



Episode 516 — Expert Instructor Razh Chen | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



### Jeremy Lesniak:

What is up? Welcome, this is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 516 with today's guest, expert instructor Razh Chen. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host on this show. I am the founder here at whistlekick and the things that we're doing over here, they're all in support of the traditional martial arts. Everything from this show which you can find in [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) to all the other stuff that we're doing and if you go to [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com), you'll see all that stuff. Everything from our blog to our products and if you make a purchase, use the code PODCAST15, gets you 15% off. What else do we have over there? We've got links to things like martial journal and our Facebook group, Martial arts fun and friends. Honestly, there's so much going on, I don't remember it all and that's why if you haven't been to [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) in the last couple months, you should go, check it out, we're constantly revising things just like you should be with your training. Why do we bring you this show? It's to connect us, it's to educate us and it's to entertain us. We, the traditional martial artists of the world, and I think we're doing a pretty good job of that. if you agree, you can do quite a few things to support us. I mentioned a few of them already but you might also consider supporting our Patreon. As you can imagine, this show isn't free, there are almost half a dozen people involved in the production of this show between behind the scenes and my time and everything else and everybody needs to get paid. I don't pay myself but I try to eat food and that cost money so if you're willing to support us, [Patreon.com/whistlekick](https://Patreon.com/whistlekick). That's the place to go. You can contribute as little as 2 bucks a month and it helps. It all helps. We're slowly



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growing those contributions. We are nowhere near offsetting the cost of this show and I try not to talk about it too much but it matters and to those of you who have contributed, thank you. I really appreciate it every time I see a new contribution come in, I get choked up a little bit because it means that you all value what we're doing enough to part with some of your dollars, some of your money. I shouldn't say dollars because we have contributions coming in internationally. Just, thank you. Today's guest is he says he's on a quest and I don't mean that in a hokey way. I mean that he's identified a goal and he's working hard for it and that goal required leaving home and travelling pretty far and working hard and he's doing it and I'm impressed so we had him on the show. I don't know what else I can say without spoiling it so instead of struggling to do that, I'll just get out of the way and let's hear. Expect instructor Chen, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

**Raz Chen:**

Thank you very much, Jeremy. Thank you for having me.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah, it's a pleasure to have you. Thank you for making the time and I'm looking forward to all the things that we're going to talk about. Now, of course, on this show, we talk about a lot of different things but they all fall under, at least, some loose heading of martial arts and we usually do this because it's kind of important to roll the clock back and see what your starting point for martial arts is so when, where, how, why did you get started in martial arts?

**Raz Chen:**

I basically started martial arts in an art that is very arty which is actually capoeira and I started to do that when I was 11. I did it for 2 years. I did it in Israel where I grew up and I really loved it. The capoeira style, many people don't know about it here in America but people that are, they love the art part of it, the music and the rhythm and the movement and different kind of dimensions in the movement, up, down, close to the ground, inverted and that kind of pulled me more towards the martial arts field and then I started when I was 13 and started with Krav Maga which is my main field and I basically followed my brother, my big brother which is 15 year old older than me and he was already a brown belt back then and he was already training in being an instructor and he invited me one Saturday and asked me if I want to join. He was preparing for his test and I said yeah, why not? I don't have anything to lose, I'm going to come there, I'm going to hit some bags, I'm going to do some back flips and stuff so I joined him and I was just kind of exploring the mat by myself, not doing any kind of specific instructions, techniques and I was saying ok, it looks like a nice place, good vibes, a little bit far from where I lived back then but I was willing to try it and I started to come twice a week. As a 13 year old teenager, I finish school, I take my notebooks and everything with me on the bus so it was kind of an hour 15 to get there and I got there so I kind of sat and did my homework and everything to do and watched the classes of the younger kids before me and after that, in the future, I started to help teaching those classes but at the



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beginning, I started coming twice a week, then I started 3, then 4 times a week and I started to do, everything that I came on the goke, I go all this way, I'm better. I'm already doing 2 classes. I trained 2 sessions, the teenagers and then when I was old enough to join the adults, I did the teenagers and the adults class and I basically fell in love in Krav Maga and I think most of it was really because of the instructor that I had, Gabi, which is my master and he's one of the top instructors of Imi, who founded the system called Krav Maga and actually, today, May 26<sup>th</sup> which is his birthday so it's a nice celebration so happy birthday, Imi and yeah, so basically, I started my path then and I've been consistent since then and continue moving forward through teacher training course in the Wingate Institute, started to go deeper and deeper.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Now, you mentioned that a lot of people in the United States aren't familiar with capoeira and I agree with that. There are quite a few people who don't know it, maybe they've seen it and, I think for a lot of people, they look at capoeira and it's so unlike any other martial arts that they're familiar with that they don't even consider it a martial art unless they get to know it but here on martial arts radio, we've had a number of guests from capoeira come on and tell their stories and anybody who knows both capoeira and Krav Maga is probably going to make the same observation that I am right now that those are about as different as you get in the martial arts world.

**Raz Chen:**

Yeah, I definitely agree with that. I think even the definition, the general definition, of martial arts is so vast and I think as martial artists, we need to, one of our greatest abilities, in my opinion, is to adapt and to be open-minded and I heard many guests in your show encouraging for the listeners to try different martial arts and to experience different kinds of movements and responses and techniques and I think that's a great way to be in a mindset in the martial arts field and the more you're close-minded, the less you'll be able to learn and generally in life, I feel like that. Not only in actual training. Every person around us is a guide, every person around us is a teacher if we allow them to be. If we are close-minded, if we stay in our little square and say no, this is a martial art and this isn't, we're automatically blocking ourselves from getting new data, getting new knowledge and becoming better and more evolved and yeah, I think capoeira is definitely an art and beautiful movement and I believe it's actually good especially for kids because kids need to learn through very large movements in the beginning like arms and legs, same like you do in karate or if you're in martial arts, in taekwondo doing these kicks and punches and movements, it's not very, it doesn't have to be for kids. Very refined and very specific. Bigger movements are better so in the beginning, capoeira, I think is a very good martial arts to learn and regarding to Krav Maga, Krav Maga, I would define it, if I need to define it, I would define it more as a self-defense system versus a martial arts because Krav Maga is taking the most practical parts of martial arts for street scenarios and connecting them to real life and to actual techniques that we can apply in real life like facing multiple attackers and different weapons and capoeira is more oriented for, some people will call it, will see it more as a dance versus as an actual martial art but the people in Brazil



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that invented capoeira, it wasn't legal for them, the slaves, it wasn't legal for them to fight and train in martial arts and self-defense so that was the disguise, that was the way that they keep practicing while not being arrested and not doing something illegal so I think both of them are kind of similar in the way of how they began like how one of my students tell me this phrase and I keep using it, necessity is the mother of invention and I think that capoeira and Krav Maga started out of necessity of the people whether it's in Brazil where they needed to know how to protect themselves and stand for themselves and not be a victim and in Europe, in the mid-'30s when anti-Semitism went up to the highest level and the Jewish people needed to know how to protect themselves and Imi, the founder of Krav Maga, couldn't sit quietly and he said ok, I have to come up with this system that will be simple, will be practical and it will not take so long until that kid or teenager or that woman will be able to protect themselves in real life.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Absolutely. Now, because I've done a bit of capoeira and, far less but still, a bit of Krav Maga, I can see some circumstances where your prior capoeira experience may have both helped and hindered your progress in Krav Maga so I'm wondering if you'd speak to that?

**Raz Chen:**

I think the ability to move as a whole is amazing in capoeira and that contributed a lot to my quick progression in Krav Maga in the beginning and the connection with the nervous system, the connection with knowing what's happening with the right arm and the left arm and the right foot and the left foot and the toes and fingers and kind of like yoga as well. I'm practicing yoga now for almost 4 years and actually finished my teacher training in yoga so I am also aware of the fact that it helps me a lot in being aware of the body, the general movement which helps me very much in Krav Maga so I think capoeira, the timing of things, the ability to coordinate yourself, not only with your own body but also with the movements of the person in front of you and the syncopation between the two fighters is very important. It's almost like a choreography but improvised choreography.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right and I have found that you used the term syncopation that need to orient yourself with not just what you're doing or look for opportunities to express a technique in capoeira but to stay in time and in sequence with your partner in this freestyle, let's call it, a dance for this context is very difficult and creates a wonderful skills for observing what your partner, later in Krav Maga, your opponent becomes and I think it's poetry. I think it's beautiful.

**Raz Chen:**

Yeah, definitely. I think it's amazing and I love the fact that Krav Maga is always evolving and always moving forward. You understand that reality is not staying still so we can't stay still as well. We need to



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adapt with it and that becomes a way of life and if you're facing, in a real life situation, multiple attacker situation, you need to increase your peripheral vision, you need to be able to respond and of course, try to prevent, try to avoid this contact combat, the Krav Maga scenario if you can but if you can't and your back is against the wall and the last option for you in that moment is to fight, even fighting multiple attackers that require much higher level of attention and improvisation especially if they are bigger and stronger than you and that's why I love Krav Maga so much is because in Krav Maga, in coming back to your previous question, in Krav Maga, there are no rules which in martial arts, we find many rules especially in the ones that are competition-oriented and the one rule in Krav Maga is that basically there are no rules and you have to use your surroundings to your advantage and whatever resources you got to be the most efficient possible.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Sure. Now, when you talked about your brother bringing you into Krav Maga, it didn't sound like there is any reluctance or hesitation to leave capoeira, something that you've been doing and enjoying and I can hear in your voice now, you think of very fondly. What was it about Krav Maga that you said ah, this is what I need to be doing? Why the abrupt switch with the 2 styles?

**Raz Chen:**

It's a great questions. Overall, I think capoeira was kind of fun. It was fun, it was a nice hobby for doing twice a week as a teenager and improve my overall movement skills and back then, I really liked that kind of gymnastic part of capoeira, the back flips and inversions and these kind of stuff that I keep doing until today but then, when I came to Krav Maga, I felt like ok, that's the real deal here. When I came to classes, I was like wow, that's a very intense workout. That's something that is challenging me, not only on a physical aspect but also on a mental aspect to face against someone bigger, stronger than me even if they were my age. I'm a small guy. I'm 5'4" and I was always the smallest guy in the group. In capoeira, I didn't have this struggle and when I came to Krav Maga, I find myself in a very, not in a good starting point. The people that were bigger and stronger, they absolutely had the advantage. In fighting, size matters, strength matters. You can't go around it so I was challenged and as much as it was hard, I liked the challenge and I felt like that was a challenge that was important for me and for my future and I felt the attraction mentally and physically to the challenge. In the first 2 years or so, I puked every class and my nose was bleeding and back then, we had only white shirts. After a little while, my white shirts became a little red and I understood, ok, that's something I can really aim for in the long term and that's something I'm not uncomfortable with.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

If I'm doing the math right, you're still pretty young at this point where you're in Krav Maga for a few years wherein bloody noses and red shirts, you're still a teenager, right? What did your parents think about this because you said your brother was 15 years older so I would imagine that he's an adult, he's



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off doing his own thing, they probably don't mind as much but I can imagine my mother thinking and looking at this and me coming home from a class with a bloody nose consistently and saying maybe this isn't a good idea?

**Raz Chen:**

My parents, especially my mom, thought exactly that multiple times. Sometimes, even still today when she sees me sparring and doing this kind of stuff, she's saying I think I'm not going to watch it and yeah, but she, my parents, I'm the youngest child out of 4, by far the youngest, I just turned out a few days ago, 29 but my oldest sister is 20 years older than me so there is a big gap and I think I'm very grateful for that because my parents raised me to be as independent as possible and I always like to remember the story of me going to 1<sup>st</sup> grade when I was 6 years old so my father told me, lets walk together so we're walking the first day and getting to school and am very excited and then comes and pick me up after school like that we're walking every day for the first week and beginning the second week of school, my father tells me I think you're mature enough and you're responsible and I trust you to walk by yourself and you know the road, you know there is one crossroad that you need to cross and you know how to look and you know the road by yourself and I trust you to go. I was super happy, proud of myself with the chest out and taking my backpack and walking to school and that's it. Since then, I'm walking by myself. After a week, feeling courageous and independent and then, basically, 16 years after that when I talked about it with my father just drinking coffee out on the balcony, a beautiful day and I mentioned that story and how much I was proud of myself then he was saying you know Raz, I never told you but after that day when I let you walk by yourself, I was following you for a whole week from afar. You haven't seen me but I was following you and I saw that you're ok and that everything is going well just to make sure but that story reminds me how well they raised me and the aspect of being independent and now, I live by myself in New York city, all of my family is in Israel and I feel independent and I feel great and thanks for them so I think, in regarding to my Krav Maga journey, they kind of let me do my own calculations, my own decisions is to continue or to back off and really kind of experience it for myself and not make decisions for me and not interrupt my personal journey to the best of my ability and also, they knew that my brother is there and he's there to support me and they trusted him as well as an instructor.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Now, you moved to New York. Why? That's a pretty dramatic shift.

**Raz Chen:**

Yeah, definitely. In Israel, everyone goes to the military in the age of 18. Men go for 3 years and women go for 3 years and I finished the military service when I was 21 and then, I started working again for my brother in his Krav Maga studio in Israel and then, I went to travel for 5 months and I went to Central America for 8 different countries to travel and I came back and worked some more and while I was in



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the trip in Central America, I got a message from a friend, a Krav Maga instructor, that did the course with me, the instructor course, a few years before that. I did the instructor course when I was 16 and a half in 2007 so he sent me a message that he's in New York city and he's opening here a studio and he's inviting me to come teach with him here and since then, I started to consider that offer and after a while, after I came back from the trip and taught in Israel some more and taught in different kinds of populations, kids and women and law enforcement, kind of got experience and taste from different aspects of Krav Maga because Krav Maga is being adjusted to the population that you teach according to the needs but then I said ok, I think my next role is to spread Krav Maga in the world and not just keep it in Israel as an Israel assistant but I think that Imi, one of his goals for Krav Maga for the future and visions that Krav Maga will be known and practiced all over the world so that one may walk in peace and I decided to do that move and also after, again like I said before, my parents raised me to be independent so I decided to go for that path and with all the struggles that involved but to be worth it, it will be an adventure and I look for something again like the journey Krav Maga versus the capoeira that will be uncomfortable and that will be a challenge and I know that it's going to make me who I am today.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Your involvement in Krav Maga has sort of come in at an interesting time because over the last 15 or so years, Krav Maga has grown considerably. It spread quite a bit to being practiced and taught by a lot of people and, as an outsider, I've witnessed a lot of fracturing within Krav Maga and a lot of different systems and different organizations and it seems to be going through this very interesting political time that, I mean, all martial arts is facing and really, has faced for decades but it seems even more intense within Krav Maga. I'm wondering if you might speak to that if you agree or disagree?

**Raz Chen:**

I agree overall. I think, like you said, every martial arts is going through that and with all the love to the hobby and to the art itself and our greatest passion of this field of whatever we invest our life in, it's also, we need to remember that it's also business and we need to make a living, whether it's opening our own studio or whether it's opening our own company or branch or whatever it is, but eventually, people often go after their survival instinct and the survival instinct is so powerful. It's the first instinct as a human so if we, as martial artists, understand the significance of the survival instinct and we want to train to be able to protect ourselves and our loved ones in real life scenarios, a part of this survival instinct is also to survive financially and to be able to support yourself and your future family and to raise your kids with abundance and I think, as a result of that, I think there's also a lot of separation. There's a price and people understand that ok, if I'm not going to do my own thing in one point or another, I'm going to be dependent on someone above me and I'm going to need to keep paying them or whatever the deal is so often, people not always, I think in the best way possible, I think people choosing to do their own thing and go for their own path which I support but I think also there's a way to do that and unfortunately, some people take it too personally and forget there is also a business and they get insulted or they take it to the heart and I think the attachment in that aspect and



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understanding that I give all of my students, I heard a while ago, a guy that is an expert in martial arts saying the fact that some instructors are not letting their students try or train, practice different martial arts which I was kind of in shock. I didn't really hear about it too much before but I heard that it's pretty common and I think the implications of that are if you try to hold people strong or hold the leash tight, eventually, sooner or later, they're going to want to leave you. No one wants to stay in forced especially if they don't have to so I think, giving freedom to students and to instructors to practice different martial arts and to open their own thing or to evolve and go to their own journeys is a very important thing to keep in mind as an instructor.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Absolutely. Yeah, it's a shame that this is an occurrence. I don't know how often it happens. It's certainly what we think of in the older styles of martial arts and older time periods. When we talk about the 60s and 70s, even the 80s and 90s in martial arts, it seems like it was more common then than it is now and that could be because we have more martial artists teaching schools that have multiple styles under them. You're another example. Most of the guests that we have come on this show have trained in more than one martial art and that wasn't the case from what I can see from the past but I think with the internet, I think what we're starting to realize that, just as you said, if we try to hold people on too tight of a leash, they will break away and you'll lose them entirely. Now, what is your training look like here? You left your family, you left your training partners and you come here and one of the things that I know about Krav Maga, maybe not quite as much as, say Brazilian jiu-jitsu, but you really need a partner to do that work so you come over here and how did you balance moving to the other side of the world, teaching and your own training?

**Raz Chen:**

It's interesting that you're saying about meeting a partner because now, in the past 10 weeks since the quarantine started, I'm teaching all of my classes online which is very interesting experience for me as an instructor, I'm sure also for my students, but it's definitely increasing some skills, increasing the imagination, increasing the ability to respond without an opponent and try to improve your skills on the best way possible with the current situation but for me, personally, when I came here, I started training with our team at the Krav Maga Experts and we have here few instructors that all of them are professional. Some of them are Israelis, some of them are Americans and kind of built it together with similar mindset about Krav Maga so we train together and aside from that, I started practicing yoga which, again like I said before, helped me a lot with increasing my mobility and body awareness overall and started practicing Brazilian jiu-jitsu here in New York city as well and I got to my blue belt. I competed twice and I was very happy with my results in competition. I took first in my 1<sup>st</sup> competition and 2<sup>nd</sup> in my 2<sup>nd</sup> one and yeah, I'm going to come back to that as well. I like this kind of discipline and system and yeah, just maintaining my overall health, fitness level. I believe that training does not have to be only physical. It can be by being aware of your general cycle of life and health and nutrition and super important staying hydrated, taking care of your mental state, doing meditations and resting is also





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a very important part of recovery, of course, and doing things with balance and not doing something too much.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I couldn't agree more. When we talk about Krav Maga, as we already said, it's focused on reality, it's focused on evolving with the times, with climate, has there been conversations within the Krav Maga world, or at least within your world about, not just how we change the way we teach right now during a pandemic, but are the training scenarios that you're considering different? Are the self-defense possibilities that you're working with your students on, have they changed at all?

**Raz Chen:**

You're talking about the online training?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

How do I say this? I'm coming from a place where I know a little bit about Krav Maga, not a lot so I have to temper this with my own speculation. The world is a bit different right now, people are on edge, depending on where you are in the world, crime is up, some places crime is down, certain types of crime are way up, others are way down, are you, forget about the online piece, are you teaching your students any differently? Are you teaching them to look out for people in a different way or to be prepared for different situations now?

**Raz Chen:**

For your question, definitely. Like I said before, Krav Maga, first and foremost, about adaptation. It's about, I like to say and teach according to the 3 E's. The first E is examine. Second E is execute and the third E is exit so in Krav Maga, we constantly try to examine, not just this specific scenario that we're in. Like I said before, if you're back against the wall, night time, 2 people in front of you, bigger, stronger than you, you have to examine real quick and choose what's the most efficient way to execute in that moment, which tactic do you use and of course, find the exit, the closest place to get away to to improve your position whether it's the closest store or place with more people or place you can use any object to get in the car, whatever your exit route is. We constantly examine reality, constantly trying to be in tune with the news, with the dangers that are out there to give the most efficient solutions to our students and not to teach them something that is irrelevant. The one thing we don't want to happen is to give our students false confidence and I think that's one of the main issues with martial arts today. Again, martial arts, we say it, but it's such a wide term, such a big spectrum and yeah, some people training in YouTube and watching videos and think oh, I'm now a brown belt in a YouTube Krav Maga and I can win and I know how to do this and I know how to do that and eventually, it comes down to the moment, they need to be able to deal with that scenario and I don't believe that only training online and only training without a partner can help you achieve it and again, it's a lot about the response in that



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moment. The ability to overcome the freeze mode and snap into the fight mode or the flight when your body is full of cortisol and adrenaline and it's a very scary moment but in that moment, you want to respond and for Krav Maga, seeing ok, there's attack with axe in Union Square in New York city and now we focus on the next 2 weeks on how to respond against an axe so when a student comes out of class, they know ok, if this thing happens again, I have a very high chance to win. I have very high probability to get home safe and we teach them ok, if you see there were slashers in the subway this past month, 3 incidents of random people got slashed in the subway so people are coming to us and saying I'm afraid. If this comes down and someone comes at a knife at me and start swinging, I don't feel comfortable and I don't know what to do so ok, perfect. We know the problem, lets focus on the solution now. Let's be pragmatic, that's the Krav Maga way. Let's be efficient, lets practice now the solution of how to deal with the knife slashers so we are kind of readjusting ourselves and our teachings to reality watching videos and actually, that's a great time, this online period of time to share videos and we do it via zoom and we have 60, 70 people in a class and all of them can watch the same video and we can analyze it together, analyze the problem and start practicing the solution and they know, ok, after I watch this scenario, this one person fighting 3 people and what they did, what they did good and what they did bad and practice the solution and they come out from this sessions much more confident and much more practical.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Makes a lot of sense, absolutely. Now, when you submitted your guest form, you put your website on there and I spent a minute checking it out and it looks like you have your own approach to Krav Maga as I would expect most people who instruct Krav Maga do, you talk about yoga, you talked about some of the benefits of capoeira earlier in our conversation, how would an experienced Krav Maga student find your classes different from maybe what they're used to?

**Raz Chen:**

I like to bring my personal approach that is also about the capoeira and yoga and the more mental but it's also a lot about the military style and I think my classes, if I need to differentiate from others, it would be going from 0 to 100 and going from 100 back to 0 so I think a practitioner, more advanced they are, they can choose, they have more ability to choose and regulate themselves on the spectrum of 0 to a 100. 100 is the highest level of aggression, complete aggression and strength and everything in one moment of burst and you can't be on a hundred more than 5 seconds probably and that's also a lot and I learned that on myself and felt that in my military service. In the army, I was first a combatant in an infantry and did the whole training and did some operational duty as well and did that for around a year and a half and I was lucky enough to become a Krav Maga instructor after doing the course in the military although I was a significant instructor beforehand but they wanted combatants so I became also a Krav Maga instructor in the army and I got to teach many, many different kind of soldiers in different units and it was a very interesting journey so I think today, I bring a lot of that into the mat and to my training. For example, doing different scenarios and starting from different states of mind. For example,



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sometimes I start the drill after running sprints but sometimes I start the drill from sitting down on a chair and being very calm and even with the eyes closed and then, when something happens, you need to open the eyes and respond as quickly and efficiently as possible so I think, in real life situations, similar to being a soldier, the danger will probably be there in the time that we're least expecting it so that's the time that you want to be prepared for. Being prepared for fights when you know ok, this is the fighter that I'm against, this is their weight, this is their reach, this is their age, this is the country they're coming from, that's the style that they trained in, I watched their videos before, you come much more prepared mentally and physically for a fight. It doesn't mean that it's going to be easy because they're trained fighters so it's a very, very high level of proficiency but in real life, you're not prepared. You don't know when it's coming and you want to be on 0. You want to be calm. You want to be nice and kind and laugh and have fun and not worry and be in real self-confidence that when the time comes, if you have to go for that 100, you will be able to do that even from a moment that your eyes are closed.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Makes sense, yeah. For traditional martial arts where the self-defense aspect is somewhere between, and this is most schools, I don't want anyone to get offended, it's somewhere between secondary and an afterthought. How can some of the principles or thought processes, you mentioned the 3 E's in the way you teach Krav Maga, how can some of the lessons that students learn in a self-defense system which you described Krav Maga as, how can we enhance our traditional martial arts?

**Raz Chen:**

I think it's about mixing it up and I think it's about having that disciplinary part and the traditional part together with the modern and the more updated part and I think most of them are very important especially for the kids and teenagers, I find the disciplinary part and having respect for themselves, having respect for their equipment, having respect for the place that they're training and having respect for their partner. That's is something that we also emphasize in Krav Maga training as well and to give a, what we call, kida, so kida in Hebrew means bow and basically, we give kida in the beginning of the class and at the end of the class to kind of start and end and we give kida before sparring to our partner, it's a sign of respect and I think a good instructor find, with time, the balance between those two and the efficient part of street situation in Krav Maga and prepared together with discipline and respectful and the ability to practice while maintaining and understand that there is no ego in it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Great lessons, great things for all of us to consider. Now, we've talked today, we've talked about your beginning, we've talked about your current, let's talk about your future. You're still young. I assume you've got some big goals. You've moved across the world and you're looking to spread Krav Maga in your own way. If we look out, however far you want to look out, 5 years, 10 years, 50 year, if we were to



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meet up again at some point and talk and say what's happened since you first came on martial arts radio? What would you hope to tell me had transpired?

**Raz Chen:**

Definitely. That's something that I'm thinking about every single day. I like to set goals for myself and while setting them up for the next 5, 10, 20, 50 years, I like to also set them up for tomorrow and I think the future starts from tomorrow and what we do today is a preparation for tomorrow and my goals are to impact with the Krav Maga, with the Krav Maga mindset and way of life on as many people as I can and especially people that need it. What it means, people will not necessarily go in the door, people that are not necessarily going to look in google Krav Maga, I really want to train, I'm going to come for a trial pass. This is the easy crowd and I love teaching them and that is definitely one of my passions. I love teaching people first class Krav Maga and when it's their 3000<sup>th</sup> class but I definitely want to reach to few main populations that I think they really need it like kids and teenagers. Statistics on bullying are very concerning. 20% of students reporting being bullied in schools, most of them are in the hallways and stairwell and a lot in classrooms, in cafeteria, out of the school so bullying in school, that's something that I definitely want to create impact and I think every kid should learn martial art and different kind of disciplines to be a part of community, to be under an instructor that they know that care about them and of course, they know that they can protect themselves if they need to. They're not going to allow anyone to make them a victim. Secondly, definitely I want to work with women. I think, again, women are another part of the population that definitely need to know self-defense, Krav Maga. 54% of women were sexually harassed. They're worthless. I don't want to think about my sisters, I have 2 older sisters, going to work and someone is trying to touch them in an inappropriate way and they don't know how to protect themselves or fend for themselves so I think it starts from the prevention part. 1 in 5 women has been raped in their lifetime. It's crazy statistics. Half of them by someone they knew. What it means, that they don't have the ability to set the boundary and the skill to set a boundary is very important and I think it starts from the basics. Starts from the body language, starts from how to use your voice and how to use basic tools of defense and counter attack in Krav Maga and just know that you can protect yourself and you have to protect yourself. It's your responsibility. Doesn't matter who you are, you're a 4-year old kid or your 98-year old woman. Doesn't matter who you are, you're not allowing anyone to make you a victim in any way, shape or form.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Can I ask a personal question? I don't usually break in but just the way you talked about bullying, were you bullied?

**Raz Chen:**

I don't think I was bullied because I was preventing myself to connect to people. I kept myself more isolated. I kept myself in my comfort zone and I didn't allow myself to expose myself to too many kids



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and too many people and I was kind of more shy and I got beat up a few times when I was a kid because I didn't prevent like I probably should have but except that, I wasn't bullied on a regular basis. I was lucky enough.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I ask, not just in your words but for most of the guests we've had on the show, if bullying is something that they're passionate about, it's usually because it had affected them or a sibling or someone they knew very, very closely so I was just taking a stab in the dark there.

**Raz Chen:**

I think bullying, again, is a very wide term. I think everyone is having the choice to tell themselves if they got bullied or not because bullied can be a mental bullying or a physical bullying and both of them are still bullying so I think in a way, honestly, I think every single person, every single person was bullied in one way or another because it's enough that one time, 2 kids call you names and that's what kids do. They do it all the time and this experience stays with you for the rest of your life in your subconscious and I think martial arts and training and increasing your competence and your confidence is a great vaccine to that, is a great way to eliminate that trauma and to open those knots and in the end, another part of population that I really want to work with and passionate about working with in the future is law enforcement. The law enforcement system, the police and teaching the de-escalation tactics. I think that's something that is super needed and important especially in this time. Only in 2019, police killed 1,099 people. Now, I think that police and law enforcement are heroes. My father volunteers in the Israeli police for 20-something years and I think that police officers are heroes and very important. Because of that, I think they need to have more de-escalation training. Not being trained to go for the weapon, that's the first thing. Yes, have in mind using your weapon but at the same time, I think so many people can be saved and their families, not only them, they can be saved from the police officer to be more trained at different strategies and prevention. That's what Krav Maga is all about.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It's an interesting point and, of course, we spend a lot of time in American media discussing police, inappropriate use of force and unfortunately, ethnic and international backgrounds, we turn it into these sides in the media but what I'm hearing is that, regardless of whether or not that part exists because unfortunately, that subject gets really politicized and I work very hard to not bring politics into this show so I'm going to put that piece aside. I don't want anyone to think anything about that subject with regard to my own personal views but what you're saying, what I'm hearing anyway is we give law enforcement more tools beyond a firearm. If they have more options available, then maybe we will see fewer deaths.

**Raz Chen:**



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Definitely and also, not only death but also the population will trust the police much more. We don't want to have situations that, like today, only 54% of people trust the police. 31% only trust the police somewhat and 15 are very little to none so those are concerning statistics and I want to create a situation that the people understand that the police are on their side. They want their favor. They don't want to hurt innocent people and because of that, police officers need more de-escalation training and yeah, focusing less on aggression, aggressive solutions, more on negotiation and de-escalation strategies.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Now, if people want to find you online, social media, website, we talked about your website, give everybody the ways that they can get in touch with you.

**Raz Chen:**

On social media, I'm [raz.maga](http://raz.maga) and that's on Instagram, [@raz.maga](https://www.instagram.com/raz.maga). My website [razmaga.com](http://razmaga.com) and Facebook, Raz Chen, feel free to reach out anytime, any questions. I'm also writing now different blogs on Medium and Quora and just had one of my answers on Quora about self-defense getting 100,000 views and that's awesome. I love the fact that people are interested and people are curious and people are intrigued to ask questions and to go deeper and to really know, not just hear from one or two instructors but hear different perspectives and again, that's how I started the conversation today, I think, about the personal evolution of each and every one of us and if we are really curious and want to know more and want to question why so that's what life is about for me, the journey.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Absolutely. I fully agree. The journey, not the destination and this is your opportunity to send the episode out, how do you want to close up our conversation today? Some final words, some inspiration, what do you want to leave the listeners with?

**Raz Chen:**

I think the last thing I said is how I live my life. I live by staying curious, keep questioning, keep enjoying the journey, understand that every day is a different day and different opportunity, a new opportunity to start your journey again and don't feel stuck. It's easy to stay in a place and feel comfortable with something that you know, something that is easy for you and something that you maybe feel confident about but especially in martial arts training, especially in Krav Maga, feeling uncomfortable is key for progression, being curious and questioning what is life, what am I doing, why am I doing it, that is the key for improvement.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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This was a fun one for me. I really, I can hear something in Expert Instructor Chen's voice. There's something there. There's something that tells me he's going to make this happen. I have a lot of faith in the guests that I bring on the show that they're going to accomplish whatever they want because I believe any of us can accomplish whatever we want but I believe he's in the middle of accomplishing it but maybe in a way that will only become clear in hindsight. Time will tell. I wish you luck, sir, I thank you for your time and I hope we get to connect soon. We're not that far away. For those of you listening, go to [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com), check out this episode 516, see all the things that we posted over there related to this and maybe check out some of the other episodes while you're there. Photos and links and videos and transcripts and all that good stuff. If you're willing to support us, help offset some of those costs that we incur doing the show, [Patreon.com/whistlekick](https://Patreon.com/whistlekick) or make a purchase or share an episode or just something. Help us out. I'm not going to ever put these episodes behind a paywall. I'm pretty strongly opposed to that but hopefully, if you're a long time listener, you'll consider doing something to help. Doesn't have to be paying it back, could be paying it forward. If you see somebody out there walking around wearing maybe a whistlekick hat, say hello. Ask them what's going on, talk to them about their training, there's a really good chance that they'll want to have a conversation with you. If you have a guest suggestion, we want to hear about it so you can email me, my personal email address, [jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremy@whistlekick.com) and if you want to follow whistlekick on social media, we are @whistlekick everywhere you could think of. I'm done. So, until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day!