



Episode 327 – Paradigm Shifts | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hey everyone thanks for coming by this is [whistlekickmartialartsradio](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) and you're listening to episode 327. Today we're going to talk about Jeet Kune Do. My name's Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host for the show on the founder at [whistlekickmartialarts](http://whistlekickmartialarts.com) and I love traditional martial arts. I'm doing it all my life and now it's my job, it's my job to help you love the martial arts even more and I'll do whatever I can to make that happen.

If you wanna check out our products our projects our services all the stuff we've got going on you could find that at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) and you can find the show notes for this and all of our other episodes at [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) most of them have a transcript. We're actually going back and transcribing all of the old episodes. So if you're in a spot where you can't listen but you could read you might want to check those out or of course for our friends who are hearing impaired we wanna make sure that we give as much as we can to all martial artists regardless of how they take in their entertainment.

Let's talk about Jeet Kune Do. We've spent a lot of time talking about Bruce Lee on the show especially lately episode 305 with Mr. Matthew Polly talking about his book Bruce Lee a life received at ton of attention and we thought it might be good idea to dig deeper into part of the legacy that Bruce Lee left namely the martial arts style that isn't the style in a sense Jeet Kune Do.



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Jeet Kune Do or JKD is a martial art style founded and developed by the martial artist Bruce Lee on July 9, 1967. It is based on the personal and martial arts philosophies of Lee. What makes it unique is that it doesn't have any fixed patterns or katas unlike most traditional martial arts. Similar to Wing Chun Jeet Kune Do prioritizes the concept of attacking while one's opponent is about to attack applying the principle of minimal movement with maximum effect. The Bruce Lee foundation changed the name of the martial art to Jun Fan Jeet Kune Do on January 10, 1996 after the Chinese given name for Bruce Lee Jun Fan. Lee believed that katas or movement patterns restrict one's liberty in expressing oneself in executing limit and he thought that martial arts styles had become unrealistic. He even described the katas as quote organized despair because the martial artist should be able to freely express without any limitation. Because of this philosophy, Jeet Kune Do included all possible forms of strikes even the ones that are illegal and tournament matches such as [00:02:52.20]. According to Lee the name Jeet Kune Do was just a label and referred to it mostly as quote the art of expressing the human body. He called martial art competitions a dry land swimming which I think is a wonderful visual and he believed in the concept of real-life combat with a martial artist cannot predict the next attack on the opponent but only react accordingly. He said that a good martial artist must be like water continuously flowing without any restriction.

Lee researched many fighting styles and he first called it Jun Fan kung fu after his name. He did not want to create another style as it would sound limited as he felt all other styles were. Jeet Kune Do is the result of Lee's lifetime of training in different martial arts. Lee's concept was not about just adding more things on top of each other to form a system but by taking what's best and incorporating it into one system. He compared his philosophy to Chan Buddhism's metaphor for removing what is useless by constantly filling a cup with water and then emptying it. He also use the notion of a sculptor starting with a lump of clay and then gradually removing the unnecessary material through the process of sculpting. These principles resulted in what is called bear combat essentials or Jeet Kune Do. A martial artist should primarily use his or her dominant or strongest hand because it would perform better and will work more to the person's advantage. Lee believed that despite the overall formidability of the en garde stance fighting stance many styles call it, there are other stances that are more useful in some maybe even many situations. He felt the characteristics of Jeet Kune Do as being dynamic enabled his practitioners to become familiar with the ever-changing and unpredictable events of actual combat. He believed the martial artist can only truly develop techniques or adopt the ones from other styles in a quote real combat and work all out sparring environment. As a person would be obligated to make a critical decision and use the most advantageous techniques. Since everything is dynamic in actual combat predefined patterns and techniques would seem ineffective.

Lee laid down the principles of Jeet Kune Do and he deemed that these principles can be applied to any form of combat. A martial artist should have the full understanding of the four ranges of combat because this is essential in survival. If the fight can be ended from a distance, say with a kick that would be the ideal situation the ideal fighting range, if not then a closer range would come next like punching. Jeet Kune Do teaches that an incoming attack should be intercepted not just block following the



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principle that the best defense is a strong offense. Furthermore not only physical attacks but also nonverbal cues from the opponent can be observed and used to one's advantage. Aside from the four ranges of combat, there are the five ways of attack that teach the offensive techniques that help the Jeet Kune Do practitioner in organizing their fighting method.

Lee didn't approve of fancy stances, he believes that fighting in this way would bind the person to unnatural rhythmic movements and in actual combat the rhythm gets broken. The opponent will not do the same rhythm that they might do in practice. The movement should be constant small shifting steps. This type of stance and movement can be seen in many of Bruce Lee's movies for example the way of the Dragon [00:06:26.11] Chuck Norris. He used that that side southpaw stance followed by right-hand jabs and a lot of sidekicks. When blocking a kick he doesn't use the leg check that we might see in some martial arts but rather in oblique kick. We also use the defensive techniques from other systems like Western boxing that is slipping and rolling and kung fu like [00:06:49.27]. According to Lee exercising using a jump rope will greatly improve one's agility and footwork and proper footwork can assure victory as the distance from the opponent is properly maintained. As seen in Lee's movies he used quick skipping like footwork that was inspired in part by Mohammed Ali's strong footwork.

The straight lead punch or jab is the fastest punch and Jeet Kune Do and arguably any martial art. Lee considered it to be the backbone of all punches in JKD due to its reliability. The straight lead punch lacks power compared to other techniques but due to the speed it can be devastating because there can be a greater frequency of successful hits. It is also the most accurate punch because it travels the shortest path to the opponent. The punch is thrown from different positions and levels but normally it's thrown from from the center of the body and not from the waist or shoulder.

One of the core philosophies of Jeet Kune Do is to form an attack without the opponent noticing. The goal is to catch the opponent off guard and destroy his or her balance while decreasing his or her chances to defend to make the following attacks more effective. As Lee wrote quote the concept behind this is that when you initiate your punch without any forewarning such as tensing her shoulders or moving your foot or body the opponent will not have enough time to react. Meaning one must only be tensed upon impact and have the arms and body loose while still planning for the next moves. In JKD there are also no get ready poses because this would defeat the philosophy that Lee incorporated to JKD. There should be no signs or hints that an attack will be delivered as the opponent could strike first.

Now how many times have you seen heard read this quote: empty your mind, be formless, shapeless like water if you put water into a cup it becomes the cup you put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle you put in a teapot it becomes the teapot. Now water can flow or can crash be water my friend. This is what Lee wanted for all JKD practitioners to achieve as every activity or event in a man's life is varied the same thing happens in fighting. It is important for fight or not to be rigid but be flexible to adapt to any situation. Flexibility allows a person to learn new things aside from the already known techniques and this could lead to one's victory either in life or in combat. This means that one can react



Episode 327 – Paradigm Shifts | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

accordingly and instantaneously to any form of attack. Moreover [00:09:21.04] not stick to styles. The goal is to improve oneself through learning new methods to apply them appropriately.

Jeet Kune Do teaches not to waste any motion in executing a movement. For example a [00:09:34.05] a blocking technique from Wing Chun, must be executed quickly to not give an opening to the opponent. It is necessary to minimize any unnecessary motion and it requires a lot of practice to achieve mastery. The [00:09:47.03] comes from the three facts or principles in Jeet Kune Do. One non-classical: no unnecessary movements and postures especially those that are inherited from quote styles. Two directness: every defense should incorporate a counterattack, simply blocking is the least efficient and three simplicity: minimize the movement to make it simpler and more straightforward a punch is just like a punch kick just like a kick, remove all the sophistication and ornamentation. Both energy and time must be conserved. More damaging blows will consume more energy but may take the opponent out sooner thus conserving time. Less damaging blows will mean faster strikes that can cause the opponent less time to react.

One of the principles of Jeet Kune Do is to take advantage of any possible opening that an opponent may give and one example is when the opponent prepares for an attack. An oncoming attack must not only be blocked but must be intercepted. A JKD practitioner should not only receive damage but try to damage the opponent. This is one of the most difficult skills to develop because there are many variations of attack. However, when performed successfully the strategy can minimize the fighting time as the attack and defense are combined into just one movement.

In a similar way an attack is parried or redirected deflected while a counterattack is delivered simultaneously. When an attack is parried it may cause an imbalance to the opponent that's causing him or her to have less time to react or plan for another attack. Moreover parrying as opposed to blocking does not consume as much energy making the fighter more efficient in combat.

The best body parts to deliver a kick to are [00:11:40.11] knees thighs and midsection as also taught in Wing Chun. Low kicks are more stable than high kicks and they require less time to execute. However, if better opportunities seen in a fight or the potential target is above the waist it should be seized immediately and should override this overall principle of low kicking.

Earlier I mentioned the four ranges, and if you aren't familiar with those and this shows up in quite a few martial arts: kicking, punching, trapping and grappling you can see that the distance gets closer as we get deeper into the list. A JKD practitioner should identify which range is best when fighting an opponent. Kicking an opponent will keep the farthest distance but if it constantly fails then another range could be tried. It's also important to know the forte or the preference of your opponent. For example he wants you to stay away from the punching range of a person whose good in boxing. While it's a good strategy to know the opponent skills it's unrealistic when you're fighting a stranger. Therefore one must keep distance as much as possible and use the farthest range of attack. If the situation requires to move to a shorter range one must be ready to execute the corresponding attacks suitable for



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that range. The last option should always be grappling or going to the ground especially if the opponent is difficult to subdue. Blocking and avoiding attacks are more difficult when fighting on the ground.

The centerline theory is a theory that Lee adapted from Wing Chun. Imagine a vertical line traveling through the center of the body and one must defend that centerline always because this is where the vital organs are located. On the other hand the centerline of the opponent should be dominated and controlled to gain the greatest fighting advantage. Punching from the centerline can also give more power to the punch from proper hip and body movement. All forms of attack and defenses as well as footwork in JKD evolve around the centerline theory. There are three guidelines to centerline theory: controlling the centerline will also control how the fight goes. The centerline must be guarded at all times while attempting to dominate the opponent's and the centerline can only be controlled by [00:13:54.23].

Conditioning: Lee used arm conditioning such as [00:14:00.16] or three stars conditioning, a common drill in Chinese martial arts. As Lee trained under Ip Man a master teacher of Wing Chun, he also trained with a wooden dummy [00:14:09.23] but modified it by adding a neck and a middle leg.

Lee strongly believed that martial arts should be designed to be used in actual combat not only in tournaments and rulebound matches. Meaning the techniques developed in martial arts should be effective and practical in actual combat which is the reason why he was compelled to develop the Jeet Kune Do system. Combat realism is the main difference between JKD and other martial arts styles or so he felt where the techniques and other styles involve quote flowery techniques that would not save someone in street survival. While forms may help Lee eliminated the unnecessary motion in the intention of quickly defeating the opponent because of this Lee was in favor of using sparring gear to be able to spar all out in training sessions. As a result the sparring and JKD is close to actual combat where the participants do their best to survive and defeat their opponent.

Now I'm going to drop the disclaimer that I probably should have at the top of the episode but here it is just to make sure it is part of the episode I'm not an expert in Jeet Kune Do, I've never trained in Jeet Kune Do and this episode is based entirely on our research here at whistlekick and an attempt two distill a lot of information down to 15 minutes or so of speech.

I am not saying that this is the be-all and end-all. I am not saying that this is the perfect representation of Jeet Kune Do and more importantly Jeet Kune Do is more of a concept more of a system of concepts. It is different now from my understanding from speaking with high level practitioners than it was when it was founded. Why am I offering this disclaimer because it seems that anything that we put out that has Bruce Lee's name on it catches a lot of attention and flak. So I'm hoping that those of you who listened to this or read this on the website will understand that our attempt here is simply to give you some fundamentals that may inspire you or interest you in going deeper into what Jeet Kune Do is. That's it that's all we're doing okay.





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