



Episode 40 – Master Anthony Graf | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hey there everyone it's episode 40 of whistlekick martial arts radio, the only place to hear the best stories from the best martial artists like today's guest master Anthony Graf. I'm your host Jeremy Lesniak and I'm also whistlekick's founder. Here at whistlekick we make the world's best sparring gear and some great apparel and accessories all for traditional martial artists. I'd like to welcome our new listeners and thank all of the returning fans. If you're not familiar with our products you should check out what we offer, like our great cloud 9 sweat pants, they're so comfortable we routinely have parents complaining to us that their children won't take them off to be washed. You can learn more about our sweat pants and all of our great gear and apparel at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) all of our past podcast episodes, show notes for this one and a lot more over at [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) and while you're on our website why don't you sign up for our newsletter, we offer exclusive content to subscribers and it's the only place to find out about upcoming guests but let's talk about today's episode. On episode 40 we're joined by Master Anthony Graf an incredibly accomplished taekwondo athlete. His lists of accomplishments is long but let me sum it up for you. Master Graf was an alternate to the USA Olympic team in both 2004 and 2008, he's now a martial arts school owner coach and offers up some great insights into the world of competitive martial arts and what it truly takes to be successful, inside and outside the ring. So with that Master Graf welcome to [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com).

**Anthony Graf:**

Oh thank you thank you sir how are you?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I'm doing great today how are you?

**Anthony Graf:**

Awesome, awesome.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

We're having kinda your type of weather up here in Vermont it's 72degrees up here right now.

**Anthony Graf:**

Nice.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Which is really weird it makes stacking wood and doing all that other winter prep that we had have to do up here kinda strange it feels like summer's never gonna end but.

**Anthony Graf:**

Alright super cool for me that my winter prep is something 02:13

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Nice, nice I have to come down and visit you when the snow is up to my neck which could happen

**Anthony Graf:**

02:21 always welcome yeah.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well thank you, well cool let's jump into it why don't you tell me tell the listeners how you got started in the martial arts.

**Anthony Graf:**

Alright so 02:35 you know as a kid I'm having some challenges as anger I began gaining a ton of weight and we went to the doctor my mother and we found out that I was 02:47 have slight scoliosis so you know I loved martial arts you know I was a big fanatic of I grew up in a video game generation that we were just you know I'd play every I had every martial arts game I had I have made my own weapons you know I was a boy you know and

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah

**Anthony Graf:**

And you know 03:05 in martial arts school you know it just changed my life and fortunately I was you know I was in right place at the right time with the right people and you know we had I had some great mentors 03:18 upon and it did change my life you know they you know I was I already controlled my anger my scoliosis fixed itself and you know after 4 years of doing martial arts I became an adult national champion you know beating the US national team member and I was 03:38 so I went from a chubby little bunny to you know a rock and that's very empowering for somebody that's changed your life in that direction.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's quite a transformation and I think it illustrates a really good point whether it's martial arts or it's like so often we look at the end result and you know we're gonna have some photos up of you out in the website and you know let's be honest you've achieved a level of physical fitness that most of us would hope for and some of us strive for and very few of us get to but it's really easy when you're looking at that end result to forget all the hard work and you know the starting point that we all have.

**Anthony Graf:**

Absolutely I think you know it's very and also just cause see the transition from starting in a position where you know that you never wanted that you know the Jewish people on the saying they're never get involvement you know where they never will have go back to that being like that again cause it's just very you know I've had this anger issues because I was very uncomfortable with my own body and unhappy with myself and I didn't have an identity and my identity became my fitness and my martial arts so.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Awesome, so you got started in the martial arts now was that taekwondo? That you started in?

**Anthony Graf:**

Yeah I started in Taekwondo I started under I started actually in a local community center and then I actually then I shortly after that I stumbled upon Master Peter 05:11 who was a national team member several times he was he trained under Herb Perez Herb Perez was also one of mentalist I was growing up and these guys are the cream of the crop in the United States and it was kind of like the old school you know they threw you in the water and you have to swim or you are going to learn a 05:37 lesson so I learned the hard way but I was you know one of the survivors and I was able to come out of it and I came out on top and I'm very grateful.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's great so I'm sure with all of your success and all the things that you've done in the martial arts you've had a chance to travel and you've probably got some great stories so I'd like you to tell us one what's the best martial arts story you have to share with us?

**Anthony Graf:**

I think it's probably overcoming a 06:07 you know I think that is one of my yeah I mean like after Olympic trials in 04 I lost to Steven Lopez and you know we had a here in Miami in our training facility



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we have a lot of Olympic team members from different countries come down and train and I was like in phenomenal shape and I just started we were training with those guys and I probably had one of the best days in my life where I was just 06:39 through everybody 06:40 I was I had a chip from my shoulder for not going to the Olympic team and you know and I have just done some crazy stuff and I heard a pop and I blew my ACL and the way the Olympic cycle was kinda built I probably my 07:00 you know it's a really rough time because if our national championships is coming up in a couple months and if I didn't make team I'd probably will be up for 2 years and you know that was probably be bye-bye for my career I'd probably just call it quits right then and there, just for the cycle and here's the dilemma the doctor said I shouldn't even kick for 9 months so I fucked it up you know I trained you know around it and I qualified for our team trials in 3 months and then 6 months I my first fight out in for our US team trials 07:47 I had broken the guy's arm in my first kick out in the first fight so and honestly I was the I had a phenomenal day I think I was so focused by for 2 years I pretty much didn't kick with one leg I mean I was able to use it 08:03 but I was able to work around it and it was such a challenge for me you know and I took it as that the thing to work through this diversity you know and being able to overcome it and still be a better version of myself even with my limitation so I think that was my for me as far as my character and anything that I learned in my favorite experience through the martial arts is that 08:35 becoming this huge, huge optical 08:40 you know the doctor's told me that I shouldn't even be you know throwing a kick nonetheless I shouldn't be competing and having you know thrown 190 pound man trying to kill me.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right well I'm in my mind I'm drawing a correlation between you and of course Bill Wallace and 09:01 of the show we've had him on great guy so you're in some good company there with having to spar with one leg but I'd like you to take us back to kind of that rehab process, what did that look like what was your emotional state?

### **Anthony Graf:**

Well I knew one thing is that it's hell because you're basically is like starving and then you know you have to sit through turkey dinner every night you know because what happened was I didn't let myself step up I mean 3 days out of a torn acl I threw my 09:37 away you know I blown acl I have no acl left 09:41 no more and I would go you know I'd go to training and everything I could do if it does make any sense I mean I would do like I was huge in my weight training at that time my upper body was I look like you know like a tank you know and then I was doing my versions of cardio I can only 10:00 activities I was doing really you know inter world stuff 10:03 and things like this and I was working through it and then I would show up to training and 10:09 to force myself to go every night because it's about the ritual it's about being there it's about you know it's so easy once you if I'm home I can fall out of it so quickly you know I'm not 10:21 being there is just being in the vicinity of other people of training you know I'm training my mind too I knew that I didn't wanna miss a beat and it was really really challenging especially when you start being when you start to move because if you're training and you're trying to get back it's 2 steps forward and then 1 step back and then 2 more steps forward and then 3 steps back because you



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feel the pain and you're swelling and you're injured and you're stepping back again and then you're moving forward and then back and forth so it's a constant battle within yourself and 11:01 a good character.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well now would you say that after this experience would you say I don't wanna put words in your mouth, how would you say that it changed you 11:16

**Anthony Graf:**

It just one of the things it made is I think it made me a little bit more patient you know I was a really really active fighter and it showed me that I can do a lot 11:28 and be more effective right I would I mean not that it's I was when I you know prior to the injury I was 11:36 you know and then I learned how to pick my shot a little bit more, be patient, control my breathing a little bit more you know so it's actually taught me a lesson a big lesson in patience and being more selective of what I was using cause you know it's becoming I was becoming a little better than that to be more selective about my shot and I became more efficient if that makes any sense so.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Makes all kind of sense so that's certainly a challenging experience I mean I can't imagine what it was like to be on the track that you are on and then just have to just stop you know in terms of movies it reminds me of way of the peaceful warrior the movie based on the Dan Millman book if you or if any of the listeners have read that it's a great book I read it when I was a teenager but now when you train or now when you're working with other people with their training how has that experience changed that I mean we just talked about how it changed your sparring game how it changed you mentally, how has it changed the physical aspect of martial arts?

**Anthony Graf:**

Well so many different ways you know it's like especially as far as that whole indomitable spirit thing I have a great template a story shared with kid and also you know I 12:58 facility and if somebody gets injured who's training for a high level we you know we kinda get them a simple and say hey you guys you can always work around it you know and there's also there's so many inspirational people that you know we especially now that we have the Paralympics for Taekwondo and you know we have people like 13:20 compete in CrossFit so that I 13:23 these people that are have these challenges are you know they don't make excuses you know they do what they're supposed to do and you know I just try to 13:32 say hey 13:34 you got a broken arm you know 13:37 you know and he doesn't you don't hear him complain about it so we kinda use that actually this, there's always something you can do you know we have you know you can make yourself better in so many other areas it's just the just the mentally and



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physically 13:53 of who you are and that's probably the best thing to train more than anything else, the physical will you can always train the physical but if you take care of the mind if you make your mind strong everything else flows.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

Great yeah so you mentioned CrossFit in there and that's something that you and I have discussed that we have in common you know both our passion for martial arts as well as CrossFit but I'd like to know for the people that are listening of course how have you incorporated CrossFit training and philosophies into the way you train and teach martial arts?

### **Anthony Graf:**

Well we have one of the largest kids 14:33 programs in the United States and the reason is we do it differently you know we basically took the martial arts structure and then we focused on character first you know we don't it's so funny you know I consult so many different people we have a company called 14:52 compound and we have a lot of people that we do remote coaching with 14:57 and they have these 15:00 they believe that they have to their goal is to train you know these kids that are already in sport like they're in athletic training facility so we don't approach it like that, we approach it like we are just a training facility and 15:13 Right and my goal is to get their kids off the couch that like they were like me that weren't playing in sports you know and not the kids that are already athletically straight and you know varsity and killing it right I'm trying to get I have a place for those 15:32 they become these you know and in our community called 15:37 right so but I want 15:42 kids that you know and we have this level system you know just kind of like the martial arts here the t shirt system and where they can earn for example of you're able to do 15:56 five on a broken 16:00 you earn a star on the back of your shirt and then we have this 16:06 level system that we created that was based upon martial arts and what we do is we finally 16:12 in the martial arts school they're so empowering when you know a kid hits 10 single 16:20 when they went from 0 you know and then we have such a level system unlike martial arts when you know you put your 16:29 uniform and this and that it's completely 100% black and white so it's completely skill based. Now you're gonna have to work your way up until some of real basic level right but you know it's not like you know hey you beat your time you learned your form here's it's like you either get a pull up 16:47 and then once you get your pull up you get to move forward in your level and it's so funny how you know the necessity of the modern invention and how we get these kids that were from 0 to super fit and it's just because we've taken to this fragile and slow progression 17:03 pull up we have a whole 17:06 before we go to that 17:07 up the level and and there's no timeline if you're really motivated or talented you can shoot up the level 17:15 and fast it's so it's not just so they all start to learn other things about nutrition and that sort of like all things that are taken from the martial arts aspect and at the same rate we 17:26 if we focus on our character you know we have power session power community sessions where we talk to them everyday and we talk to them about you know whatever it might me respect or you know and 17:41 whatever it maybe and we sit down and we talk to them everyday you know and I have a huge 17:50 and what's funny is because the kids are the most 17:51 when they look at me it's not the five year old with you know the hungry 17 and



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18 year old that I was. So and we see that in the martial arts but the training is we just transferred it over and made it fitness and I think one of my big hunger for creating this black and white system was you know my experience with the martial arts where there's so much gray area being a competitive martial artist right so I don't know you know it's kind of shaping gymnastics until 18:23 the judges and then here the judges you know we have standards across it right it's always you know that or not right you get it or you don't and you know there's no bias there and I wanted to cut my 18:37 and make sure that I wasn't biased towards any of my kids and I wanted to be something completely legitimately earned and they only way is you got to create a system but our level system that is completely black and white and you know so all my kids also it looks like 18:55 training in a martial arts school when you see it because they all say yes sir no sir they 19:00 we all have a system they line up it works you know I wasn't trying to change it the military and the martial arts have been doing it right for thousands of years and I wasn't trying to you know do something different I know what how to train the masses and that's the way you know that you copy the model.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right and that's great and I one of the things that I wanna point out is that whether we're talking to you or some of the folks that we've had on that have strong children's programs. One of the things that comes up the word that seems to come up when I talk to all of them is structure and that I believe that at the core of it, I think all of us that train in martial arts recognize that children benefit from martial arts whether they're one of the things that we say on this show well that I say on this show is that there's nothing else a child is gonna do in their life that will give them more benefit than even just 6 months in martial arts, it's gonna last the rest of their life and I believe that the core of it it's that structure that a good instructor is giving to them so as I'm listening to you talking as I'm reflecting back on other conversations I've had its reminding me that that structure has become I wouldn't say even more important in today's society than it was probably when you and I were children you know we're just about the same age because we've lost so much more of that in general society and I think it creates an opportunity for martial arts schools to become more successful with their children's programs like providing more of that structure would you agree?

### **Anthony Graf:**

I agree 100% I would say that it definitely comes down to the and when we talk about structure it's the structure has to be the psychology of the student right I would say where hey I'm 80% psychology 20% mechanics and you know we work the mind first right and everything else 21:00 up because we know you know as martial artists as an athlete my limits have never been physical you know they were between my ears you know cause my mind controls my body right so we basically if we change their vocabulary we change the way these kids talk if we change the way that they think right and there's you know we remove things from their mindset like the word can't right? We start changing their action, I think a great instructor focuses on their you know basically their psychology of their student and I think that's what makes the difference right but like you said it has to be something a structure that we can recreate it can't just be something that hey I you know works with one kid and then not with the other



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it's got to be something that you know we can kind of implement to every child and we know there's a lot of systems that work I know you had David Kovar on he's got great system as far as working with kids and development and you know we do the same thing we have everything we have our own program that kinda works on teaching everybody from the first they hear and neither my instructor and coaches and my staff are unclassified from day one to infinity you know we have a system that works you know and it all comes down to this it comes down to building you know a belief within the child right and then removing their limiting beliefs right so the a limiting belief would be an excuse right anything that they say that there's I'm not able to that you know and 22:53 yet I hadn't been able to do that yet right not I'm not able to do or I can't do that and then 22:59 so then that they can and once you 23:00 they can 23:02 and you change their beliefs I'm not sure if you got the same if it's happened same to you.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right and even though we're talking about kids here I think anybody that's taught adults sees a lot of these stuff coming through that` language adaptation removing the word can't trying to get people to shift into a more positive place can have the same sort of impact of course you aren't gonna instruct children the same way that you will adults so your methods might be a little bit different but those core beliefs that core structure carries through.

**Anthony Graf:**

100% so you know for every book that I read 23:37 and when we kind of travel cause we went everywhere was on trying to make mind stronger you know and is that you know a sport psychology or being able to you know or spirituality or trying to find you know getting make myself stronger mentally because we knew you're humps in life or a lot of they always comes down to the same thing is in their like I said before that it's between ears.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well cool so we'll talk a little bit more how people can reach out and talk to you if they're looking to learn a bit more towards the end of the show

**Anthony Graf:**

Okay

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

But let's shift on now, I'm sure you've trained with some wonderful people I mean you've already dropped some pretty big names that had me impressed but who would you say the most influential of those people was?





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**Anthony Graf:**

Oh man I've had some can I shoot up a list.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah you can drop a few names.

**Anthony Graf:**

Alright so as far as well my instructor was super influential and then I had a tremendous amount of coaches so you know everything from my you know 3 time Olympian Juan Moreno was my coach recently, Herb Perez all of the gold medalists, 24:53 was my initial instructor 7 time national team member you know I've had and then you know and then I think as far as you know people that have made me better 25:05 my training partners and people around me and 25:09 I forgot him Olympian the Olympic bronze medalist I but the people that have made me better as an athlete or just as a person in general?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I'll let you answer the question however you want.

**Anthony Graf:**

Alright so okay let me as an athlete I would have to say Steven Lopez he's my favorite athlete because you know I fought Steven by a number of times and you know he's but hands down the greatest Olympic taekwondo athlete of all time 25:50 by just by statistics. I mean if you wanna say debatably whatever you wanna say as far as you know in your opinion or how or what kind of fighter that he wanted a different story but hands down by just by his record he's just the Lopez you know being a few times Olympic gold medalist 5 times world champion, you know 20 years on national team and he definitely raised my bar fighting him from his time and you know after fighting Steven you know I've beaten world champions and Olympic medalists and some of the best fighters in the world, not actually not some of the best fighters the best fighters in the world because he raised my bar if that makes any sense you know that 26:40 where they you had great people around you and you well you have to raise your game so I had great coaches and all these other things but there's no great motivating factor than trying to you know take down the fighter 26:58

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Right yeah and it brings to mind a couple sayings just to put it in a different way than what you said dress for the job that you want or to surround yourself with the people who are living the lives you want to live.

**Anthony Graf:**

Right

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Cause it's gonna raise you up you become, you are the average of the 7 people you spend the most time with something like that.

**Anthony Graf:**

Right right.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So yeah if you wanna become a better martial artist as difficult as this can be you shouldn't be the best martial artist at your school.

**Anthony Graf:**

You know it's funny actually I had speech I give to my kids yesterday about that about you know being proximal being close to your kid who 27:45 around if you're hanging on a bunch of losers right let's say you had kids that are drinking and partying all the time because of the fact that you know I'm so tribal right and then most people are right that you wanted to be the best partier or you're gonna be the best drinker of all of them because you know I'm a winner and I wanna be the best in my group and if you're group is a bunch of you know people that are you know unambitious you're gonna be the most unambitious person of that bunch so be you know be careful 28:15 show me your friends and I'll show you who you are and you know 28:19 with my 6 year old wasn't 28:23 that I'm kinda preaching too but the truth in there is you know we you wanna be great surround yourself with greatness and I agree with you 100% on that yeah.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well cool well clearly competition has been a thread throughout your martial arts career and it's something that you're clearly very passionate about and I'm wondering if you have a good story from your time in competition outside the horrendous and mixed emotional bag of tearing your acl but maybe something from Olympic trials or something like that?



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### **Anthony Graf:**

One of my great fighting stories I think something like 29:02 with me is in 2003 I was in the Belgium open and I was fighting France in semi-finals and the French guy I was fighting was actually a 2001 29:13 world champion the amazingly talented athlete really really high energy and I thought if you can kinda read my energy to see I'm really 29:23 and high energy so one of the great things about my coach, coach 29:26 two time Olympian is that he's able to read me he knows that I fight best when I'm kinda playful right when I'm not too serious when I'm enjoying myself when there's a smile on my face and he turns to me 29:40 finally he goes you know what they call a quarter pounder with cheese in France I go 29:47 they don't call it a quarter pounder with cheese, and he goes no man they 29:50 system we started going back and forth and 29:53 and he goes well actually they call it a royal with cheese and I go back royal with cheese? That's right I go what do they call a bigmac goes a bigmac is a bigmac but they call it a little big mac so we started doing this whole dialogue back and forth and I walk into that fight and I am never been happier in my life and with that happy state I had one of the coolest most amazing scraps with these amazing fighters who was just as energetic and just as wired as I was. I ended up taking the win and the final score in the fight was like 21 20 or something like this but I think you know he's such a great coach to be able to put me in a state and this simple thing you know of going back and forth from the dialogues 30:42 it can you know it stays with me for the rest of my life.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's great and that's a lot of fun there's a good lesson in there and for anyone that's listened to the episode with Master Gordon White who is the one that connected you and I he had something very similar to say about knowing your athletes as a coach and I think quite often when we think about coaching in the martial arts we limit it to competition but I think that there's a lesson to be applied in a much broader sense that when you're instructing a class you could just as easily use the word coaching you are helping your martial artists who if there was any other sport you would call an athlete get better and the better you know them and the better you know what makes them tick the easier time you'll have helping them progress.

### **Anthony Graf:**

Absolutely, yeah and you know every kid is different right and you know but you know the underlying thing is that we all 31:43 and if you can 31:44 kinda know those person it's like some part of you know somebody who would was you know isn't there that they maybe he could've get something that get them fired up right and then 31:55 sorry they needed to have a fire lit under his belt for me it was I was I had no problem being fired up 32:01 and doing backflips and he just needs to make me enjoy it. He needs to have me enjoy the journey and put me in a state where hey like this we're having fun you know and once I realize that I am relaxed I'm smooth I'm breathing better everything's really cool so you know kudos to my coach and just you know putting me in you know this is one of my most memorable situations I think of the top of my head with you know just being able to change my state like that from hot really super intense to playful and energetic.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

That's great absolutely and that's a fun story you know I've just I haven't watched pulp fiction for quite a while I'm just envisioning that dialogue going back and forth with 32:54

**Anthony Graf:**

Yeah we're just having the conversation and so it always it's not typically the normal go out there and fight 33:06 you know so 33:09

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So when I ask you about who you've trained with and who was influential on you had quite the list, but who's not on that list that you would like to who do you wanna

**Anthony Graf:**

Oh man so as far as not as an athlete but as a person I know I've so I'm a person who's addicted to betterment right whether it be every year I try to do several clinics and seminars whether it be as far as fitness related, personal development or you know the training children or whatever it maybe I try to do you know I have a plethora I collect certifications if that makes any senses in books and audio tapes one of the things that come the near end of my career I one of the things that stuck with me in one of my self-betterment programs was you know find somebody who's done it before you know find a role model find somebody that you can you know that can mentor you that you know and I was gifted I was so fortunate to have these people around me but you know coming close to my retirement I have sought out an old friend who was extremely successful and as far as a person just overall and as far as being a martial artist and a great phenomenal business owner and his name is Master 34:37 he's out of upstate New York and he is just an amazing person I remember seeing him on the cover of you know all these different magazines from as far as martial arts business and this and that so you know I keep coaching 34:57 when I was 26 years old and fighting in Mexico and you know we became pretty close then you kinda expect the way from the sport Taekwondo and after you know 15 years I got a hold of his phone number cause I didn't talk to him in years and I gave him a call and I said hey I'd love to come and come see you and you know shadow you and you know spend some time with you so I spent about a week with him and It was one of the greatest experience in my life and it changed my course because I was you know I was an empty cup you know and I was just ready to absorb any information he gave me and he gave me so much and he gave a better template then the bottom-line is like I said before I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel, I'm just you know cause I'm always gonna put my spin on it especially with all the different versions I have of things that I get and I just 35:51 of doing it my way which is was the ultimate goal of any business owner right like on your terms but I was able to do that with the guidance of this phenomenal life coach and he's such a great dude his name is Master 36:08 he's out of upstate New York and I'm very grateful for him yeah he's changed my life tremendously so and 36:15 like the



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first thing I gave him was my curriculum and he laughed at me because 36:21 but he thought I was crazy because I had way too much in my coaching room I mean honestly it was a novel it wasn't a curriculum if that makes any sense so he we tweaked it and geared it down and simplified it tremendously and to this day you know I'm very grateful for not having my kids quit at white belt because they were already have a thrill of you know trying to put 36:47 being stuck at white belt for 6 months trying to learn how to 36:51 round kick.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hmm sometimes less is more.

**Anthony Graf:**

Yeah is that 36:56 and I've learned that you know cause there's I can always teach that to people but 37:01 be part of my curriculum you know.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah it's a great lesson

**Anthony Graf:**

Yeah so.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So let's kinda switch gears again talk about some entertainment stuff movies? I mean you're a amped up guy high energy guy a competitor I'm gonna take a stab in the dark and say that you love a good fight scene.

**Anthony Graf:**

I do I do, I'm not a big fan

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

How did I know.

**Anthony Graf:**



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I'm not a big fan of the wirey stuff you know like that the whole flying through the air crouching tiger hidden dragon kind of stuff when I get to like come on and when I get to 37:37 I don't like it it's not for me you know. Some of my favorite movie though I probably used to watch it all the time before I start was drunken master and I just love the whole kind of like just glowing and 37:55 and that's what it says 37:56 you know Jackie Chan that was really cool for me though I guess I like playful fighting I like being able to smile have a smile on your face and hit somebody, and that's how it should be I mean and my own coach you know Olympic gold medalist 38:14 silver medalist 38:15 Olympic fight Olympics trial fight when he beat the 10 time national team member he's a 17 year old kid to look at him and he has this smile on his face the whole time you know and I mean 38:28 that embodies a spirit of like of just being just confidence and I love that.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

What's better than doing something that you love and being able to enjoy it in the moment I mean so often we look forward or we look back but we don't look right now.

### **Anthony Graf:**

Yeah you're giving me goosebumps right now just saying something you love right being able to 38:51 smile on your faces and if you love it you know and like honestly you know we both go in there we both we know what we're getting in to right it's not like I'm trying to fix somebody on the street but we're just enjoying the moment smiling I love that that's my favorite thing like 39:05 being able to really have it as sport you know.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's great so do you have a favorite martial arts actor?

### **Anthony Graf:**

Ah geez, favorite martial arts actor okay I wanna be biased I have you know Clay Barber is a taekwondo guy and he was a stuntman so I'm gonna have to say him because I love him as a person so and I'm also you know but you know I grew up a Van Damme guy not a Bruce Lee guy if that makes any sense but if I would have to say because personally I know him you know he's a Hollywood stuntman and I was 39:44 Clay Barber he's a national team member and I have a personal bias towards him but you know I was always a Van Damme kinda guy back in the day so if I have to say well known you know like a superstar Van Damme and then I'm not gonna downplay Clay Barber as a person as I love what he does I have to say Clayton Barber.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Cool I'm actually not familiar with him so I'm gonna

**Anthony Graf:**

Oh man he's super cool he's a have you ever seen Zoolander

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah

**Anthony Graf:**

40:22

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah

**Anthony Graf:**

That's him.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Oh cool okay right on. Yeah nice well I'll dig up some more information on him and link it over the show notes [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) for anybody that might be new to the show we do show notes links to all these good stuff that we talk about here.

**Anthony Graf:**

Perfect.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So I heard you mentioned before books that you collect information and inspiration so why don't you tell us about a book or two that you think everyone should read?

**Anthony Graf:**

Well I think one of the, if I had to give one book40:59 I think it's a book that kinda changed my pace 41:01 my instructor right he's really my original instructor I will compare him to Rocky right.



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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Okay

**Anthony Graf:**

A very wise thing to say and very simple and they're very tough you know they mean like the way he said things but the same way he's very rough and he doesn't really sugar coat anything when he says it and 41:20 I would always talk to him myself and he would say you know if 41:29 perfect impersonation 41:31 right you'd always say that cause I was always talking to myself right and what technically I finally read in one of my books that hey this is self-talk this is actually something 41:45 to the betterment of an athlete right you know 41:51 it's kind of you know now we're here to quote you know from Mohammad ali who says you know when I said I was the greatest I wasn't trying to convince you I was convincing myself right so I think the mental edge is a sport psychology book

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Okay

**Anthony Graf:**

And I it's 42:14 mental edge here we go it's right there, maximize your sports potential with mind and body 42:24 look at that March 1st 1999, well I got this book back in the day right so it's if I had to give you one book as far as just looking at yourself in a different perspective it's this sport psychology book and I thought it was very great.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's interesting that a lot of the books that people are suggesting are so focused on the mental aspect of martial arts and it's interesting because I think most of us that have training a while recognize that yeah there's the physical aspect to martial arts but it's not just fighting anymore it's personal development so it's all they think and yet so many of the books out there not the ones that are getting recommended on the show but I think I would guess the majority of the books that have been written about martial arts are about how to fight.

**Anthony Graf:**

Right, right.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**





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And that seems almost contradictory to me.

**Anthony Graf:**

Yeah but that's it's kinda always evolving you know?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah

**Anthony Graf:**

So I mean if you put yourself in fighting if you look at any fighting system it's changed it keeps developing and keeps people because it's a chess match and it keeps changing so obviously there's something's that you know the baseline, the things that work in fighting but you know the technical aspect of it is always evolving right so the you know the importance and 43:46 me to learn one lesson from being a fighter is that it continue to grow and always changing yourself you know always evolving right or making yourself better because if you're not changing if you're actually only trying to get physically better than if you're only trying to get physically better one day that's gonna stop you know whether it be an injury or the age you know those things I mean that's 44:12 I mean I'm 36 years old and I have had 3 knee surgeries I had 44:18 on my left foot I have arthritis in my wrist and then my spine you know and this is from years of you know taking a beating at the end of my career I was you know I was glued together so I had to be evolving and being smarter on my training so it's not so 44:37 it's mostly about getting your mind in the right place you know.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yea, very well said so you've already accomplished a lot in your martial arts career and you know earlier on in the episode we heard you talk about your passion for bringing these martial arts principles in to CrossFit and working with children and some of the consulting that you do but what are the goals you have what are you as an individual be at martial artist or in life what are you striving for right now?

**Anthony Graf:**

So to be a great father right that's first and I have a beautiful 2 year old daughter and family first and be a great husband as far as the martial arts we I plan on having the largest kid fitness community in the United States in 45:34 we are so we bring people on as far as that and we work with about 10 groups at a time and we do it through seasonal cycle so we're doing math 45:49 and we're really happy with that. Next I would have to say that as far as my martial arts school I continually to evolve I mean we're I couldn't be happier with what we're doing but I just don't want it to be the person that is completely that is too comfortable like I always wanna grow and expand so I'm really happy with my program it



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gives me more joy than anything else it means you know my kids get their leveling up you know working with kids and 46:31 68 years old this is my oldest student so we you know it makes me happy it's my passion I stay away from the office because I don't enjoy paperwork. I do what I love right that's it I'm able to teach and my biggest I'm able to I created by nature I love to create programs and systems and I spend a lot of my time being that but I'm not going to be handling cheques and paperwork 47:07 my goal ultimately as far as a martial arts school owner, continually grow you know we may have some room for expansion down the road, it's not and 47:21 patience you'd do that and right now my I think my verbal coaching is one of my focuses I think, if I put a lot of energy in to that I think I can be bitterly used and not water down my current system if that makes any sense.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Makes all kinds of sense, that's awesome those are great goals and I'm feeling inspired listening to them and really just this through this whole episode you've got me amped up.

**Anthony Graf:**

There you go baby there you go.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You know I'm nobody can see it fortunately

**Anthony Graf:**

47:57

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

For anybody out there that doesn't do CrossFit who doesn't know what 48:01 it involves squatting down holding a weighted barbell up kind of at shoulder height standing up with it and then driving that weight overhead and they never show up in just ones or two's it's usually dozens at a time and we'll leave you 48:20

**Anthony Graf:**

I have a tutorial or instructor on 48:22 you can always do that if you wanna.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Perfect well there is a wonderful transition this is your opportunity to tell us about how people can get a hold of you what you can offer to them if they wanna follow you on social media all that.

**Anthony Graf:**

Yeah absolutely so you can follow me on social media I'm pretty much Facebook 48:44 I'm not a big Instagram guy 48:45 so Facebook Anton Graf you can look me up A N T O N G R A F, juice athlete compound is our website it's [thejuiceathletecomound.com](http://thejuiceathletecomound.com) and lastly you can check us out we're very active on our Facebook page which is 2 facet compound and you can check it out you know like us and you know you'll see what we're doing and if you're interested and you just wanna see what we're if you can always kinda talk to it a little bit deeper about starting up your program it basically turns you getting a kid's fitness program going properly everything from programming to our level system to our character development systems and you know being able to teach a little bit differently I don't wanna say properly cause a lot of martial arts people have this 49:49 but maybe giving you a couple tool that might send you in a different direction so yeah that you can reach us at we're very active on Facebook and also [juiceathletecomound.com](http://juiceathletecomound.com)

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

And of course there will be links to all that in the show notes [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com), you guys know that by now I'm sure well awesome it's been a lot of fun really exciting and let's go out on a high note do you have any parting advice for everyone listening.

**Anthony Graf:**

You know one of my favorite sayings is the saying that successes continue with growth right it's not a place you know it continuing to strive to grow as a person physically mentally and fiercely so you know if you find yourself you know stuck in a place force yourself to grow you know 50:40 modern invention you know so push forward.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Awesome, Master Graf I really appreciate your time had a lot of fun.

**Anthony Graf:**

Thank you sir it was awesome.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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