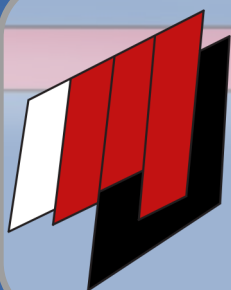


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MARTIAL
JOURNAL



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Letter From The Editor

What's up, warriors? It's our inaugural issue and I can't think of anything more important to say than this: "thank you!" Those words may sound cliché, they may even be expected, but they are also 100% drawn from the heart.

The pages you are holding in your hands right now are the result of an incalculable amount of labor and love. What started as an idea for online articles and essays has officially become a printed publication delivered to the doorsteps of those such as yourself. What makes it even more incredible is, we are doing this in an age when print is viewed as a dying product!

Psst...Wanna know our secret?

To be honest, *you* are our secret weapon. I know, I know. You can roll your eyes if you want, but the mush and gush is true. We are all on the same team and the only reason we get to do any of this stuff, online or printed, is because of your genuine interest and support. It wouldn't be a stretch to say this is just as much your magazine as it is ours.

Whether you are a novice just now entering the world of martial arts or an expert who has taught seminars around the world, an assistant instructor at a strip mall dojo or a multi-school owner, whether you study a Chinese martial art or Greco-roman wrestling, know that this magazine is for you. Take pride in being a part of a magazine that is about building bridges, not walls, inside the martial arts community.

Long story short and mushy-gushy kept to a minimum, thank you for being a part of this adventure. I can't wait to continue this journey alongside you!

Editor-in-Chief
Justin Lee Ford

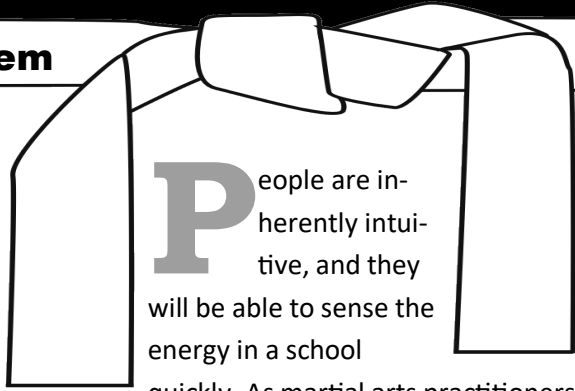


**MARTIAL
JOURNAL**

Beginning The Journey!

By Craig Wharem

The most important steps in martial arts training are the first five steps into the dojo for the first time.



People are inherently intuitive, and they will be able to sense the energy in a school

quickly. As martial arts practitioners, we

help set the standard. If you are a senior student or instructor, you can help set that tone. The longer a practitioner trains, the more imperative it becomes to maintain a “white belt mindset”. It is important for us to remember to always try to see our schools and classes through the lens of a white belt. Through that lens, we can help potential new students feel welcome and excited at the opportunity to learn.

The Importance and Meaning of a “White Belt Mentality”

A white belt mentality means that practitioners stay humble and remember the true pursuit of the martial arts. Remember that it is about more than just gaining the prestige of a black belt. A student should work to gain proficiency in both physical skill and in our internal strength.

Often, we hear people preach keywords such as humility, and that is often used to describe the act of not bragging about skill. That’s certainly an important piece of humility, however, there is also another portion that I notice is a bit harder for people to recognize and properly embrace.

The other portion of humility is the concept that everyone, regardless of rank has something to contribute. I have learned plenty by working with inexperienced people who didn’t know what to expect. The rank of a person denotes their knowledge and understanding of the arts, but often we

forget to factor in that drilling is done by two people who understand the drill. It can be greatly beneficial to listen to the perspective of someone seeing a technique or a drill for the first time and watch them work to learn it.


One of the mantras in the dojo where I teach is “just because I’m a black belt in Karate does not make me a black belt in everything”. Make it a goal to continue to put on a white belt and train, this helps keep your mind fresh. It will also help show you what the experience will be for someone who steps into the dojo the first time.



“The journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step.”

When defining the culture of the school where you train or teach, factor in those first five steps through the door. When I see another person enter class on their first day, I often will walk up and introduce myself. The most intimidating moment for someone is walking in and explaining that they are there for help. When someone chooses to begin their training and take that journey, it is because they are looking for something.

That reason could be physical, mental, or emotional. It’s not for us to judge why they are there. We can welcome them to something that has brought joy and given us so many amazing benefits.

When you bow into the dojo, look at that class as though it’s your first day all over again. When someone comes in for their first day, welcome them into your class and that will ultimately help them on their journey to black belt. 

AUTHOR’S BIO

Craig has been training in Martial Arts since 2002. He began teaching at the age of 14 and never stopped. Along with managing a school he also spends time working on helping with Instructor Development. He believes that it is important to continue to build up the next generation of Martial Arts Educators to help strengthen the future of the arts in mainstream society.

What is...

WUXIA?

BY EZEQUIEL DAVIDOVICH CABALLERO

Wuxia (武侠, pronounced “woo shee-ah”) is a genre of Chinese fiction concerning the adventures of martial artists in ancient China where the protagonists are martial heroes who follow the code of xia, a code of chivalry that rules heroes of the martial world.

Wuxia protagonists typically do not serve a lord, wield military power, or belong to the aristocratic class. They often originate from the lower social classes of ancient Chinese society. The code of xia usually requires wuxia heroes to right and redress wrongs, fight for righteousness, remove oppressors, and bring retribution for past misdeeds.

Though originally a literary genre, wuxia has expanded to film, TV, animation, comics/manga, even video games, and tabletop role-playing games.

Common Themes, Plots, and Elements

Modern wuxia stories are largely set in ancient or pre-modern China. Some stories are set in very specific periods in Chinese history, while others are more vague with settings that can't be properly pinned in one era or another.

Almost every wuxia hero is an expert martial artist with abilities beyond the common person, often involving superhuman skills like the ability to jump very high and almost levitate, use of pressure points to paralyze, harm or heal, and the manipulation of internal energy or qi. Swordsmanship skills are also quite common.

Our main heroes and their antagonists usually belong to or have some connection to one or several of the martial arts sects from the setting.

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A common plot stars a young male who has suffered tragedy, has to seek revenge which leads him to become a martial arts expert while navigating the politics of the martial world. Romance is also a very common element, often with the couple going through hardship to finally be together. Often a martial arts manual with esoteric secrets is involved. 📖

How To Get Started In This Genre!

Jin Yong's novels *Legend of the Condor Heroes*, *Flying Fox of Snowy Mountain*, and *The Book and the Sword* have official translations, as does Gu Long's *The Eleventh Son*. Their works have been adapted to TV shows and movies several times. Good examples in film are *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*, *The Swordsman* trilogy, and *Kung Fu Cult Master* (based on novels by Wang Dulu and Jin Yong, respectively). The TV adaptations of *The Legend of the Condor Heroes* and its sequel, *The Return of the Condor Heroes*, are on Prime Video, and the 2020 TV adaptation of *Gu Long's Handsome Siblings* is on Netflix. As for games, I recommend *Path of Wuxia*, *Gujian 3*, and *Age of Wushu* (available for PC). If you like tabletop RPGs, I recommend *Hearts of Wulin* and *Tianxia*.

AUTHOR'S BIO

My name is Ezequiel ("Zeke" for short)! I'm from Argentina, Spanish is my mother tongue, and English my second language. I've been into martial arts for as long as I can remember and have been doing Hung Sing Choy Li Fat (aka Choy Lee Fut or Choy Lay Fut, same thing) for almost two decades now with bits of other Chinese styles in it. Hope you like what I write.

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PODCASTS

THE
MODERN
TOOL



FOR
MARTIAL
ARTISTS

WRITTEN BY JAREDD WILSON

Martial artists are a weird bunch of humans. We are often anachronistic, luddites who over-emphasize the past. We practice traditions and with weapons that are not only obsolete, but also not even native to our own cultures. These are not criticisms, nor should they be perceived as negative traits. However, as a group, we do often fall into the logical fallacy of appeal to antiquity or tradition.

In the other parts of our lives, we're fully modern individuals who drive cars, use iPhones, and watch 4K TVs. In some ways, I think that one of the appeals of martial arts is its traditionalism. The connection to the past, to doing something that doesn't "have an app for that" is part of that. I agree with that concept, however...

If we call ourselves martial artists, we have to include the art part of what we do. Part of what we do should involve a discourse in history, philosophy, and possibly even language or cultural studies. Although these subjects admittedly do not help with the "how" of a martial art, they often will answer the "why" of a martial art. Learning about the connection between taekwondo and the break between North and South Korea won't help you throw a sidekick better, but it may help you know why kicks are so emphasized in the art. Sometimes, the origin of a martial art is tied to a philosophy, which explains some of the more esoteric or seemingly odd aspects of what we practice. Why do I bend in half in front of a picture of a dead guy? There's a lot culturally going on in that movement and practice.

The question is, how do we get to the "why?"

Option 1: The Old Fashioned Way


I am a big fan of reading. Books allow you to know the thoughts of people from around the world, and across the centuries. However, I fully understand that there are people who would rather get punched in the face than have to read a book, even if it is about a subject they hold dear to their heart. Time for modern technology to save the day.



Option 2: The New (ish) Solution

What if I told you that there was going to be a brand-new talk show about martial arts? That'd pique your interests, right? It could be interviews, discussions on history, lectures on philosophy, and all tied back to martial arts. Better yet, you don't have to pay anything for it. It's available whenever you have the time and you probably already have the player in your pocket. Of course, I'm talking about podcasts. Podcasts are pre-recorded shows that are available for download online from podcast services, Apple Podcasts (formerly iTunes) being the main one.

Podcasts are great learning tools for all the other parts of martial arts besides the physical. The best part is, there's podcasts about your specific martial art, if you really want to get deep into what you're studying. There's podcasts about martial arts in general, which allows you to learn about other arts that you'd probably never be able to actually practice or see. Learning about other arts often teaches you something about your own. Each podcast also has its own flavor, so you can find one that suits your interests, and blends with your personality. You can listen on your commute to work, while working out, or even as you're cleaning your dojo.

Podcasts aren't the new tool to polish your punches, but rather they are here to improve your overall understanding of martial arts. 

AUTHOR BIO

Jaredd Wilson has been studying Japanese martial arts since taking his first class in 1996 while at the University of Florida. He is a yudansha in aikido and is currently training Nami ryu Aiki Heiho in Nashville, TN.

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The Need for Positivity in the Martial Arts

WRITTEN BY LEON ROGERS


2020

Every generation's persona is molded and shaped by the events that unfold before us each day. We can all agree, 2020 was a year unlike any most of us have witnessed, taking a toll on our nation's psyche, creating a divide not just among generations, but even within generations. "We are in this together" became a common mantra. But were we? The temper and attitude of the nation suggested otherwise. Depression, fear, and anxiety struck even the most resilient. The bereavement, isolation, and confusion brought about by the pandemic only intensified political, racial, and economic divisions.

We all know that children and teens learn through observation...and the behavior exhibited by many adults throughout 2020 was disheartening to witness. Sadly, there were no shortages of bad role models for our children. When children see poor choices and bad behavior glorified by television and social media, they begin to think it is normal and therefore, acceptable.

But our industry has the unique ability to show a different, better path to overcoming adversities such as those we faced in 2020. Now, more than perhaps at any time in our nation's history, our children need good, strong, positive role models. This is where we, as a community of martial artists, must step up. Because our industry sometimes too, has displayed its share of bad behavior, discord, and fragmentation. No more. It's time to set egos and differences aside and let our industry provide the vision, the leadership, and the passion to, yes...change the world.

Children through the ages have been greatly influenced by teachers and coaches and as martial arts school owners and instructors, you are both a teacher and a coach. You give children a place to engage in positive practices. You instill in the generations the life-skills and values they need to navigate through life successfully. You show them that adversity is best overcome by means of positive behaviors.

We all know martial arts changes lives. Now is the time for us to all walk the walk of a martial artist, not just talk the talk. 

AUTHOR BIO

Involved in various aspects of the martial arts industry for 38 years, including product research & development, production & supply, legal, safety, and business consulting. Now semi-retired but still active in the industry, I am committed to seeing school owners change lives and achieve great success for themselves and their families in the process .

The Ninja Trix Story

Ask him what the biggest gift the martial arts have given him is, and Mr. Butts will tell you, "It's the trust thousands of parents and adult students have put in me over the years. To be able to touch someone's life and have them remember you many years later and thank you for telling them to never give up."

Developing an interest in the martial arts as a pre-teen in the early 70's, Steve Butts has forged a path that has led him to achieving his 7th Degree Black Belt in Moo Duk Kwan Taekwondo, to coaching Team USA from 2001 to 2012, and to today where he has owned and operated 3 martial arts schools in the Florida panhandle area. His three Martial Arts America schools had topped 1,000 student's pre-pandemic, and today enrollment sits at 850 and is steadily climbing back to pre-pandemic levels – thanks in large part to his Ninja Trix program.

With over 30 years of experience under his belt, Steve Butts is an avid believer in Kaizen – the practice of continuous improvement – always looking for ways for his schools to better serve their communities and grow. Enter the popular TV show American Ninja Warrior.

Realizing every kid wants to be a ninja, Mr. Butts created a variety of "kid-friendly" obstacle courses to mimic the TV show. Then, applying what he knew from running schools for many years – the need for structure and goals – Mr. Butts developed a comprehensive two-year curriculum drawing from Martial Arts, Parkour, and Gymnastics, and Ninja Trix was born!

When he introduced the program in his schools, it was resoundingly popular! There was immediate interest from his current students, as it re-energized them and their training, helping to improve retention. Then, as he began advertising the program in his community he began seeing a brand-new market of clientele! Kids and parents who previously had no interest in martial arts were flocking to his doors to see what Ninja Trix was all about! After two years of refining the program, building a vast library of management and marketing tools, and even adding birthday party materials and an official Ninja Trix uniform, Butts knew he had a turn-key program that was ready for licensing to others.

Ninja Trix isn't designed to replace your existing martial arts programs. Instead, it's a compliment to them! Ninja Trix students gain basic foundational martial arts skills and can channel them into existing martial arts programs of any style. It can also act as a stand-alone program, an add-on program, or an upgrade- the choice is yours!

Kids love the 10-piece obstacle course, complete with the obstacles they love from American Ninja Warrior, such as slant steps, barriers, and hurdles. The obstacles

are set up on a 42-foot-long strip of carpet bond, specially developed for safety so the obstacles remain secured to the floor as kids move through them. Students won't get bored with NinjaTrix - through the duration of **our 24-month curriculum, your obstacle course will be reconfigured 96 different ways!** That's 96 separate courses for your students to keep them excited, engaged, and motivated!

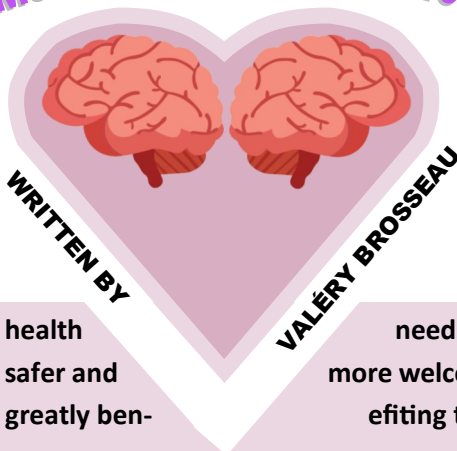
You and your instructors do not have to be gymnasts or parkour experts to teach NinjaTrix classes! The Ninja Trix curriculum teaches you everything from how to spot, how to make your classes safe, and how to make your program take care of your students.



The curriculum spans 24 months, consisting of 5-minute blocks of information for each lesson. Each class gives your students a new martial art skill, a parkour skill, and a gymnastic skill. The curriculum is 100% digital - this means that **prepping for your classes is as easy as pulling out your phone** and viewing the day's lesson plan. Through a combination of written and video lessons, the 5-minute blurbs detail how to set up your course for the day, what to do on the floor, and how to make your class successful.

Ninja Trix is quickly sweeping the nation and becoming the talk among school owners in 2021! Offering a 5-mile radius of protected territory around licensed schools, territories are going fast, so don't get left out! Mr. Butts would be honored to talk to you more about how you can add this exciting new program in your school! Just go to the website (www.ninjaxtrix.club) where you can book an appointment online, give him a call at 850-530-0234 or email the Customer Care Specialist at leon@ninjaxtrix.com!

Fostering a Mental Health Conscious Academy



Addressing mental health academy creates a safer and for students while greatly ben-

needs in a martial arts more welcoming environment efiting the business.

Knowing how to recognize when a student requires extra support and being able to provide that support makes students more comfortable, ensures they want to keep training and helps with student retention. Furthermore, being able to showcase that

your team demonstrates mental health awareness will show prospective students that your academy is a safe and supportive place.

Mental Benefits of Martial Arts Training

- It can help build confidence and provide a sense of accomplishment
- It is an active and athletic activity
- It provides a social group and a sense of belonging
- It can help give students a sense of control and agency
- It can help students face fears and triggers

Martial arts can be stressful but for people with mental health concerns, it can be a considerable stressor. That being said, martial arts can be extremely beneficial to those with mental health challenges.

When it comes to mental health, your students can be experiencing anything from day-to-day stressors

to symptoms of clinical mental illness. You do not need to be a mental health professional to be able to support students in either situation.

important role in ensuring a student's psychological health and safety within your academy. It can be part of your role to check in with students to make sure the academy atmosphere is affecting their life positively.

Approaching and Supporting a Student

It is important for you to approach a student when they are not participating as usual, their behavior or habits have

MENTAL SIGNS

- Sadness or lowered mood
- Being overwhelmed
- Irritation or anger
- Loneliness

changed, or they are no longer showing up to training without warning or explanation. It is also important to approach a student when you are concerned for their health and safety.

PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Feeling tired
- Aches and pains
- Headaches
- Digestive problems

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

- Acting agitated
- Isolating or withdrawing
- Being quick to anger
- Being moody
- Not attending training
- Avoiding interaction with teammates

Stress and anxiety manifest themselves mentally, physically and behaviorally. It is important to first identify the issue before we aim to offer support for it. There are physical, mental, and behavioral signs to look out for when deciding whether you should check in with a student.

With mental health, it can be more difficult because mental health concerns present differently for different conditions and different people. Here are some tips on how to check in.

Communicating your concerns and checking in with a student:

- Choose a quiet time when neither of you are busy or distracted

- Choose a quiet and private space
- Be compassionate and non-judgmental
- Ask how they have been feeling and express your concern empathetically
- Explain what behaviors you've observed that have caused this concern
- Express that you are here to help and support
- Ask your student what their needs are and how you can help

Empathy and Active Listening

When supporting someone through a mental health moment or concern, it is important to base our support on empathy and active listening. We are not counselors, we are not professionals. Nonetheless, as professors or academy owners, there are ways in which you can provide support to anyone experiencing a mental health concern or difficult moment. Empathy and active listening are the main components of this support.

Empathy:

Empathy is the ability to feel what someone else is feeling and to share in their experience. It is what allows you to support each other in a way that is real and genuine. Sympathy is the feeling of pity or sadness we have for someone else's misfortune. It puts us outside their experience. The core difference between the two concepts is that one creates emotional intimacy whereas the other separates the listener from the speaker. With sympathy there is no true sharing. Meanwhile, empathy is making yourself vulnerable to emotion in order to share an experience with someone else.

Active listening:

Active listening gets you to a place where you can provide an empathetic response. It gets you to a place where you have a deep enough understanding of what the person is experiencing that you can relate to what they are going through. Active listening is more than the type of listening we often do on a regular basis – it is deeper and creates more connection.

FEATURES OF ACTIVE LISTENING

- Remaining non-judgmental
- Taking silences to truly listen, not simply waiting for our turn
- Verbal and non-verbal cues to show we are tuned in
- Asking open-ended questions
- Asking for clarification and paraphrasing to make sure we understand
- Reflecting back what is said to us to show we understand
- Summarizing what is said to us

ate connection and build trust. It is important in these moments to get out of the habit of multitasking in our hearts as so many of us do.


Empathy and active listening promote a true connection between two people. Both parties are sharing information, experiences and emotions and they find themselves in the same viewpoint. This is how we can truly support someone through a mental health concern.

It is important to note that asking a student what would help them best can be the most productive option as they will know their mental health and their coping mechanisms best. Furthermore, it is important to remember that empathy and active listening should be the basis for all interactions aiming to help or support someone.

The Importance of Combating Stigma within your Academy

While the concrete tips above will greatly help you in supporting individual students through difficult moments, it is also important to create a general sense of safety and understanding within your academy.

Much stigma surrounds mental health and mental illness. As a role model and leader in your academy, your actions can greatly influence the atmosphere your students train in. It is important to combat stigma by speaking openly about mental health, by using respectful and non-judgmental language when discussing this topic and by making it clear that you are there for support if needed.

Mental health awareness is gaining more and more traction. That being said, much work has yet to be done. If you can be part of affecting change and making mental health a more ubiquitous topic of discussion, you will ensure a safer and more accepting atmosphere for every student you train. 

AUTHOR BIO

Valéry Brosseau is a passionate speaker, writer and mental health advocate, as well as a Brazilian Jiu Jitsu purple belt. She began volunteering in the mental health field in 2013, hoping to help provide a service she wished she knew existed when she was in her darkest place and has won several awards for her volunteer work. Valéry now delivers talks and workshops, raising awareness and equipping people with the tools and language to support others and manage their own mental health.

5 TIPS FOR FINDING A TEACHER!

WRITTEN BY JEREMY LESNIAK

Unlike many professions, martial arts is unregulated. Some may see this as a negative in our industry, but I see it as immensely positive. We, as martial artists, have a variety of options to choose from when it comes to schools and instructors.

This variety does create a challenge for us, though, as we must be selective in determining what instructors will meet our needs. Here are some tips on making that selection.

Teaching Style – Be sure to observe a class, or more than one, from any instructor you're considering. While many of them will encourage you to join, I suggest simply watching your first class. There are things you can observe from the side you may not see participating in a class. Be aware of the way the instructor engages with the students, from teaching material to offering corrections. Does the teaching style

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create an environment that will help you thrive?

Teaching Skill –

Different than the style with which they instruct, is how they instruct.

Does the instructor give students the opportunity to work through new material, or are they constantly nitpicking the tiniest detail even from the first repetition? The




needs of individuals vary here – some people like lots of time to figure stuff out, others want to know right away if they’re getting it wrong.

Patience - No matter what you teach, or to whom, there are times when it becomes frustrating. Patience is a key trait for any instructor, and one to watch for. The best way to observe this is watching the classes with the youngest students. If an instructor has the patience to work with young children, they’re probably going to be patient with adults.

Sense of Humor – From my years of training, I believe the best instructors have the best senses of humor. Which one creates the other, I can’t say, but I can say they go together. Further, an instructor that knows when to inject levity into a class is a signal that they are aware of what students are experiencing. And they’re aware that happy students tend to learn better.

Vulnerability – Everyone is still learning, or at least should be. The best instructors I have worked with are aware of the things they’re working on and willing to share that with students. Contrarily, I’ve known instruc-

tors who are so defensive of their own skill, they refuse to demonstrate movements in front of students. Avoid the latter.

There are other qualities you can watch for, but these are the most important ones. Finding an instructor that teaches in a way that works for you is important and varies wildly from one person to another. Be patient with your search and know when to compromise. 

AUTHOR BIO

The founder of Martial Journal, as well as whistlekick Martial Arts and the voice behind whistlekick Martial Arts Radio. Between these projects, Jeremy has personally interviewed many martial arts legends, including Bill “Superfoot” Wallace and Bas Rutten, as well as martial arts authors like Donivan Blair and Matthew Polly. He’s a passionate martial artist who simply enjoys learning and connecting with others.



With over 600 episodes, Martial Arts Radio is a leader in the martial arts and podcast spaces. Subscribe in any podcast app or learn more at whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

KICKING THE

WRITTEN BY

JASON BRICK



When I adopted my eight and I was 36, training under my trained and taught, traveled in sketchy places, even walked away from a handful of “real” street fights and attempts at making me the victim of violent crime. I thought I was a badass.

oldest son when he was I’d already had 25 years of fading black belt. I’d competed, won medals,

As every parent knows though, the responsibilities that come with that joyful new life in your world utterly change how you think about fear, safety, and self-defense. Your time is no longer your own. Your tolerance for risk plummets. Your self-defense goals shift. Even your stances need to change when there’s a baby in your arms or a young one under foot.

It’s been eleven wonderful years since that day, sharing martial arts and safety with my boys. For better or worse, here’s what I’ve learned in that time. This knowledge came after years of making lots of mistakes. I’m sharing it with you all in hopes that you can avoid those errors, and go on to make new, unique, and exciting mistakes of your own.

Finding Balance

Let’s be honest with each other. As martial artists, we sometimes have the tendency to go overboard when we commit to something. When kids come into our lives though, we have to make a choice. We can’t give 100% effort to training and our kids.

The tendency is to choose the kids, letting our training slide until it’s just a hobby we get to sometimes in between the homework help, soccer games, and

family dinners. It's the right tendency, but again, we go overboard.

Remember that training regularly and with focus makes us the best person we can be. It's not just okay to make time for martial arts, but necessary. It's always been about balance, right? This is one element of finding yours.

Redefining Self-Defense

Can we be honest together for a minute? Sure, the self-development and emotional growth and all that other Mr. Miyagi stuff is great, but we all secretly love some Cobra Kai. It's weirdly fun to learn how to dismantle a bad guy one joint at a time or otherwise learn how to action-hero your way out of a situation.

That kind of self-defense remains my favorite in theory, but day-to-day, self-defense as a parent is about protecting our children and making sure we stay alive long enough to annoy them by how much we spoil our grandkids.

“Remember: a plan you don't rehearse isn't a plan. It's a wish. You didn't reach your current skill level with a main hand straight punch by talking about it after dinner once.”

Self-defense by that definition is less fun. It's checking toy and baby furniture recalls. It's getting your brakes done. It's eating less fast food, getting more cardio, and re-upping your first aid certification. It's changing the batteries in your smoke detectors every spring forward day and checking them every month.

Most importantly, it's teaching our kids to do the same.

Applying Squad Tactics

When I first became a dad, one thing I noticed was that 100% of my training taught me how to protect myself, and 0% of my training taught me how to defend another person. Some arts do this better, but it's a gaping hole in most of our martial arts experience.

I was lucky enough to know a couple of bodyguards and other people with third-party protection training. They taught me to make plans

with the people you protect, and to rehearse those plans with them. Learn basic squad tactics and apply them to the makeup of your family, then practice them just like you do your family fire plan.

Remember: a plan you don't rehearse isn't a plan. It's a wish. You didn't reach your current skill level with a main hand straight punch by talking about it after dinner once. Practice these like your kids' lives depend on them, because they might.

Learning to Fall



Since becoming a father, I've fallen down hard three times. My aikido break falls saved the day each time. Twice, I had a toddler in my arms. I got a little boo-boo somewhere, and he wanted to do it again!

Learning falling skills and teaching them to your kids are the single most important physical self-

protection skill you can apply.

Think about it: how many fights have you or your children been in? How many times have any of you fallen down?

If you're already in an art that teaches breakfalls, great! Get some extra reps in. If not, consider taking a course at the local aikido, judo, or gymnastics school.

Training Together

On one hand, time on the mat can be your private time where you recharge, refresh, and reconnect with yourself to be a great parent. On the other, there is very little quality time quite like getting on the mat with your kids (and your spouse, if they're willing). On the other, you don't want to force your kids into your passion at the expense of the things that inspire them.

If you can get your kids on the mat, great. If you can't, find ways to train with them in things that catch their eye. Learning together, whatever



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you learn, is an incredibly powerful tool for structuring together time and building a lasting relationship of love and trust.

Having Fun Along the Way

Nobody knows what tired means until they've had children, nor have they experienced a very specific and powerful kind of fear. Kids are a pain in the butt. Any parent who tells you otherwise is fibbing.



But they're worth it. Only parents have experienced that very specific and powerful kind of joy...and sharing our martial arts journey with our kids, however that works out, only compounds and increases it. I'm not here to tell you how to find that balance in your own family, but I am here to tell you it's possible and worthwhile. 📖

AUTHOR BIO

Jason Brick is a father, journalist, and 6th degree black belt. He hosts the Safest Family on the Block podcast, where he interviews safety experts on how to best protect our loved ones. Find it on Facebook or YouTube to learn more.

**UNLOCKING
THE
SKILL
OF**

MOTIVATION!
WRITTEN BY JUSTIN LEE FORD

It has been said before that the road towards master isn't complex, yet it isn't easy either. Essentially, we all have an idea of what we can do to lead better lives, the hardest part is just staying motivated and disciplined to do it. Are you ready to work towards a better version of yourself? Let me share a couple of tips to kickstart your mission!

If your goal is to work on your forms each day for a year, start as small as possible: go outside and bow the form in on the first day.

Yep. That's it. Simple, I know.

Once you have finished that miniscule task, accept your accomplishment and do what you want afterwards--whether that be to finish the entire form or to go back indoors and binge watch Cobra Kai.

On day two, strive to do your minimal goal plus just one more small step--the first movement of the form. Keep building on your fledgling start each time and you will soon find yourself immersed in a fully-fleshed out habit. Too often, we decide to take no action simply because the entirety of what we are trying to accomplish seems daunting or excessively demanding of our time/energy.

This is where you must remember to avoid negotiating with yourself. Oftentimes, we make allowances for ourselves--allowances to sleep in a

times, we make allowances for ourselves--allowances to sleep in a bit later, to eat a bit more of that chocolate cake, or to indulge in one more day of unhealthy habits. Our goal with doing at least one small goal each consecutive day is to build positive momentum in our life. Like a snowball rolling downhill and growing bigger, a small act of discipline can easily continue to grow and impact bigger parts of our lives as well. A wide-spanning wall can seem impossible to lay, however if you set the bricks down one by one, you will find the task soon fully completed.

Find Your Fuel

Source from a feeling of abundance rather than scarcity. Strive for healthier eating habits because you love your body and want to preserve and enhance the parts of yourself you appreciate rather than because you despise how you currently are. Just as the fuel placed within a vehicle affects performance, the fuel we source for motivation affects us deeply. Negatively sourced motivation can burn out quickly and also create an unending narrative that you aren't "good enough". On the opposite end, a positive source of motivation is founded on gratitude for what your teachers have shared as well as self respect, self appreciation, and self love. During times of low energy, focus on your fuel. It isn't enough to remember why we started this journey, we must keep in mind why we have continued thus far. 📖



AUTHOR BIO

With writing credits that span multiple websites and publications, Justin has a massive amount of appreciation and respect for martial arts of every kind. This passion has led him to travel overseas, meet many high level martial artists, and pursue training in multiple disciplines.

Letter From The Publisher

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Martial Journal, Print Edition. We started Martial Journal, the website, years ago in an effort to give budding martial arts writers a chance to build a following. At the same time, we recruited established writers for the same reason and, through it all, built quite the community. During those early days we spent money but had no idea how we'd recoup the costs.

Despite being a whistlekick website, we never branded it because I didn't want to distract from the mission, and I feared putting our stamp too heavily on it might compromise the integrity. For the same reason, we've never allowed Martial Journal to publish a review about anything whistlekick has produced.

Now, here we are, launching a print edition of a magazine when the rest of the world has decided that's a foolish move. Further yet, we're doing it with no direct cost to the reader. Crazy, I know. But if you take a big step back and look at the amazing world that is martial arts, you'll see that there are more than enough of us to further an endeavor like this. The advertising covers the expenses and pays the writers, editors, and other staff. But we do it in such a way that is rooted in enough efficiency that we can mail this limited-edition publication to the most ravenous of readers.

Stay tuned, there's more in store.

Publisher
Jeremy Lesniak



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