



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello, everyone. It's episode 74 of whistlekick Martial Arts Radio, the only place to hear the best stories from the best martial artists like today's guest, Mr. Jeremiah Grossman. My name is Jeremiah Lesniak and I founded whistlekick. And I'm also your host here for Martial Arts Radio. whistlekick, as so many of you know already, makes the world's best sparring gear as well as really great apparel and accessories, all for practitioners and fans of traditional martial arts. I'd like to welcome our new listeners and thank those of you checking us out again. If you're not familiar with our products, why don't you head on over to whistlekick.com and take a look at what we make. For example, our sparring gloves are pretty popular and for quite a few reasons. We cut the wrists shorter so you can move your hand better. There's lots of ventilation and they're doubly reinforced. Add to all that, the more comfortable, durable foam we use at our protective gear. And you've got a pretty great glove. Now, if you want to see the show notes, those are at a whole different website. And that's whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. While you're over there, go ahead and sign up for the newsletter. We offer special content to subscribers and it's the only place to find out about upcoming guests for the show. We only email a few times a month and we never sell your information.

Today's episode features our first conversation with someone who trains primarily in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Mr. Jeremiah Grossman started his martial arts training in other styles but found his color later when he switched. With the strong ties between BJJ and MMA, you might go into this episode thinking we're going to have a wholly different conversation than normal. But we didn't. Mr. Grossman is every bit the martial artist that our other guests have been and I really enjoyed our conversation. But enough of me. Let's hear it from our guest. Mr. Grossman, welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Thank you very much for having me,

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's going to be a lot of fun. You are, I believe... Now, we're getting to the point where it's hard to remember everybody. But I think you are our first Brazilian Jiu Jitsu guy.

Jeremiah Grossman:

The first one?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think so.



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremiah Grossman:

This is going to be... There's a lot to live up to.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Perhaps, perhaps. And of course, we live in a time where I would say unfortunately, most people associate Brazilian Jiu Jitsu with the Mixed Martial Arts world. Which, I know, you do have some ties into that. But of course, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is a legitimate traditional martial art in its own right. So, I'm looking forward to talking about all that. But let's start out, because you have to start somewhere before you could get to here, how did you get started in the martial arts?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Ironically, because... Well, I grew up kickboxing but it wasn't... It was more of a ring kind of fighting style. And then I left combat sports for a long while. But I found my way back to it because I was a huge UFC fan back in the UFC 1 or 2 days. And many years ago, I thought to myself, I might one day want to take a cage fight. And all these guys were training this Brazilian Jiu Jitsu stuff and I have to learn it if I'm going to go do it. So, that's kind of how I found my way to Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. It's by way of MMA rather than then the other way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Interesting. So, what was it... If you're talking UFC 1, UFC 2 days, this was before everyone sort of became a bit homogenized. If... For anybody out there that listens, you'll probably agree with me. Maybe you would agree with me, Mr. Grossman, that most of your high level competitors, they've got some Jiu Jitsu experience. Then they've got their striking component. They're kind of similar. But back in the early UFC days, they were really different. It would be a Karate guy and a Taekwondo guy and a BJJ guy. What was it about the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu that attracted you?

It is kind of interesting way back then. There was a very specific moniker. There is a Taekwondo guy, a boxer guy, a ground fighter and things like that. And I remember back in the day, I don't think the name, the word or the phrase mixed martial arts or MMA ever came up. That was something that came later as people start to mixing up the styles. And I guess, if you look at it now, there's three ranges of fighting. You have fighting at a distance and things like Muay Thai and boxing. You'd have clenched - Judo and wrestling. And then you have the ground which is from wrestling and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. And everybody's so mixed. Everybody's a mixed martial artist even though they might have a propensity for one or the other.



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. So, have you had any experience with anything at those other two ranges? Those Judo, the boxing?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Kick boxing early on.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right.

Jeremiah Grossman:

And then Brazilian Jiu Jitsu later. And over the last 15 years now, I've got a little bit of experience with... I've done wrestling classes. I've done some Judo classes. I'm by no means proficient like the black belts. Like the Jude black belts that I've come across were... When they grab your gi with 2 hands, you're going for a ride. So, I'm not as good as those guys. But yeah. I do have some experience with the other arts.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, great. So, that gives us a little bit of context for who you are and how you got started. But... And I guess even why you got started. But let's take a step forward. We're all about stories here. Pretty much everything that we do were set up to get you to tell your stories. But let's start on a high note. Tell us your best martial arts story.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Oh, gosh. That's a good one. Actually, you say step forward. For that one, I've got to take a step back. And I think, from what I'm told, because I had to write about it, my best story is how my first training class ever and what kept me training. So, as I mentioned earlier, I was watching UFC. And I was like, okay. I want to try Brazilian Jiu Jitsu class and I went with a co-worker of mine. So, we go take up Brazilian Jiu Jitsu class. And if you've ever taken one, you do about 15 20-minutes of warm ups, you learn some moves, you do some drills, some techniques, and then you spar. Now, you have to imagine, I was in not terribly a good shape way back then. I'm about 6'2" and at the time, I was probably around 300 lbs. Much different than today. And I got to do the warm ups, just managed through it. And the first person that the black belt there put me to spar with was a... She had to be mid-40s, late 40s at that time. She was a purple belt. And it was a woman half my size, twice my age. And I thought that the instructor was messing with me. You know, the macho guy kind of comes out and he goes, I can't believe this. Okay. I'm going to take it easy on here. You can't hurt a girl, you know. That sort of thing, right? And



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

so, I'm going to go very light. So, I go for... You shake hands then you go forward. You start running the etiquette. And in the half second, she kind of weaves herself under my arm, gets onto my back and proceeds to choke me, right? And it was the first that I've ever experienced anything like this. And I'm like happy and so fast. It was like both hands going. And I'm upset, I'm scared. I'm more upset than anything else. Like I was, take it easy on her. And she takes advantage on me. Not cool. I'm not going to let this happen again. So, you start from the knees. There's always a reset, shake hands. Then I go forward harder. Same thing. Just lets an arm drag, it was right to my back and chokes me again. And I'm sitting there. I'm less angry and more stunned than anything else. And like, okay. Let's try this again. And this proceeds to happen over and over again. Same move over and over again for the 2.5 minutes of stamina that I have in my body. And I could not do anything to this woman. I was just upset, embarrassed than anything else. Class ends and I'm sitting there in my car at the parking lot going, thinking to myself, I have no idea what happened. I have to come back and keep training. If nothing else, to beat this woman. Because I can't go through it my life as a macho guy thinking grandma here beat me up. So, I have... That's [08:23](#) coming back for multiple classes. And so, I was taking about three or four classes a week. And it took me about a year and a half to actually finally find a way to tap her.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's a good one. We don't talk a lot about me on this show. I had about three months of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and had slightly different but basically the same experience coming in. I had a fair amount of martial arts background. I've done some Judo. I've done some grappling and thought, yeah I'll do okay. I mean, this is all new stuff but I'll start... I won't be terrible at this. And I was absolutely terrible.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Everybody is terrible. Everybody is terrible.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Jeremiah Grossman:

[09:10](#) describe it as drowning and being repeatedly taught how to swim.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I like that. So, one of the things that we talk about here is how martial arts and martial arts training has had an impact on people's lives. Now, you've been training for a little while.

Jeremiah Grossman:



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Yup.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If we'd have to put a number on it, if you want to, you're welcome to.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Oh. Somewhere between 12 and 15 years now.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay.

Jeremiah Grossman:

At least for Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure.

Jeremiah Grossman:

But at combat sports, my whole life.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right. Okay. So, let's roll back. Let's roll back beyond Jiu Jitsu. Let's roll back beyond kickboxing. And let's say that soccer had become your thing. How do you think your life would be different now?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Oh, gosh. You know honestly, probably not terribly different. I like sports a lot. While I was doing martial arts, I've played basketball. I've played Australian rules football through my 20's and things like that. If you took out the martial arts, I'd probably have different friends circles and different activities. You know what, thinking about it, I'd probably be at least 20% to 30% different of a person. I don't know what that person would look like. Because now, martial arts have become such a big part of my life. But I think one of the things, it might have changed a lot of people around me. So, I travel a lot for work. And one of the things I do is I bring my gi with me everywhere I go. So, I've trained in 50, maybe 100, different academies around the world. And I also have 3 children and I... They do Brazilian Jiu Jitsu as



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

well. So, I teach them. So, I think my relationship with a lot of different people around the world, with my children would be a lot different. It's probably less different for me... I'd be a little bit different of a person but not much. But I think I just... I would treat the world much differently. I would experience the world much differently.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Can you expound about that last point a little bit? How would you treat the world differently?

Jeremiah Grossman:

You know, the way... I say it kind of tongue in cheek. I was like, I get to travel the world, meet new people and fight them. So, that's kind of a unique kind of situation. If I played soccer, I would get to compete maybe if I find and pick up games in different parts of the world. But probably not. Again, as a travelling executive, you have a lot of times with... A lot of people are stuck in the hotel room gym. They don't get to go to the local academy and go spar with just some random people. Like they say in The Matrix, you never truly know someone till you fight them. So, I have fought and fought hard a number of people around the world. And I consider them friends. I've built up great relationships. In a way, I can't imagine whether it's soccer or anything else would ever be able to do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow. Yeah. That's good stuff. So, let's come back to reality. Let's bring you back. You've got all that martial arts experience. You have traveled the world, you've trained with all these wonderful people. But now, reflect back on a time in your life where maybe things weren't quite so rosy. And tell us how your martial arts training or your experience was able to help you move past it.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Oh, man. I think the most difficult times... Everybody goes through family troubles. Everybody goes through troubles at work and things like that. And I think one of the times, my job function at the company had started to have a change drastically. And it required 18 months straight of 12, 14, 18 hours a day, seven days a week, nonstop. Just a very struggling time. Just a lot of work, things to do, tough decisions. And it's just a grind. Not anyone think particularly about it was really, really hard, mentally taxing difficulty. It was just a million little tasks and it's just a grind. Get up in the morning, you grind it out. Every single meeting, every single phone call. And you have to keep a good attitude about it because you're working with other people and they have to be upbeat and motivated as well. So, it's a grind every single day. And you have to keep your head, you have to keep motivated, you have to keep doing it. And that for me, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu ends up being an exact replica of that. It's actually become good practice. In Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, the learning curve is difficult. I look at it... When I go to class, it's just 1% better everyday. One little move, one little detail and it's really difficult to get any better any faster



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

than that. So, you have to grind it out every single class. You're hot, you're tired, you're injured. There's somebody on top of you and they're heavy and you're in pain and you might be injured and so forth. But you have to keep coming back. You can't get discouraged. You can't keep... You can't be frustrated. You have to keep coming back and do it over and over and over again. If you could persevere through that, you emerge a very different person and somebody that can go through and embrace that grind and come out of the other side. And end up in a place that many other people will never reach or understand.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think that I could just take that last minute that you said and just chop everything else and we can just put that out as the episode. That was so well-articulated. And obviously, you're talking about it from the perspective of what you know, of your martial art. But I would say that that piece, that 1% better, I think that's probably really going to resonate for a lot of other people. I know it resonates for me. That makes a lot of sense. And you just explain things in a way that I don't think I've ever been able to about some of my trainings. So, thank you for that. And yeah. We always chop out quotes to go at the beginning of the episodes. And I'm pretty sure that this episode's quote's going to come from that piece.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Excellent.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, like you said, you've had a chance to travel a lot and really work with people all over and I'm sure some of them have been great. Hopefully, most of them have been at least good to work with or fun. I'm sure you've had some duds, some people that you'd rather you were not working with. I think we all have that experience from time to time.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But who, other than your direct instructors, would you say has been the most influential on your martial arts?

Jeremiah Grossman:



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Oh, that's a great question. Let's see. You know, a lot of people take different kinds of vacations. They go and relax on a far off beach, somewhere. That's not an option for me since I live in Hawaii. So, I get to go to the beach all the time. So, one of my last vacations was a Jiu Jitsu tour. So, I've got to train. I went to Vegas and I trained with Forest Griffin and [16:11](#) Did grappling with them. That was amazing. For those that aren't in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, I got to train with Rickson Gracie, [16:18](#) Gracie, Kron Gracie, Rickson's son. And all these guys... I would really think about the class before going in. I have too many expectations but on areas of my game, weakness is really that I wanted to focus on. And whatever I learn during that class, I would ask them separately. If I'm having trouble in this area, what do you got? And they would sit down with me and we'll go over some things. And all those little experience, I don't know if it was any one particular person in those guys that really stood out. But I think the one person that was really influential on me was actually somebody... I guess I inspired to train, his name is Chris Hoff. We're from similar industries just never worked together. But we started doing these Brazilian Jiu Jitsu events twice a year at different conferences. And so, I would get better. I would teach him moves. And then he lived on the other side of the country. And he would talk about his experience in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. And he's a brown belt now. We've slowly worked up through the ranks. I've met him when I was a blue belt. He just got in to it. And now, we've trained a thousand times together. We're learning from each other, sure. It's all in fun. But when he keeps training, I keep training. And I think that has been a big influence on me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow. And for people that don't know your background or haven't read the show notes or anything yet, your industry, these conferences, these are not martial arts conferences, are they?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Oh, right. So, I'm a... I started a company a while back that does computer security. To not put, I guess, too simple or find a point on it, it's a company full of hackers. So, our job is to... Companies pay us to break into their systems. They'll tell us where the problems are. And so, we're professional hackers as it were. And around the industry, computer security industry, there's large computer security conferences where you get together and talk computer security stuff. Tens of thousands of us. But that's the industry that we work in.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What kind of parallels do you draw... Because as some of the folks know and as you and I talked about briefly before the show, with my background not quite in the security space but is in technology, would you draw any parallels between technology, specifically computer security, and combat?

Jeremiah Grossman:



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

I think so, actually. Because in computer security... My type of security is I simulate the bad guy. Our job is to try to break in. Somebody else's job is to try to stop us and we simulate that activity. And so, you have the people who try to build secured systems, break secured systems and other people that try to do defend them. But no matter what, when you're dealing with computer security, there's always what you're protecting and there's always the adversary. And try to figure out where the adversary's strengths are so you can counteract them. And that [19:22](#) directly the combat sports, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu - I imagine whatever martial art. What are your strengths and what are the strengths and weaknesses of your adversary that you're likely could go against? Are they bigger? Are they faster? Are they going to be more technical? How do they come at you? Do they come at you directly? From the side? Are they going to strike? Are they going to kind of close the distance? And the more experience we have in different martial arts then the more proficient you're at it. Your advantage is in exploiting their weaknesses, the better you'll be. And so, I think it relates directly. So, I'm always studying the adversary in my professional world. And then every time I'm sparring with somebody, I have two things going through my mind. One is what are the areas that I need to work on to address my own weaknesses? And I'm [20:07](#) them up going, what are their skills? Are they bigger? Are they stronger? Are they going to be faster? Going to be more technical? And I develop really quickly a battle strategy in my head for how I'm going to win this fight.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Then I think on the backside of that, after any kind of exchange, going back and reviewing your notes or what worked and what didn't and using that feedback to guide your training.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Exactly right. Because we spar, we train. It's not a fight. The fight will happen later outside or whatever. And it's very important to review how you did. Did you execute well? Did you throw out your game plan at the last second? And one of the things I wish more academies have including mine is maybe like a GoPro [20:54](#) Get all the students can get access to the video of their match or the class. And go back over for 30 minutes after class or the next day or something like that. I think that would be really cool.

Jeremy Lesniak:

One of the most helpful things I've ever seen in any kind of a fitness or exercise facility was at a gymnastics club that I used to train parkour at. And they had a big screen TV on the wall with the camera recording the main area on a 7-second delay.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Ah.



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, someone would do something - whatever their routine was or if they fell. They could wait a couple of seconds and look and they could watch what led up to it.

Jeremiah Grossman:

That's very cool.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. And the technology, isn't that complicated, right? It's pretty simple to implement. I'd like to see that more. One of the things that I've encouraged on some of the episodes of the show is that even though we are martial artists, traditional martial artists primarily, there's no reason we can't bring modern training techniques and modern equipment into helping us get better at traditional things.

Jeremiah Grossman:

I think every martial art must be able to evolve, try new ideas - strange as they may be. Keep what works, throw out things that don't. There's nothing wrong with that. Including tech. I mean, if technology can help us spot the weaknesses and it allows us to develop our strengths much faster, let's do it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Absolutely. I think a lot of people that teach have felt the frustration. I don't know if you work with children and all. But especially kids, you tell them that they're not doing something right or they're doing something wrong, you're trying to help them. And then they don't believe you. And I've even gone to my bag and pulled out my phone and recorded them and shown them. And then the light bulb comes on.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Yup. Yeah, it's different a lot of times. You step out of yourself and see yourself with the mistake that you made. So, a lot of times, you just need video evidence when you do that sort of things. I've been training in a lot of striking lately, Muay Thai. And I'll drop my left hand and I'll go in, I'm not dropping my left hand. My instructor saw me and said, no, you're really dropping your left hand. And you know, I had to catch myself on video and went to go oh, I am dropping my hand. It was kind of imperceptible because in my head, I'm doing the move correctly. But for whatever reason, what I see of myself in my head is not what my body is actually doing.



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right. And for years, a lot of instructors have recommended shadow boxing in front of a mirror. Kind of that low-tech, the same self-assessment.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Yes.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That video can provide. So, you hinted at the beginning about competition. The idea that maybe you would compete in something, some kind of full-contact events. And you said you did kickboxing. But let's talk about in terms of competition. Have you been in the ring? And if so, what have you done?

Not in a MMA match or anything like that. But I've done quite a number of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu events. I think in many ways, those are every bit as competitive and nerve-wracking as everything else. You're going there and you've trained really hard. Or hopefully, that you've done everything necessary to prepare so you can step in there and do well. And then that other person there is going to fight you. Everybody as hard as you're going to fight them. And I've won a lot of matches and I've lost a lot of matches. And it's always a lot of fun. It's actually... I find it helpful to at least compete at least once or twice a year even though you're not really big into competition. Because at the end of the day,, we're doing martial arts and some people like the art of it. For me, it's a lot about self-defense. Yes, it's physical fitness. Yes, it's discipline. It's a good workout that sort of thing. But I like to do it primarily for self-defense purposes and to get your head in the right place. And so, you'll have to be able to practice when it's time to turn it on. When it's time to fight and win, competition helps simulate that in a safe place. And of course, you're there with your other training partners, your teammates and your instructor. And it's a lot of camaraderie going on there. But that's a great way - win or lose, you start to train your body and mind to turn on, to fight when it's time to fight.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Great point. Now, you've said you've done Brazilian Jiu Jitsu events. What's your thought on going the MMA route? Because it sounded like that was some of the original inspiration for you.

Jeremiah Grossman:

It's something I'm still probably... I'm getting a little bit older now. So, it's probably something I... If I really want to do it, it's something I could technically do and be okay at. But right now, I'm just having



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

fun training and getting better. The guys that I train with regularly are really good. So, just being able to have the opportunity to train with a lot of local black belts, big, strong guys that are also extremely technical. In a lot of ways, it's just a blessing. It's not something that everybody gets to do. And if that opportunity comes, well, I'll take it. It's kind of how I set my goals in life and I grind it out. And I try to have fun in the process. So, if I've decided to take a cage match, it will be later and a place where I can clear my life to really focus on that one. Because that's not one that you want that to take lightly on or in a whim.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right. I agree. Now, we've mentioned some names, some pretty big names especially for people that may dabble in the MMA world or watch the UFC, you've had the chance to train with some great people. But if you could train with someone that you haven't, be they living or dead, who would you want to train with and why?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Oh, goodness. Oh, gosh. I'd have to... I think that answer there deserves some time. I'd like to think about that one.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Let's come back to that one at later in the episode.

Jeremy Lesniak:

All right. We can do that.

Jeremiah Grossman:

I don't know. That's a great one.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We can do that. I am going to hold you to it.



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Sure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'll put you on the spot later if I have to.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Get it back in my mind head with every other answer going who the hell do I actually want to... That's a great one. I don't know yet.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. How about movies? Are you a movie guy?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You have any favorite martial arts movies?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Martial arts movies? You know what, this is going to sound a little cliché but it's nonetheless true. I'll explain a little bit more why but it's got to be The Matrix because it crosses sci-fi and martial arts. It's not at all out of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and ground fighting of course. But still, the martial arts in that one is super cool, some super good lines in there. I've already used one - you never truly know someone until you fight them. So. And of course, there are hackers in there. It's sci-fi, it's hackers, it's martial arts. That's just like me all bottled up. So.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, I'm trying to do math. So, that would have been around the time that you had started training Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, right?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Yeah. What year was that? Was it '98 or '99? It's probably '98 or '99.



Episode 74 – Mr. Jeremiah Grossman | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Somewhere around the millennium, yeah.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Ah, yes. So, it's probably a couple of years after that that I started training in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. But as far as kickboxing and stuff, I've been doing that since I was 14 years old.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, did that movie have any impact on you? Because I'm going to guess... I don't know about you but I'm a self-professed nerd. I've been a nerd my whole life.. And that movie resonated for me on all those different levels as well as the martial arts aspect and the technology nerdy aspect. Did that potentially have any... I guess I want to say influence. Did that push you? Did you look at that movie and say, maybe this... Maybe I want to go onto Kung Fu or the striking thing? Because obviously, you didn't. You went in a different direction. But I'm just curious.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Not so much that movie. I think that movie influenced more of my professional life with technology, hacking and things like that, and less with martial arts. I think as far as television entertainment that affected more than anything else, it's just the UFC in general. I still... This weekend, they had a fight with Frank Mir and Mark Hunt. So, I'm watching it; watching the fight nights in the UFC. I love it. I love watching it and following the story. But I think for TV movies, it's more just entertainment rather than... I don't look at it for martial arts inspiration. That's just me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. Do you have any favorite fighters in the UFC?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Oh, gosh.

Jeremy Lesniak:

There's a... Folks, this wasn't on the question list. I'm just kind of throwing this at him out of the blue. So.

Jeremiah Grossman:



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Oh. Not at all. You know, it's funny. People always ask me when I'm watching UFC fight the last minute, who I'm rooting for or whatever. While I do have some fighters that I like and I've met personally, I'm mostly just looking for a good performance out of both guys, a good fight. Watching, have the techniques and the different styles match up and things like that. And whether it goes quickly or it goes fast, most of the time I'm just really interested in a good fight. But he's retired now. But I really like Forest Griffin a lot. I like when he fought. I get to train with him at least once a year now. And so, he's a really cool guy. Super big, strong and technical so mixing it up with him is different. He's slightly bigger than I am so it makes for a good challenge. Let's see. But active fighters... Actually, he just lost but he's still an awesome guy is Frank Mir. Heavyweight. So, I like that guy a lot. I'm definitely a big fan.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. Yeah. And I don't watch mixed martial arts a lot. I enjoy it. I especially enjoy the amateur stuff because I like people beating the tar out of each other and then hugging it out and saying the things, thanks for helping me get better. I really dig that part of it. But yeah. Watching it, watching people rise to the occasion, hopefully they're a good match for each other. And then seeing who's got the most grit or who trained harder. That's the part that I really enjoy.

Jeremiah Grossman:

I think that that's in a lot of ways. It's like why we like watching sports? We like watching the excellence of it - the struggle, the challenges and the victories, the overcoming of adversity. But effectively, just watching the excellence of the competition. I just think there's something in us that we really like, that we're really drawn to that sort of thing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I would agree. So, how about martial arts movie actors? Do you have a favorite in that camp?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Oh, goodness. You have to help me out with this one. Because everything... Like fighting, it's kind of synonymous with the movies I watch. So, just to [32:03](#) Jackie Chan. We got Chuck Norris. That's some of the old school guys. I think I like Jackie Chan a lot. You know, he's super fast, highly creative with all the choreography in the movies. And if I remember, I think I've seen of him... I've never met him. But every interview, he just seems like a very fun, entertaining, loving-life kind of guy. And that's like how do you not love that guy?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right.



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Jeremiah Grossman:

So, probably Jackie Chan.

Jeremy Lesniak:

He's a great guy. We did a profile of him on one of our Thursday episodes and I'll link to that in the show notes. And for anybody that's new, we keep all those t whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. But yeah. He's a really talented guy. I mean, he's a singer and just an overall entertainer on top of being a martial artist. So, there's some good stuff going on there. I was afraid you were going to say Keanu Reeves and I wasn't going to let you get away with that one.

Keanu is cool but for different reasons. But I remember this one thing in an outtake. I forget what Jackie Chan movie it was. But apparently.. I think he was jumping out of a hovercraft and he broke his foot or his leg. And they weren't done shooting. So, they put a cast and they put a sock on the cast so it looks like his shoe. And he's still out there doing his own stunts. I mean, that's just toughness right there. You break your leg and you continue shooting.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right. And he's known for breaking something in just about every movie he does. And if my memory is serving me, and I'll check, I'm pretty sure that's Super Cop.

Jeremiah Grossman:

It probably was. So. He was so martial artist creative and he's tough. That's awesome.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. And it's easy to forget that he's getting older now. He's far older than what most martial arts actors and... Really. Because he does all his stunt work. So, you can think of him as a stunt double, too.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

There aren't too many stunt doubles working at his age.



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Jeremiah Grossman:

Imagine trying to be a stunt double for that guy. You get that call and, we need you to be a stunt double for Jackie Chan. And like, oh no.

Jeremy Lesniak:

No, I'm out. Because he'll do just about anything.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If he's not doing it, then I'm probably just going to die. How about books? Any martial arts or loosely related books you'd tell us about?

Jeremiah Grossman:

It's almost embarrassing to say but I read voraciously but it's usually news or technical stuff. I don't read a lot of fiction or old martial arts books to be perfectly honest. Usually, I'm... When I'm learning about martial arts and things like that, it's right off YouTube or some videos or something like that. Not too many old martial arts books.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. Well, YouTube can work, I mean, for some similar reasons. Depending on what people are trying to get out of books versus trying to get out of YouTube. Are there YouTube channels that you might recommend?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Oh, yeah. What is it? Submissions101 [35:06](#) But I don't think there's any one particular channel. Usually, I'll look for a counter and escape, a different kind of submission from it, from one. There's an instructor, a Jiu Jitsu black belt, in San Francisco I really like. And he has Submission of the Week. His name is Kurt Osiander, really rough guy, tough guy but certainly super cool. I visit him in San Francisco every time I'm there. And he does a Move of the Week. It's kind of... A lot of times, his Jiu Jitsu, it's very slow, very heavy, very simple and highly effective. And that's a style that I prefer. So, I've gone back and I researched his Moves of the Week a hundred times. And that's one of the things I find interesting about... I don't know if the same thing happens in other martial arts. But in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, I've gone



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back and I've relearned, relooked at the details in certain moves or even certain fights and saw it in a completely different way. Years ago, I was not skilled enough to see the nuances and the details of the move or the fight. And now, I just see the sequence in a completely different way. So, I've had to review all my knowledge from past years. And now, I take away something completely different. Like yes, I know how to do an armbar. Yes, I know how to do a rear naked choke. but when you relearn it and you redo it and you go through it with another high level black belt and they're teaching you details, you'll get a completely different experience with it. And he's one of those guys.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. And that's something that I remember. Just before I earned my first black belt, the senior student in my Karate school was having a conversation with me and I said, what was it like getting your black belt? And he said, I realized how much I didn't know. And that's always really stuck with me. And for similar reasons for what you're talking about, that you learn a certain amount of knowledge and then you go back and realize how much more there is to know on the detail level.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Yeah. So, I've earned a black belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and I think... There's not too many belts in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Blue belt, I kind of figured, it's a... When you earn a blue belt, you've learned how to tap. A purple belt is kind of somebody that can connect moves together. Brown belt, they've introduced some strategy. And when you get to black belt, you ask your very experience but you end up being more of an encyclopedia of moves and anything else. And then, I can just say it for myself. I've learned probably more as a black belt than I did all the other years combined leading up to being a black belt. It's kind of interesting. I should have enjoyed the journey more. From one belt to the next and really not look forward to the next belt so much. That's one problem with a black belt - there's no more belts after it. Not for... You might get a red and black belt 35 years later but there's no more belts. Which is kind of, for me, was a good thing. I don't have to worry about the belts or the stripes or anything like that. I can just focus on the game, on the art. That's probably what helped me out a lot. Just giving me less to think about.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, are you saying that the motivation for your training has changed? Were you really belt-driven before?

Jeremiah Grossman:

It's.. I think, to be honest, yes, I probably was. At least a little bit. Yes, of course I wanted to get better. But getting promoted, I think for a lot of students, is a big part of their training and reason why they come back. They want to get to the next level, the next belt. And not necessary the next level of skill.



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And so now, when I go to the academy, I'm not thinking about a stripe. I'm not thinking about my belt. I'm just thinking about what I need to focus on. So, it just frees me up from that kind of obligation. So, much as I really... I never knew I was going to be a black belt one day. It just kind of happened. It's still very much in the back of my mind. I probably should have just enjoyed the journey much more.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure. And the way I asked that question was almost a trick because I wanted to see what to say. Because yeah, it's human nature that the majority of us are going to want that external representation of our commitment, of hopefully our knowledge and our investment into the martial arts. But most of us, I'd say, not all - I certainly know people on both sides - get to a point where rank doesn't matter so much. Now, it's about okay, I want to get better. As you said, I want to focus on my training.

It's especially true in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Because it does not look good when a black belt gets tapped out by a blue belt. I mean it happens from time to time. But a black belt shouldn't be able to, in a general sparring match, lose to a blue belt. I mean, they should... The skill differential should be such to an extent that it shouldn't happen. So, those guys in our academy definitely keep you training because they're really good.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice. Have you.. Now, you've trained for long enough that Brazilian Jiu Jitsu has really gone from being kind of a fringe martial arts to something that's really prominent. Have you noticed a change in the type of people coming in, wanting to learn?

Jeremiah Grossman:

It's just a lot more, I think. So, I think I got started when Brazilian Jiu Jitsu was just on the root. UFC was still in its adolescent years; it's so very new and I started then. And I kind of saw the rise of it. I probably got in it at the same time as many, many other people got into it. I just kind of stuck with it. But one of the things I've noticed just over the years, because I travel is, every city and every town I got o has at least one if not several martial arts places that I can jump into and just start taking classes. And they're always very welcoming. But I have noticed that there is a distinct difference in the gyms and the culture. A lot of places will train Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and general grappling, MMA places versus Jiu Jitsu academies. Because of my style of training, I tend to go for the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu classes that they wear the gis and the belts and things like that versus the MMA places where they go generally with no gis and rashguards.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Wow. Yeah. It's something that I would like to go back and spend some time with again - the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Because I know that my ground game, so-to-speak, could use some work. I'm really enjoying the perspective that you're bringing in. Because it is different. And because of that type, with BJJ and the mixed martial arts world, I think you're giving a lot of us that don't train in what you do some different thing to think about.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Well, I think... In Brazilian Jiu Jitsu classes, they really wear the gi. It's a very standard class format. You do some warm-ups, you'd learn a move a two. You do drills and then you spend anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes sparring. That's a general class. And the gi... It's kind of like Judo. It gives you something to hold on to. There's a ton more moves when you have a gi on - different submissions that you can go. Because you're using the gi as a defense item but also as a weapon. But Brazilian Jiu Jitsu as a martial art, it's very respectful. It's a very programmatic in that way. And people are in there for the love of the art and not necessarily to get tough and to beat other people up. It's different when you got to the general MMA school. And this is not true across the board. But a lot of times in MMA schools, they might have good instructors and they're very skilled. But it seemed to me that a lot of times, they have something to prove. They're treating every fight as if it's a world title fight. You know, that sort of thing. And it gets more injury prone. And no gi is meant to simulate cage fighting. There's nothing really to grab onto. There's no gi or anything like that. It's kind of slip and go kind of art. So, the style of fighting change a little bit. So, I'll do both. I'm proficient in both. But I just prefer the gi style of fighting because it's something that I can train hard but also train safe without running the risk of people with attitude problems.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. Would you say that... I want to ask this in a diplomatic way because I'm not in your world. But I hear things in your world. So, this is a good opportunity for me to bounce these questions off of somebody. Has that attitude increased? Is there more of incidents of that now than there was say 5 or 10 years ago?

Jeremiah Grossman:

Difficult to say because I think it really depends on the academy and the instructor itself. So, when I walk into an academy, let's say it's a gi academy, I'll just look very closely look at... From the front door person, are they welcoming? Do they want me there? Are they looking at me curiously? Are they looking at me like fresh meat, somebody to test their skills on? That sort of thing. Or are they very welcoming? Jiu Jitsu plays 99 times out of 100, everybody is extremely welcoming and they want to know who you are, where you're from, who you train with and what they're... I'm looking at it from their eyes. It's almost like an opportunity for them to learn something new from you. And also, to test themselves a little bit. Not in a bad way. But they only get to train with their own style of Jiu Jitsu a lot of times. And



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they like the opportunity to train with other people in a kind of like a close, less stressful setting. So, universally, I've always been welcome in the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu academy by the instructor. But the other thing that I'm looking for is not only the quality in the instructor but is their attentiveness. Are they attentive to the class? Are they really taking the time to teach the students? Are they watching every single match and every single move being done and making sure nothing gets heated out of control? Because that, actually, I think, what separates the good academies from the great academies, is the attentiveness and the passion of the instructor. If the instructor is right there very watchful and controlling the action the whole time, that's a really good academy.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I think you could make that same statement about a lot of other things, certainly other martial arts schools, other styles. I think that certainly applies.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Well, we're training fightings. So, anytime people get a little out of control or somebody isn't telling to settle down and teaching the right way, the right etiquette, people are going to get hurt.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Jeremiah Grossman:

People that have to go to work the next day. So, unless the instructor is right there at all times, making sure everything goes okay and spreading that culture out. When you do that, things are going to go great. When the instructor is not attentive, I've seen it several times, things go sideways really fast. And it's never a good outcome.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. So, let's roll back a little bit. Let's see if I can put you on that spot for who you would want to train with?

I think... Is it train with or fight?

Jeremy Lesniak:



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I'll let you answer both. Fight wasn't on the list. But I'll let you put in both.

Jeremiah Grossman:

I think in a fight... I was thinking about it. I think what has built, at least for many, many years, he's one of the greatest if not the greatest fighter of all time is Muhammad Ali. Still today, people equate boxing with fighting. I don't. Boxing is boxing. Fighting is fighting. And MMA is the closest simulation of that that we have while still allowing you the ability to fight again. I would like to try, not in a boxing match, I want to fight Muhammad Ali, I think. Especially in his prime. To think how the greatest fighter of his day, how does it compare against an average fighter of today? How does that look? And I think not only his skill at the time, his persona, but I'd like to meet that guy when he had all these faculties way back then when he was saying all those crazy things way back then. I think that's a person that whether you love him or hate him at the time, would be a really interesting character to mix it up with.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I agree. Now, how about training? Let's say it learning under. Maybe that would be...

Jeremiah Grossman:

I was kind of in a way, I was thinking about who would I... I just recently got to do it but I would love to have been able to train with Rickson Gracie in his day and come up that way. Because back then, he was definitely billed as one of the best if not the best Brazilian Jiu Jitsu guy ever, really. Super strong, flexible, fast, skilled, a good temperament about... Did it his whole life and being able to learn from somebody like that would be pretty phenomenal. Interest [48:08](#) I have actually gotten to do that. So, one recently is I actually didn't get to train with him personally but I took a class from Rickson Gracie. I actually got to train a couple of classes with his son, Kron Gracie who's just a phenomenal guy. He's extremely skilled. But I got to sit with Rickson a while and I asked him questions about different positions and moves and he took the time with me and my brother to teach us some stuff. So, that was amazing. Coincidentally, Rickson Gracie gave a belt to my current instructor, Luis Heredia. I think his first if not one of his first black belts. So, I actually have the Rickson Gracie lineage going through my training now. I just would like to have trained with Rickson Gracie back when he was in his 20s or 30s.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow. Cool. Yeah. I've certainly heard a ton of good stuff. The Gracie family name, that's Brazilian Jiu Jitsu royalty right there. So, yeah. Okay. Now, how about goals? Most of us are goal-driven specially martial artists. What is it that's keeping you going? What's keeping you training and learning and getting better?

Jeremiah Grossman:



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I think... It won't sound superficial in a way but I think right now, at this stage in my life, I want to get... My goal is to get fit as humanly possible. To get as strong, fast. Just as physically fit as humanly possible. And I really just the conventional form of exercise whether it's running, jumping rope and bicycling. I prefer martial arts. I prefer sports and things like that. Yes, I'll do some weight training and things like that. But I think in many ways like that, my physical fitness goals matches with the martial arts or Brazilian Jiu Jitsu - that's one of them. But when it comes to martial arts itself, I actually... In my mind, I really don't have any goals with it. My goal is to go there, have fun and to learn. I want to be the best version of myself, for lack of a better way, every time I train. I want to get a little bit better every single time. And now, I'm just enjoying the journey of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and martial arts. And in the meantime, getting in great shape is definitely attractive.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know, you kind of down played it but I think that's the goal. I think that's the best goal - to go, to have fun, to learn, to get better, to get in shape. I mean that's 99% of it for 99% of us.

Jeremiah Grossman:

Yeah. I think before maybe I should have a goal, be in world champion or winning a tournament or something like that. Yes, I'll go compete once or twice a year. But I just want to get better. That's it. I want to go there, have fun, test myself, challenge myself and that's it. And I think if I did that for the next 15 or 20 years, nothing would make me happier.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Awesome. I don't so much think it's important what your goal is but that you know what it is and that it drives you; it fuels you. So, perfect. Now, here's a chance. We throw some kind of commercial time your way and you can use this however you want. If you've got conferences and whatever, your business, if you want to talk about that. It doesn't have to be just martial arts stuff. But if people want to get a hold of you or learn more about you and what you do with these two very distinct sides of your life, how would the do that?

Jeremiah Grossman:

I'm pretty active on email or social media. So, my email address is me@jeremiahgrossman.com. So, I was that fortunate to get that dot out of my own name. And let's see here. And on social media, at least on Twitter, I'm Jeremiah G. I'm pretty active on Twitter. Unless you're into hacking and computer security stuff, you could follow if you choose but I'll only scare you to death about the things that I tweet about. Then on Facebook, I'm Jeremiah Grossman. And that's all fine. I keep my social media accounts kind of separate. So, on Facebook, I'm just Jeremiah Grossman. I go the the beach and I live in Maui and I do martial arts and stuff. And then on Twitter, I'm Jeremiah the executive professional hacker type.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

I think it's important to have that distinction and to have a voice with your social media, whatever it is. We do that a little bit.

Jeremiah Grossman:

I do have a personal life with my friends and family because I live in Hawaii, right? And they don't know Jeremiah the professional hacker, the martial artist. If they wanted to follow that part, no problem. Facebook and everybody else gets to follow me on Twitter.

Jeremy Lesniak:

There you go. That works. And of course, we'll link to those things over on the show notes page to make it easier for everybody. And before we wrap up, do you any parting advice for everyone listening?

Jeremiah Grossman:

I guess if you're into martial arts and getting into martial arts, the thing that I've always learned and the thing that we touched on earlier, just have fun with it. If you have something to improve, there's nothing wrong with that. But whatever your goals are, just have fun with it. Sought out some good training partners, challenge yourself, get to that next plateau but have fun. It can't only be about the destination. As it's been said, you have to embrace the grind. If you're not embracing the grind, then you're just marking days. Life is short. Do something that makes you happy. [53:33](#) the goal. It's going to be that much better at the end.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thank you for listening to episode 74 of whistlekick Martial Arts Radio and thank you to Mr. Grossman. Head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com for the show notes, a video of Muhammad Ali fighting a mixed martial artist from the '70s, outtakes from [53:51](#) and some other things we've talked about during the show. If you like the show, make sure you're subscribing or using one of our custom apps. They're available on iOS and Android. For those of you kind enough to leave us a review, we randomly check out the different podcast review sites. And if we find your review and mention it on the air, be sure to email us for your free box of whistlekick stuff. If you know someone that would be a great interview for the show, please fill out the form at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. Or if you just want to shoot us a message with a suggestion for a Thursday show or some other feedback, there's a place to do that on the website as well. You can follow us on social media. We're on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram, pretty much everywhere you can think of, and the username is always whistlekick. Remember the products you can find at whistlekick.com like our durable, comfortable, better designed sparring gloves. But that's all for today. So, until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.



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