



Episode 417 – Teaching Blended Martial Arts | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey there, welcome! This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 417. Today, we're talking about teaching blended martial arts styles. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, your host on this show, the founder of whistlekick and a guy who spends as much possible time training as possible. Well, that was an awkward way to say it but I'm going to leave it because sometimes, life is awkward. If you want to see all of the awkward and cool things that we're doing here at whistlekick, you could go to whistlekick.com. You can find them, you can find the store where we sell some things and you can use the code `PODCAST15` to save 15% off all of those things. If you want to know more about this show, that's got a separate website: whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. You can sign up for our newsletter there. You can check out all the past episodes, you can find transcripts, links to things like the guests and, in fact, we have 2 guests today who came on to help me talk about this very subject. Some of you know that I used to teach martial arts. I used to have my own school and now, my instruction is limited to my travels and the occasional teaching at the schools that I train in but over the last 23 years or so, martial arts and the lines between styles have gotten a little blurry and it continues to get even blurrier but how do you handle teaching that blurriness? Do you just develop your own new style and give it a name? Do you teach those things independently and expect students to achieve rank in each of them separately? There're a lot of different ways to handle this and plenty of good and bad to each. Well, today, I have two guests who are partners in a martial arts school and they are facing this very challenge and so I



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invited them on to talk about it so we can have a conversation of how they handle it and their school so let's welcome them to the show. Sensei Nate, Sensei Eric, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Eric Romo:

Good morning.

Nate Church:

Thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's a pleasure to have you both on and, of course, we're probably going to stumble a little bit at times because there are three of us and listeners, if you've ever had a conversation on the phone with more than one person, maybe a conference call or something, you know that that isn't always easy to do and if I heard you guys correctly as we were getting set up, you're not in the same room.

Eric Romo:

No.

Nate Church:

I'm in our weight room and Eric is in our office.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. Usually, when we have multiple guests, they're sitting in the same space so this is an opportunity for me to kind of flex some of my interview host muscles in a way that I haven't before so I appreciate that opportunity and just make sure you don't say anything that makes one of you throw the mic down and run in the other room and start brawling or anything like that but if you do, make sure you capture the audio well. That's all I ask.

Nate Church & Eric Romo:

Got it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool! We started talking over email, of course, a few weeks ago with the idea that the two of you were doing something that, honestly, it happens all the time across the country, I assume across the world, in that you are incorporating multiple martial arts styles in the curriculum that you teach and yet, as we're talking about it, I realized we've not really talked much about that so I thought it was a great opportunity for us to get to know the two of you, of course, and hear some about your martial arts journey but also talk about the ups, the downs, the pros and cons of how you start combining things in



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such a way that a student doesn't have to feel overwhelmed or conflicted with what they're being taught.

Nate Church:

Yeah, it is and, as we discussed before, with the mixed martial arts and blended martial arts, I mean, it's not uncommon but probably less common with some of our traditional aspect that we're combining but it is, it is definitely interesting and I think, for me, I think it's just fun really.

Eric Romo:

It's been a super exciting opportunity that I didn't know that I was ever going to come across and now that I've come to know Nate and working with him, I think his humility and just being able to openly discuss and not shy away from having a real talk has made it all the much easier to make this all happen and a reality.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Let's take a couple minutes for each of you. Talk about how you started in martial arts and what it is that you're bringing in to this blending that you're creating together.

Nate Church:

Eric has the most consistent long-term training from the traditionally young age so I'll let him go first.

Eric Romo:

Absolutely. I grew up in Houston, I was born in Chicago and I think I took a one month or one week pass from one of my buddies in kindergarten in Taekwondo school and they had a good reputation, had been around for many years and had an association in the greater Houston Area and I was enjoying it, absolutely loved it. I would train with a buddy who invited me in and a couple friends that went on for a couple of years. I was about the age of 8 and was really enjoying it, loved the physicality, loved the individual aspect. I had been doing some other team sports but this is the one thing I knew, when I got there, I was going to get all 45 minutes of game time or play-tag as it were so that was one of the things that really drew me into the martial arts. It was about 8, 8 and a half when I moved in to the intermediate kids' class where I was working with one instructor in particular. It was his demeanor, more than anything, he wasn't mean but he just is an overall laissez-faire attitude that kind of had me waning, wanting more and looking for a little bit more inspiration, I guess, and I, in not so many words told my mom and dad this and my dad was visually impaired so we didn't have a lot of options as far as getting to and from another school so we were pretty limited to things right in our area so we decided, one day, to take a walk around the block and check out the school that just said martial arts. They were in a strip center less than 10 houses away from my childhood home and ended up taking an intro and showing the instructor what I knew and I think within 10 minutes, my dad and I had some sidebar and



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were really impressed with what was going on so this instructor ended up being my sensei, my business coach, my life mentor up until my 27th birthday when I quit on my 12th year anniversary of [00:06:53] so we were up doing a traditional martial art called Kuk Sool, Korean-based, it incorporates a lot of the militaristic weaponry from the Korean history and also, a lot of joint locking what people would consider very traditional, what's the word I'm looking for, Jiu Jitsu, standard Japanese Jiu Jitsu, acupuncture and things like that and just the complexity, I guess, for some can be overwhelming but it was something I was really extremely drawn to and I was very fortunate to have the instructor and guidance that I did. In short, that's where I come from.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Doesn't sound that off from what a lot of the listeners are likely, their experience, sound fairly similar to my own so, yeah, alright. Okay, one down, one to go.

Nate Church:

So, I'm a, a lot would call, late bloomer martial artist. I grew up playing traditional sports in the Midwest, South West Ohio from a small town. I grew up playing soccer, running track so pretty much doing the traditional sports the year round including indoor soccer. All the way until the summer before my senior year in high school, started dating a girl who was training in martial arts and I'm a few years, quite a few, of Eric so I'm from the generation of going to see Karate Kid in the theater and growing up with the original Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and the old, cheesy, '80s martial arts films and I'm remembering Blood Sport and all this, so martial arts always interested me and I always wanted to but my family couldn't really afford it but come the summer of my senior year, I've been working a couple of summer jobs, I started training martial arts without a lot of fanfare or sharing with others and met my instructor who came from kind of a non-traditional martial arts upbringing himself. He originally started in Shaolin and worked into Shotokan and even though I went to college, I continued to train and wound up transferring to college a half an hour away, got my Shotokan black belt and then, we also taught a Japanese style of Jiu Jitsu, very close to Aikido, Aiki-jūjutsu, and trained there through the early 2000s. I moved to San Diego in 2008, took a hiatus from training for a while due to SoCal lifestyle, raced motorcycles there. Later in 2014, I laid off from my corporate job, started doing fitness as a full-time career, got hired to teach at a Tang Soo Do school, trained in Tang Soo Do for 2 years and then, 2 years after that, decided completely to do my own thing and go back to kind of my original Shotokan base and that's what we use as our forms base now between myself and Eric. We use traditional Shotokan form.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, nice, nice and how did the two of you meet?

Eric Romo:



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Interesting story. I, after quitting my job in September 2017, went on tour with my buddies' band. I was good friends with a couple guys who went to Berkley and I was at a wedding with one of them and having drinks after the ceremony and told them I wasn't sure what I was going to do next few months, my goal has always been to open up my own school but I was planning on taking some time off. I've been working since I was 15 for my instructor full-time since I was 17, senior year, when I moved out and was wanting some time so he invited me to go on tour and do some band managing, do some driving, whatever they need kind of person and ended up crashing in his couch, was planning on being here in San Diego for a week and I was walking around Ocean Beach, the little beach town we have here, and I saw a Karate studio and you know it would be fun to take a class. I haven't been to a formal class for a month and a half too and ended up talking with the instructor before class. He said come by a little bit later and I want to introduce you to somebody and that somebody ended up being Nate and had a conversation and here we are. There was kind of serendipitous in not so many words.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice and how did that turn to a school and working together and all that?

Nate Church:

I was running my program, as I mentioned when I talked before, I was sharing a space with competitive cheer gym which, by the way, any listeners out there are trying to figure out a place to start a studio, you can find a cheer gym. That floor makes a very fun and entertaining floor to train martial arts on because they're spring-based floors so falls are no problem on those floors. I was actually running martial arts classes for home-schooled students for their P.E. requirement and that was 100% of my student base then we started an after-school program with a local elementary and my program was growing and growing and Eric was helping me teach some of those classes as well. He teach in cardio-kickboxing class for my fitness program and we kind of hit a plateau where we could be sharing that space with not having any evening classes at all and he said he intended to open a school so we sat down and talked for a while and I said I'm ready to try and make a go with my own location and renting my own space but financially, that's going to be tough so it was either bring on a partner, bring on an investor or go massively in debt and the partner was definitely the best option and Eric was in the position he could come in and help and so, here we are today.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right on and so, what did that look like? When did that transition from daytime classes to that format and that expansion look like? And here's why I ask: we often have people listening who, maybe they're not actively running a school or even, necessarily actively planning on starting a school but I think, for most martial artists, you think about it. You think about what would I do if...and so, talking about some of these early seed times can be really impactful, really interesting to the folks we have listening.

Nate Church:



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Honestly, we're still in that position. I have to tell you, we just moved into our own location May 1st and we're still trying to fill those evening classes. Our afternoon class for our home-school program is still super strong and healthy but now we're seeing some of those kids for extra classes start to come there and we know at summer which can be a challenge for schools. We have another summer camp coming up next week which kids are enjoying. It's just being persistent and we know part of the reason why we want to make that transition is our after school program got kids pitching out of that program and we hated to lose them and then, not continue training so it's kind of like martial arts. You got to stay persistent and keep working. Just like in any martial arts, if the technique doesn't work, you need to step back and see why it's not working but right now, we're just being confident and patient that the more we're here, the more people will find out and the more those classes will fill. We're content right now teaching a couple kids a couple nights a week and we train some ourselves still and I think that's the big key as well is to make sure that you still train and use that time valuably.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, how did you approach the discussion of what you were going to teach recognizing, I assume that you recognized at some point, that you didn't want to teach separate curriculums? That was probably a conversation that you had early on, yeah?

N:

Yes, it was. I had my program going before I met Eric and I was using the Shotokan base and on meeting him, could tell that his skills were exceptional and you discussed it before. I think once you're an experienced martial artist, once you learn how to learn a form, learning another form isn't a daunting task and a good forward stance is a good forward stance and he was able to help me with that and, even once we formed a partnership, we've had students training with me for several years know it was going to be tough to change them so they knew it was pretty easy and open to say that, at least, Eric seemed to be that we were going to stick with a Shotokan base but then there was aspects that I definitely want him to pass on to our students.

Eric Romo:

I think just keeping that discussion open and get that conversation going and, even in front of our students sometimes, Sensei Nate will share something and show something and I might chime in with this is where I came from and how I went about it but what works, works and when we're able to train it and show it in front of the students, I think that you have an even greater appreciation for what we're doing because even some techniques in a specific style, you know you're going to have some differences but depending on your body type, your physical limitations and making things work so if something doesn't work one way, we'll be able to go back and forth and maybe find the right combination for that student but I think just being open and honest, as I mentioned before, his humility, I try to come in with the same humility and just...let's talk about it and let's see why wouldn't it work and not sticking to a



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specific dogma that it has to be this way because this is what was said. Let's find something that works and what's going to be useful for the task at hand.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So what I'm hearing is it's actually pretty organic and the student are, not only observant of it but maybe even, participants and how you're working out some of these things.

Eric Romo:

Yeah, definitely.

Nate Church:

Absolutely.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Has that caused any problems?

Nate Church:

No, surprisingly, we have some other friends who have taken over some schools or started working with different instructors and, even me, when I started teaching at a Tang Soo Do school coming from Shotokan, the forms are very similar but very different and it can be a bit of a battle of no, it has to be this way and maybe that helped me in preparation of being open to any input Eric gives but, like I said, his talents are exceptional so who am I going to argue with someone whose kicks honestly look better than my kicks? Who am I to argue my kicks with him?

Eric Romo:

Thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I would imagine that it's a much easier process when you recognize the goals are similar and you both mention humility and you're both speaking very highly of each other and that's a different kind of collaboration. It's a very open and, I think that word that's coming up for me is, selfless that it sounds like what is most important is arriving at what works best for you and for your students, not what makes either of you look good. I don't imagine that you're keeping score or anything like that.

Nate Church:

I think that's even something when we were lifting earlier, to put it shortly, I don't necessarily need to be right but I want to get right is just something that I try to keep in my mind. What am I trying to



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accomplish? Am I trying to gain something personal or a little bit of ego out of this or am I truly after what is most beneficial for our clients, ourselves and our students.

Eric Romo:

Yeah and I think, like he said, it boils down to how are we going to progress and advance our students and that's another reason why we each train now in pure Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. We both come from a background, if I would describe, a more standard Jiu Jitsu. I was very weapon-based. A lot of eskrima, stick-based for your training but now, we're both, it's fun for us, we're both putting on white belts, going to class, having fun but it's a lot of it is, also, to make ourselves better but then in turn to make our students better and to make our students more well-rounded and give them as much knowledge and capabilities possible.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I can certainly see the value in adding additional stuff, additional material, to what you're able to offer to your students but I'm also wondering if there's benefit for the two of you as, not only instructors, but as school owners here in that you now have a shared experience. Your entire martial arts career up until the point that you were working together was really separate. It was quite different, in fact, as you've both described it but now, here's something that you're working on at the same time, at the same place, learning from the same people and it gives you, I guess we could say, some common ground.

Nate Church:

Yeah, it does. It's fun like we trained last night, every class is extremely hard training at our Jiu Jitsu school that we train at and it was Take Down Night so working on takedowns and then, of course, training grappling at the end and then a lot of what we'll do is share with each other because we still do have our traditional forms based like how can we pull a move from a form to help reinforce this for our training and I've told a lot of people, I think going, having the humility to put back on a white belt and to learn and to drop the ego and go I don't know everything. I have a lot I can still learn from any rank in this room helps give me patience teaching my students when they're not getting the technique even if it's a technique I've done a thousand times and do easily. All it takes is for me to be in class at Jiu Jitsu and not get a technique that I'm seeing someone else do without effort to kind of connect the dot and go, you know what? Step back and be patient. When your student is struggling or teach the technique maybe differently and it is fun for us to learn together.

Eric Romo:

Oh, absolutely based on experience.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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What's an example of something that maybe, with this incorporation, this collaboration, subject, you could've done differently?

Nate Church:

Oh, that's a good question. I think if we had started from the very beginning. If we had started zero students starting a collaboration together, we could've mapped out a more mixed curriculum. His forms, my forms, some of his weapons, maybe a more defined road map of what we want at each belt rank. We are associated with another group of schools that has a curriculum that's still Shotokan-based which we're still sticking to that as well but since I was kind of running for some time, got to put the pressure on Eric to catch up on the Shotokan forms but now, sorry, not to offend any Shotokan listeners out there, we want to start a demo team and his forms are definitely much more flashy and interesting to watch. I come from 20+ years of Shotokan that's not quite the flash that some of the other style have.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's quite alright. Hate mail can be directed to the two of you directly. Leave me out of this!

Eric Romo:

Not a problem. I have to concur with him. Yeah, having that a little more planned out probably would have been most beneficial but him already being open with his students and coming in to see how he's interacted, not only with the students but the parents as well, since we're teaching almost 100% kids at that time. They've been very malleable and understanding and it would definitely have been probably a little bit easier for them to come across this is what it is and have that all laid out but I think they're also having a fun experience knowing that moving into their own space, they're at the forefront. They're going to be the leaders inside the school and so, they're going to experience a little bit more taste of this and that but it's trying to make the best of that situation currently.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, if you were to go through this process again, would you do anything differently?

Nate Church:

I don't think so. I think I kind of, like as you've put it, happened organically. It's almost more real world. Not everything is going to be planned to a T. You can come, even if you talk about point sparring, you can come in with a great plan and it's not going to go to that plan so I think with us already having the mindset to be flexible, and as Eric said, malleable and kind of move and go with the flow and evolve as we need to, I think that is a strength to us because we're going to be able to move and evolve and overcome kind of anything thrown at us because we're not stuck to this strict, pre-determined path.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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And so, when you start looking out into the future because it sounds like you got a pretty good thing going, you've got two people with deep backgrounds, varied backgrounds lending their experience and their skills together to the benefit of their students and, I would assume, each other and then bringing in additional information, keeping that white belt mentality we talked about on the show quite often, it all sounds great. So, where is it heading?

Nate Church:

Right now, our goal is we cap our fitness classes and we cap our martial arts so right now, it's headed to get to that cap of what we want is our students to always keep that white belt mentality and continue to evolve and we always say that, tell our students, when you realize you get your black belt in our style, that just means that you are truly ready to learn now and we want our students to constantly challenge themselves and constantly try to pick up more skills and, for us, we're both going for black belt rank in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. In most schools, that takes 8 to 10 years or more so we have that path in front of us and I have a lot of Kuk Sul to learn and Eric's got some more Shotokan to learn but together, I think we're going to build a solid school of disciplined, focused, hard-working students who also have a lot of fun because we tell everybody, for us, nothing is off the table. If you came to visit and you're like oh, I'm experienced in point-fighting and I do a little point-fighting, our kids are going to be fine and be comfortable with that. If a Judo instructor comes in for the day and wants to work throws, there are kids that are experienced with throws and they're going to have fun with that. Our Jiu Jitsu professor comes in and works on Jiu Jitsu, they're experienced with that and have fun with that. Are they top-level at any one thing? No but, at least, they're familiar and then, I think that helps us. If you're thinking from a business standpoint, retention because there are a lot of information for us to still learn and pass on and a lot for them to learn and get better at and then, once they've been here for a while, maybe, they gravitate to Judo or they gravitate to Karate or they gravitate to Jiu Jitsu and maybe that's where they turn their focus years from now and that's fine.

Eric Romo:

We want to give them the opportunity to pursue and just with its, my personal opinion, many flaws, the education system, I want them to have an elementary understanding of how to do stand up, how to do takedowns and how to do groundwork and creating an environment where it's okay to ask can I do a little bit more of that and not shy away because one of us is more comfortable or less comfortable with that aspect of the martial arts. I want a common, communal ground and community of martial artists who are willing to share and push each other to their expertise and work on their weakness.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Nice, nice. I'm forming the question. Okay, here we go! I have heard some martial arts schools speak that they have difficulty when people inquire as to what is taught if they have a blended style like this.



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When people call up off the street, what do you teach? Oh, we teach such and such Karate or we teach such and such Taekwondo or this flavor of Kung Fu. How do you answer that question?

Nate Church:

It's an answer that the other, sort of our, the other partner schools teach a blended style also and I've had experience in the last few years and, even in my original school, our Shotokan was very...it wasn't pure if I'm totally honest with that part. How we do is we just kind of break it down. We just teach a little bit of all of it. We break it down to a rough percentage. Eric breaks it down a good percent takedowns, if we break it down to the parents [00:31:22] because in real life, you're not going to be, in real life there's no rule of oh, you're just going to do one thing. If you were truly to defend yourself and we're just kind of honest that, especially with a child, you don't want their only known way of defending something if someone shoves them is kicking them in the face. You want them to be able to grab a kid, hold a kid and take the kid down, kind of hold them and that's where our main focus with our takedowns are. Grab the kid, take them and hold them because that, to me, is a better alternative than a beautiful front kick to the face so we kind of ask what it is the parents are looking for because I'm sure you see it in your experience, most of the time, the parents are looking for the discipline, the focus, the physical activity. Get them up and moving, away from an iPad or a tablet and giving them the respect now in community and communication. I guess I've been there in the business long enough to know that I think most of the time they really know what they're looking for, they may have some idea but I think the average person couldn't tell you the difference between Shotokan Karate Isshin-Ryu and Shorin-Ryu or even Tang Soo Do. I guess we try to show the benefits and what we're teaching by them having a class and seeing it in first person, if that makes sense.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It does and that's kind of the gist of what I've heard most school owners respond with that it's an opportunity for educating the prospect, if you want to think about it from the sales process. The idea that hey, maybe you did call up looking for this thing but really, you're not looking for that thing most of the time. You're looking for what you believe is the way to achieve that thing. You don't need Shotokan Karate to learn respect. You don't need Taekwondo and any particular style of Taekwondo to learn how to kick, necessarily so to have those conversations becomes important.

Eric Romo:

The thing that it lays the groundwork. You're in good communication with the parent and usually teaches them something. I echo what you said. The only time I've ever had some specifically looking for style is maybe a parent that grew up doing Taekwondo and that's the jargon they're familiar with so it's a good opportunity to just be open and here's what we do and if you're looking for something, lets discuss why we do or don't do that and make informed decision from there.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Do you guys have a name for the style?

Eric Romo:

OTW United Martial Arts.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, that's the name of the school.

Nate Church:

Correct.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So you don't have some funky collection of names that you...it's not Shotokido?

Eric Romo:

It's...Wu Flung Dung?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I enjoy those names. Sometimes they get really long and they're fun to say.

Nate Church:

We are affiliated with a group of schools here in San Diego. [00:34:47] founded style that is recognized by the International Japanese Federation, Go Jiu Bujitsu. Go because there was 5 who helped him establish the base for the style and he's trained in Shotokan, Judo, Jiu Jitsu as well so he believe that the three styles incorporated in the school that Eric mentioned, Setting Sun dojo here in Ocean Beach is where we met and I met the group from Setting Sun through a local tournament here. I was teaching in a Tang Soo Do school so if you had to pinpoint this style, that's what it would be but with Eric's Korean background and, even now, more of our, mine and his fluid movement is, I guess, that would be the style but it would still be very much EricNate-do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yes! I like that name even better.

Eric Romo:

I like it!

Jeremy Lesniak:

EricNate-do. You should make certificates of that.



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Eric Romo:

We're working on it. I'll send it to the presses.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I dig it. Now, I'm curious because whenever people talk about this idea of blending martial arts, inevitably we end up on the subject of Bruce Lee, of Jeet Kune Do, since that happened a lot. Are either of you fans or have you read his work, did the philosophies of Jeet Kune Do creep into your thoughts at all as you're navigating this?

Nate Church:

I know, for me, I was actually telling Eric yesterday as we're looking over the list of questions you asked, I'm like it's hard for us not to be personally, I'm at that age where Bruce Lee was prominent after his death and we read his philosophies and his mentality like mind like water and take in what works for you, it's really hard to deny that that is, to me, a good path because he's just saying take what works for you. Take what works and if it doesn't work, leave it and so, I'm honestly, a huge fan of Bruce Lee and always have been and really enjoy his philosophical viewpoint a lot.

Eric Romo:

Agreed.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright, right on and here we have another episode and I wasn't thinking of it in this way, we found a way to talk about Bruce Lee in almost all of them. More than 90% end up with some little mention, here we are quite few years, closer to 50 years after his death, still the most prominent martial artist. That's a legacy.

Nate Church:

It is. You have to consider and think how he is still around with his input and say, the UFC for instance, what would his thoughts be? I'm old enough, Jeremy, I'm not sure your age, I remember UFC One. I remember getting, going to my instructor's house to watch UFC One on pay per view and that was the original epitome. One hour is better, throw everybody into the ring and do the tournament for the night so I would always thought about and be interested with his take on the UFC.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely. I remember when it happened. I'm still, I'm 40 now, so I was young when it happened but I have been lucky enough to have a conversation with Bill Wallace about it so, almost as good as being there myself and for those of you that don't know, Bill Wallace was one of the commentators of UFC One.



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Eric Romo:

Good old Superfoot.

Jeremy Lesniak:

He's the man.

Nate Church:

I think we each have separately...you took that seminar, correct?

Eric Romo:

Yeah, I worked with him in a few occasions. That guy is...

Nate Church:

Yeah, myself as well.

Eric Romo:

And The Jet Urquidez too. So they're really, still some really good information and some contemporaries of guys who were of that era and just super cool getting to talk with them about The Bruce.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Stuff that works, still works, right? Alright, well if people want to find your school and maybe look you up individually on social media, how would they do that?

Nate Church:

On Track Wellness goes back to when I established the business originally was predominantly a fitness business but we feel that it still fit which translated into OTW United Martial Arts but ontrackwellness.com, [@ontrackwellness](https://www.instagram.com/ontrackwellness) on Instagram, On Track Wellness on Facebook is the easy way to find us. You'll see, not just a lot of fun martial arts stuff but fitness as well. Pretty much any fitness like hiking, martial arts, lifting, powerlifting. We actually, as Eric mentioned, we powerlift as well. Our studio is not just a martial arts studio. We have a functional fitness area, we have a bag room and we have a full weight room for heavy lifting and power lifting.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh man, I want to come and hang out with you guy!

Nate Church:

Yeah, come by anytime!



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Jeremy Lesniak:

You're like smooshing Jeet Kune Do philosophy with CrossFit philosophy to end up where you're at. Do a bunch of everything all the time which kind of describes my workout routine. What am I doing today? Oh, this? Cool.

Eric Romo:

And a lot of eating to back it up.

Nate Church:

Yes!

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well, that's the fun part. We work out so you...

Nate Church & Eric Romo:

Exactly.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And we powerlift so we can justify eating even more. Because bodybuilding you got to eat less, powerlifting you have to eat more.

Nate Church:

Oh yeah, that's an excuse for a lot of peanut butter that goes down the studio.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm sure, I'm sure. Well, guys, this has been a ton of fun. I thank you for coming on. Little bit different discussion so listeners, I hope you got something out of this and I hope you check out what they're doing. It's certainly not an uncommon thing in today's martial arts, even when we're not calling it blended. It's, for most of us, what we learn is blended and I think that that's awesome.

Eric Romo:

It is and I hope what it does is, for me, going into my mid-40s and deciding to put a white belt on, I think it's easy for us to stay in our comfort zone even though we talk to our students about getting out of their comfort zone. I think it's good for us to put ourselves outside of our own comfort zone and strive to learn and grow and evolve. I still compete. I compete in Jiu Jitsu and traditional martial arts still and I think it's good for us as school owners, as instructors and just martial artists to still dabble, have fun, learn and grow and not just get stuck with nope, this is the way it has to be so that's what I would love



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to see in anyone out there San Diego, you and surrounding areas are more than welcome to come check out, hang out, lift weights, kick around, take a class, doors always open.

Nate Church:

Absolutely!

Jeremy Lesniak:

I thought we covered some good grounds today and certainly, I learned a number of things. If I ever end up owning my own martial arts school again, which is not on the radar but who knows, life's crazy. I've got some stuff in my back pocket that I can refer to thanks to Sensei Nate and Sensei Eric so, gentlemen, I appreciate your time, I appreciate you being so open with me and with the audience. If you want to find the show notes with the transcript and everything else we got, head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. You can leave your comments there in the show notes page, remember this is episode 417 but if you've got some private comments you got to share, you can email me directly jeremy@whistlekick.com. whistlekick.com is the place to go for the stuff that we make and the other things that we're involved in and don't forget the code PODCAST15. Save you 15% on sweatshirts and tees and tank tops and hats and uniforms and gear and the list goes on. Check out the store. If you haven't been over there lately, I added some new stuff not too long ago. Our social media is @whistlekick, YouTube, Instagram, twitter and Facebook are our primary channels and that's all for today so until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day.