



Episode 508 — Sensei Darryl Vidal | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

What is up, everybody? Welcome, you're tuned in to whistlekick martial arts radio episode 508 with today's guest, Sensei Darryl Vidal. I'm Jeremy Lesniak, I'm the host of the show, I'm the founder here at whistlekick where everything we're doing is in support of the traditional martial arts. If you want to know more about what that means, go to whistlekick.com. That's the place to learn about everything we're doing. It's our online home. It's also the place to find our store and if you use the code `PODCAST15`, you're going to save 15% off anything you find over there. This show, martial arts radio, has its very own website and it is so creatively named whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. I'd like to keep it easy. The show comes out twice a week with the goal being to educate, connect and entertain traditional martial artists throughout the show. If you want to the show, if you want to help us with what we're working on at whistlekick, there are quite a few ways you can do that. You can make a purchase, share an episode, follow us on social media, tell a friend, pick up a book or a program, leave a review or support us on Patreon. If you think the new shows we're releasing are worth a whopping 63 cents apiece, not to mention all the back episodes you get access to, consider supporting us for \$5 a month. Visit Patreon.com/whistlekick and sign up there. If you do, we're going to give you even more stuff. We're committed to giving you more value than you think you deserve. We give away this show for free and so much of what we do for free and if you're willing to say hey, I'll throw a couple of bucks a month at you, we're going to give you even more because that's just how we do it here. Now, there's a chance that you know today's guest by name and if you do, it means that you're probably a fan of a



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particular piece of martial arts history. Now, I'm not going to spoil that but when we start talking about it and it happens pretty early on in the conversation, you're going to go really? Regardless of that, we have a great conversation. Quite often, we have people on the show who have ties with a piece of, again, martial arts history and the conversation becomes about that but that's not what today was. Today, we talked about Sensei Vidal and what he's done, where he's been, what he's hoping to do. It is, as far as I'm concerned, the best of both worlds. We've got celebrity and down to earth all wrapped up in one conversation so here we go. Sensei Vidal, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Darryl Vidal:

Thank you for having me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's a pleasure to have. Been looking forward to this one. You came as a referral and we're not going to namedrop yet because I know it will happen later on. You came as a referral from a past guest. Someone that I had an absolute blast talking to and we're kind of making the rounds in this particular piece of, we'll call it, cinematic history and hoping to hone in on one certain person who seems to keep dodging all of our inquiries so if we can stack up enough people.

Darryl Vidal:

Oh really?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, maybe. Maybe they'll pay attention. People will figure that out eventually.

Darryl Vidal:

Hope I'll help out.

Jeremy Lesniak:

They're wondering now. We have them hooked. That's the idea.

Darryl Vidal:

It was a good teaser.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, thank you! Now, of course, it's a martial arts show. Everything we talk about stems from involvement in martial arts so let's lay the foundation, if you will, and I'm going to ask you, hopefully, the most boring question that I ask you today. How did you get started in the martial arts?



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Darryl Vidal:

That's a good question. I wasn't as young as you, I wasn't 4. I grew up in Mira Mesa, California, San Diego, and my dad was in the Navy and so there were a pretty big Filipino community there in San Diego and in the late 60s, early 70s. My parents used to go to, they used to call it a faith healer, but he was an elder Filipino gentleman who would make potions and do massages that really help people with their ailments but he also did some eskrima, Filipino stick fighting, so that was my earliest exposure to martial arts was to see them practice and clacking the sticks and hold the sticks a little bit myself but it wasn't until my older brother started training in Karate that we started to really learn Karate-style moves and that's probably 10 or 12 at that time, still in San Diego and then, all the [00:4:38] start coming out and early 70s, we moved to Chino, California which is still in Southern California but a much different neighborhood, mostly white and Latino neighborhoods and so, I wanted to keep that interest going so we started to take Karate from my current instructor who was teaching through the Chino parks and rec at the time, Joe Rosas, and we start training Karate and that really just took off for me. I had an affinity to it, I had good, natural skill. By the time I was getting to 16, 17 years old, I was getting to my brown and black belt levels competing in a lot of tournaments and being a huge fan of Bruce Lee, I started to branch out into wrestling in high school and boxing and even to do some Wing Chun and I've always continued my stick fighting study with different people even today so that's kind of like how I got all started. I got my black belt when I was 18 with Joe Rosas and at 19, if you will.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's quite a diverse, I guess I'd say starting point, and it sounds like you were doing some cross training earlier than, I mean, both in age and in history, than most people. Was it really Bruce Lee's influence that inspired you to do that?

Darryl Vidal:

Absolutely. Having the Tao of Jeet Kune Do as a book that often referred to and really his idea of JKD which to me was the precursor of MMA, mixture of boxing and Wing Chun, were the specific reasons that I sought out to box and fight somebody and to train in Wing Chun and it did change my whole outlook on martial arts even though I still loved Kenpō Karate, I still teach it the traditional way I learned it. I may have, over the past 40 years, adapted things and internalized things if you will, it's still a very recognizable Kenpō that my instructor still is practicing his style of Karate but yeah, I mean, boxing changed my Karate. I don't think anybody who's experienced it would feel differently and even in my own gym, all my equipment is boxing equipment because that's what you use for Karate. You just need open space but I still use those exercise, training methods along with the Karate and then, with Wing Chun, I studied with this one person here and then another person there and that's all I have of traditional Wing Chun. I mean, my gym use that training method as well so yeah, it was that but I think the more important thing, less than the fact that that's what Bruce Lee did was that they're all great systems that have something to offer and mixing them together is very rewarding and practical, even to



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some extent, and maybe impractical in another extent but it is definitely part of my whole Karate makeup if you will.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We've, as you might imagine, talked to quite a number of martial artists on this show and most of them, I'd say, have done some cross training. Most of them, whether they started in one thing and ended up in something else, or maybe trained in things simultaneously, the culture in martial arts has certainly shifted. We're certainly a lot more open to that cross training that Bruce Lee, I don't know if he predicted it but certainly encouraged it, but you're talking about adding in boxing which is something that we don't have a lot of people doing. Boxing as a, I guess we'll call it a system, tends to come in to martial arts and actually, I consider boxing as a, it can be a traditional martial art depending on how it's approached and everything. It doesn't have to be but it can be, not everyone does but most of the time, when we're speaking from a traditional perspective, boxing comes in via kickboxing but your boxing, boxing, for you, without the kickboxing, it's coming in the way we might see on TV, Floyd Mayweather et cetera. For those of us who haven't approached boxing as a standalone pursuit, you said boxing really changed everything for you and I'm wondering if you could elaborate on that.

Darryl Vidal:

Sure, that's a great question. That's very astute, by the way. Just as a for instance, when you're doing a Karate stance and you're doing a Karate punch, you tend to be very firm in your stance and keep the rear foot planted, heel down and creating power through your foundation and if you're moving, you're moving forward as a structure, if you will, that has this exploding punch coming off of it and the structure is what creates the power or the lack of collapse, if you will. In boxing, it's a little different because you're a lot more mobile because you're using this much higher stance, heel off the ground of the rear foot and when you throw your right cross, basically the first punch you're really learning outside of your jab is you're accelerating your body forward off the ball of your foot. Your heel is probably going to come off the ground. Your whole body might be shifting forward depending on your range and you're throwing the punch through the target line and then popping back to cover. It's a fundamentally different move and I'm not necessarily saying that you can punch harder with one way or the other, probably similar amount of power based on your body makeup and your weight and all that kind of stuff but just the fluidity of the boxing motion and use of the twisting and torquing of the upper body is different. The hook punch, one of Bruce Lee's favorite punch is a boxing punch, not a martial arts punch so that's kind of how I see it and it was right about what you said about kickboxing is. When I pursued boxing, there was an intent to get into kickboxing because I'm a Karate guy. That's kickboxing. I went after the boxing but I never did get into a kickboxing gym or training because it tends to take on, kind of its own thing. There were great kickboxing and then you mention Bill Wallace who is probably one of the most accomplished and obviously, Don, The Dragon, Wilson. Those guys were great kickboxers but in the general community when you went out, you couldn't go to a kickboxing gym. The people that were



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doing kickboxing were the health spa gyms and they were doing this fake kickboxing where they wouldn't get in the ring. That's not kickboxing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's aerobics!

Darryl Vidal:

That's aerobics. Exactly. So, I never got to appreciate it. I never got in the ring and use my boxing along with my kicks even though that was an idea at a certain time so yeah, that's how boxing fits in but it is interesting that you said that it's not a traditional martial art per se. You might lump it in even with wrestling but wrestling was something that I did in high school to so I think they all added something to my martial arts compilation.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Did you end up competing?

Darryl Vidal:

In which?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I guess in anything. It sounds like there was a point in time, you're reading, I can imagine you as a teenager reading the Tao of JKD and saying ok, here are the pieces to this puzzle and if I can assemble these and I can achieve some competency or even mastery of these requisite parts, I'll have something really substantial here.

Darryl Vidal:

Sure, so just to answer your question, from 13 starting Karate so from about purple belt to 21, the Karate Kid timeframe, I competed actively in LA in open tournament Karate so that's kata and kumite type of point sparring so I did that actively for several years. Accumulated so many trophies that I just had to start throwing them away but that's where the boxing came in because right as I was kind of in that lull, I got my brown belt, I'm still waiting around for my test in black belt, I'm still competing but I've been in the divisions for 4 or 5 years, I started to look around at other things and that's when I picked up the boxing and I mentioned it changed my martial arts. After you box and throw right crosses and hit people in the face, point systems goes kind of out the window because you lose that kiss-contact so I started to fight more in the sparring competition and just using excessive contact to the face because of the boxing, the follow through that you're using so that's when I started to really compete less. That's when the Karate Kid happened, becoming older into adulthood, and getting married and all those types



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of things so I did a lot of competition. I boxed for 2 years and had [00:16:12] of fights so I was kind of mixing it in.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, you brought it up. You brought up Karate Kid. We can't gloss over that. We got to go there because it's such an important thing and lets be real, part of the reason that we want you on the show is to talk about it. How did it happen? Did they found you or did you try out or how did it go?

Darryl Vidal:

Just as to background that story. I told you that I was into Bruce Lee and all that stuff and I felt my skills were strong enough so I did think that I would become some Hollywood Karate movie star. I thought that could happen for me but I didn't know how to go about it so this is, now, it's 1983, I'm already a black belt and competing in a tournament in Los Angeles. I had won the kata division, just getting ready to get into the sparring and the director of Rocky, at the time, John Avildsen, directed the Rocky movies, he came up to me with his assistant and said hey, how would you like to be in a movie? Pow! There it was, it actually happened to me and, of course, absolutely, I'm your guy and from there, the rest is history as they'd say. I called the phone number, showed up to Burbank, went to Sound Stage, start rehearsing with all these actors that I don't know, not me, but we're training with them so they could learn Karate and that's how it all got started.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Most of us are never going to get the chance to work on a movie. For listeners, they might start to feel a little bit left out because we've had so many people who've been involved in TV and film on this show but for those of us who, myself included, have never and likely never be involved in a project like this, what's it like?

Darryl Vidal:

Just before I answer that, I will tell you that when you live in Southern California, everyone has been involved in something.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, we just have to move. That's the secret. If you want to be in movies, move to SoCal.

Darryl Vidal:

Maybe that's a gross misstatement but in my community, I live in Murrieta which is a couple hours outside of LA. I know so many people who, they go to auditions, they're great singers, they're talented, they dance, they do this, they do that, they've been in this commercial, in that show and because of the circle that I have friends in, everybody's got their projects that they're working on but ok, step back from



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that, I do recognize that if you're not in Southern California and haven't been looking for it, most people haven't been in the movies so typically I don't talk about the Karate Kid at all, I mean, almost never around my group of work and even my Karate students but when I do see somebody or get acquainted with somebody from Maine, for instance, so far that instance like isn't like the Hollywood type place, I might bring it up and talk about it so your question, what is it like, I was 20 years old. Pretty full of myself at the time but still naïve, inexperienced kid thrust into these actors and actresses and directors and the Hollywood scene. I mean, it's overwhelming. It's a dream come true if you will. It's not all its cut out to be, all those stories that you hear of people that they wait tables so that they can try to get their big break, it's true. Those are also the people that I met in and around the movie sets and the rehearsal stages so it is. It's what you see on television and when they show kind of like the reality situation, you see that too but I did get to participate in it through the whole Karate Kid and the release of the movie and the opening at wherever it was. I don't remember where but I think it was somewhere else, Directors' Guild maybe, so I did get through all that but then, not being an actor with an agent, it kind of all fizzled after that. I think I had one other audition that I had the opportunity to go to and after that, I just kind of started working fulltime and got married and continue to take up doing my martial arts and that was it for the most part so...

Jeremy Lesniak:

You don't sound regretful.

Darryl Vidal:

I don't. I don't. The livelihood they did, I mean, if you made it big, great. I mean Ralph, obviously, made a ton and he's great. When I see him, he's still a great guy. He talks to me like I'm his old pal, yeah. I just don't know what it would have been like and I'm very happy with the life I lead now. I know I have 4 kids, they're all grown up, got a couple of grandkids, still teaching and training. My wife is a dance instructor. She does what she does and we've been married for 30+ years so yeah, I don't have a lot of regrets. I can't say I have none but that whole Hollywood thing is not all its cut out to be but then again, if I had made a giant bundle of dough, maybe I'd say something different.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I mean, I don't know too many people who've said I regret making all that money. I'm sure somebody somewhere said that but that's not something I'm used to hearing. Maybe because I'm not hanging around people making bundles of money.

Darryl Vidal:

No but how many stories have we heard of kid that it just doesn't work out great for them so those are real stories and they are real people and so that's the part of it that I don't have any regrets about not getting caught up in so I don't know. I don't know if that's a great answer.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

I think it's a great answer. Makes a lot of sense. You worked with what you had and you moved on and I'd like to know how you ended up teaching. It sounds like running your school is your primary job?

Darryl Vidal:

No. It's my secondary job. I have a regular job as a technology, IT type consultant is what I do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Another martial artist who's into IT. There've been many. There's something there. There's something about the personality types.

Darryl Vidal:

I'm curious. I know some but to me, it's not an overwhelming factor but you may know better than I do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I have no data to back this up but just anecdotally, there seems to be a broader Venn diagram intersection of martial arts and tech. I think it might be figuring things out. Those who stick around martial arts like to figure things out.

Darryl Vidal:

You might be on to something because I think what people like about my teaching of Karate and stick fighting is my analytical and mechanical viewpoint. How I don't just say do this, do that but I can give you some functional, anatomical, even philosophical background to the way of things and so, if you don't mind going off the tangent, my real job is I'm a consultant for educational technology systems for almost 25 years or so and I've actually published 7 books on Ed Tech and project management and distance learning and stuff like that so it is an active part of my main career but my Karate, I've been living in Murrieta here for 30 years and I started my own Parks and Rec program as you can remember, I met my instructor in parks and rec and so I kind of just took that model and came to Murrieta as a young family man and started teaching to our Parks and Rec and here we are 30 years later, I'm still teaching online tonight but yeah, I still have the parks and rec program. It's a great way to stay in touch with your martial arts without relying on it to be my whole source of income.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right, that's such an important thing. Given what's going on right now, people are starting to see the value and, at least, some diversification in how you live and make your money. I think it's important. Something that I try to do as well. The stories that we've heard from you, so far today, have all been positive, really uplifting, warm, fuzzy, if you will, but I would be surprised if that was the entirety of your life so I'm going to take a stab in the dark because this is a statistically pretty good stab that I can take



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when I talk to someone in that, at some point along the way, something went wrong. Something wasn't good, something sucked and you were able to lean on your martial arts in a way, whether it be emotionally or physically to move past that. Is there something from your past like that that you might tell us about?

Darryl Vidal:

You might have some statistics that prove that you can do that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Just hunches.

Darryl Vidal:

Yeah, like I said, you must have done it enough time and know that you can. You pull at some interesting thought strings that most people don't venture upon and it is so I'm trying to relate to something that truly was overcome, if you will, through my training. In terms of hardships, family-wise, I've been great. I have 4 wonderful kids. They've all done well. I have grandkids, all that kind of stuff so that's not an area where I think I've hit the major challenge. My marriage has been great. I think career-wise and financially is where I've had some challenges. I've changed jobs recently even though I have my own business for 20 years. Before that, and I have been an entrepreneur, I started companies and had them fail and so, those are probably been my biggest heartaches, challenges where things that I've tried to do, to do better for the family, that may have blown up in my face but it's funny that you talk about how martial arts has kept me, saved me or whatever way you want to put it but if it's nothing more simple and fundamental than the fact that I've got to go there tonight and teach my students, that keeps you grounded. People talk about leaving their work at home. I've had difficult times at work. I've had to get laid off even as a person 50 years old plus. I didn't get laid off but I was given the choice so I opted to step away. The things always worked out. I still work through some struggles but it really is as simple as well, I have to deal with that but I also have to go teach Karate and when I'm teaching Karate, I don't worry about these things. I worry about my students and I don't worry about them, I'm helping them. I'm guiding them. They're teaching me and we're all in this kind of thing together. That's what I think is really the most fundamentally rewarding thing about teaching martial arts. I have a saying that I've been quoted as, it really sums it up for me is by demanding excellence, we help each other achieve excellence so just by being there and saying it's got to be done this way and holding to the standard, people can achieve things that they never knew they can achieve before and similarly, in business, if you're running a company and you're able to employ people, I used to love it when my employees would show up and they had bought a new car because you're basically a part of that. You helped them achieve that, you helped them buy that so it was always very rewarding for me so yeah, I think that there is a connection back there and just the fact that you train every day, not every day, but ongoing week by week with no



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end in sight, I think is what it is. It's something that a lifestyle, a way that you live and guiding others and that, their past, their knowledge, is the most rewarding so yeah, good question.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thank you! I told you that first one, how did you get started, the goal is that's the most boring, obvious question. Everything else stems from whatever you give me to work with. Kind of like sparring, right?

Darryl Vidal:

There you go!

Jeremy Lesniak:

There's a lot of corollaries here. You talked about educational technology and this consulting. Here we've got multiple aspects of your life where knowledge and sharing knowledge and anybody who's been a consultant knows that a consultant quite often is a teacher in and of itself. You're taking your experience and you're conveying and you're offering advice et cetera. Where did that desire, and dare I even say, love for passing on what you've learned come from? Did that come from your parents? Did you have a really impactful teacher as a child?

Darryl Vidal:

Very good question. I don't know if I've got it, I've never thought about whether it comes from someone but I've always been, even as a very young person, very analytical to the point where I could be accused of over-analyzing things and being too analytical. Analysis paralysis, if you will but my mind is very systematic and functional and I'm very good at just breaking things down into its components and defining those components. That's why I'm such a good process person for IT because I can look at this and say ok, this needs to happen, this needs to happen and this needs to happen and I'm so far away from things like programming per se and configuring a router per se or designing a network or an IP map or something like that. I'm just at 30,000-foot level but there's so much value there because the typical technology person lives in tactical implementation and my mind takes me. To strategic, what's the big picture, what are you trying to accomplish, what's the objective but then taking that high-level strategy and then turning it into implementation, into tactical plans. That's where I found my talent and I'm using it even today as we're dealing with the COVID situation in my current employ but to answer your question, where did it come from? I don't know that I could say that this person taught me that or that person, obviously my instructor, Joe Rosas, is a great conveyor of the way of our Karate and I've had great teachers but I can't say that any of them drew me toward any type of being a consultant but I think that, as I develop my more technical background in IT and networking, I had found that I had a talent of taking something that is complex and being able to explain it to non-technical types and even making persuasive arguments based on whatever fundamentals I can gather up and compile so what I'm good at is taking these concepts and writing them up into something that you can digest and you can



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use to persuade people and use to show, create step by step plans if you will so that's kind of where I think that comes from. Unfortunately, I can't say that there's a person that I tie that to but it's a good question.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I don't think it's unfortunate. It is what it is. Sometimes the impetus for the things that we do is completely random. Sometimes, we can track it back. Sometimes, we need to spend a few weeks on a therapist's couch to figure out why we do the things.

Darryl Vidal:

And we might not even think about it until somebody asks you that question very specifically.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's why I like asking those questions because sometimes they lead us in really interesting directions and sometimes they don't and both are completely fine because, it's our conversation and this is the story of you. This is you and your time through the martial arts. For those of us listening, if we, I'm assuming because you use the title sensei, you call it a dojo. If we attended a class in your dojo, given with the way you were just talking about the way you give information, would we see anything different in the way you teach versus maybe the way most martial arts schools are conducted? Is there a focus on certain things, is there a way that you break concepts down? Do you bring in a chalkboard?

Darryl Vidal:

That's a great question. I think the difference would be in the level of analytical detail I might try to bring but I don't always do it. I think muscle memory and repetition are just as important. Visual kinesthetic contact where you look at me, how I'm doing this, look at how this should work with you, anatomical, this is how the body is developed, this is how our joints join together, this is how our bones align. I try to present all those things to show why we move a certain way we do and maybe even to explain why you do a certain thing because of a traditional legacy thing, something that they've always done type of thing and you want to validate that somehow. I don't know if that is different because I haven't attended enough of other people's classes to see how analytical they might be but I can say that about 10 years ago, when I first started teaching Karate here in Murrieta, I started at 7 and because to me, that's what my instructor did. At 7, I think that you start to know your body a little bit better than, for instance, 4 which you have mentioned you have started but they kept telling me, you would have twice as many students if you would take 4-year olds so about 10 years ago, I said ok, I'll do junior Karate. 4 to 6 years old, half hour, once a week and those classes filled up and so, I did. I doubled my students, I got all these little crazy monkeys running around. I'm really, really good at getting them in line. In fact, I would say that parents just, their jaws drop when their 4-year old comes into my class and they stand straight in line, in position, waiting for class to start without running around, without falling off the



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tables even though that's what they're doing 5 minutes before and the reason I think I'm good at that is one, I'm just mean enough to be that sensei but I'm not unfair. I'm not unreasonable. Obviously, if you need to go to the bathroom, you can go to the bathroom and if you did something funny, I'll laugh at it but I also respect their intellect at the age of 4 and I try to explain things very clearly but what you'll find is there's a broad range of capability at 4 and 6 where some kids get it, some kids don't. If I explain something very explicitly, even taking more time than you might think necessary, some kids will get it and you'll see it reflect in their position. They get it. They understood so I've always been really rewarded by those kids who I can explain something like you might explain to a teenager and the little kid gets it but then the other kids see them get it and then it just follows into this kind of peer pressure or peer whatever imitation where they start to fall in line together. Of course, you're going to get the crazy kid who we can't get straight. That's fine. I'll keep them over the side, let their mother rescue me from them at a certain point but for the most part, I can get these 4 to 6-year olds to line up, straighten their line, keep their eyes forward, focus on their target and do some of these fundamental Karate. Shoot, I think I might have forgotten what your question was.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's ok! Like I told you, and listeners, you don't get to hear kind of the pre-show chat that I give to the guest but I tell them feel free to wander. Get out into the weeds. The questions don't matter. This isn't a test. This isn't, I'm not Larry King. My questions are more just talking points just to keep you going and that's what you did!

Darryl Vidal:

I did. You brought me to a place with the junior Karate and I think that I rationalize my position where, oh and I think the point I want to make was a lot of kids that start at 4, quit at 4 too and never come back so that's why I think, if at 7, if I get them at 7, I'll get them to train, I get them to become a teenager, I probably have a good chance of keeping them for life. Not that you won't have that chance and not that it's a bad thing, I just think, maybe it's a selfish thing but I'm definitely not opposed to it at this point.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Anyone who's taught martial arts to 4-year olds, 5-year olds, even 6 and 7-year olds knows that it's a challenge to get them to understand martial arts for what it is. They don't have the life experience, they don't have the context. They don't walk it, they've never, you can bring up self-defense but they've probably never been afraid of someone taking their wallets or harming them so how do you relate to them and it sounds like you're engaging with them on their level, you're meeting them with your energy which I don't consider myself good at teaching children. I know plenty of people, we've had a number of guests on this show who are infinitely better working with young kids than I am but the one thing I try to do that I figure, if nothing else, is to meet them where they're at. If the whole class is being silly that day,



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I'm not going to try and make them serious, I'll be silly with them and find a way to make what we're doing silly and try to get something out of them.

Darryl Vidal:

That's a good point because sometimes they'll be silly and I'll say something like there's no laughing in Karate. Of course, that just gets them to laugh more. I get to laugh with them. You're right about that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

My fundamental teaching philosophy is if people aren't having fun, they're not going to learn. Now, you've mentioned earlier that you've written, I think, 7 books? None of them on martial arts?

Darryl Vidal:

Just to clarify, I've written 7 books on education technology. I've written 2 other books. One of them is a novel, an IT novel, which is the first book I've ever wrote.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Forgive me and I preface this with an I had an IT consultancy for close to 20 years so I'm going to throw myself under the bus with you. IT novels sounds like one of the nerdiest things I've ever heard.

Darryl Vidal:

It is super nerdy and it was written pre-Y2K so you would read it and throw up because it's just so nerdy but it's a classic. It's a novel about a network engineer who obviously has access to companies' back end information and gets laid off and gets into trouble and starts accessing and stealing money and stealing money from the wrong people and blah blah blah and on and on but it's a fun little story. Glad I wrote it. It's up on Amazon.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I don't think you gave us links for that stuff when you sent in the form. We got to make sure we link that up. People will be interested.

Darryl Vidal:

I mean, you can just type in my name on Amazon. All my books would come up but the other one that I wrote more recently is a memoir of a musician. His name is Marty and he plays trombone behind Elvis and Frank Sinatra so this is way off center everything else that I've done then but it's a great story and I actually have an independent producer trying to turn it into a movie so maybe that will happen so those are the books I've written.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Before we move on from that, this gentleman, the memoir is about, you know him? You met him?

Darryl Vidal:

Yes, yes.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How did that happen? I would assume a trombonist at that level is pretty darn impressive. Not somebody you bump into every day.

Darryl Vidal:

Oh no, it's a great story. In fact, he's an older gentleman, in 80s or so. We met in a golf tournament. I got paired up with him in a charity tournament and he starts talking about Elvis and Frank Sinatra and D. Martin and I'm just like this guy is something else. I can't believe it so I spent the whole day jogging his memory and I said Marty, you got to write a book about all this stuff. Well, everybody tells me that and da-da-da-da- this and that so by the end of the dinner, I told him, Marty, I'm an author and I write different kinds of stuff but I want to write your life story and so, we met once a week on Wednesday nights at Murrieta where he lived out here too for a while. I did all the interviews like you interview me and we'd have dinner and I'll compile it and I wrote this book and I love the book. It's a very fascinating book. We've got stories that we might have heard, maybe, or probably not about the Rat Pack, about Liberace and like I said, Frank Sinatra. I don't know. Do you know much about that era?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I know a little bit. I had some teachers in school who were really fond, one I'm thinking of in particular was a big Sammy Davies Jr. fan so we would get some stories. One of those teachers that we can poke a little bit and get off subject and the whole school, the whole class would go by without you actually doing anything so we got some stories that way but was that an era that you felt really tied to?

Darryl Vidal:

It was. Growing up in the 60s and 70s was Happy Days, the 50s and so, then the tale of Elvis as I was growing up so probably in my late 30s and 40s when music started to really take a downward turn. I had a resurgence of going back and listening to a lot of the Rat Pack era, Frank Sinatra, Tom Jones, Elvis obviously, the Beatles and I'm a Rock and Roll type fan so Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin and all that kind of stuff so yeah, that's where all that came from. I'm an amateur musician. I played guitar and I used to play in a band so I have a little bit of that in me to where I can keep it interesting to myself, if you will.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We haven't talked much about what you talked about, one of the things you talked about really early on with the conversation about Filipino Stick Fighting but I find that the footwork that I've been taught in



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stick fighting to be very rhythmic, very musical. It reminds me a lot of the movement in capoeira if you've ever had the opportunity.

Darryl Vidal:

Well, Jeremy, I will tell you, Jeremy Lesniak, that you have hit the nail on the head that very few understand but I teach Filipino stick fighting and I just call it that. I don't call it eskrima or kali or Arnis because I've learned from so many different people that I can't attribute it to one system. I have my own system here in Murrieta but you can come on any night and we can talk about the footwork because it is the key to it. It is rhythmic, it is fluid and dynamic and hard and soft and all those things so yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

The first time I saw taiko drumming, which was only a few years ago, it could have been FMA. I don't know if you've ever had the chance to watch taiko, but anybody out there who's listening, who's spent time doing double stick in any system and has seen taiko drumming, that you could pull the drum out of those people and they could beat the snot out of you with those sticks.

Darryl Vidal:

I do know what you're talking about, yes.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool, cool. This is good stuff! We got here with a question about why no martial arts book? I'm going to ask that question again. You've done some interesting things. There has to have been some thought.

Darryl Vidal:

When I first thought about writing a book. Alright, see, you've backed me to a place I haven't been before. The first book I've ever tried to write was a martial arts book and I just thought of that through you. Ok, Jeremy? Like I said, I had this analytical mind and I feel like I could put things down so I started to put this down and I started writing it but I think I realized at this early stage that my experience is limited to point fighting and that point fighting doesn't extrapolate to anything in real life except for winning and losing in stuff and as you expand that concept, that is true for all martial arts in the respect that martial arts versus self-defense, martial arts will only get you so far in self-defense. Let's put it that way. I think you know what I'm talking about. There's always rules whether it's MMA or Shotokan or judo or boxing or wrestling, there's always rules. Nothing that relates directly to self-defense. It's also a reason that people in martial arts gravitate to weaponry, not guns and knives. It's funny that this came out on a discussion about books but yeah, one of the books that I wrote about education technology is called Confucius in the Technology Era and the concept between this is the Tao, the Tao te Ching, the I Ching and Confucius to an extent in my younger college days and then, more recently as well so when I wrote this book, I took the philosophical approach to say, everything about technology, when I look at it



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is a Laozi which is some guy so that is the extent of it and it's really more about Chinese philosophy than it is about martial arts so to answer the question, no martial arts books yet.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I hope we get to underscore that word: yet. I've got a feeling there's one in there. I think everybody has something to say and most of us never get to find the courage and the medium to express it, whether that be music or writing a book or a play or whatever. Now, one question that I try to ask every guest who has ever participated in a film industry, what's your favorite martial arts movie?

Darryl Vidal:

That's an easy one. Enter the Dragon.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, here's another theory. Was that your first Bruce Lee?

Darryl Vidal:

No.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You're only the second.

Darryl Vidal:

Really?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I have a theory that everybody's first Bruce Lee movie becomes their favorite one.

Darryl Vidal:

I was growing up at the time. This is my early teens, 1973, 1972 so the first one that came out that I saw was called Chinese Connection but it's more known as Fists of Fury so that was the first one that I saw and that was quite the Bruce that blew my mind because everything before that was Shaolin Warrior, Five Fingers of Death. I can't even think of the crazy plot with the guy flying around, they puff up like balloons and spinning around and do whatever but Bruce Lee, what he brought to it, but Enter the Dragon was the second. Return of the Dragon or what was it called?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Game of Death?



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Darryl Vidal:

That was obviously after but Chinese Connection was called Fists of Fury. I think Return of the Dragon had another name. Maybe that was called Fists of Fury. I don't know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, right, yeah.

Darryl Vidal:

But I didn't see that but then I saw Enter the Dragon in the big screen and that was it. I was going to be Bruce Lee.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You and everyone else, man. There is something about him and him being on screen and we've certainly heard from some folks, especially folks of Asian descent that for the first time, seeing someone who wasn't white on screen was so powerful for them.

Darryl Vidal:

Sure, sure and for me, like I said, I grew up in my younger years around a lot of Filipino community but in my high school years, I was in the white and Latino communities so there were no Asians so in that time, everyone thought I looked like Bruce Lee because I was Asian so it was part of my growing up.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We've talked a lot of different things today, we've gone on a lot of different directions and I think we've got a pretty good idea of where you've been and where you are so now, let's turn the clock forward, if you will. What's coming? What are you working for, hoping for? Goals and you can answer this kind of in whatever timeline you want but I ask you just to look over the future and tell us what you're seeing and hoping to see.

Darryl Vidal:

Another deep question and like I said, I came and saw Bruce Lee and directly working for [00:57:51] so I'm kind of immersed in that but I'm looking this to kind of end my fulltime career. Probably working for a few more years and then what I'd like to do is to semi-retire into a consulting mode where I can still continue to offer my services in strategic planning in school districts so I think I want to see myself move into, like I said, semi-retirement in the next 10 years. I don't see an end to my training although my body is telling me differently but my mind certainly isn't and I have some other pursuits. I snowboard at the winter time, I like to fish and I like to play golf so there's a lot of things I haven't been able to do much especially recently so tend to want to pursue those things and continue to watch my family grow. I have 2 grandkids. One of my daughters is married and going to have a baby here so I'm going to have three



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and hopefully see my other 2 kids get married and have kids and someday have a giant living room of grandkids running around my house.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Are you going to teach them martial arts?

Darryl Vidal:

Absolutely if it works out. I mean, all my kids trained with me. Both my boys got their black belts and my daughters danced with my wife so they didn't complete the curriculum but definitely, if that's something that they want to do, I'll be here for them.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Great. Now, if people want to find you, website, social media, anything like that, where would they go?

Darryl Vidal:

Sure, yeah, I'm very open on my Facebook, [00:59:52] Kenpō or Vidal Kenpō. Anybody can go...getting close to 5,000 so I'll probably have to start deleting people but go ahead and try to add me there. I talk to anybody. I remember there's a lot of Cobra Kai, Karate Kid groups and so, I try to participate and be a good, I don't want to say, I don't like to say celebrity because I don't consider myself a celebrity but a good people for the fans because the fans love it so I try to make myself available and approachable and people like it and I've made some great social friendships that way so it's great to start some friendships.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Are we going to see you in the new series?

Darryl Vidal:

If you've watched the old series, you already saw me. They took stuff from Karate Kid 1 and it appeared in the 1st season and in the 2nd season, they talk about it but not in season 3, I can tell you that but I am friends with the creators on Facebook. We have sideline, not sideline, discussion about this and that about me being in it but there's no thought of that kind of discussion out there so I don't know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I hope it happens because I consider myself the exact perfect person that the Cobra Kai series was created for. I was born in '79, Karate Kid hit at the right time for me. I grew up with it. Objectively, I think we can all agree, there's nothing that should make it a great movie but it's is.

Darryl Vidal:

I love that!



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Jeremy Lesniak:

It manages to capture something so special that defies the writing, the acting, the story. It's just great and not in a sarcastic way that people point at Evil Dead 2 and say that movie is great because it's ridiculous and silly but Karate Kid is something really special and it came back and I watched the 1st season in like 12 hours and I did the same thing with season 2 because give me more because these people have grown up in the same way that I've grown up and I hope they will reprise your role even if it was a small one because you were part of making something that was so special to so many people including myself.

Darryl Vidal:

Thanks! I appreciate that and maybe it will happen.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And now as we walk off into this virtual sunset, I ask the guest, how do you want to end? Parting words, words of wisdom, some encapsulation of advice, whatever it is, what would you want to leave with the listeners today?

Darryl Vidal:

I use my quote that I have already and so, I don't know that I have something else but I will tell you that I appreciate your interview, your interview style and you've taken me places where I haven't gone in interviews recently so I very much appreciate that. Maybe that's a good way to finish off.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I had a wonderful time with this episode. Great conversation with Sensei Vidal and we had fun talking both before and after the episode. I am so blessed with what I get to do as work. I get to talk to these wonderful people and here we have another example of a wonderful person going deep, being open and I get to have a fantastic conversation in the process and you get to hear it so thank you, Sensei, for coming on. Thanks for all that you've done and all that you will do. If you want to see the show notes with links of the things that we talked about, photos, a bunch more, go to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, check it out, episode 508 and if you're up for supporting us and the work that we do, you have a few options. Make a purchase at whistlekick.com and if you do, don't forget to use the code `PODCAST15` to save 15%. You might consider buying one of our Amazon books or our programs, telling others about the show or supporting us on Patreon, Patreon.com/whistlekick. You can do that for as little as \$2 a month. If you see somebody out in the world wearing something with whistlekick on it, please introduce yourself. One of my personal goals here at whistlekick is we use this community to break down barriers and show that we are all martial artists and we start helping each other far more than we do. If you have guest suggestions, people that you think would be great to hear from, let me know. Email me, jeremy@whistlekick.com and our social media is the place to find a lot of



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