwork show we did to open that very first seminar with



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

him. As a matter of fact, I just thought that in one of my classes over this past week, I always go back to that. It kind of brings me back to where that part of my martial arts career started. But he was just a regular guy and he was out talking to everybody before the seminar and hung around after to sign autographs. And what really struck me was during the seminar, somebody said excuse me, Master Lewis, and he stops. He goes, woah, woah, woah, hold on. He says, guys look, I know I'm the teacher here, I was world champion, I've got this black belt - and he grabs his black belt which is just a plain old black belt, no fancy markings, no multi-color, it's just a plain old black belt - and he says, but my name is Joe. And he just wanted to be one of the guys out there, just training and as we're learning from him, he wanted to be learning from us. It really struck me. It's not what I expect from somebody of such magnitude in the martial arts. So we exchanged numbers and when he was in the area, he would call which was fantastic; it was amazing. My childhood hero is calling me to tell me he's gonna be in the area for a seminar and I kept track of where he was gonna be when he was in my area. I remember he was in Boston one day and his memory was just unbelievable. So I trained with him a few times over '97 until '98. So maybe a year after we've met, he's in Boston and he's getting out of his car and I had pulled in literally just behind him for the seminar. And I get out and he goes, what the heck are you doing here? I said, I heard you were gonna be here so. He said, 4 hours? I said, yeah why not? I said, I think he has something good to teach me. So I followed him around for 3 years and finally he said, this is now in 2000, he says, clearly you're like this and I think you're gonna stick with it. You know, I'd love you to become part of my system. I want you to come and meet some of my guys. So this is in 2000 when he was one of the headliners for Karate College. He said, I want you to come down in this camp in Virginia and I want you to meet some of my guys - Robb Buckland, Ian Marshall, Mike Allen, my buddy Bill. I said, your buddy Bill? He said, yeah Bill Wallace. I was like, oh my gosh you've got to be kidding me. Bill Wallace, another one of my heroes, right? Superfoot. I said, sounds like a blast. So then that was history. I met all these guys who become lifelong friends and mentors and a great, great time at Karate College. All sorts of different stuff there, of course. There was this stuff Joe was teaching in a lot of his students were teaching - John Maynard, who I failed to mention a second ago, also was teaching, Danny Dring - all these guys from the Joe Lewis Systems were teachers at the conference. And then beyond that, you have your Jiu Jitsu. Renzo Gracie was there and a bunch of other great guys, you have wrestling; just a fantastic time. And I got to meet Joe's guys and now I really was [19:03](#) at the bits to become more than just I was at that point. I really want to become a Joe Lewis black belt. Once I saw these guys in action where they carry themselves, the camaraderie, the toughness, the skill, I said this is where I want to get to. So over the next year, I trained really hard with Joe and I was travelling further distances now to get with him but now I knew more guys. Guys up in the Northeast like Jeff Troshane and Phil Maldonado that I could train with even without Joe. And then a year later in 2001, he invited me to his annual conference to test for my black belt with him. So I was only 33 at that time. I was a youngster. And you know, Joe's test wasn't like any other I took. My first three black belt tests was probably two and half, three hours. My 2nd Degree Black Belt test was probably four hours. This was an 11-minute test. Three-minute rounds of full contact sparring against three of his black belts. Intimidating, to say the least. I knew what these guys were capable of and I'm not ashamed to say and I know everybody's soon to hear it but I threw up four times the night before my test and then four more times the morning. The test is not designed to test what you know. It's designed to show you what you don't know or to show what you don't have. And Joe always said



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

that, I'll give you a couple of rounds to show me what you got. And the last round, I want to show you what you ain't got. The test was really designed to see if you had heart. You had the skills, you know how to punch, you know how to kick, you have the footwork, you have the rhythm, the timing, the head movement but do you have the heart to stand in there for nine minutes and not quit? And it was just an amazing experience and certain things you never forget. My three rounds, I fought Randy Ballard who, at that time, was the North Carolina Heavyweight Kickboxing Champion. I actually knocked him down with a lucky right hand as he was coming and I hit him in the right hand and he fell. And I said oh my goodness, he's gonna get up and kill me. So he gets up, we touched gloves, he says, great shot in all sincerity. And he gave me a little bit of beat down later on. I was trapped in my right hand, he says keep your hand up and I dropped my hand a couple of times so he finally whacked me and from that punch, I couldn't chew for a couple of days. But I survived that round and then round two had Mike Allen who later became their president of the Joe Lewis Fighting Systems. He was the lightest hitter of the three but by no means was he a light hitter, tough guy, great friend and 10 years my senior. It felt like I was fighting someone 10 years my junior. He was just that good and so technically sound. And the third round, I fought John Maynard who was just an absolute beast. He kicked me so hard I thought his foot came out my spine. And at one point, I'm running out of gas in the third round so I grabbed him like we did in boxing, right. You'd clench just to try to catch your breath. And he says, you better kick my butt, you little stinker. And he pushed me off and survived the final bell. And it was just a great experience. It felt like... Yeah, I was in a fraternity in college and when you get in and you feel like you're part of something big and you've accomplished something, it's huge. But becoming part of the Joe Lewis family was a thousand times bigger than that. And after putting your butt on the line in front of all your brothers and sisters and being welcomed as part of the family for performing, it was a great feeling. So now I've got black belts in seven different systems but none of them was meaningful as that first degree with Joe. That was something else. That was an experience I'll never forget. And from that point forward, you know, I was with Joe, in total, for 15 years. He'd come to my school and then seminars twice a year and I traveled over the country to see him. We'd have our annual conferences in Virginia and somewhere in Tampa and he was in the Northeast so often. From Philadelphia to New Jersey to my school to Long Island, easily we'd see Joe 20-25 times per year which is awesome. Keeping up with the training. In some weekends we'd have three seminars and maybe I wouldn't see him for a month here and there but you know, on average, it was like twice a month that we'd be seeing each other; it was great. He was just a tremendous teacher and a teacher, you know there's instructors and there's coaches. He truly was a teacher and a motivator. You know, he taught us how to be fighters and he really taught us how to be teachers. It was very important to him that we'd be able to see to take our skills and empower others with what we had. We can't take this stuff with us to the grave. It's important to keep this martial arts spirit moving. I always loved that about him. So you know, we always had a blast. We trained hard. I never trained harder in my life but I never had more fun. And right through the end in 2012, he was diagnosed with a cancer in the summer of 2011. He said he'd have about 4-6 weeks to live and of course he laughed at them all and lived for 13 and a half months with brain cancer. I saw him the last week before he passed, about 5 or 6 days before he passed on August 31st. He couldn't talk anymore yet he could still move and we walk around at the hospital center there and he was shuffling his feet but he was moving so quickly I had to walk briskly to keep up with him. But he got tired after a while and my girlfriend at that time, who was there with



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

me, Joe adored her. There's something about her. He always liked her. Her name was Sonia. And again, he couldn't talk but we could just kind of communicate with the way he'd look at us or whatever. He looked at her and he's kinda rolled his eyes and blew a kiss at her. You know, even when he was so sick, he was still flirting with her. I miss him. I miss him a lot. And when we get together at occasions like Teri's event recently in New Hampshire where we had a bunch of the Joe Lewis guys there or any of these events where we all get together, it just feels like home again. And that was the thing with the Joe Lewis Systems - being together you always felt like you were home and it's different. That was very different from all the martial arts training that I had done. You know, it always felt like my dojo was home but when I was with the Joe Lewis family, it really felt like you're part of something tremendous and you felt that you were at home and you didn't have to be in this specific place for it to feel like home.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Excuse me. Just getting a little, little bit of emotion on my end here. You mentioned...

Dennis Campo:

I don't know how I held it together so.

North Carolina Heavyweight Kickboxing Champion

You did great. You did great, my friend. You mentioned Kyoshi Robb Buckland, someone who's been on the show, told some hysterical stories and of course, we'll link to that on the show notes if anybody might be new to the show, we have show notes at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com where we'll just link to all the stuff we talked about and you know, we'll link to your website and all that. But you said something that I've only ever heard one person say before and the only, in reference to Joe Lewis, and that was when Kyoshi Buckland talked about just following Joe around.

Dennis Campo:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know I've had the opportunity to meet and to speak with, quite a few people and of course, getting pulled in the Superfoot System. I'm blessed. I'm utterly blessed but I've never heard anyone talk about their experiences with Joe Lewis with... nobody's ever talked about it in that way that just kind of like, almost like once you enter his orbit, you were there. You were pulled in. What was it? I don't want to make this whole thing about Joe Lewis but I think it's important for listeners to understand how fundamental your love for him and how important his influence was on you as a person and as a martial artist.



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Dennis Campo:

Yeah. There's something about Joe. His charisma was unmatched. But Joe was very... I don't know the right word. He's very picky or very specific on who he'd pull into his orbit, so-to-speak. Joe liked toughness. He likes sincerity. So you know, I remember him that at the summer of one time, you know he's teaching concept and good stuff and somebody who I think was taking it with me the first seminar with him and you'd know because he was wearing a white gi and a belt and we all wore t-shirts and shorts. And the guy is continuing to challenge Joe and those of us who've been in combat, by combat I mean the sport version of it, we kinda understand where his questions are coming from if you don't have the experience and you kinda understand. He's trying maybe to get it but then it got to a point where it was just getting a little obnoxious and we just want to train. So Joe stops him and says, what's your fight record? The guy says, excuse me? What's your fight record? He says, well I just do point-fighting. He goes, no more questions then. Trust me, in all these guys here, points to us black belts, they can tell you this is the real deal. This is what works. But I think I'm a little off topic there. You know, Joe, if he believe in your sincerity and you displayed it, and obviously, if you were Joe Lewis's black belt, you clearly demonstrate it. He'd pull you into his orbit and you are family. And on many occasions, he would talk in the end of the seminar while on the training floor still or enjoying a meal afterwards, Joe always said that you guys, you're my family. And he loved his daughter, Christina, and his son, Cameron. They were everything to him. And I remember seeing Cameron as a little five-year-old running around Karate College with a little fake sword just having fun and learning with us. They're everything to him. Don't get me wrong but beyond his two children, we were his family, his black belts. We meant everything to him and certainly, he meant everything to us. When we lost Joe, to me, it was like losing my own dad. I'm blessed my dad is still with us and Joe and my father are the exact same age. But losing him was losing a very big part of me and I've only grieved a couple of people as much as I've grieved Joe and I still, to this day, we were at Teri's event a couple of week ago in New Hampshire and Buckland and I and Anthony, we were just kind of reminiscing and we had ourselves a good cry and some good laughs. It's just interesting how much he's still with us and how much he was a part of us. But going back to your point, you know, following him around, Robb and I, as was many of his black belts but particularly Robb and I, we're very similarly minded in terms of teaching and training and learning. We took advantage of every opportunity we could to get on the training floor with Joe. We knew that he wasn't, he didn't have a full-time a school that we went to and that we could train with him three or four or five times a week. Every training session was valuable and is a treasure. So if it meant hoping on a plane to get there or taking a five or six hour car ride, we were there. And I remember going to Dennis Nackord's school in Philadelphia or at that time, it was King of Prussia Pennsylvania, which is two hours for me but it was about 8 hours from Buckland. And I walk in, who's standing there? Robb Buckland. Just, you know, another chance to get there and train with the champ. Yeah, it wasn't... We never felt like, that you had to be there to maintain your status with Joe. We just want to be there. We want to learn from the absolute best. We were blessed to be part of the world, the inner world, the family if you will, of somebody who was a hero, you know. He was a character on a poster on our bedroom walls. We never thought we'd ever meet him and shake his hand. Now, he consider us family. And moreover than just having the chance to train with our teacher, with the chance to train with each other and help each other to grow. And you know, I've



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

certainly helped Rob along the way in his martial arts journey and he has helped me tremendously in mine. He's definitely one of my mentors now. You know, just an honor to be part of his world which is, again, part of Joe's world. Does that answer the question?

Jeremy Lesniak:

It did.

Dennis Campo:

I went a little bit around.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It did. And you know, there's going to be an element of that that is unexplainable. When you talk about the charisma, when you talk about that gravity that some people have. I think we've all experienced it with various people. But to experience it with someone who also has a tremendous amount of skill is a rarity. So the gravity pulls you in, maybe it even keeps you, but there's so much benefit in being there because of the skill, because of the ability to instruct. I appreciate you answering that. I think my whole -

Dennis Campo:

Yeah, I would close with this. As I've said frequently and it's worth having people hear this. Joe was a better teacher than he was a fighter. And be mindful that he's considered by his peers as the greatest Karate fighter of all time. So think about that. In my personal and professional opinion, he was even a better teacher than he was a fighter.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's pretty powerful. And the reason that I asked you to talk about Joe, the reason I asked these questions is I want people to understand what an amazing teacher looks like in the way that they conduct themselves, in the way that they inspire their students. So whether you are considering where to train or you're considering how to train others, hopefully this conversation is giving you some ideas of what one end of the spectrum, what the standard can be that you can hold yourself to or you can hold others to. Let's imagine an alternate world where you didn't meet Joe or maybe that he was never born. What would your life look like now? How would you... I mean for the most part, let's corral it to martial arts but how would you be a different person? What do you think you'd be doing now, etcetera?

Dennis Campo:



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

That's a pretty, ratty good question. I don't know that I'd still be in martial arts at this point. All of the connections that I have today in martial arts have come from Joe. Out of Joe came Robb Buckland, came Bill Wallace, and you, Jeremy, of course. And the whole family, the whole Superfoot family. Paul and Frank and... Interesting. Now, Michael DePasquale, I've known since I was 11 years old. His dad, Sr., and Antonio Pereira, who's the headmaster of my school, they were contemporaries. They were the two big names in Jiu Jitsu and the Northeast and of the whole country back at that time. And both DePasquale's actually on the examination board when Curtis Inness went for his 4th Degree Black Belt. So it was pretty cool. You know, I've actually had the pleasure of having Mike Sr. put his hands on me which were enormous hands. Yeah, he's just a gentle wonderful man but just so fierce. But I don't know that I'd still be in the martial arts now. I was at a time where I was without a teacher. I wasn't really sure what I wanted to study. I knew I was getting kind of bored with the same old, same old and I missed boxing. I boxed as a youngster. I had my team since my early 20s. I missed that. I liked the reality of it as opposed to the point-fighting and the katas which were fun, they were great. But I wanted something more and something more realistic. Not that the other training was real but just something a little more realistic that fit for me. So I don't know. Joe certainly reinvigorated my desire to train and to train differently. But more importantly, he really inspired us to be, and I mentioned this before, he really inspired us to be teachers and to impart our wisdom and our skills to others. So I don't know. I may have just been an accountant or human resources professionally. My regular job, my day job, if you will, has taken me. I don't know where I'd be. That's a great question.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know it's amazing how many people get bored. They start to wonder away, their training falters, maybe even stops. And if I was to categorize the emails that I get from listeners, the number one email I get is that something as a result of the show, whether it's an introduction to a person or a story somebody told or simply hearing that they weren't the only ones feeling boredom has helped them find another teacher, another instructor. It's a subject we talk about on the show. I've done an entire episode on it. And I just want listeners out there, if you're feeling some boredom, it's probably because you're not developing. And some of that might be on you, some of it might be where you're at. I don't know that it necessarily matter for what I'm saying here. Just look, find something different. Find something new. Find something that is going to reignite that passion because you never know where that passion is going to come from and you never know what's on the other side of your next training. I mean, as you said, if you had not met Joe Lewis, you and I would have likely never met.

Dennis Campo:

No. Absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

And so many other people that are truly important in your life and I can say the same thing. Had I not met Bill Wallace, I would not have met you. Some of my absolute best friends in the world, I would not know.

Dennis Campo:

Yeah. Interesting, right? The good fortune. We're so blessed.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We are.

Dennis Campo:

So blessed. And I certainly recognize that and I appreciate it every day.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Did you ever take the stuff that you learned into competition where you do any full contact stuff? I would assume boxing but

Dennis Campo:

Yeah, I did boxing but that was actually before, long before I met Joe. So when I started doing the full-contact kickboxing with Joe. I was probably 29 or 30, in a test room of 33. Now I'm beyond my competitive career at that point. At that point, I had three kids already so I want to keep my head on straight. I had gotten the knockouts and the concussions from boxing earlier on. So no, I didn't compete as a kickboxer. I certainly had a good taste of it, fighting some of the great champs in our association but my competition years ended a little bit earlier

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right.

Dennis Campo:

I did the whole thing. I did the katas and the weapons and point-sparring and of course, boxing, which was a blast.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Martial artists have a fairly unique tool kit for dealing with challenge and I'd love for you to take a moment, think about a time in your life when things were really, really difficult. And in case you...



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

I don't want you to go to the well too many times, you know. I know that Joe's passing was really difficult for you. We've talked about that. So I want to take that one off the table because I want to hear some new stuff.

Dennis Campo:

Sure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Tell us about that time and how, you know, just you being a martial artist, helped you get past it.

Dennis Campo:

I'll tell you, I'll get really personal about 10 or 12 years ago... about 12 or 13 years ago, somewhere in that range, start the process of moving towards to divorce. I got married young, too young, to a lovely young woman I went to school with and we had started a family and we had two kids and probably should have called it quits. But I said, you know what, we're gonna make it work. We've got a family, we gotta make this work. So we made up and had two more kids. And I'm blessed with four sons and I would never change it, would never, ever change. They are certainly the four times the best things that ever happened to me. But she and I just weren't a good fit. So we started that process and it became a very... [42:03](#)are very contentious and difficult and heart-wrenching process. You know, it's hard to... even though your marriage is failing and has failed but you're just there because you've got children. It's heart-wrenching to walk away from your boys but you're hoping that to do so, to create something better for them in the long run that sounds kinda counterintuitive, right? To break up the family to make it better for them but hindsight being it is now, it was the best thing we ever did. Everybody is happier and healthier and relationships are strong between the kids and both parents. And even she and I get along for the most part so it's... things worked out pretty well but during the process, it was difficult and tried to take the kids and move far away, like move to Virginia. It was difficult. There were so many times I think had I not done martial arts training and gone through the meditation and the breathing, and being disciplined and centered, you know. I could see that going through that process, really terrible things happen where spouses even become, or soon-to-be former spouses become violent towards one another. I can never empathize with it, I can never justify it. But I can understand when you hear stories why people went off the deep end and did really horrible things, I kinda understood a little bit, going through that process. I think I attribute the martial arts to not going off the deep end and being able to stay focused and trying to see the bigger picture. And as difficult as that whole thing was and dealing with lawyers and... You know, my ex-wife was difficult but it was really, it was the lawyers that made the process so much more difficult, I think. So I think, she and I are fighting but these guys, they're fighting each other and I think their egos come into play and they want to win. I think it gets to a point where they weren't looking up for the best interest of us but looking out for their win-loss record. So that was just a brutal process. And I think I was able to get through it with my chin up. Because of all the training. Like I said, we came out at a happy ending, so-to-speak. We came out at a better place. Boys are happy and



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

doing well and three of them are adults and living great lives and one more in high school. Like I say, my ex-wife and I, we ran into each other the other day, we chatted for a bit. So things worked out in the end.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's good. You know, one of the things that comes up often when I'm talking to people, not on the show but individually, is how their training and emotion can relay, and you as a self-described sensitive person. If someone comes to you, let's say one of your students comes to you and says, you know, I'm going through a difficult time. I don't know how this fits with my training, I don't want to, you know, let emotions get the best of me and start balling in the middle of training or to maybe go a little too hard with someone, you know, and overstep. What advice do you give to those people?

Dennis Campo:

That's another great question, Jeremy. Just yesterday, one of my closest friends, fraternity brother, he's training with us and he's training with Joe, this fellow. His son got suspended from school, made some dumb choices, beat up a kid and used some bad language in doing so. So he brought his son to me to have one of those talks with him about how his choices have consequences and he made some bad choices and... Somebody might upset you doesn't give you the right to put your hands on them and to throw them into beating and use really and languages as you do so. And we talked about the consequences and I said kid, he can grow out of this or learn from it but as an adult, you may not get such a free pass, you know, a week of suspension well-deserved. As adult, if I did that, if I crapped his father and did that on the street I'd be spending a lot more time behind bars, so-to-speak. That's kind of one example. You know, it's interesting... I love the question because as a martial arts instructor, we're not just asked to teach kicking and punching. Most often, when parents come to us, they're asking us to help their child to be more disciplined which I don't think is our job. I think it's the parent's job to discipline but I can certainly help them to learn how to be self-disciplined. So I tried to explain that. But often times, we're called upon to be... psychiatrist isn't the right word but a counselor, so-to-speak. Almost like some people go to their priest for advice, people do come to us for advice from time to time. And I've had either adult students or parents approach me or one of my assistant instructors and say, Johnny's going through a difficult time. He's getting bullied in school and he's acting out and he's lashing out and he's been hitting his brothers. And then you realize, he has been getting more aggressive in class. You know, we'll sit him down and we'll say listen, I know you trust us, you know you trust me. What's going on? And, you know, as a young kid, he's not gonna want to answer and they'll deflect but eventually he gets to the heart and matter. And without pushing too much, sometimes the kids will open up and they will start balling, not during class, but usually I'll grab them after class. You know, with their parents nearby, it's not... Anyway, as a martial arts instructor, our role is certainly much bigger, I think, than most people realized. I look back right to me, you know, going back to Joe for a second, in some way, shape or form, I communicate with Joe almost every day for 15 years where there is phone call and email or text. And a lot of times, we didn't even communicate on martial arts stuff. It was really just life stuff and



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

asking each other for advice and things. I think martial arts instructors are so respected and trusted that people, our students and family members look to us for advice on those types of things. You don't have to deal with fear, I had to deal with anger... It's interesting. I'm actually, I'm just studying a psychology course right now. I get self-study just to kinda understand the way the brain works a little bit more, too, for myself to be a better teacher. So I'm learning some stuff there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I've always like the term coach. Because even though, you know, I grew up in traditional Karate and I gravitate towards traditional martial arts you know, I can certainly appreciate, you know, when Bill Wallace wants me to call him Bill which I still struggle with. You know, this sort of non-traditional term - coach. Feels like a lot more encompassing when I think of a coach, you know, you could be a sport coach, you could be a life coach, you could be a nutrition coach. You know, that term coach can be so broad. And really, I mean if we take a couple of steps back, I think that's what martial arts instructors are. Because as you say, yeah, when people ask us to teach them martial arts, they're not looking to learn kicking or punching. People rarely say you know, do I want to learn boxing or karate? That's rarely the decision because accurately or not, boxing is seen as much more the sport whereas martial arts has this perception of being this overall development, this personal development notion, that so many of us holds so dear.

Dennis Campo:

Absolutely, I agree.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If you could train with someone that you haven't, anyone in time - alive or dead - who would that be?

Dennis Campo:

Chuck Norris. I round up the big three, right? So John Maynard was the first. I'm not sure if he's the only one still but John Maynard was the first black belt under Joe Lewis, Bill Wallace and Chuck Norris. Little known fact, maybe, well-known fact, I was the third black belt under Bill Wallace and Joe Lewis. So I'm being so blessed. I would love to meet Chuck and to train under him, train with him. Of course, as a young martial artist, I've loved Chuck Norris movies. It was one of the reasons that... I think that after I took those first couple of classes, we went to see the Octagon with Chuck Norris. And he was doing this unbelievable spinning hook kicks. I said, I want to learn how to do that. And I think that was one of the things that helped me want to do the class more after I was apprehensive at the beginning. But I think one of the things that really attracts me now to Chuck is that when Joe was sick, Chuck was such a good friend and did so much for him and trying to help him. We knew he wasn't going to recover but just try to be comfortable for those last few months. He was really a good friend to him. And besides that, his skill level is



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

unbelievable. You know, he's in his in mid- to late 70's now and he's just in an absolutely phenomenal shape. We even had a couple of total gyms in my school. There are a lot of fun. It's a great machine. And the black belts, we get together several times week and we when workout and then we had a blast with him. But you know, his skill level was just so amazing and he just... his humility. He absolutely personifies, I think, what all of us as martial artists aspire to be on the training floor and off the training floor. Just an amazing amount of respect for him. I think having had the chance to work with Joe who's just an amazing fighter and can be a little gruff. Chuck absolutely just seems to be the absolute epitome of respect in martial arts and I think he's got so much to teach. So that would be my absolute choice.

Jeremy Lesniak:

A great choice. And it brings to mind this idea, and I'm curious about what you think, you know, when we think back to when we were coming up, you started a little bit before me but we had these movies that weren't that old. We had these active martial artists who we could look to as role models.

Dennis Campo:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

In that current time, they were contemporary and larger than life. Now, when we're talking about martial arts role models, these figures that are larger than life, we're talking about them in the past. We don't seem to have anyone that's really coming up now with a few exceptions. I mean we have folks like Donnie Yen but the things that they're doing, for many of us, seem to be a bit out of reach. When we look at, you talked about Chuck Norris and watching him on screen and doing a spinning hook kick, anybody can learn how to do a spinning hook kick.

Dennis Campo:

Right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm not going to learn how to channel the force.

Dennis Campo:

Right.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

I'm not going to learn how to pull off these moves from, you know, Crouching Tiger 2. Do you think this is a necessary part of martial arts evolution? Or do you think it's something that we took for granted and thus we haven't created these folks? And does it matter?

Dennis Campo:

Great question. Yeah, you're right. I think the big appeal, one of the big appeals of Chuck Norris, Steven Seagal, back in our time coming up, Jeff Speakman, you watch the skills they were displaying and you can learn those. I think that was the big appeal. I want to go to the gym or the dojo and learn that stuff. I can do that. You're right. I think movies in general have just evolved. I think... I don't think that just regular human action is enough. It seems like everything is more exaggerated or more supernatural. What was the biggest movies now, right? The Marvel movies with all the heroes and... What's the new one? The Infinity War, I think, it's called?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Avengers: Infinity War.

Dennis Campo:

Right. And there's certainly a great deal of combat in there, a hand-to-hand combat but it certainly had a much more robust pace than what we're accustomed in martial arts movies. And certainly some of what they're doing are martial arts. And on Netflix, there's some great programs and I've actually watched a bunch of them - Daredevil and Iron Fist - lots of martial arts in there but certainly beyond what's possible from a normal human. But I think the excitement of it is where movies have gone today. I think people enjoy it. I think they recognize, well I could never do that but it's really cool to watch and it's entertaining. So I don't know in the movies if it matters, to answer that question. But I would certainly welcome another. Be it a TV series or another series of movies with a martial arts superstar that is still more on a human level. That would be certainly interesting. I miss the Chuck Norris movies every couple of years. Seems like something is missing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. When I think of the person who kind of fills that role today, someone who, I mean, we both know of, is Michael Jai White who is an exceptional martial artist and a Superfoot black belt and just a tremendous actor. And you know, he's, by all accounts, checks all the boxes. He's a good-looking man, he can act, he can fight on screen, he's got everything. He should be a big deal if he was born 20 years earlier, he probably would have been.

Dennis Campo:

Yeah.



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

But why hasn't he become, why has he not crossed over and become one of these breakout stars that people look at and say, he makes me want to do martial arts? The people watching his movies already do.

Dennis Campo:

Sure. Yeah. I think that's the answer. You're right. We seek out his movies. He's doing our stuff or you know, we've trained with him and we want to see him in action. And he is a great actor, a lot of fun. The Why Did I Get Married? and Why Did I Get Married, Too? He was fantastic in those movies. Not in martial arts at all but just, he's very versatile. He can do so many different parts.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What are your favorite martial arts movies? You mentioned the Octagon.

Dennis Campo:

Oh, I love the Octagon. It wasn't the best movie but it's just, it's kind of that movie that helped encourage me to want to continue pursuing martial arts. But I think my favorite Chuck Norris movie is Lone Wolf McQuade. I've always enjoyed that movie. I've probably seen it about 40 times and I went through a period of time when I was the lone wolf. I like to kinda just keep to myself and that was my nickname. I was like hey, that movie was named after me. But I just love the action to it and just was... it was just very well-don. David Carradine was in it, it was just a great movie. A little bit more modern, I love The Transporter films. Those were a blast.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Those were a lot of fun.

Dennis Campo:

And I'm terrible with actors' names so I forgot the guy's name. I don't know if you remember his name but you know, the bald guy always looks angry but he's great. So again, I'd know the movies but I don't remember the actors too well. But I love that whole series, all three of them. There was even a television show that was actually quite good. A television series based on it. Character names were the same, different actors except the French police officer. He was the same guy from the movies. Again, bad with names but those were great. Those movies were a lot of fun. And I liked a bunch of Steven Seagal movies, it's certainly very different. In having trained, in having the opportunity train with Antonio Pereira and Mike [1:00:11](#) for so many years, you know, I certainly have an affinity and a love for Jiu Jitsu and Aikido so Steven Seagal just [1:00:20](#) very different. With the first movie, Above The Law, it was certainly ground breaking at that time.



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Great movie.

Dennis Campo:

And he had a few others that were pretty good, hard to kill. And I really liked Fire Down Below. The martial artist in him really came out and he was just very grounded and respectful but still did all that great butt-kicking and stuff. That was certainly very different flavor from the Chuck Norris movies that we grew up with. Not that they were better, just different. Certainly a lot of very entertaining, great stories, and great action, and realistic just like we talked about earlier. That it was skills that you knew you could learn. They were things that any martial artist could pick up and do. I think that's what was the 1:01:14 movies was were identified with the skills that were being performed there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And the gentleman you were speaking of was Jason Statham.

Dennis Campo:

That's right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

In The Transporter movies.

Dennis Campo:

Yup, yup.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Who, really, if you watched his fight scenes, you would expect he has a long legacy as a martial artist and he actually doesn't. There are some conflicting accounts as to whether he even holds any rank in any traditional system. But he's pretty exceptional. He does a pretty good job of selling it.

Dennis Campo:

Yup, absolutely. Movies are still fun.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Yeah. Now how about books? I know that Joe had some books.

Dennis Campo:

Yup.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm sure you've read those.

Dennis Campo:

Of course. But I'm gonna go outside of Joe.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, how about others?

Dennis Campo:

I think my favorite book of all time in martial arts, you can't even find anymore. It's a book called Moving Zen by a fellow, name is C. W. Nicol. And I remember reading that when I was in high school. I would really capture my imagination in reading martial arts books. It was not the technique. I had those books. I have Bill's book on how to become a better instructor, and better kicker. But the books the books that really touched upon the spirituality of the martial arts, the Zen, if you will, those are the books that caught my attention. And I really enjoyed Moving Zen. I've read it several times. I wanted to get copies and give them as gifts to my black belts but you can't find this book anymore. It's unfortunate. But it was written probably mid-1970, even before I started training. It's about a Westerner, like us, who spent several years in Japan learning martial arts, learning Karate, specifically. And he talked about his journey, going from white belt to black belt, and the sacrifices he had to make to become a martial artist, and how he kinda didn't fit in. He was typical large American against the smaller Japanese and he had a hard time [1:03:21](#) but he fell in love with a woman there, native Japanese. And in one part of the book that struck me and stuck with me and I never forgot, there was a situation they were at, I believe in the subway or the train, and he got into some kind of argument with somebody which he could have just easily just trounced them, I'm sure. And she tugs his arm and says, c'mon let's go. And he says, but... She goes, what happens when you walk down the street when a dog barks? Do you hate it? Do you want to kill it? It's just a dog barking. That's the same thing. C'mon, let us go. This is silliness. Such a powerful message. That's the essence of martial arts. You know, the subtitle of that book, if I remember, was Karate as a path or as a way to gentleness. It's such a powerful message. The movies portray us as big bad dudes that settle everything by kicking butt. And this was just, you know, a woman who never took a martial arts class but was so wise to recognize that you know, somebody who's barking is just that - somebody who is barking. They're no threat, they're no



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

inconvenience. They're just barking. Why pay them any mind? Wow. So that's my all-time favorite martial arts book and I wish I can give copies of it to my black belts. But one that I can give to them, and I should do that, and of course everybody who's listening, I'm sure knows Zen in the Martial Arts, Joe Hyams, that was published in the late 1970's. I think all of us has had copies or several copies of them with highlighting and underlining and so forth. I don't want to go into much detail, I know with this audience, but two of the stories that always stuck out to me were Lengthen Your Line and Empty Your Cup. Empty Your Cup is like the first or second short story in his book. Lengthen Your Line, that one always caught my attention. I even retell that story in class every couple of years. I love how... He's sparring and he's getting whopped and he's getting frustrated and the instructor pulls him on the side and says, what's wrong? He was like, I got my butt kicked. No matter what I did, he countered me easily. And the instructor draws a line on the floor and says, so how do you make that line shorter? And he talks about different ways how he can cut the line or erase. And then the instructor draws a second line longer. And he said, how does the first line look? Oh, now it's shorter. He says, exactly. He says, you don't take always from somebody else by cutting down their skill or taking shortcuts. You overcome them, overcome their skill or overcome you shortcomings by lengthening your line. I get just a powerful message and that of course, it pertains to us as fighters, as martial artists but it transcends martial arts. It can be applied to anything that we do. Whether it be in our career, our schools, our relationships. I think that's what's just so powerful about martial arts. I think the fighting is a small part of it. The kicking and punching is just a small part of it. There's so much beyond it in terms of the [1:06:58](#) the respect, the discipline, the peacefulness. So you know, those two books really captured in great detail that's the essence of martial arts is. And I certainly appreciate them. And I mentioned them the Empty Your Cup. All of us, going to work meetings or having discussions with friends or with your partner, we come with our preconceived notions and our opinions and a lot of times we talk but do we really listen? As he's sitting there and she's pouring the tea, you know, the cup is overflowing. Stop, it's overflowing. You're going too much. And we're the same way. If we really, sincerely want to learn, we've got to empty our cup and be open to what's being presented to us. So that goes well behind martial arts training. So those were my two all-time favorite books. Of course, I don't even have to mention in detail [1:08:05](#) that's got to be in everybody's Top 5. Amazing piece of work, obviously.

Jeremy Lesniak:

All great books. And of course, yes, Zen in the Martial Arts, did a whole episode on that and I'm fairly certain that a big part of my love for the philosophical side of martial arts and my views on martial arts come from reading that book many, many times at a very young age. I mean that book was in our bathroom probably by the time I was seven.

Dennis Campo:

Great.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

I can't even tell you how many times I've read it. I have my own copy now, of course. But there's something about that book and the first book that you've mentioned, Moving Zen. These incredibly elegant lessons. You know, they're simple but they're powerful and they're told in a way that's very relatable. And those are the ones that I look for because they'll stick with you. The idea of a dog barking is, it's doing its job.

Dennis Campo:

Right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's what a dog does. All we have is the way we react to things. That is the only thing that we can control, truly. You don't have to run from the dog or kick the dog and the same is true of the person being a jerk.

Dennis Campo:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Such a good stuff you're sharing here today. Now if people want to get a hold of you, you know, social media, website, email, whatever ways you want to give them, how can they do that?

Dennis Campo:

Oh, pretty easily. I'm not the most technical person out there but we've got the traditional stuff there. denniscampo.com, my name, which points to my school's website which is wisdomway.net. [1:10:00](#) already taken even 18 years ago, it was already taken. So of course, going back to the old Ji Do Kwan, translate to English, wisdom way, that's our roots. Right where we started - wisdomway.net. Facebook, just search for Wisdom Way of myself. I'm on LinkedIn, Dennis Campo - we use Kyosah. You can find me on LinkedIn with that. And that's just a very simple title. It goes back to my Ji Do Kwan days, Kyosah just means teacher. I never went to beyond the next titles are Sah Boo Nim, the Kwan Jang Nim, all that stuff. We just kept it simple as the same title like the Kyosah that was used by my instructor, Curtis Inniss and Carlos Farrell before him, real humble guys. So we kind of just kept that real simple. That's how you'll find us. I got them all, website, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, kyosah as well. So we've got a few things out there where you can find us.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

And there you go, as I already, I think I already mentioned, we'll drop the links on the show notes at whistlekickmartialartsradion.com. This was a lot of fun. Thank you so much for being here. I know I'm gonna see you soon but I'm gonna ask you for -

Dennis Campo:

Oh yeah, absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Ask you for one more thing

Dennis Campo:

Yeah

Jeremy Lesniak:

And if you could give everyone listening, but I guess me too, some parting words?

Dennis Campo:

Oh, well you know what, I'm gonna echo what Bill Wallace always says: have fun. Have fun. And that's what this stuff really should be. He wasn't the only one that say that. Joe Lewis always said that, too; have fun. We're gonna train so hard and blast each other with punches and kicks and do thousands of push-ups and hit that heavy bag and run out of gas and sweat up a storm but have fun doing it. Just, you know, enjoy your training partners, enjoy the opportunities, enjoy that our bodies can move and do things that maybe we didn't know that they could do and just have fun. If we're doing all these crazy stuff and crazy people who don't really understand, maybe, have fun doing it and enjoy every minute of it. If you're doing martial arts, whether it's traditional martial arts, some kind of mixed-martial arts, competitive martial arts, full-contact, they're all good. There's value in every type of martial arts that's out there from a spiritual perspective to physical perspective to the camaraderie, have fun. And don't be scared to go out of your wheelhouse. So you know, if you're a striker, try some grappling. If you're a grappler, try some striking. Get out and meet people. I think what you'll find, and I know Jeremy here can certainly attest to it, martial artists are some of the greatest people out there. The most caring, sharing... you know, like in every walk of life you're gonna find people who are close-minded who may not be as open-minded but those are the exception. Martial artists love to share what they do and what they have. None of us sincerely want to take this stuff with us when we leave this earth. We would want to pass on and watch the next generation help it to grow and make it even better. So that's for my parting words. Have fun, guys. And Jeremy, thank you. You're a true gentleman, a great martial artist, somebody who I respect so immensely. I appreciate the work that you do and just keep it up. You're a great advocate for the martial arts and for sharing and you know, I speak for the entire



Episode 302 – Kyosah Dennis Campo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

martial arts community when I say thank you. And that's nearly not deep enough for what you do for all of us. So thank you, again.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know if there's one thing that makes hosting this show more fun, it's that I get to talk to people that I've become friends with or people that become my friends because of this show. When you make friendships with martial artists, it's quite coming that these people are going to live far away. And Kyosah Campo is one of those people that I wish lived closer. I don't get to hang out with him nearly as much as I would like to. But, as you can tell, we get along really well, had some great conversations, some wonderful insights from him, and he gave me some stuff to think about. There's definitely some stuff ruminating right now that I'm looking forward to seeing what comes out of it. I hope you enjoyed it even half as much as I did. Kyosah Campo, thank you. Thank you so much for coming on the show and I hope to see you soon.

Remember to head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, check out the show notes with links to Kyosah's website, social media, and a bunch of other stuff. We've got some photos there and of course you can sign up for the whistlekick newsletter. If you want to check out our products or the other projects that we have going on the web like Martial Arts Calendar, you can find those all at whistlekick.com. Now in the intro, I think I mentioned that the show comes out once a week and that's because I'm insane. It actually comes out twice a week. What I meant was we do one interview per week. Of course on Thursdays we do our topic shows, sometimes our profiles of martial artists or other subjects. Sometimes it's questions and answers, sometimes it's subjects that you've written in on. Feel free, reach out to me, jeremy@whistlekick.com. Find us on social media, we are @whistlekick and thank you to those of you that support us in a multitude of ways that you can support us. Whether it's buying products, sharing this show with friends, or just writing in and saying hey, I appreciate you. Because you know what, I didn't know business is hard and knowing that some of you out there like what we're doing, especially when those emails come in on difficult days, makes it easier to keep going. So thank you. That's all I have for today. Until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.