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In This Edition » December 2017–January 2018



Features

20 Cover Story: Okinawa Calling

Sensei Damien Martin reveals why he and many other Aussie karateka are returning to karate's country of origin, Okinawa, in increasing numbers

28 To Be Free Like Lee

Renowned Jeet Kune Do master Chris Kent talks about the philosophies of Bruce Lee and his years as the assistant to Lee's number-one student, Guro Dan Inosanto

36 BJJ's 100 kg Principle

Brazilian jiu-jitsu pioneer John Will reveals some handy principles for ensuring you use your weight to full advantage when grappling

44 Why Do We Punch?

A revealing look at the evolution of the human fist and how it relates to why we punch, and different martial arts' methods for striking

48 Science & Self-Defence

Combat tai chi instructor Sifu Al Williams outlines some of the key scientific concepts that govern how we deal with conflict and inform how we should train

72 To Hurt & To Heal: Part Two

Goju Kensha karate instructor and shiatsu practitioner Sheryn Gung Sensei reveals the connections between the Asian fighting arts, traditional Chinese medicine and Western science

78 Beyond the Shadows

Australian ninjutsu pioneer and long-time security professional Shihan Mike Hammond, 10th Dan, looks back on the heady days of early ninjutsu training Down Under



10



16



58



64



82



94

Regulars

6 Editorial

BLITZ & PIECES

- 10 News & Events
- 16 Martial Movies
- 18 Martial Arts Gear

ON THE MAT

- 57 **Technique Workshop**
Three instructors show defences against a throat grab and punch
- 64 **Drill It**
RAW Combatives' Jim Armstrong drills self-defence skills for kids
- 66 **The Burn**
Matt Beecroft reveals why grip training is great for your grappling and your long-term health

FULL CONTACT

- 82 **Fight Life**
Former kickboxing champ Nadine Champion reveals what goes on in a fighter's mind before a title shot
- 86 **Reality Check**
Krav maga instructor Jeff Phillips recalls the real-life lessons learned from facing a knife-wielding mugger

MARTIAL MINDS

- 90 **Fighting Words**
Dr John Jory tells us why the recent McGregor-Mayweather boxing bout was good for martial arts

- 92 **Living Budo**
Sensei David Dangerfield on why the concept of space is so important in understanding your martial art
- 94 **Get Tactical**
Graham Kuerschner explains how to enhance your ability to perceive and assess danger before the 'bang'
- 96 **Close Quarters**
Paul Cale reveals the key elements to completing a mission successfully
- 98 **The Last Word**
John Will discusses the reasons for doing martial arts and why they change

Prepare to Succeed

Some of you will be reading this at the height of end-of-year celebrations, and some of you as you look back on the good times and contemplate the year ahead. Either way, it's probably a good time to assess the year that's gone, reassess your direction and plan ahead for what's to come.



Silvio Morelli, CEO of Blitz Publications & Multi-Media Group, co-founded *Blitz* magazine in the late 1980s. Morelli is a lifelong martial artist and founder of Geido Kai freestyle karate.



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This month in *Blitz* you will find examples of many individuals who have used goal-setting to great effect — although our ex-military columnist Paul Cale prefers the term 'mission' to 'goal' (see page 96 for more). The following pages contain inspiring examples of what determination and an unwavering commitment to goals can achieve — but while it may not be immediately evident, these successful people will inevitably have undertaken a lot of self-evaluation and planning to get where they are.

In early January I always set aside two or three days of quality time to review what I've done, what I've achieved and what targets I've missed over the past 12 months. I believe it's very important to do this and to review your results. Have a think about what circumstances you faced and what affected your overall results — sometimes there are very good reasons why we missed certain targets.

Sometimes we might miss our targets (and note, I use this term rather than 'fail', which has an unhelpful finality about it) because we take our eye off our action plan and waste valuable time along the way. It is critical that we use this time to evaluate what we have done because it will make it very clear in our mind the things that we did, the things that we should have done and, obviously, the things that we must do in the future to achieve our goals.

As I said, I normally spend two or three days reviewing the last 12 months and re-evaluating all the goals I've set for myself, and also setting new goals for the following year. I don't treat this process lightly, either; some quiet time alone must be dedicated to the process. I cannot overstate the importance of this, especially at the beginning of the year. Putting aside quality time to evaluate past performance and set new goals will enable you to put your plans in motion with a clear sense of where you're going and why.

I have spoken about the steps to goal-setting quite a few times in the years past and, as I've mentioned before, martial arts training is not just about building our self-defence skills, competing or developing our bodies. The process that we go through over the weeks, months and years is life-changing. Martial arts are a vehicle for self-development and self-improvement. We require

courage, discipline, hard work and perseverance to achieve proficiency in any art, as well as to change our bodies through physical training.

We must continue to train, apply correct health and nutrition strategies, and keep motivating ourselves to get to training day in, day out. Life generally, it must be said, is very similar to what we experience in our process in the dojo. We have to set goals in life. We're always going to be challenged by obstacles on a daily basis and if you expect life to be perfect, you're setting yourself up for disappointment.

This requires us to stay focused on our goals and keep working to overcome the challenges we face each day. I've learned many life lessons through my martial arts training and experiences in the gym over almost 40 years and I have used the same strategies to overcome obstacles in daily life. For me there has been a real parallel between my experiences in the dojo and my life outside it, and I've been able to use the strategies of goal-setting, creative visualisation and positive affirmation in all other areas of my life.

I can guarantee you that if you take some time to plan your goals, you will achieve amazing results. You've no doubt heard the old saying, 'If you fail to plan, then you are planning to fail'. So write down your goals and their order of importance, and the steps you will need to take to achieve them. Then try to work out a time-line to achieve each step — this will make it easier to achieve your goals and keep track of your progress. You also need to evaluate the obstacles you will face and brainstorm some solutions, then devise a plan to overcome them. This will also involve some honest personal appraisal; take note of what habits or behaviours you may need to change and how you can do so. Again, set a plan of action. It may never happen if you don't have clear steps to follow from the beginning.

May 2018 be a prosperous one for you — for those who maintain focus on their goals, I'm sure it will be. Keep the faith, stay committed and you'll be rewarded.



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New kung fu masters for Gary Martin centre

Celebrations are under way at the long-standing Gary Martin Kung-fu Centre in Moorebank, NSW after two of the school's most highly ranked members, Mark Lunnon and Jeff Stiffle, passed their Gold-sash grading recently.

It took 20 years of training and a grueling 20 hours of testing for them to achieve the rank, with the grading covering all of the martial arts' strategies and sciences learned over the last 20 years, along with Chinese medicine, philosophy, history and, as chief instructor Da Shi Gary Martin stated, answering the 'why' question.

"A master doesn't just do something because he/she was taught it; a true master knows 'why' it is done," said Martin. The grading included a five-hour theory exam, in which both Lunnon and Stiffle scored the perfect 100 per cent.

Lunnon, 42, is a school teacher and has been training with Martin for 21 years, while Stiffle, 37, is an osteopath and has been training with Martin for 20 years. Both are married with children.

"Our large member base all have an enormous respect for Mark and Jeff, not just because of their martial arts abilities, but both are what the members call 'A-grade' men," said Martin.

"I'm extremely pleased to see so many of our members seeking the traditional martial art path, in an era where the focus is now more on sport than traditional knowledge and insights."

Lunnon and Stiffle now join Martin, his wife Julie, and fellow Gold-sash Mick Cowan in the school mentoring team, with the aim of assisting even more members to reach this elite grade.

Newly minted kung fu masters Mark Lunnon & Jeff Stiffle



Cult following for US podcast

A real-life crime podcast, based on an American martial arts cult is proving popular. *Deceived: The Moo Years* tells the story of Russell Johnson, a man who claims to have survived eight years in martial arts cult Chung Moo Quan. The 12-episode series, which aired on iTunes in October, has since ranked 23rd most popular on the platform's daily podcast charts.

The podcasts focus on Master John C. Kim, the leader of Chung Moo Quan, who is rumoured to have died in February 2016. Kim was a known criminal. In the late 1990s he was convicted of evading tax at his Oom Yung Doe martial art schools. During his trial it was revealed that Kim and colleagues conned students into making huge cash payments for courses and administered 'loyalty tests' in which students were forced to decide between leaving the school or dying. He was also described to hold a cult-like status among a group of loyal followers.

Deceived: The Moo Years was co-written by Johnson and David Bruskin, a motion picture story analyst, credited with work on *Forrest Gump*, *A League of Their Own* and *What Happens in Vegas*. Since leaving the cult, Johnson has dedicated his life to teaching others about the deceptions of Chung Moo Quan and the dangers of cults. He is now a private investigator and today works in the security field. He has also immersed himself in film and television as a writer, production assistant, actor, producer, location manager and social media coordinator.

Deceived: The Moo Years is available free to access on iTunes.



Wing Chun's happy campers

More than 50 members of Practical Wing Chun Australia attended the Practical Wing Chun spring camp in Queensland. Hosted by Sifu Jack Leung, the two-day event took place at the PCYC Bornhoffen Centre in Brisbane.

The camp featured a double workshop timetable, with two workshops running simultaneously and members participating according to their preference. Day one options included: Siu Lim Tau (the first empty-hand form of Wing Chun) and applications, Chum Kiu (the second empty-hand form) and applications, concepts for fighting multiple opponents, dealing with blunt weapons and edged weapons, and using weapons for self-defence.

The second day of the camp saw Geordie Lavers-McBain introduced as a surprise guest speaker. The Black Dragon Kai martial arts academy chief instructor holds Black-belts in multiple systems, including shoot-wrestling and Brazilian jiu-jitsu, and gave the kung fu folk a workshop on ground defence and how to get back up off the ground.

"Members of PWC experienced the dynamic of self-defence from a groundfighter's perspective," said Leung.

Lavers-McBain is also president of Kudo Queensland and the Australian Federation of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu's Queensland director.



Geordie Lavers-McBain & Jack Leung (front, centre) with their seminar group

Chida Shihan Down Under

A living legend of Yoshinkan aikido and the founder of Aikido Renshinkai, Tsutomu Chida Soke, paid a special visit to Melbourne in October. "He was magical in his movements, very smooth. He astounded everyone," said Aikido Shudokan chief instructor Joe Thambu Shihan, who hosted Chida Soke.

During his time down under, Chida led a two-day training course at Melbourne's Aikido Shudokan. More than 80 Yoshinkan aikido practitioners travelled from across Australia to attend the event.

This was the first trip Chida has made Down Under in 20 years. It was a special visit for long-time friend Thambu. "In some ways he's changed a lot and in some ways he's the same man I met in the '80s," said Thambu. "His aikido has changed a lot. It's more supple, more amazing and the level of finesse is something that you don't see anywhere."

Thambu said the training course was well-received by attendees. "His seminar was very informative and educational. Everyone got lots out of it."

Alongside demonstrations and seminars, Chida found the time to go on a fishing trip. "I think a lot of people think of high-level teachers as god-like," said Thambu. "But when you hang out with them, you find out they're humans too. They have their likes and dislikes."

Soke was an *uchi deshi* (live-in disciple) of the late Gozo Shioda, founder of the Yoshinkan dojo. Yoshinkan is the home

of the infamous Senshusei course, an 11-month intensive aikido-training program undertaken by the Tokyo riot police and also open to civilians. In 1994, when Gozo Shioda-Sensei passed away, Chida Soke continued supporting the Yoshinkan Honbu. In 2008 he left the Yoshinkan organisation to establish Aikido Renshinkai.

Chida Soke in action Down Under



Street Edge hits India

Members of Mumbai's specialist counter-terrorism unit were among those to attend Brisbane-based Street Edge Krav Maga's first international seminar in India. The seminar was held by senior instructor Milind Kawade.

A group of 30 Shivgarjana Pratishtan students attended the first seminar. The students are trained in traditional Indian martial arts, such as sword fighting, stick fighting and Indian wrestling, but none had any previous experience in krav maga or defensive tactics. Other attendees included a prominent VIP and their bodyguard team, as well as a representative from India's elite Force One Commando.

Milind Kawade teaching in India



Force One Commando is the primary tactical unit of the Mumbai Police. Formed by the Government of Maharashtra in response to the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, the unit was trained by the Israeli Special Forces to be a specialist counter-terrorism unit, tasked with guarding the Mumbai metropolitan region.

Kawade's seminar covered situational awareness, empty-hand and control and restraint techniques, and defensive measures against armed attackers, including impact weapons, firearms and edged weapons. Specific training for women's safety was also given, due to the increase in attacks against women throughout India.

Kawade trained extensively with Street Edge Krav Maga chief instructor and former Australian Federal Police operative Paul Johnstone in Brisbane. He has since relocated to India, but maintains close contact with Australia, continuing to study under Johnstone during his return trips. Kawade is a senior instructor in Street Edge and holds equivalent status in India. He is also the India representative for Israeli Special Forces Krav Maga Australasia and holds the rank of Shodan from Bujinkan Jissen Dojos Australia.

Kawade is passionate about self-defence in India. "Every morning I read the news and in so many corners of India there are gang rapes and physical abuse of women," he said. Despite this, kawade believes many people throughout India maintain the mindset that "this will never happen to us".

Kawade's seminar was taught in the local language and all profits were donated to cultural foundations and the preservation of an ancient fort. Kawade and Johnstone have been invited to conduct a series of seminars for various government law enforcement agencies and specialised units in India. These seminars are expected to take place in 2018.

Champions lead Ishinryu's inaugural 3 k's course

An inaugural three 'k' karate course held by Victoria's Ishinryu Seaford dojo attracted more than 90 students from various styles of karate.

The course was made up of the three 'k's of karate: karate *kihon* (basic techniques), kata (forms) and kumite (sparring). The event was run over three hours and students were divided into groups, with each instructor taking a group through the three k's.

The instructors were led by world team champion, three-times British champion and founder of Ishinryu karate, Sensei David 'Ticky' Donovan (OBE and 9th Dan), former Australian Karate Federation national/state coach and US national champion Sensei Bruce Hyland, 7th Dan, and founder of the Australian School of Shotokan Karate and national title champion Sensei Edji Zenel, 5th Dan.

Sensei Donovan makes an annual pilgrimage from England to visit his Ishinryu dojos in Victoria. During his last trip, he ran exclusive training in Ishinryu kihon and private lessons for advanced grades. Being the first week of the school holidays, every session was packed.

While in town, Donovan awarded Sensei Janice Bathols her 4th Dan for her dedication and commitment to Ishinryu. Donovan is now back in his second home, Thailand, for a well-earned rest and is looking forward to his next visit in 2019.



Senseis Hyland, Donovan & Zenel with the Ishinryu clan

Dust off your gear for Sportsfinda

A new online hub for selling second-hand sports equipment and clothing is designed to bring a fundraising boost to sports clubs of all kinds.

Australian entrepreneur Ahmad Elhawli is marketing his website sportsfinda.com.au as a fundraising solution for local sporting clubs and parents struggling to buy equipment.

"Every junior sports club has equipment, unwanted gear and lost property lying around," said Elhawli. "The arrival of sportsfinda.com.au means clubs can now turn this sports equipment into much-needed cash." Elhawli hopes the website will also allow families to access second-hand sports gear at reduced prices.

"There are a number of different sites people can use to buy and sell new and second-hand sports equipment, all involving different trading terms and offerings, but they're mixed in with other products and services," said Elhawli. "So I decided to simplify the market space..."

"As an Aussie growing up in a sporting nation and playing sport, I know how hard it is for local sporting clubs to raise funds," he said. "My hope is that [the website] will become a key part of every sporting club's fundraising activities."

Need help to kick bad diet habits?

A CSIRO study has analysed the diet-related personality types of more than 90,000 Australian adults to answer the question: why is it so hard to maintain a healthy diet?

With almost two in three Australian adults overweight or obese, the resulting CSIRO report — which identifies five key diet-related personality types in what is Australia's largest ever diet and personality survey — will be welcomed by many Aussies.

"For anyone who has found eating to lose weight difficult, your personal diet type, daily habits and lifestyle factors could provide the answer to why some weight loss methods haven't worked for you in the past," said the report's co-author, CSIRO behavioural scientist Dr Sinead Golley.

The five most common diet personality types found across the surveyed population, including differences in weight status, diet behaviour, gender and generation, were:

The Thinker (37 per cent): Predominantly women (86

per cent), Thinkers tend to over-analyse their progress and have unrealistic expectations, which can result in a sense of failure that derails the diet.

The Craver (26 per cent): Cravers find it hard to resist temptation, and 58 per cent of them are obese.

The Socialiser (17 per cent): Food and alcohol play a big role in the Socialiser's active social life, so flexibility is key to maintaining a healthy diet.

The Foodie (16 per cent): Foodies are most likely to be a normal weight. Passionate about food, this type has the healthier diet with a high variety of vegetables in their diet. Alcohol makes up one-third of their discretionary food and beverage intake.

The Freewheeler (4 per cent): Spontaneous and impulsive eaters, Freewheelers have the poorest quality diet. Mostly men, Freewheelers avoid planning meals and 55 per cent are obese.

The CSIRO has now set up an online diet type survey designed to provide behavioural insights to increase a person's potential to successfully lose weight. According to Dr Golley, "If you're frustrated by unsuccessful weight loss attempts, having a better understanding of your personal triggers and diet patterns can be the crucial piece of the puzzle."

To learn more, visit www.diettypes.com.au



The Jet lands Down Under

American martial arts legend Benny 'The Jet' Urquidez made another inspirational appearance Down Under in October, taking his annual seminar tour to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The sensei spoke about his 50 years of ring-bound warfare and showed participants the skills that saw him garner five world titles and remain undefeated. Those in attendance were also given a glimpse into Sensei Urquidez's world, as he shared his philosophies on life as a martial artist.

A wide variety of martial arts were represented at each seminar, from kung fu to kickboxing. "It gave me great pleasure to see practitioners from all styles of martial arts enjoy and learn from this world-renowned and most respected martial artist," said taekwondo master James Sheedy, who hosts Urquidez during his Australian tours. "Sensei Benny always says he is a better teacher than a fighter — that's definitely saying something considering his unbelievable fight career."

Sensei Urquidez spent time speaking to individuals after each seminar. "Regardless of what disciplines of martial arts people trained in, one thing was certain: the impact Sensei Urquidez had on all in attendance," said Sheedy.

Sensei Urquidez will be Down Under again in October 2018, with added tour dates in Adelaide and Perth. Information about past and future seminars can be found on the Facebook page: 'Benny 'The Jet' Urquidez Australian Tour 2017'.

"For those seminar holders that made it possible for others to attend and for those who attended, it was a pleasure to meet you and thanks for making this year's tour a fantastic experience," said Sheedy.



"The Jet" teaching a seminar in Sydney with James Sheedy

Breathing science blitzes Beecroft

Blitz strength and conditioning expert and krav maga instructor Matt Beecroft was blown away by the benefits received from a recent Buteyko breathing method program.

"It has most certainly been extremely good fortune for me to have had the amazing opportunity to train for three days in the Oxygen Advantage instructors course with one of the world's leading experts on breathing and the Buteyko breathing method," said Beecroft. The Buteyko breathing method is a series of exercises designed to reduce 'over breathing' and its purported symptoms, such as asthma, ADHD, rhinitis/hay fever, stress and sleep apnoea. It was developed by Russian-Ukrainian doctor Konstantin Buteyko. The Oxygen Advantage is a program developed by author and Buteyko master instructor Patrick McKeown, who trained under Doctor Buteyko.

"Whether it's for health or performance, this is the new (and old) frontier of untapped potential," says Beecroft. "It was a real privilege and a great experience attending the course. Whilst my brain is absolutely fried just from the biochemistry, I can't wait to see where this path will go. This is absolutely life-changing."



Beecroft demonstrating breathing exercises: the hand on the belly is to measure full diaphragm expansion

Aikido honours for local sensei

Melbourne's Sensei Jon Marshall will see out 2017 with promotions in two highly respected forms of aikido. Marshall was awarded the titles of Shibuchō (branch chief) of Gyokushin-ryu in Australasia, Shihan and the rank of 5th Dan by Terui Washizu Sensei, the founder of the Gyokushin-ryu school of aikido. He was then recognised by the Yoshinkan Aikido Honbu Dojo, receiving the rank of shihan for his contribution to the international spread of Yoshinkan aikido.

The promotions were well earned, according to Marshall's long-time instructor Shihan Joe Thambu. "With 32 years of training and teaching, six of them at Yoshinkan, he [Marshall] has truly earned this title," said Thambu. "The shihan title can be interpreted in a number of ways. In the Yoshinkan system it is awarded to one who, in character and technique, exemplifies the art."

Marshall began his training at the age of 10 under the tutelage of Thambu Shihan at the Aikido Shudokan. As a young adult, he moved to Japan to further his training at the Yoshinkan aikido *honbu* (headquarters) dojo. The following year he joined the 7th International Instructor Course (or Senshusei program), training alongside the Tokyo riot police. He was promoted to 3rd Dan on completion of the course and became an instructor at the honbu dojo.

In 2003 Marshall returned to Australia to pursue studies in osteopathy and became a senior instructor at the Aikido Shudokan in Melbourne. Three years later, at the age of 31, Marshall became the youngest foreigner to be awarded the rank of 5th Dan in Tokyo.

The last seven years have seen Marshall start his own dojo, now named Melbourne Budo Academy, and become a direct student of Terui Washizu Sensei, the founder of Gyokushin-ryu. Marshall makes regular trips to the Gyokushin-ryu headquarters in Shizuoka.



Marshall & Washizu Sensei

Grapplers gather for annual Machado visit

More than 360 competitors gathered at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (MSAC) in September to test their jiu-jitsu skills at the annual Australasian Machado Gathering. The event, held each September to coincide with a visit from US-based Professor Rigan Machado, 8th Degree, drew students and instructors from more than 60 academies.

With eight different divisions and a large number of second-generation BJJ Black-belts on the mats, the action was fast and highly entertaining for the solid crowd of spectators at MSAC. Bouts were run according to the IBJJF's point-based submission rules, with matches running for five, six, eight or 10 minutes depending on

the rank. Competitors are awarded points for acquiring positions of control (e.g. mount, side-control, knee-ride, back-control) over opponents or via execution of successful takedowns or reversals (sweeps). The ultimate goal, however, is to force the opponent to submit via a choke or joint-lock, which takes precedence over any accumulated points.

Organiser and head of BJJ Australia John Will reflected on the art's development since he first established it in Australia some 30 years ago, having since fostered the developments of more than 100 local BJJ Black-belts.

"The BJJ competition scene has enjoyed phenomenal growth over the past few decades," said Will.

"Ever since the advent of the UFC, BJJ has gained a level of popularity that is surprising; especially considering the challenging nature of the training regimes. There are competitions in the USA and Europe that attract thousands of competitors, such is the growth in interest around BJJ and submission grappling sports."

Will, a long-time friend and representative of Professor Machado, also paid tribute to his mentor's role in establishing the art Down Under.

"The BJJ landscape in Australasia traces its lineage back to the Machado brothers, originally of Brazil. Professor Rigan Machado was the original owner of the Barra Gracie Academy in Rio de Janeiro and held the (yet

unbroken) record of over 350 consecutive wins in competition," said Will.

"Australia's original BJJ academy took root in Geelong but now, the fruit of that initial planting can be found in every state and territory of Australia and on both north and south islands of New Zealand. With over 100 second-generation Black-belts now teaching and training Down Under, Machado BJJ enjoys a level of camaraderie and solidarity that remains truly special on the martial arts landscape."

Next year's Gathering is set for 8 September 2018 and Prof. Machado will also run seminars around that date.

John Will & Rigan Machado (front, centre) with BJJ Australia's senior Black-belts



Black-belts battle at The Gathering



Seminar brings budoka from abroad

Adelaide had a taste of international budo in October, as teachers from all over the world attended the Kokusai Kaigi International Congress. About 80 students, teachers and spectators were present at the annual event, which is hosted by the World Budo Kan Association (WBKA). During the meeting, students had the opportunity to train with teachers from all over the world, including Switzerland-based Shihan Juerg Steiner (6th Dan, Aikido), Arizona's Hanshi Larry Hall (10th Dan), and Hawaii's Kyoshi Angel Lemus (7th Dan, Shorin-ryu and Kojo-ryu).

Shihan Juerg Steiner took the Dan-grades through some *bokken kumitachi* (wooden sword two-person attack and defence techniques), incorporating evading, control, wrist locks and takedowns. A junior workshop was delivered by Hanshi Hall, assisted by committee member John Alford Sensei of Tugra Shan Martial Arts.

"Some juniors demonstrated their flexibility by showing extremely high kicks," said sensei Alford. "Others showed their expertise in aikido techniques against a number

of opponents. Aikido, jujitsu and weapons techniques demonstrated were very sharp...I'm sure we all came away with some exciting techniques to add to our arsenal."

The workshops were followed by the WBKA gala dinner and charity auction. Special guests included vice consul of Japan Mr Shota Tohara and parliamentary secretary for multicultural affairs, trade and small business Jing Lee. Both dignitaries gave speeches, outlining how the benefits of martial arts create good societies.

During the gala dinner, Hanshi Hall was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award. "I was simply overwhelmed by the love and kokoro spirit that I felt in Australia," he said. "I can't wait until next year."

The WBKA is a non-for-profit organisation dedicated to the preservation of the Japanese and samurai arts. The association is already planning its 2018 seminars at which visiting teachers volunteer their time and skills. Profits from the events are used to finance the teachers' accommodation and travel.



Could Conor take fighters' rights to US Congress?

American Congressman Markwayne Mullin is on a mission to extend the legal protections enjoyed by boxers to MMA fighters, and he thinks UFC megastar Conor McGregor might be able to help.

In May 2015, Mullin, a former fighter, introduced the Muhammad Ali Expansion Act to the House of Representatives. The original Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, often referred to as 'The Ali Act', was enacted in 2000. It was designed to protect the rights of boxers and help states regulate the sport. Specific protections include safeguards against "coercive contracts", the founding of an independent ranking system, and the restriction of promoters having "direct or indirect financial interest" in managing fighters. Mullin wants the same protections extended to MMA fighters.

Mullin's bill so far had two subcommittee hearings and he

believes McGregor may help push the next one. "We have been told by [McGregor's] team that he was going to come to the [Capitol] Hill to talk about this," Mullin told Reuters.

But not everyone in the industry is supporting the bill, including the UFC. The organisation's chief operating officer Lawrence Epstein believes the UFC is already exceeding health, safety and contract requirements. He opposed the idea that an independent ranking system could improve MMA. "We have been successful for one reason and one reason only: we put on the fights the fans want to see," he told Reuters. "That's where we have a problem with what Congressman Mullin wants to do." According to Mullin, a transparent ranking system would allow fighters and spectators a better understanding of who's in line for a title shot.



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WWW.BJJ.COM.AU

Samurai seeks revenge

Immortality is revealed to be a doubled-edged (and very bloody) sword in Japanese master Takashi Miike's 100th film. Inspired by a manga story by the same name, *Blade of the Immortal* tells the tale of Manji (Takuya Kimura), a samurai warrior with the gifts of immortality and self-healing. Don't be fooled, though, swipe him and he will bleed, impale him and he will keel over in vomit-inducing gurgles. He just won't die.

It may seem like a blessing but Manji was in fact cursed with these qualities after a legendary battle. The scale of this curse comes to the fore when Manji's sister is killed and he must live forever with his loss. Manji's pain transforms into an unquenchable need for vengeance, which leads to a gory bloodbath, delivered with a samurai precision that will make even the most hardy squeamish.

"If you are going to see one outlandish and occasionally nauseating bloodbath samurai pic this year, this is the one," writes *The Guardian* reporter Jordan Hoffman. Debuting at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, *Blade of the Immortal* is expected to be on Blu-ray and DVD in February.



Takuya Kimura plays an immortal samurai



Sammo Hung in *God of War*

Hung vs pirates

He may have just met the Australian retirement age, but martial arts movie master Sammo Hung is still delivering on the film front. Since debuting at the age of 12, the Hong Kong movie buff has traversed the industry, from sparring against Bruce Lee in 1973 action film *Enter the Dragon* to directing kung fu classic *The Prodigal Son* and launching Jackie Chan's career with a series of action comedy collaborations.

On 17 January the man known affectionately as 'Big Big Brother' will grace screens once again in *God of War*. Fans who were disappointed with Hung's 2016 directorial return in *My Beloved Bodyguard* might be pleasantly surprised with this sweeping epic.

The drama is set in 16th-century China. Pirates rule the coastline, terrorising citizens and brutalising anyone in their path. Hung plays General Yu Dayou, a maverick leader set on defeating the pirates alongside an astute, young general (Vincent Zhao). Wit and weapons collide as the two sides battle for power. Directed by Gordon Chan, *God of War* will be available on DVD and Blu-Ray from January 17.

Honouring tai chi

Jet Li is bringing a cast of A-list kung fu stars to the screen in *Gong Shou Dao*. The short drama that debuted on Chinese screens in November incorporates a range of codes, but tai chi reigns.

Protagonist Jack Ma (the billionaire Alibaba founder acting in his first film) and producer Jet Li have both proclaimed their respect for the ancient Chinese fighting art. In the lead-up to the film's release, Li sought to clarify common misconceptions about tai chi, explaining in a press conference that the art is more than a self-defence practice or an exercise for the elderly.

"Tai chi is much more than that. It is a philosophy and a practice that focuses on achieving balance in life. Everything in life is based on tai chi," Li told reporters. The stellar cast, including Sammo Hung, Donnie Yen and Jing Wu, are rumoured to have worked for free on the film, with the shared goal of paying homage to martial arts predecessors and promoting Chinese culture. An Australian release date is yet to be confirmed.



Jack Ma takes one for the tai chi team

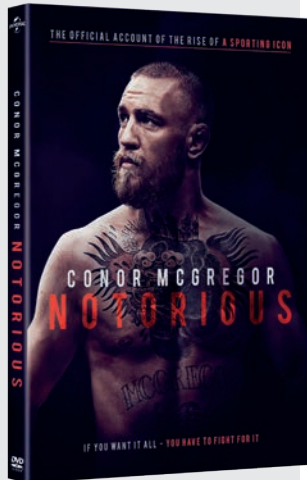
Documenting McGregor's rise and rise

Dublin's UFC lightweight champion Conor McGregor is arguably today's most talked-about fighter. He's loud, unruly and driven. He's also a record breaker, arriving at the fastest knockout in UFC featherweight history and being the first UFC fighter to simultaneously hold titles in two divisions. So how did he get there?

From humble beginnings surviving on 'the benefit' and living in his mum's spare room to MMA superstardom, McGregor's story is laid bare in biopic *Notorious*. Training since the age of 12, the 29-year-old now has 21 wins under his belt, 18 by knockout. He's also established himself as one of the biggest earners in the game, headlining some of the most profitable pay-per-view matches in MMA history.

Notorious is an all-access account of McGregor's rise to the top, filmed over the course of four years. Following McGregor both in and out of the ring, this docu includes behind-the-scenes interviews, fight footage and highlights from his career. He might be known as a relentless self-promoter but *Notorious* does not shy away from the bumpy road to success, with McGregor's shock loss to rival Nate Diaz and his record-breaking bout against Floyd Mayweather featuring.

Directed by Gavin Fitzgerald and produced by Jamie D'Alton, *Conor McGregor - Notorious* is available on Blu-Ray and DVD.



Lego goes stealth

Heroes of childhood come together in *The LEGO Ninjago Movie*. The 3D-animated, martial arts comedy follows the quest of six ninja-trained Lego teenagers dealt with the difficult task of protecting their kingdom from a wicked warlord.

The plot follows a familiar premise...after a series of assaults, evil Lord Garmadon takes over the kingdom and the six ninjas, along with their master (Jackie Chan).

They must seek out a secret that can destroy the warlord. In a *Star Wars*-style twist, the leader of the ninjas is the son of Lord Garmadon.

The film is a celebration of reconciliation and empowerment, delivered with a good dose of family-friendly humour. Among the big names to voice the drama are martial movie legend Jackie Chan, rising star Dave Franco and model-actress Olivia Munn. *The LEGO Ninjago Movie* is available in digital formats from December, 2017.



Action Stars better act fast!

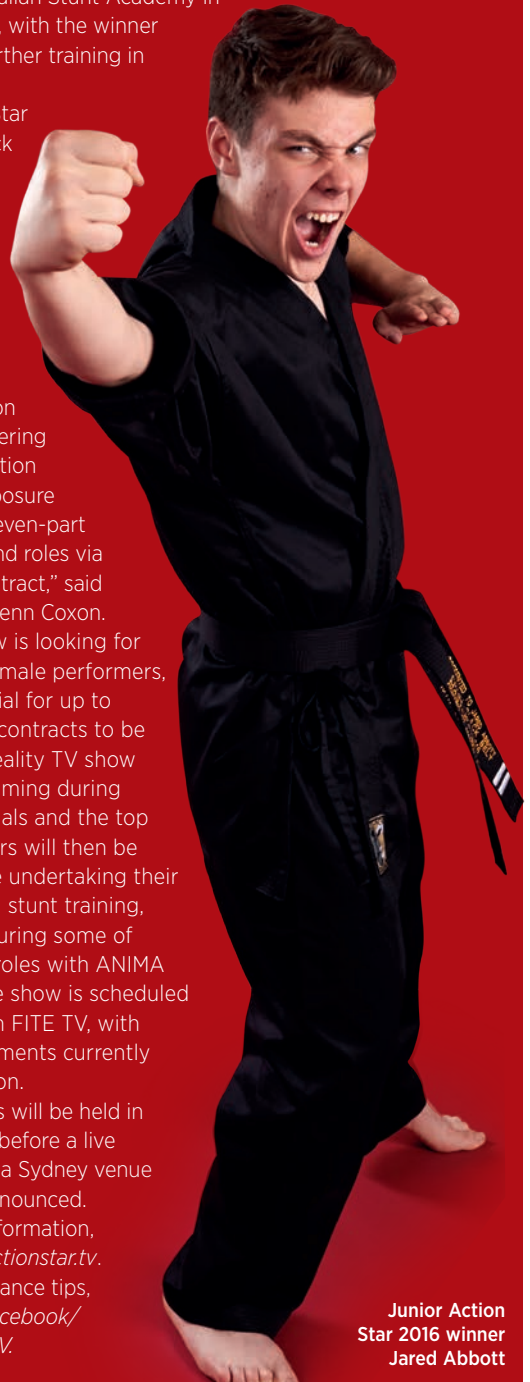
Time is running out to get involved in the second instalment of Kapow TV's Action Star Competition, which offers the chance to land an action film contract.

Action Star, which launched last year in association with Sydney production house ANIMA Studios, will hold open auditions in the NSW capital on 9-10 December. Finalists will then take part in a reality TV series that will document their journey through a two-week stunt course at the Australian Stunt Academy in Queensland, with the winner receiving further training in the USA.

"Action Star is a fast-track opportunity for existing and new-to-industry performers to break into the action film and television industry, offering specialist action training, exposure through a seven-part TV series, and roles via a studio contract," said organiser Glenn Coxon.

The show is looking for male and female performers, with potential for up to four studio contracts to be filled. The reality TV show will begin filming during the initial trials and the top 12 performers will then be filmed while undertaking their professional stunt training, as well as during some of their initial roles with ANIMA Studios. The show is scheduled to screen on FITE TV, with more agreements currently in negotiation.

The finals will be held in March 2018 before a live audience at a Sydney venue yet to be announced. For entry information, visit www.actionstar.tv. For performance tips, visit www.facebook/ActionStar.TV.



Junior Action Star 2016 winner Jared Abbott

Hayabusa Tokushu T3 Boxing Gloves



Given a five-star protection/padding rating from boxingglovesreviews.com, the Hayabusa Tokushu T3 16-ounce boxing gloves are true to Hayabusa's form when it comes to design and have a 'crush zone' filled with its patented Deltra-

EG high-impact padding.

These top-of-the-range gloves feature the brand's unique, multidirectional 'Dual-X' closure for optimum wrist protection and glove stability, and 'Fusion Splinting' for correct wrist and thumb alignment. Made from hardwearing Vylar synthetic leather over XT2 antimicrobial lining, they also boast thermo-regulating qualities to keep those hot hands a little cooler.

Price: \$159.95

Supplier: mmafightstore.com.au

Punch GroupX Man Shield

If you're looking for a punching shield for training, the GroupX® Man Shield by Punch Equipment offers a unique design that combines the round shield, kick shield and focus pad all in one product.

Featuring a large, protruding strike face, the Man Shield can be held by hand or strapped to the leg for partner work. It can also be attached to a tree or post for solo use, and even offers a good-sized stand-in for a partner when practising striking on the ground.

Made to Punch's expected high standard of quality, the GroupX Man Shield is great for giving a visual anatomical reference when teaching or learning striking techniques and is well suited to mass class use and the at-home trainee.

Price: \$149.99RRP

Suppliers: www.punchequipment.com



Henty CoPilot travel bag

The clever two-in-one Henty CoPilot consists of an outer garment bag and a spacious 20-litre inner utility bag. As good for carrying a perfectly pressed gi to a grading or competition as it is for getting a business suit to work on your bike, the garment bag wraps neatly around the utility bag, which can also be worn separately as a stand-alone backpack.

Made from recycled plastic, when rolled the garment bag holds clothes in place to minimise creasing, while the multi-purpose Henty CoPilot has enough space for your business and/or leisure needs, including laptop and other tech devices, two pairs of shoes, toiletries, accessories and gym gear. This durable carry pack features a large external pocket, removable laptop pouch, strong coat hanger with pivoting hook, adjustable buckled straps with comfortable padding, a leather handle for carrying briefcase-style and a high-vis waterproof jacket to protect the bag and belongings.

Henty also offers several customised inner bag designs that are compatible with the CoPilot: Inner Tube, Dry Bag, Sports Messenger and the Sports Backpack.

Price: From \$319

Suppliers: Luggage retailers



DVD: Shaolin Temple Gung Fu series

The six-part DVD series *Shaolin Temple Gung Fu* includes one of the first ever DVDs covering the complete history of China's Shaolin Temple since before Bodhidharma. Shi YanTi, a 34th-generation warrior monk, takes us through a typical day in the temple and also reveals his own personal history, explaining how he started martial arts so young that he can't remember a time when he wasn't doing kung fu.

The other DVDs in the series cover the following topics:

- Jiben gong (Shaolin kung fu fundamentals)
- Da Hong Quan (Shaolin's foundational form)
- Zen/Chan Buddhist practice
- Qi gong standing
- Qi gong sitting.

Price: \$59.95 each (discount for full set)

Supplier: www.subscribeandshop.com





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Before moving to Australia, Jack Leung trained & competed in Goju-Ryu Karate in Hong Kong for 6 years. He also trained Muay Thai in Thailand and several lineages of Southern Praying Mantis, including Chow Gar & Jook Lum Tong Long. In 1996, He was fortunate enough to meet Grand Master Wan Kam Leung in Hong Kong and started training at the Ving Tsun Association. Wan Kam Leung Practical Wing Chun is a close range combat & self defense system that does not pit force against force. He constantly cross train with different martial artists and mentors in other martial arts discipline. After 17 years of training and guidance under Grand Master Wan, he was awarded the title of Sifu in 2013. Sifu Leung now serves as Regional Director for Practical Wing Chun (Australia). Currently runs 6 branches in Queensland and does seminar and corporate workshops around the world. For more info, please visit www.practical-wingchun.com.au Or follow our Youtube Channel www.youtube.com/c/PracticalWingChunAustralia



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It was necessity that saw security professional Sensei Damien Martin gravitate from freestyle karate to reality-based training methods — but, surprisingly, that same need also drew him to Okinawa, back to the roots of the art he started with. Nowadays the 6th Dan Goju-ryu instructor is one of a group of Aussies making regular pilgrimages to the small island chain roughly 640 kilometres south of mainland Japan, and shows no sign of letting up. Jarrod Boyle finds out why.

STORY BY JARROD BOYLE
IMAGES BY EMPEROR CREATIVE

OKINAWA CALLING

SENSEI DAMIEN MARTIN ON REDISCOVERING KARATE'S ROOTS

Okinawa is the birthplace of karate. A vital trading post in the South China Sea and an independent kingdom before its capture by Japan's Satsuma domain in 1609 — later leading to Japanese rule — it was a place where both goods and fighting methods were exchanged for many centuries. Japan's fifth-largest prefecture was a cauldron of conflict during the Second World War but is now a bucolic territory, known to boast one of the largest populations of centenarians in the world.

Damien Martin is one of a group of former Zen Do Kai freestyle karate instructors who have traced their martial origins back to Okinawa and makes the pilgrimage every year to study authentic karate-do, refreshed at its source.

This search for authenticity drives Martin's modern incarnation of Goju-ryu karate at the Southern Cross Martial Arts dojo in Helensvale, Queensland. Martin's karate has survived the acid-test of real world application, and what is left is made up of the durable realities created in feudal Japan.

"A lot of what we were originally told was bullshit," says Martin. "We discover

new things every time we visit [Okinawa]. For instance, the furphy that weapons were banned by the invading samurai, so [the populace] turned to using farming implements for weapons training. There were pre-existing schools of kobudo long before that happened: it was their own king, Sho Shin, in the 15th century who took their weapons away, to keep them under control.

"Their own records and documents were lost during World War Two when the place was levelled by the Allies. Their oral history remains, passed on from instructor to student."

Okinawa hosted one of the bloodiest battles of the South Pacific campaign when the US invaded to appropriate Okinawa as a strategic base for the invasion of mainland Japan. A quarter of the population died or committed suicide during that time.

Kyoshi Steve Nedelkos, another former Zen Do Kai instructor who has returned to Goju-ryu, has also made the pilgrimage to Okinawa and been enriched by the experience.

"I met Taira Sensei when I went back to Okinawa in 2010.

It's not that I was deliberately looking for answers; I just went for the experience," says Nedelkos. "Okinawa is the mystical place that we had all read about when we started. What an opportunity, to train with an Okinawan master.

"It was different to what I had expected. Within the first lesson, there were 'light bulb' moments left, right and centre. We had two weeks of [training] twice a day, four hours a day for two weeks. It came as a revelation, and rekindled my original passion for martial arts. I was struck by the beauty of the kata [and the] lessons inherent in it."

Taira Sensei's own karate method was the source of revelation for Nedelkos.

"Taira's combative expression of Goju was wonderful," he says. "I've seen lots of traditional karate applications but they didn't inspire me as effective; 'you wouldn't do that in the street'. His example was unlike anything I'd seen before. It highlighted the importance of foundations...he had an explanation for everything.

"The original instruction and foundation [of karate] became clearer. Travelling to Okinawa has given us the meaning behind

what we do. As we get older, we search for more meaning in what we do."

Martial arts schools are driven, for better or worse, by the personality of their founders or head instructors. Southern Cross Martial Arts is no exception.

"I want to know 'why,'" Martin explains. "When I asked questions about kata while training as a part of Zen Do Kai, they'd give me bullshit answers. For instance, I'd ask, 'Why do you turn head during Saifa kata?'. . . 'Because you're listening for the enemy'. I knew that was bullshit; I just kicked him in the nuts, so I know where he is! You keep asking questions until someone gives you the right answer."

The right answer was delivered with characteristic diplomacy by Goju master Taira Sensei: "Because you're grappling and move off centre line so you don't get head-butted. Are you an idiot?"

Taira is the instructor that Martin and his cohorts return to see for instruction every year.

"Taira was a cop for about 40 years and did a lot of work on Okinawa around the US military bases," Martin says. "He's had to deal with lots of big people."



Martin and the Southern Cross group learning nunchaku skills from Kenta Kinjo Sensei

GOJU-RYU VS RIGHT CROSS



The scenario: As an aggressor advances into range, Martin raises a passive guard. As the rear hand loads to fire...



...Martin steps off line, parrying with his lead hand as he fires his right arm up to take over...



...drawing the opponent's force past him and covering his head as he immediately returns fire with a punch to the ribs.



Martin then continues moving past his opponent on the blindside, holding the arm to control as he raises his near foot...



...as he stomps down through the back of the aggressor's knee, pinning it to the ground.

Geordie Lavers-McBain, head instructor of Black Dragon Kai, is a former Zen Do Kai instructor who has founded his own style, but has also explored the roots of Goju-ryu.

"I wanted to go back to Goju to learn the kata properly," he says. "I went on a camp that Martin also attended and the instructor corrected a student's kata, saying it had been changed. If everyone is changing it, then we need to go back to the source. Personally, I still find Goju kata interesting because I can relate to it."

This is a big call coming from a martial artist whose school's primary focus is muay Thai.

"Taira Sensei is very good with applications for kata. Lots of BJC [Bob Jones Corporation] people felt they had been misled because Tino Ceberano, Jones' Goju-ryu teacher, and Bob Jones [Zen Do Kai founder] didn't really know the kata applications. [Gogen] Yamaguchi never really trained properly in Okinawa, so he didn't know, either."

"People want to get back to the truth. They want the most reliable source, to make sure they're teaching the best version of it. Taira can trace things back to the kata. He creates that relevance. That's what's really intrigued the Zen Do Kai guys. I know that's what really got Martin."

Traditional Okinawan weapons training, known as kobudo, has further enriched Martin's understanding of his own practice. He trains at the dojo of Masakazu Kinjo Sensei, 9th Dan Uechi-ryu karate and 9th Dan Ryukyuu kobudo — the same dojo where Taira Sensei studies the weaponry arts. Highly regarded for his skills, Kinjo Sensei has a personal collection of more than 600 pairs of nunchaku, as well as dozens of other indigenous weapons.

"I did kobudo with Zen Do Kai and it never made any sense whatsoever. Five years ago, on an Okinawan training trip, Taira Sensei took us to the weapons school where he trains and said,

'This will make your karate better.' And it has. We've been working on it ever since, and we're due to grade for our Black-belts in January of 2018.

"The understanding of body mechanics that comes with using weapons has improved our own body mechanics. I'd never want to use a nunchaku in a fight, but for building your hand-eye coordination and dexterity, the nunchaku is a good weapon."

The difference between Okinawan karate and Japanese karate is significant, and especially relevant to an instructor like Martin.

"The Japanese focus more on sport karate, whereas the Okinawan approach is grounded more in self-defence. They tend to look down their noses at sport karate."

This focus on self-defence and practical application is much closer to Martin's own focus, and the trajectory of his own martial arts journey. Martin began training in the martial arts at the age of 12.

"I was always obsessed with the martial arts, but there was no chance to train until I was 12 because there was nothing around. I grew up in Camperdown, in South-Western Victoria. A judo school opened there in 1982, and I did that for a couple of years."

It wasn't until two years later when a Zen Do Kai school opened in Cobden, 15 minutes away, that Martin got his first taste of the striking arts. "My judo instructor told me I couldn't train in both and had to choose, so I chose karate," Martin recalls.

Again, the personality of the head instructor seemed to influence the development of the style.

"Goju-ryu was the origin of Zen Do Kai, from the Yamaguchi line. Yamaguchi was Tino Ceberano's instructor, who in turn taught Bob Jones. All three were quite similar in their flamboyant and, shall we say, creative characters."

Martin's own ascension

to instructor status was just around the corner and came as a matter of circumstance, as well as dedication.

“In the summer of 1987, the instructor didn’t come back [from holidays], so I ended up running three schools. I was a Brown-belt [at the time]; I had no people skills and no clue.

“People were a mystery; all I knew was to train hard. Each school had about 40 members and I managed to whittle that number down to about five in a matter of weeks.”

Martin didn’t lack in terms of passion or work ethic, and once he was taken under the wing of senior instructor Billy Manne, he found balance and the membership of his schools was rejuvenated.



Martin and fellow karateka socialise at Taira Sensei’s dojo with his old friend and Uechi-ryu 9th Dan Jinkichi Uezo Sensei (left)

JAMES BALL

“PEOPLE IN THE RBSD COMMUNITY SAY KATA ISN’T NECESSARY, BUT I HAVE TO RESPECTFULLY DISAGREE WITH THEM.

“I lifted the membership [at the schools] by becoming better at what I do,” he says. “The bottom line is, there are a lot of good martial artists who are bad teachers, and a lot of good teachers who are average martial artists.”

Martin graded for his Black-belt in December of 1987 and was soon running a total of nine Zen Do Kai schools throughout South-Western Victoria.

“I moved to Warnambool in 1991 and opened a school. I got divorced and met my current wife shortly after that. After doing everything I could to not train her, [she became my student and] here we are, 27 years later.”

From there, Martin opened a Zen Do Kai school in Ballarat at the request of Bob Jones himself.

“I was chuffed to have come to the attention of the founder, so we packed up, moved to Ballarat and I opened my first full-time school. I was only there for a few years. I’d begun working in security. I also started doing a series of courses [in security]. This was before licences, I might add.”

Working security in the time before licences gives Martin extra credibility, having gained first-hand knowledge of the ‘bad old days.’

“The day I turned 18, I went to the Magistrate’s Court and got a guard agent’s licence. I stood before the magistrate, swore I had read the act and could perform the duties required. I quit my government job to do it, much to my father’s disgust.”

Martin’s first job provided the opportunity to put his years of martial arts training to the test.

“I was working in Hamilton, which was so ‘frontier’ that there was only one nightclub in town. It was called Gables. There was nothing there [in Hamilton] other than two football teams, and they dominated the social landscape. You couldn’t bounce there if you were a local. It was the sort of club where you took three shirts to work every night; they



Martin and wife Hannah Thornton standing beside Taira Sensei

either got torn off or covered in blood.”

That sort of high-risk security work put a premium on effective self-defence technique. And it was this kind of work that threw a light on Goju-ryu as the effective bedrock of Martin’s training.

“[Goju places] a stronger emphasis on clinching, grappling and close-quarters work, and builds confidence in that range. You develop a tactile sensitivity; you tend to feel it before you see it. For example, wrist locks and armbars. If you can see them, you’re [physically] too far away from the opponent.”

Security forced Martin to make a swift assessment

of his training, as well as the instructors it had come through.

“You’re taking Occam’s Razor to cut away the stuff that isn’t necessary,” he says. “People in the RBSD [reality-based self-defence] community say kata isn’t necessary, but I have to respectfully disagree with them. Kata is a template for developing logical responses to an opponent’s actions, or responses to your own action. It gives you knowledge of the pain-withdrawal reflex. If you do something, your opponent is likely to do a particular thing. Your follow-up needs to respond to that. Every action has a consequence and a reaction.”

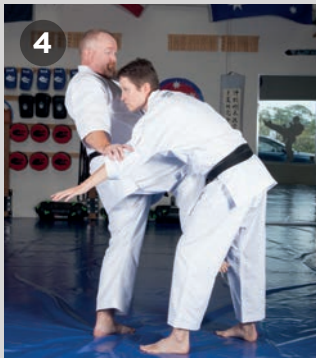
GOJU-RYU VS SHOVE & SWING



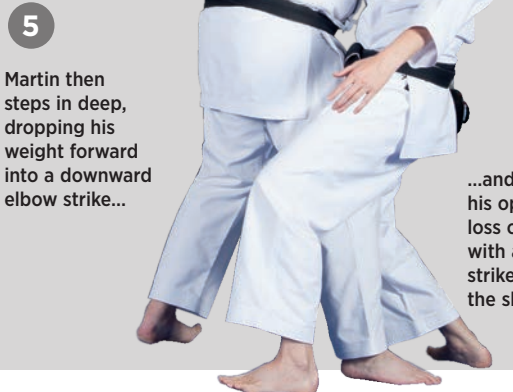
1 In this scenario, Martin is working from a passive guard and as the aggressor moves in to shove and punch him...



2 ...he clears the front arm out while firing a hooking slap that employs a raised elbow to jam the incoming punch.

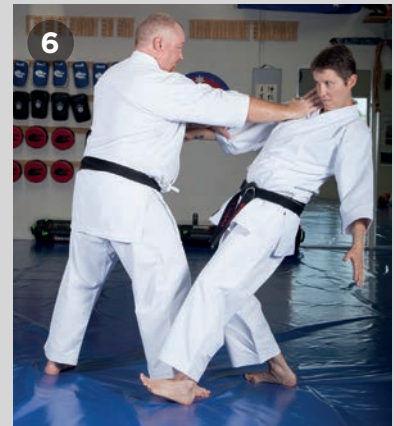


4 ...and onto a knee strike to the solar plexus, groin or nearest suitable target.



5 Martin then steps in deep, dropping his weight forward into a downward elbow strike...

3 Martin follows immediately by controlling both arms, drawing his opponent forward, off balance...



6 ...and accelerates his opponent's loss of balance with a palm strike through the shoulder.

Martin's method demonstrates a talent for working beneath the surface of a system to extract the theory beneath. Coupled with a strong motivation for the pursuit of knowledge, he resolves the contradiction he identified earlier between good martial artists who can't teach and good teachers whose martial arts skills are lacking.

"We work more [in terms of] principles, rather than technique. Instead of having wrist lock number one through six, we work more in terms of the principles of exploiting anatomical weaknesses: balance, posture, simple human biology and psychology.

"If you know how the body works, you can develop logical systems and responses. Most students are taller [than me] and have different physiques, so different things will work [for them]. You have to learn to fight for your body type."

Martin's return to Okinawa has done a lot to place that knowledge in its original context.

"Old-school karate was reality-based self-defence. After the war, in order to make a living teaching Americans, [the Okinawans] changed the nature of the activity. That said, modern techniques are no different; the human body can only move so many ways."

Reality-based self-defence has become a legitimate

extension of Southern Cross Martial Arts, with Martin formulating and delivering courses to a number of government agencies.

"From 2001 to 2014, we put together a training program for the Queensland government in 'aggressive behaviour management'. We facilitated the training of the instructor, who conducted over 80,000 training episodes with them using the RBSD model. It has evolved over time to make it safer without sacrificing 'reality'."

This could mean any number of things, of course, and Martin is quick to clarify.

"It's important to sanitise the environment and train

the participants effectively. You can't just put them in a [protective] suit and tell them to be the bad guy in a scenario, because once you're armoured, it's pretty hard to lose. People get hurt that didn't need to be hurt, instead of instilling confidence."

Physical contact is not necessarily instrumental to creating a realistic scenario.

"You can create realism by screaming," says Martin. "Jim Armstrong [RAW Combatives founder] can do it. He doesn't even have to touch you to create that adrenal response. It's often more effective to do that rather than putting armour on and letting people fight."

Structured progression through a series of identifiable thresholds is important.

“We start with verbal scenarios first to build up confidence, often starting with verbal insults,” Martin explains. “Verbal abuse is often used to shock you to set you up for something else afterwards. Then, we teach people to perform a dynamic risk assessment. That provides an opportunity to practise a skill.

“We’ve been introducing verbal-oriented de-escalation techniques with youth justice workers, which is the same model as what we used with Queensland Health. It’s reportedly reduced ‘use of force’ incidents by 88 per cent. The bottom line is, if you’ve got confidence in a technique, you’ll use it.”

Martin’s passion for ongoing education has taken some unlikely turns, including his graduate certificate in autism studies.

“Once I discovered I was autistic, I thought I should find out a bit more about it. Autism is not a disability, it’s just a

different operating system... [something like the] difference between Mac and PC.

“[Autistic children] have a different view of the world, straight out of the box. They demonstrate obsessive behaviours on given subjects and tend to have difficulty processing social cues. We often [identify] kids before their parents have realised. We recognise the behaviours and say, ‘We need to be a bit more careful with this one.’

“Forty per cent of the kids at our school are on the spectrum. The only difference with them is that they require more patience. It’s not about reduced expectations; we just delay those expectations. We don’t treat them like they’re broken, because they’re not.

“We’re putting together courses for the industry at the moment to help people deliver ethical training to kids on the spectrum. Lots of kids are often excluded for a lack of skills and graces, if you like. Our goal is to address some of that and provide a quality outcome.” ▶



Traditional architecture and culture is still strong across the Ryukyu islands

JAMES BALL



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THE KARATE TOURIST

Damien, what can a karateka experience in Okinawa, in terms of martial arts training, that they can't get in Australia?

Straight up, it's usually about honesty and ego: a lot of honesty about technique, and very little ego. It's not perfect, of course, as people are people and there are a lot of agendas, hidden and otherwise. Pretty much every sensei we've had the privilege of training with on the island has unlocked something within our own training that has led to progression — sometimes multiple times in a matter of minutes! For me it goes back to the fact that a lot of what I was taught as fact was actually fantasy. It was created by non-Okinawan people, some Japanese, some not, to fill the gaps in their own understanding and it took on a life of its own. Things morphed until in many cases they were unrecognisable from the original. With the right cultural and linguistic context, so much of the mystical mumbo jumbo vanished. For example, I once asked my sensei if the early karate pioneers actually trained at the tombs of their ancestors, and if so, why? He gave me that long, lingering look to work out if I was serious and said simply, "Of course! The grass is short — no snakes." Given what I had learned of Okinawan snakes (they're nasty) and the Okinawan customs, that made perfect practical sense.



Martin with Aussie karateka in Okinawa. Billy Manne, Bryson Keenan and Steve Nedelkos (all *kyoshi*) stand in front of the monument

Besides the karate training, what do you love about visiting Okinawa?

There is a lot more to Okinawa than the karate training...there is, of course, kobudo training! Seriously, though, we've fallen in love with the culture, the people, the pace of life and, of course, the beer. I really like the indigenous Okinawan beer called Orion and they even have their own version of Oktoberfest in October (funnily enough) called the Orion Beer Festival. It's great fun.

On a group tour in 2012, we visited the Naha Tug-of-War Festival. There were street parades all day Saturday, then martial arts demonstrations and the Tug-of-War on the Sunday. We also visited the Miyazato Eiko House of Performance Arts, run by Eiko Miyazato



Street performers at Naha's famous Tug-of-War Festival



Tourists enjoy some traditional transport on Taketom Island



Zamami, one of the many beautiful Ryukyu Islands around Okinawa

and his lovely wife Hitomi. Eiko Miyazato Sensei is a *kyoshi* in kobudo and is said to be the first man to ever put his *kama* (sickles) on a rope/chain to use them. The first half of the show features folk music and Ryukyuan dance and drum performances. The second half is all martial arts, including an exhibition of *nunchaku*, and sickle on a chain as long as the stage, which Miyazato Sensei sends whizzing past you just inches away. The exhibition is so rare that this is one of the very few places you can see it.

Hitomi Sensei is also an accomplished kobudo *renshi* and did the most astounding double *nunchaku* demonstration, before finishing in a full front split. It was an amazing performance, especially given she was 56 years old at the time.

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LIKE LEE

AN INTERVIEW WITH JKD MASTER CHRIS KENT

INTERVIEW BY BEN STONE

Jeet Kune Do master Chris Kent's introduction to Bruce Lee's art was a rare one: in 1973, while Lee was still alive, he became the last and youngest member inducted into the famed 'backyard JKD' group run by Guro Dan Inosanto. He went on to study under Inosanto for more than 13 years, travelling with him around the US and abroad, fast developing a knack for critical thinking alongside his skills with foot and fist. Now more than 40 years later, Kent has authored numerous books and videos on JKD, and is seen as one of the world's foremost teachers of the art as well as a fervent propagator of Lee's philosophy. In the lead-up to his 2017 workshops in Sydney on 9-10 December, Kent gave *Blitz* the low-down on his history and the progression of Lee's art.

Chris, how did you come to join such a privileged group as those training in Guro Dan Inosanto's 'backyard JKD' sessions? And were you ready for what followed?

When I returned from living in England for a year, I began training in Five Animal gung fu [kung fu] under Grandmaster Ark Y. Wong in Los Angeles' Chinatown. During that time I read two articles about JKD: Bruce Lee's 'Liberate Yourself from Classical Karate' and Dan Inosanto's 'JKD is Fast, Powerful, and Deceptive'. I decided I wanted to learn JKD, so I contacted *Black Belt* [magazine] to find out how I could go about it. They informed me that Bruce Lee was in Hong Kong and that Dan Inosanto was the only person teaching JKD, and he

taught in a gym in his backyard. They also told me that while they could not give me his phone number, it was in the phone book. So I found it and called him. It took about a month of calls before I actually got to speak to Dan personally, and he informed me that he only taught 12 people and that he might start another class soon and for me to call back in a week. So I did. This went on for another couple of weeks and I guess I must have worn him down, because eventually he invited me to come down to his house to talk. So I went down and as the class was going on we chatted. At the end of the class he invited me to start training. I was 17-and-a-half years old.

I cannot say I was ready for what followed, because I had

never done anything like JKD before. My martial art journey began when I began studying Kodokan judo and jujitsu at Santa Monica YMCA when I was 14 years old. I also did Shotokan karate for a short while until I had a knee injury playing soccer. But none of my previous training prepared me for training in JKD. I never did anything like hitting focus gloves, kicking heavy bags and kicking shields, or gloving up and sparring.

What key elements of the way those early sessions were conducted have you tried to emulate in your own training and classes going forward — and are there any that you and/or Guro Dan have seen a need to change?

The elements I have always maintained since I began training are the use of alive and realistic training methods, the use of equipment in developing and enhancing performance, and cultivating critical-thinking skills and problem-solving skills. JKD is about personal cultivation and becoming a creative, liberated martial artist. Of course things have changed through the years, but often this is more a case of an evolution in such things as training methodology, conditioning, and increasing one's understanding and functional working knowledge in different elements that make up JKD such as striking, grappling, etc. It's not a matter of changing simply for the sake of doing something different. Change has to lead to some form of improvement.

Bruce Lee often talked about simplicity being the goal of practice; for example, "It's not the daily increase but daily decrease. Hack away at the unessential." Indeed, this idea is echoed by martial arts masters across the eons: when it comes to combat, less is more. And yet, many JKD masters such as yourself and Guro Inosanto could be called 'living encyclopedias'

Kent, author of three books including *Jeet Kune Do Kickboxing*, is big on the importance of sparring



"ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS IS THAT MANY PEOPLE CONFUSE SIFU DAN'S PERSONAL PATH AND EVOLUTION AS A MARTIAL ARTIST AS BEING THE ART OF JKD ITSELF."

of martial arts having learned thousands of techniques and variations over the years. How do you maintain a reaction-ready arsenal when constantly working on so many other methods and techniques? And is there a point where adding new things serves only to dilute rather than develop?

Well, first of all, I do not consider myself a living encyclopedia of anything. My focus has and always will be Jeet Kune Do, as well as the Filipino arts known as kali, escrima, arnis, or whatever. I would

definitely consider Sifu Dan to be an encyclopedia, but that is his direction, which is different from mine. Dan loves to keep learning new arts and different things, and then he shares those arts and things with other people. What they get or take from these arts is entirely up to them. The problem is that many people look at what he is doing and say, "Well, that is Jeet Kune Do." And in one way it could be considered following the JKD principle of investigating other martial arts, but in another way it isn't, because it is not

about ending up with a single, cohesive art that is custom-fitted to the individual. I think that one of the biggest problems in the martial art world is that many people confuse Sifu Dan's personal path and evolution as a martial artist as being the art of JKD itself.

And yes, continually accumulating and adding can become a problem, because if you are continually adding you will have little time for refining. And there is also a vast difference between accumulating and absorbing. Absorbing means that you take something into your structure and it becomes part of your structure, not just an addition. As Tim Tackett and I wrote in our book *Jun Fan/Jeet Kune Do – The Textbook*, if you take copper and zinc and combine them together you end up with the alloy brass. Now the copper and zinc are both part



Like JKD founder Bruce Lee, Kent incorporates the skills of savate into his method

of brass, but can you see them separate? No. So in the same way it's not about simply collecting a bunch of different metals such as gold, silver, platinum, copper, steel, aluminum, and whatnot, and having them all sitting there as separate metals; it's about ending up with a single metal which contains all of the other elements within it. I know this may be a long-winded answer, but I think that is one of the biggest problems that exists in the JKD world today.

Bruce Lee said, "Man, the living creature, the creating individual, is always more important than any established style or system," and, "Always be yourself, express yourself, have faith in yourself, do not go out and look for a successful personality and duplicate it." Some might see perhaps an irony or contradiction, then, in the

idea of forming a group such as the Jun Fan Jeet Kune Do Nucleus to protect or codify Bruce Lee's 'original art'. How do these two ideas coexist — propagating Lee's 'way' and technical legacy while actually pursuing self-expression and without boundaries and labels?

Well, while both of the above quotes are true, they, as well as all other quotes, have to be taken in proper context. As with religion, politics or anything else, one can always look for and find quotes to help forward one's agenda or point of view. For example, I could easily look at the first quote and pull out Bruce's quote about, "While there may be no such things as a system of fighting, there is, however, a definite, systematic and progressive approach to training." It's all in how one interprets things. Now, when it comes to politics, interpretation and propagation,

JKD has without doubt become one of the biggest hornet's nests in martial art history. Who is right and who is wrong? Who has 'got it' and who doesn't? Who is certified and who isn't? And all this crap. Let me attempt to straighten out some of this stuff dealing with the Jun Fan Jeet Kune Do Nucleus for people. The fundamental idea of the formation of what eventually became known as the Jun Fan Jeet Kune Do Nucleus came about as an attempt to help sort out some of the chaos in the JKD world for people so that they could have a clear perception and understanding of what Bruce Lee was doing with regard to his art and philosophy. It was to create something which could share all of Bruce's notes, ideas, thoughts, etc. with JKD practitioners and instructors around the world, both at the time and for future generations of practitioners. It

was not about codifying and 'concretising' the art of JKD or attempting to control JKD.

I had been part of another group that attempted to do the same thing almost 20 years before, and had seen causes and reasons for the failure and dissolution of the organisation then, so I was adamant in trying to help this new group avoid such pitfalls. But when you looked about in the JKD world you could see some people doing things that in no way resembled what Bruce was doing himself or even followed the principles put forth in JKD, but calling it 'JKD' under the umbrella term of 'concepts' or whatever. However, if you asked these people to define exactly what concept or principle they were following, it all went back to, 'Well, I'm expressing myself and that is JKD.' And that is incorrect. And even today I hear

people talking about how JKD is all about personal expression and then doing exactly the same thing as their instructor does. They teach the same systems and techniques and look like replicas of their teacher, so is that not a contradiction?

The other thing people need to understand concerning the formation of the JFJKD Nucleus is that Sifu Dan Inosanto was asked to be part of the founding group and in fact did attend the first meeting. However, when he decided not to be a part of it (as he did with regard to the other group I spoke of earlier), what followed from many of the people under Dan was a massive misinformation campaign against the organisation and its intentions. And I have to say that some of the accusations and comments that were made against Linda Lee Cadwell as well as other members of the group by some people in the upper echelon in the JKD world were absolutely disrespectful and downright insulting. But as far as I'm concerned, all of that is water under the bridge now. I stepped down from the Nucleus in 2002 to pursue my own endeavours.

You are one of a few JKD instructors who has really focused on learning savate. With American kickboxing (essentially karate and TKD merged with boxing) and muay Thai on hand, why seek out savate? What does it offer that is better or different?

I studied and trained in boxe Francaise/savate and earned a 'teacher' credential in it not because I wanted to teach savate, but because I found their training methodology very functional and applicable to JKD. First, they wear shoes when they train and fight, as we do in JKD, so different areas of the foot such as the sole or toes can be used in striking (although one of the coaches, Robert Paturel, told me that unlike in the ring, in street savate you can also use the shin when you kick). Their ability to combine kicking and



Kent teaching knife defence concepts in the USA

"AS BRUCE LEE NOTED, SPARRING IS THE ACID TEST FOR WHAT YOU KNOW AND CAN REALLY USE. SO I BELIEVE MMA CAN SERVE AS A GOOD TESTING GROUND ..."

striking at various ranges and while moving off angle to the opponent also appealed to me. Make no mistake, muay Thai is a fantastic art, and I have trained in it with friends and absorbed some training principles and methodology into my structure. I have nothing but respect for the art. But as with anything I do, I want to know how it can help me develop totality. I remember Sifu Dan telling me years ago, "Chris, some people

'slug' with their feet, and some people 'box' with their feet. You want to develop the ability to do both. That's JKD"

Guro Inosanto is one of many JKD teachers who has embraced the changes that have come with MMA, and learned what is useful from that field as any other. How has the MMA/BJJ boom changed or informed your way of training over the past 15-to-20 years?

Yes, probably in much the same way as Sifu Dan: staying up to date with modern training methods and protocols, and cultivating skills in different elements. JKD has always been about totality in martial arts, so it has always been about developing skills in all aspects of fighting such as striking and grappling, which MMA has evolved into. However, the fundamental difference being that a lot of MMA has become a combative sport, whereas JKD has always been about self-defence. Remember when the jiu-jitsu boom first hit and in MMA fights the jiu-jitsu guys would always win? However, over time the pendulum began to swing back the other way as people developed skills to offset and counter the jiu-jitsu



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guys. Now you see many more knockouts in standing positions than you did in the early MMA days. It is much more about the individual and their well-rounded arsenal of skills.

What value, if any, does competition (MMA or any other kind) have to the JKD way of training and self-development?

Well first of all, in any form of sport, the rules of the sport dictate the direction of one's training. So while MMA is more about totality, there are rules and regulations which prohibit the use of certain things (as it well should be). I think it would be impossible to legally conduct all-out, no-rules fights; however, as Bruce Lee noted, sparring is the acid test for what you know and can really use. So I believe MMA can serve as a good testing ground for developing well-rounded martial art skills and abilities.

How important is weaponry training for the average martial arts student, and how relevant is it likely to be to their daily life? Are there reasons besides direct practical application to study in this realm?

In today's Western world, I don't think most people are going to be walking around carrying a stick, sword, staff or axe with them. If you live in some other countries you might, but not [in the USA]. However, by training with weapons, one can develop a very good knowledge and understanding of what a person armed with a weapon may attempt to do to you, which is far better than merely assuming you know what they might try to do. And you can develop your abilities to deal more effectively with them. In addition, I personally think it is enjoyable to learn how to use various types of weapons. It doesn't matter what culture it is from; one person might like to learn how to use a Japanese katana, while another might enjoy learning to use a medieval broadsword.

What did your study in physiology and kinesiology

involve and what did you learn from each that has informed your martial arts practice and teaching?

I was blessed to have a great teacher and guide in Dan Inosanto. He was a physical education teacher at the time I began training under him. One of the things he stressed to me was that if you are interested in something, find out about it, educate yourself about it. Whether you took a class on it at a school or researched it yourself was unimportant — just learn. Some people learn better on their own than they do in a class, and sometimes you actually learn more on your own because you do not have to follow the school's protocols for study. For myself, I have always been interested in the human body and brain and what they can do. So I took classes as well as did my own research on various subjects that dealt with the body and mind, and saw application of some of the knowledge to what I was doing. I also love teaching, so I am continually studying and working to become a better teacher.

Concussion, CTE and head trauma from both fight sports and NFL have been big news in recent times, and we've just seen the removal of head gear from men's Olympic boxing due to the results of an expansive study on its effect. One of your own students is a neurosurgeon, too. Has any of this altered your opinion on the safest way to train people, or your practices?

Absolutely. While sparring is an important aspect of training, it is only one aspect. And one does not need to go all-out in sparring to develop skills and abilities. Once in a while it is good so one really feels the pressure, but one does not need to have their nose broken in order to know they took a good shot. This is another thing I learned from Dan: he related the fact that in the old days the

THE MASTER'S TIPS

Chris Kent on the secret to longevity in martial arts:

I think that, first and foremost, it is important that you love what you do. If that's not the case, why the heck are you doing it? Yes, it can be challenging and frustrating at times, but so is anything worthwhile that you do. If it were always easy, it would quickly become boring. I still love what I do.

Second, give yourself time. There is no time schedule you have to follow, no pre-designated time in which you must advance or grow. You have to allow yourself the freedom to feel awkward, look clumsy, make mistakes, etc. Remember, martial art training is a process, not a product.

Finally, train hard but train intelligently. Train to experience yourself, not punish yourself. Injuries can and do occur, that's the nature of the beast. But some people seem to wear their injuries like some form of badge of honour. The thing they fail to understand, especially if they are young, is that those injuries will come back to haunt you years down the road.

On the lesson that *Blitz* readers would most benefit from knowing sooner rather than later:

That JKD, or in fact any true martial art, if practised correctly, can be an incredible vehicle to help you to come to know yourself, accept yourself and develop yourself in all your capacities as a human being. To paraphrase Bruce Lee, "To become a man of totality is more important than becoming a great fighter."



American football teams used to play full-out scrimmages every day during practice, and then when game day came around, oftentimes a number of their players had injuries. Nowadays teams practise realistic drills and conditioning and are in peak

condition for the game. People seem to forget that professional MMA fighters get paid when they fight, and so getting hit, kicked or choked comes with the territory. But for the average martial art practitioner, such is not the case. ■

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FEATURE STORY

BJJ'S 100 KG PRINCIPLE

HOW TO ADD
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Fans of classic gangster television might recall a scene in *The Sopranos* when boss Tony argues with Uncle Junior as they grapple for control of the family empire: Junior warns Tony, “Next time you come, you come heavy or not at all.” He was talking about guns, of course, but those same words could apply equally to the grappler seeking control on the mat: come heavy, or don’t bother. Regardless of your actual weight, if you don’t have the skill to amplify that weight at every opportunity, your progress as a grappler will be seriously limited. Here, Aussie grappling pioneer and head of BJJ Australia John Will explains how to be heavy even if you’re really not.

STORY & INSTRUCTION BY JOHN WILL | IMAGES BY CHARLIE SURIANO

When I had my first BJJ experience back in 1986, it was in Rorion Gracie’s garage in Torrance, California. Professor Rorion was the first of the Gracie family to have departed Brazil to fulfil the dream of

propagating his family’s jiu-jitsu method in the USA, laying a foundation for many who followed. He was also later to become one of the pioneers of what we now know as MMA, having later introduced the Brazilian concept of *vale-tudo* (‘anything goes’ combat) to

American and world audiences when he established the first UFC events in the early ’90s.

But my visit was long before that and, despite having had a little experience in wrestling — first as a kid, then later during my travels through Asia and in India — I was unprepared for

what I was about to go through in Rorion’s humble home gym.

The first overall impression I had on the mat was probably similar to what a small mouse feels in the crushing embrace of an anaconda. Unpleasant, to say the least. I couldn’t grasp how my training partners were able to feel

RAISE YOUR WEIGHT



1 Left: John Will is mounted on top of his opponent and looking to press a forearm to the floor to execute a figure-four shoulder lock.



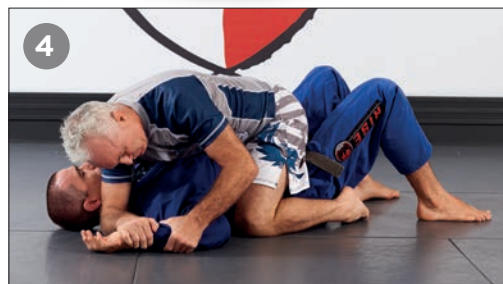
2 The opponent’s arms are strong in this position, so Will applies his entire bodyweight through the forearm by lifting his weight off the ground...

...channeling it through arms that are almost straight, and triangulated, to allow structure and gravity do the work.



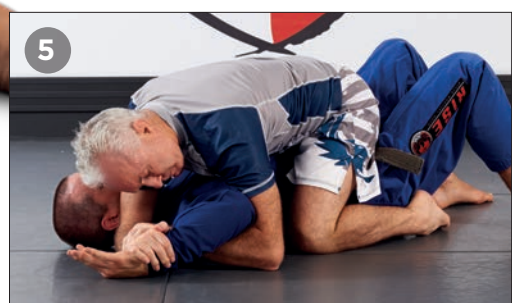
3

3 ...and adjust through his contact points as necessary — here, putting weight through the opponent’s wrist to keep it pinned as he slides his other arm under the elbow...



4

4 With the arm on the floor (and in a much weaker position), Will can keep his weight distributed more evenly to keep his opponent’s body pinned...



5



6

FINISH

5 ...to apply the figure-four. Note that Will’s hips lift slightly here as he transfers more of his weight down towards the front, keeping the opponent’s shoulder in place and putting more pressure into it.

FOCUS YOUR MASS



Here, Will is in a knee-ride position and his mass is channelled through three points — his right shin and both hands — while his left foot acts as a mobile stabiliser...

...but he can further focus his mass as needed by pulling up on his opponent's limbs, applying two concepts together.



PULL UPWARD



Here, Will is in a dominant side-control position and using his points of contact with the floor only for control: his weight is centred over his chest, through his opponent's...



...but he can increase his pressure (i.e. weight) when necessary by applying the 100-kg principle of pulling his opponent up into him.

WORK THE ENDS OF LEVERS



Here, Will has his opponent's back and while he uses his left foot and right knee to 'post' for balance, he applies his mass to the upper end of his opponent's main skeletal 'lever' — the spine...



...thus increasing his effective weight/pressure on the opponent's supporting structure (arms and shoulders) to make him collapse.

so 'heavy' and so 'tight', regardless of any weight difference between them, and between them and me. Over time, however, as my understanding of the art evolved, the pieces of the puzzle fell into place — and one of those pieces was the concept of the '100-kg principle'.

HOW TO WEIGH 100 KG

The majority of people who haven't wrestled/grappled a lot

do not know how to effectively apply their weight in a contest once it hits the ground. In fact, in the larger part of our daily lives, we apply our weight to the ground through our 'feet' alone, and even this fact goes largely unnoticed by most.

Being able to make our opponent 'carry' our weight in combat is an extremely effective way of not only reducing that

opponent's options but also tiring them out. Even someone who weighs only 50-to-60 kg can really feel as if they weigh 100 kg, if they understand and apply the 100-kg concept.

In my view, there are basically five main technical factors at play when we properly apply the 100-kg principle on the mat. Let's take a look at each of them — remembering, though, that the principle's full

effect is produced by applying all five of these skills or tactics at the same time. Even though the mathematics doesn't quite work out this way, think of it as though each of the five skills I am about to describe brings 20 kg to bear on the opponent — therefore, if all five are applied, we have our full 100 kg in play.

5 PRINCIPLES IN 1

The 100-kg principle can be

further broken down into five essential skills or tactics, each of which can be considered a key principle of jiu-jitsu application in itself. These are:

1 Get your weight off the floor. As far as applying weight to an opponent is concerned, the floor is essentially the enemy. Any body weight we have on the floor is weight we don't have on our opponent. Become floor-phobic and use your points of contact with the ground (e.g. feet, knees, hands, even head) as stabilising points to gauge, pinpoint and adjust balance — requiring only light and/or momentary weight shifts to each — while keeping the majority of your weight centred on the opponent. This is made easier by focusing on strategy number two...

2 Be focussed with your point of contact. By reducing the surface area of our point of contact with the opponent, we can effectively apply our weight over a smaller area — giving us a higher 'kilograms per square centimetre' value. If you think of this visually, it's like stepping onto an opponent in a pair of high heels rather than a running shoe... which would you prefer to be underneath? When you think about it, you only need to have one point of your body pinned to the floor to make the whole thing immovable. If you took the same amount of weight that can pin you through a single, small point (perhaps that high heel with a heavy woman standing in it) and instead spread it across your entire frame (think, the same person lying across your body), the latter will be easier to shift... and a darn sight less painful too!

3 Add pulling. By pulling our opponent upward and into our point of contact, we dramatically increase the pressure. Imagine standing on a set of scales with a belt or rope threaded underneath the platform, and pulling up as hard as you could — the pressure applied is of course going to increase your recorded mass.

WORK THE ENDS OF LEVERS: SHOULDER BLOCK



1

START

Will is in a knee-ride position — weight through his knee and pulling up on the arm — but his opponent is trying to roll inward to counter him...



2

FINISH

...so Will applies some of his weight (note the straight arm) to the end of a lever: one end of the structure joining his foe's shoulders.

FIND OPTIMAL ANGLES



1

START

Will has his opponent pinned in side control, weight through his chest, but his opponent's arms are inaccessible and tightly held...



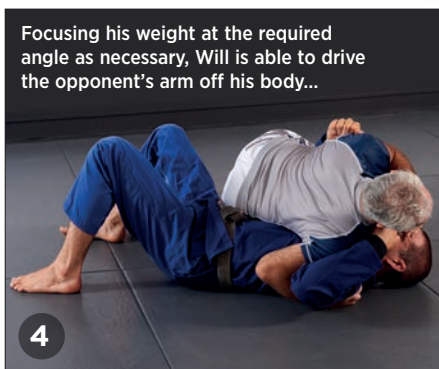
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...so Will must realign his body and find the optimal angle on which to drive some of his mass forward through his shoulder to separate his opponent's arm from his body...



3

...all the while careful to keep his weight primarily down through the opponent's chest.



4

Focusing his weight at the required angle as necessary, Will is able to drive the opponent's arm off his body...



5

...and take it to the floor where he can attack it, while simultaneously pinning his foe's upper body.

FINISH

(Feel free to try this at home and see how much the reading changes...just watch you don't break your bathroom scales!)

4 Apply your weight to the end of the levers. Where we apply our weight significantly determines how much control we exert over our opponents. Think of their bones as the

levers: by applying our weight to the ends of the 'levers', we utilise the forces more efficiently. For example, apply your weight to the shoulders (rather than the chest), and to the elbows (end of the humerus 'lever'), wrists (end of the radius/ulna, and the whole arm), knees (end of the femur), ankles (end of the tibia/fibula

and the entire leg), sides of the hips (levers of the pelvis), head (end of the spine)...and so on and so forth.

5 Apply your weight on the right 'vector' (i.e. on the right angle). This last principle can take a while to understand, as it varies for each and every technique. But when we learn to

apply our force on just the right angle and in the right direction, its effectiveness is amplified and thus we can exert even greater and more precise control over our opponents.

THE FLIP SIDE

The flip side of the 100-kg principle is the concept of

UNDERHOOK ESCAPE



1

START Will is trapped under his opponent's side control and being pulled in tight, leaving little room to move...



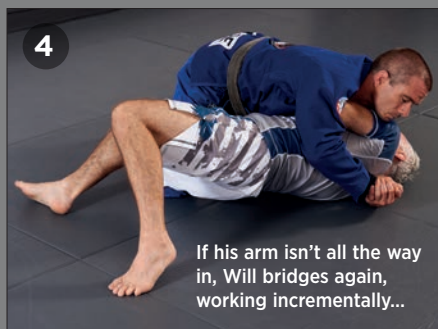
2

...so he uses leg power to 'bridge' up as he also braces his forearm against the opponent's chest...



3

...creating a momentary bit of space to squeeze his arm under his opponent as Will drops back to the mat.



4

If his arm isn't all the way in, Will bridges again, working incrementally...



5

...to create small spaces repeatedly until he reaches the desired position.



6

Now that Will has an underhook with his left arm...



7

...and turn inwards while spinning the lower half of his body away...



8

▲ ...he again uses his legs and hips to create enough space to twist away and drive his opponent's arm up with the underhook...



9

...to the point where Will is face down and driving forward into his opponent's near leg...

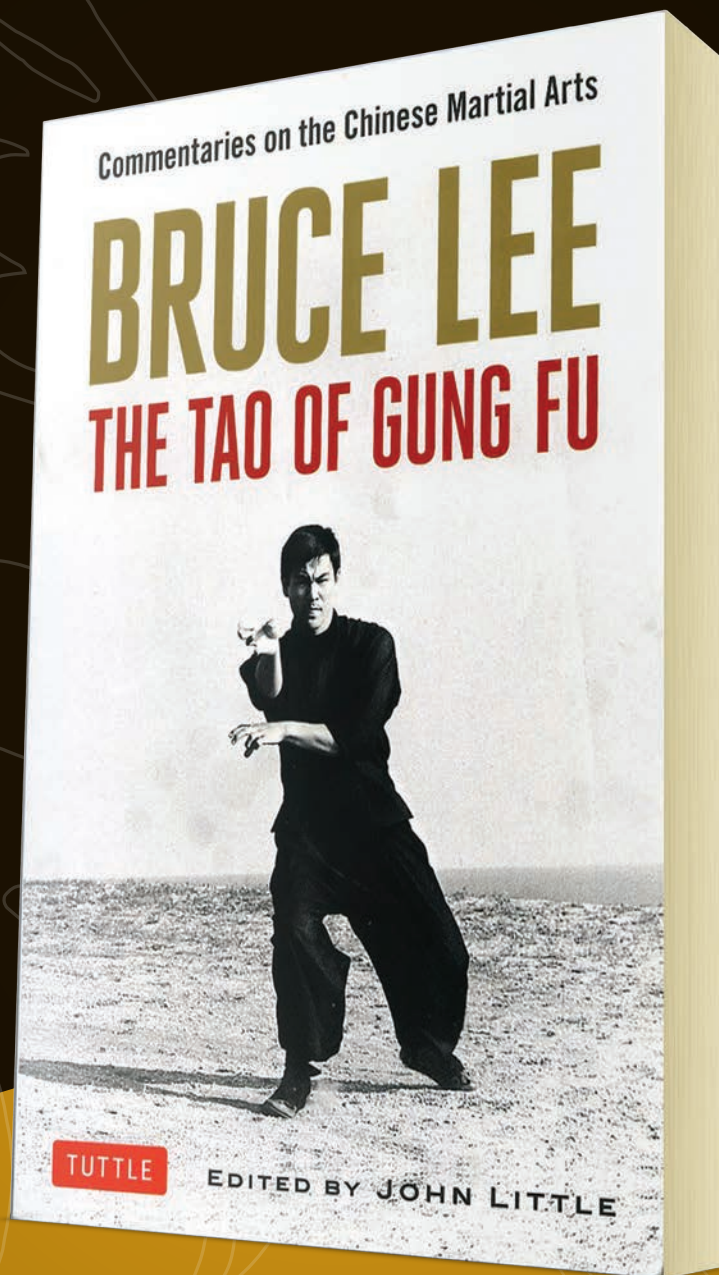


10

...and in position to attack the opponent's leg.

FINISH

This is the book that Bruce Lee began writing in 1964, but never published.



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ESCAPE: FRAMING THE HIP



Will is in an unfortunate position, trapped under side control...



...so he keeps his arm braced against his opponent's neck and shoulders then 'bridges', raising his hips (where his opponent's weight isn't focused)...



...to create a momentary space beneath him, so that when he drops back into it, he can sneak his right knee into the gap.



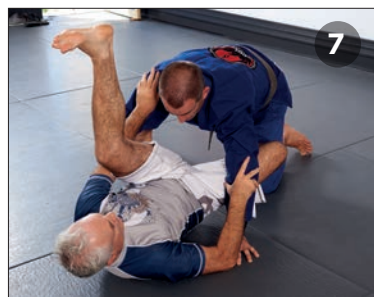
Once Will's knee is in place, it creates a 'frame' against his opponent's near hip. Will uses this as an extendable brace (like a car jack winding out) to push himself back, also bringing his arms into play the same way...



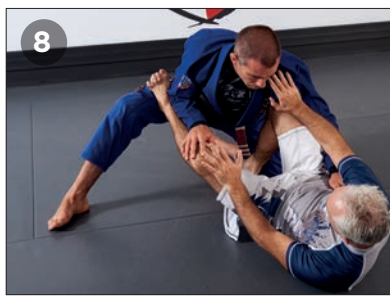
...until he has room to swing his left foot right over his opponent's body to block the other hip as well. Using his left hand to assist in keeping his opponent back...



...Will brings his right leg under to block and hook the opponent's left knee while still jamming the opponent's hip with his top leg.

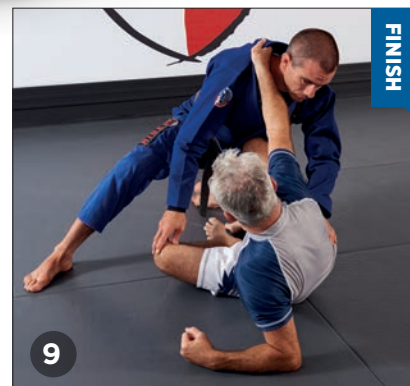


This block on the lower leg enables Will to free his left leg again and swing it back, so he is now facing his opponent...



...and able to work on submission attacks, escapes, etc. from a more operable position: the open guard.

Here, Will threatens with a collar-choke or sweep set-up, making his opponent reconsider driving his weight forward again.



"KNOWING HOW TO EFFECTIVELY APPLY OUR WEIGHT ONCE WE HAVE GONE TO THE CLINCH OR TO THE GROUND) ALLOWS US TO SHUT DOWN AN OPPONENT'S OPTIONS"

establishing and protecting your 'bubble' — that is, creating or preserving the space that exists between you and your opponent.

Creating space is a much more difficult proposition than the concept of preserving space that is already there. It is much easier to hold or maintain that imaginary 'bubble' between ourselves and our opponents than it is to create a bubble once we are being 'smashed flat' — just as maintaining a level of fitness is easier to do than get fit from scratch, or preserving wealth is an easier prospect than creating it.

That being said, there are some fundamental ideas that can help us create space (or build a bubble) that will allow us to escape or switch from defence to offence in the fight. These are:

Micro adjustments: This is the use of small — practically unnoticeable — adjustments of our hip angle, head, etc. to alleviate some of the pressure being exerted on us. Just as the opponent will seek to adjust his position to make best use of the 100-kg principle (points two, four and five), we seek to do the same for the opposite purpose when in a disadvantageous position.

Short frames: The use of our elbows and our knees to position our opponent's weight on the skeletal structure of our body (rather than crushing our vulnerable points such as organs and soft tissue).

Long frames: The use of our hands and feet to block the opponent's forward progress and control distance, reducing their ability to apply the 100-kg principle.

The most common mistakes people make in relation to applying the above methods are:

- Ignoring the value of micro adjustments. We tend to want to arrive at the solution without first setting the stage to begin the escape process.
- Trying to make use of the long frames before utilising short frames first.

THE POWER OF PRINCIPLES

Using these principles, and as many of them as possible at the same time, affords us a massive advantage over the average person in a fight. Knowing how to effectively apply our weight once we have gone to the clinch or to the ground) allows us to shut down an opponent's options, we can tire them out much more quickly than we otherwise could, and essentially make the struggle much more predictable. Effective use of the 100-kg principle is essential to the concept of 'control', which lies at the very heart of any grappling art, no matter which one we choose to train in.

Next time you're rolling on the mat — and every time thereafter — look for points in the action where you can apply each of the aforementioned tactics and build a habit of doing so automatically. If you systematically work through each concept and focus on identifying application points for each (in terms of both position and timing), you will extract more value from your training than you might have thought possible.

Train hard, train smart... and stay heavy! ■



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WHY DO WE

PUNCH?

HOW HUMAN HANDS EVOLVED FOR PUNCHING

Most of us don't question the fact that forming a fist and using it in combat is a natural part of being human. It's certainly been going on a long time — friezes and pottery from ancient civilisations tell us that much. But recent research suggests that even prehistoric man engaged in fisticuffs, and a look at the way our ancestors' hands evolved to punch might shed some light on the best method of punching, writes John Coles.

While researching and writing a book on the science behind fighting techniques, a study published in *The Journal of Experimental Biology* about five years ago piqued my interest. The paper's title, 'Protective buttressing of the human fist and the evolution of hominin hands' by M. H. Morgan and D.R. Carrier, is probably not as useful a description of the findings for the layman — however, the report on the study by the University of Utah, where the researchers were based, gives a clearer picture. It is called 'Fine Hands, Fists of Fury: Our Hands Evolved for Punching, Not Just Dexterity.'

As a martial artist of 30 years, one particular section of the paper was of most interest:

Humans buttress – strengthen and stabilize – fists in two ways that apes cannot: The pads of the four fingertips touch the pads at the top of the palm closest to the fingers. And the thumb wraps

in front of the index and middle fingers, and to some extent the ring finger, and those fingers are locked in place by the palm at the base of the thumb.

The second and third experiments found that buttressing provided by the human fist increased the stiffness of the knuckle joint fourfold (or reduced flexing fourfold), and also doubled the ability of the fingers to transmit punching force, mainly due to the force transferred from the fingers to the thumb when the fist is clenched.

Here, the report's authors are describing the common, 'garden variety' fist configuration and the biomechanical benefits of this configuration (see figure 1). However, not all martial arts advocate this method. The

Isshinryu karate system is most obvious in its difference: it teaches to place the thumb not wrapping in front of the fingers but to the side of the fingers (see figure 2).

Based on the aforementioned study, it could be argued the Isshinryu karate fist configuration is biomechanically less efficient than the configuration apparently intended by nature, which most other martial arts have adopted. But could there be a reason why Isshinryu karate may have adopted this unique punching style?

A possible explanation lies within the report of an obscure but interesting study published in *American Anthropologist*. The researchers investigated the

relationship between commonly occurring types of violence and those that are popular in sport. They found that common injuries to the hand in modern society, where boxing is popular (and tends to inform the basic style used in the street), is to the little finger and ring finger bones, commonly known as a 'boxer's fracture'.

The researchers compared this finding to the most common fractures found in a certain part of England between 1750 and 1850, having gained access to 857 bodies buried in that period after a cemetery was excavated. They found significantly more fractures of the thumb than boxer's fractures, which puzzled them because boxing was popular there during that time. The researchers suggest that a possible explanation for this might be found in the style of fighting used by boxers during the period when the bodies were buried. Boxing was bare-knuckled, and boxers

“THEY FOUND THAT COMMON INJURIES TO THE HAND IN MODERN SOCIETY, WHERE BOXING IS POPULAR (AND TENDS TO INFORM THE BASIC STYLE USED IN THE STREET), IS TO THE LITTLE FINGER AND RING FINGER BONES, COMMONLY KNOWN AS A ‘BOXER’S FRACTURE’.”



The Wing Chun vertical fist: note the alignment of the bottom three knuckles in line with the forearm behind



The Isshinryu vertical fist: Note the angling of the two foreknuckles down into the target

used vertically aligned fists rather than the horizontal fist of the modern-day boxer. A boxer's fracture often occurs when the little-finger side of the fist impacts, rather than the intended pointer-finger side of the fist. A similar argument applies to ancient boxers using vertical fists: if the boxer misses with the intended part of the fist, the thumb impacts and is injured.

So, my hypothesis based on this was that Isshinryu karateka may be sacrificing some biomechanical efficiency with a good reason: in order to reduce the risk of injury when using a vertical fist to punch.

However, when I posted this on my blog (kojutsuka.blogspot.com.au), Isshinryu practitioners did not all agree with my take on it. One commented: "You are totally wrong. The Isshinryu punch is superior in many ways. It is not only safer, like you mentioned, for the bones of the fingers,

but helps prevent the wrist from buckling under impact pressure, as well as keeping the thumb from being snagged and broken. It is also faster because it allows the forearm muscles to remain in a balanced, more natural state. The elbow remains pointed down, which allows more power to transfer from the body, and prevents a counter-attack injury to the elbow joint. The punch always ends with a snap back to the ready position, like a piston or a gun being cocked.

"Although this action prevents force to be exerted into a follow through 'push' action, it is superior for a number of reasons. First of all, when properly executed, there is an energy transfer into the [opponent's] body by several inches, damaging internal organs instead of superficial exterior damage. The fist being instantly pulled back also prevents the opponent from grabbing the arm. Also, once

it is back in a ready position, it can punch again, like a machine gun, or can be used to block. A trained 'vertical' or Isshinryu punch practitioner can literally execute four-to-five targeted strikes in the time it takes most styles to land just one. You should do more research before assuming your opinions."

While I posted a polite reply saying that my conclusion was evidence-based, and in no way disparaging of the Isshinryu punching method, I left it unsaid that his assertion of the vastly superior speed of vertical punches, and its supposedly greater 'energy transfer' into its target was not based on any substantive or documented evidence.

I will, however, focus on one issue that he raised regarding the relative importance of speed in producing what we might commonly call 'power' or 'impact'. In reference to the

mechanical concept of kinetic energy (E_k) — meaning, the energy an object possesses due to its motion — physics tells us that kinetic energy equals *one* half of mass multiplied by its velocity squared ($E_k = 1/2mv^2$). When applying this to teach punching techniques, it is commonly advised to focus on speed rather than mass, because of velocity's quadratic contribution to kinetic energy compared to the linear contribution of mass. This is wrong because it plainly ignores technique. While speed is obviously important in exploiting openings and hitting moving targets, studies of many martial arts' (and boxing's) punching techniques have repeatedly shown that greater force on impact is achieved by experienced practitioners not due to speed but due to their ability to contribute more mass behind the punch. (This is a subject of two



The unique thumb position in the Isshinryu fist, shown here from both sides

“THE INTERESTING DIFFERENCE IS THAT THE FIST IS ALIGNED SO THAT IT’S THE BOTTOM THREE KNUCKLES THAT MAKE IMPACT, WITH THE MIDDLE FINGER KNUCKLE BEING THE PRIMARY.”

chapters in my book, which uses a relatively new science, the study of injury, to better understand punching and kicking techniques.) To cut a long story short, kinetic energy is the mechanical concept to focus on with regards to the *potential* of a striking technique to inflict injury (and/or pain), and force is the mechanical concept to focus on regarding the *actual* infliction of injury (and/or pain). Meaning, it doesn’t matter whether it’s via speed or better body alignment that you inject more force into your opponent — it’s the force that counts.

The first commenter was missing the point, though: my post was published to simply

share research applicable to the martial arts that could be applied to better understand practice. That is something that has been completely lacking to date in the martial arts, and which is the mission of my book: to apply theory to better understand practice, rather than refer to theory for the sake of theory.

Interestingly, another poster commented: “Great article. I don’t believe you to be wrong! I am an Isshinryu practitioner of 18 years to date. I must say I would have to witness scientific evidence in order to believe the four-to-one punch theory? If we stand with our arms at our sides, our hands are neither vertical nor horizontal but in between? So which is the fastest/strongest punch?”

His sign-off was also an interesting if inadvertent comment in the debate: ‘Speed is fine, but accuracy is final’. The sentiment is right — speed is useless without accuracy — and the same applies to power/force, but ultimately it’s the contributed mass to the strike and the biomechanical properties of the target are what is important in determining if injury and/or pain are experienced. This is what injury science looks at (think, car hits pedestrian, cricket ball hits cranium, and so on).

Surprisingly, nobody mentioned that the Isshinryu vertical fist resembles the Wing Chun kung fu fist, nor did they refer to Bruce Lee’s famous (or infamous) one- or three-inch punch. Again, another study shows that Lee’s short-distance punches are in fact pushes rather than punches that will inflict injury. Note, too, that while Wing Chun

and Lee’s Jeet Kune Do use vertical fists when punching, neither uses the same thumb configuration as Isshinryu and thus it could be argued they retain the biomechanical efficiency associated with buttressing of the fingers whose knuckles apply and receive the force on impact. The interesting difference is that the fist is aligned so that it’s the bottom three knuckles that make impact, with the middle finger knuckle being the primary. All other common methods (besides variations like karate’s ippon-ken or single-knuckle strike, which uses a protruding pointer finger) use the two foreknuckles (pointer and middle fingers) only. In both methods, the fist is angled so as to align the bones of the impacting fingers with those of the forearm. However, ‘traditional’ punchers have argued that Wing Chun’s way is weaker, as it doesn’t use the largest and strongest of the knuckles, which are both braced directly by the thumb sitting tight against those fingers. In turn, Wing Chun folk have been heard to argue that spreading the impact across three knuckles is stronger, and the alignment with the supporting arm is superior.

Study, anyone? ■

John Coles is a finance professional who has trained in martial arts since 1983 and has taught around the world. He is a 3rd Dan in Jan de Jong jujutsu (Tsutsumi Hozan-ryu), 5th Dan with the Australian Ju Jitsu Association, 1st Dan in aikido and a 3rd Grade instructor of Suci Hati Pencak silat. Coles holds a Bachelor of Commerce, Master of Business Administration (MBA) and is a Chartered Accountant. The author of Jan de Jong: The man, his school, and his jujitsu system, he is currently working on two more books on the science of martial arts. See more at kojutsukan.blogspot.com.au

SCIENCE & SELF-DEFENCE

COMBAT VISION, ADRENAL CONTROL & RAPID REACTION

When it comes to martial arts, you can learn all the fancy techniques you want, but until you understand and master your physiological responses and tendencies, you will be flying blind when it comes to self-defence. Here, long-time instructor of combative tai chi Sifu Allan Williams explains some simple ways you can improve your capacity to survive a violent altercation.

STORY & INSTRUCTION BY ALLAN WILLIAMS

5

...to unwind into an exploding back fist, without breaking contact with the opponent's arm.

FINISH



TAI CHI: PERCEPTION & REFLEX



START

Reach advantage: Note the difference in reach that Sifu Williams must gauge when managing his distance.



1 Sizing up his opponent, Sifu Williams is looking off to the side and relaxing his eyes to more easily detect movement.



2 Reading the jab, Williams shifts and parries with a small 'closing slap' from his rear hand (called 'Prawn boxing')...

...redirecting and drawing the force in and away as he enters. His front hand starts to take control of the opponent's arm...



4 ...to create an opening and upset the opponent's balance as Williams torques his own body...

Just recently I trained a 25-year-old kickboxer. He has had half a dozen ring fights, he trains with a former world champion kickboxer, and after a loss he spent two months in hospital with a blood clot on his brain. I was shocked and saddened that this young warrior had no idea of the things that tai chi (the combative kind) has taught me; he was unable to see the strikes or moves that I made, leaving him vulnerable to the attacks — he would simply try to cover up as I hit him.

I am now 54 years young, a father and a big softy, and I felt sick at his situation. I advised him not to go into the ring again until he has the ability to see blows, and he agreed: not before mastering peripheral vision.

CENTRAL VS PERIPHERAL VISION

Our eyes see by the use of light. They use two different types of cells to do this: cones (for central vision) and rods (for peripheral vision). You have approximately 90 million rods and a measly 4.5 million cones. Cone cells perceive colour and fine detail, but they need good light to do this. Rods, on the other hand, are not good with colour and have low resolution, but remain sensitive even in low light. A white that can barely be seen by rods will need up to 1000 times more light before the cones can see it. Cones and rods are situated on the retina at the back of your eye, the cones packed altogether in the centre of your retina, in and around an area called the fovea, directly behind the pupil. This way, the light entering the eye will fall directly on them. The rods surround the cones; they do not need as much light so light does not hit them directly.

When learning to use night vision gear (say, in a military setting), it is explained that when trying to see an object at night, you should not look directly at it or try to focus on it. Instead,

you should look off to the side of the object, so you rely on the rods to see the object. Detail might not be clear, but you will see it — and if it moves, that will also be easier to see. Night vision skills correlate with learning to see movement in a combat or self-defence context, not so much because self-defence often happens in low light conditions (though it often can), but because your rods are also better at detecting movement than your cones.

When I was first taught to use peripheral vision to see an attack, I was astounded at the result. For years in my boxing and other martial art training, I'd been advised by various teachers to focus on one or another specific part of the opponent: the shoulders, the front hand, the chest or even directly in the eye. All of a sudden I was being told not to look directly at my opponent, but slightly off to the side — essentially, I was not to focus on anything at all!

When facing an assailant, do not focus on the person or allow your eyes to be drawn; instead, look just to the side of them. Even allow your focus to soften, as this will assist in not setting your sights on a particular thing. Any movement your assailant makes towards you will be much easier to pick up and any secondary threats that may be approaching will also be seen peripherally due to their movement.

Of course, seeing peripherally must be practised. Most of your life you have focused on things directly, so whenever your attention is drawn to something, you will almost certainly look directly at it. Getting out of that habit takes a little practice. Try using your peripheral vision to scan around you: just pick a spot in the centre of your vision and look off to the side. Allow your eyes to lose focus slightly (remember, your rods have low resolution so things will appear out of focus anyway if you're using them to see) and you'll be

amazed how much wider your vision becomes. Movement off to your sides is easier to notice. When wandering around shopping or simply sitting and having a coffee are great times to practise peripheral vision. It really is an eye-opener (sorry, couldn't resist).

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM & ADRENAL STRESS

When faced with danger, real or perceived, a strange thing happens. Your breathing and heart rate quicken, your gut may feel queasy and you may also start shaking — all a result of the adrenal stress response. Indeed, any stressful situation can cause this: a job interview, public speaking or entering an exam hall could all trigger the adrenal stress response. It's your body's natural response to stress, more commonly known as the 'fight, flight or freeze' response. Everybody, including your assailant, is affected by this near-instantaneous sequence of hormonal changes and physiological responses — but when you understand what is actually happening, you can learn to channel this response to your advantage. Your assailant is channelling it without even thinking about it.

So what exactly is happening? The part of our brains called the hypothalamus — think of it as a control centre — communicates with the rest of your body through the autonomic nervous system, which has two parts: the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The sympathetic system is the accelerator and the parasympathetic system is the brake. Initially when you sense danger (or the thought of an upcoming event stresses you) the hypothalamus presses the accelerator and sends signals through the sympathetic nervous system to the adrenal glands, which release epinephrine (adrenaline); your heart beats faster, pushing more blood to your muscles and organs, your

TAI CHI VS OVERHEAD STICK STRIKE



1 As the strike comes in (from between the 10 and 12 o'clock angles), Sifu Williams raises his arm up on the inside...



2 ...to meet the stick indirectly with a 'slip block' while coiling back his free arm, ready...



3 ...to launch a simultaneous strike as he passes the stick and enters to the inside of its line of force...



4 ...and palm-strikes the opponent's face while seizing the weapon-arm, pulling the attacker into his blow.

ALTERNATIVE ENDING



...to launch a strike on the inside, as he has slipped further inside the stick's arc and/or it has ricocheted away...



...allowing Williams to overwrap his opponent's forearm...



...and pull it into arm a locked position under his arm, dragging the attacker forward into a palm strike.

FINISH

blood pressure rises, you start to breathe more rapidly and the small airways of the lungs open wide so that your lungs can take in as much oxygen as possible. You become more alert as sight, hearing and the other senses become sharper. Blood sugar (glucose) and fat from temporary storage sites of the body are released into the bloodstream and supply a burst of energy. As the initial surge of epinephrine subsides, the hypothalamus triggers the secondary stress response system, known as the HPA axis (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal), by releasing a hormone that travels to the pituitary gland, which in turn releases adrenocorticotropin, which travels to the adrenal gland, which then releases cortisol. The body then stays on high alert. Once the danger or stress is diminished, the parasympathetic system kicks in and calms the response.

So your body has now prepped itself for action. Your ability to perform fine and complex skills diminishes but your gross motor skills — simple, broad muscle movements like running and punching — become more effective. However, if no action is taken (fight or flight), the freeze response may occur. As the hypothalamus hits your body's accelerator, your heart rate can go from a resting rate of 60-to-80 beats per minute (BPM) to over 200 BPM in just a few seconds. A heart rate in excess of 175 BPM will deteriorate performance and mental function. You will start to get tunnel vision, so your ability to track movement and focus on things in close proximity is impaired, your hearing may even deteriorate, if not disappear, and so you become less aware of your surroundings. Then, if your heart rate hits 185 BPM or more, it can trigger the freeze response. If you're about to be physically assaulted, that is generally not a good thing.

Research suggests that a heartbeat of between 115 and 145 BPM will provide a human with the best information processing and motor performance, so what we need to do is condition ourselves to manage this response. There are a few things to consider that help.

HICK'S LAW

Hick's law, or the Hick-Hyman law, named after British and American psychologists William Edmund Hick and Ray Hyman, describes the time it takes for a person to make a decision as a result of the possible choices he or she has. The crux of it is that increasing the number of choices will increase the decision time.

The more response time you have, the better prepared you will be when facing an assailant. The greater the awareness of the limitations of the brain and the body's physical functions when under stress, the better your reaction time will be. That reaction time can be separated into four distinct stages.

- Perception (you see/realise that a threat is imminent)
- Analyse (you assess what you have obtained through your senses)
- Formulate strategy (you devise a plan to deal with your assailants)
- Initiate motor action (your brain messages the body to react in a certain manner)

Realistic training can prompt you to react almost automatically and correctly to a non-specific assault, which means no time will be wasted formulating a strategy. The more techniques you have to choose from, the longer it will take you to select one and use it. A simplified game plan with a high probability of success strengthens your control over the situation, and this in turn decreases your fear and stress symptoms while increasing your confidence.

THE 'INVERTED U' HYPOTHESIS

The inverted-U hypothesis or model (also known as the Yerkes-Dodson law), was created by psychologists Robert Yerkes and John Dodson as long ago as 1908. Despite its age, it's a model that has stood the test of time. Peak performance is achieved when people experience a moderate level of pressure or stress; too much or not enough, and their performance will decline, sometimes substantially. As mentioned earlier, a heart rate of 115 to 145 BPM will provide an individual with the best possible information processing and motor performance — however, performance will decrease the more difficult or complex the task is.

So reaction time will then increase if;

1. Additional elements are added to the action
2. More than one limb must be coordinated
3. The duration of the movement becomes too long
4. The movement is more complex (for example, the length of time to organise the motor system and initiate action, and in any of the above ways).

So to sum up, you should limit yourself to a small group of techniques that are simple (i.e. 'gross motor'), reducing your response options and decreasing the amount of time it takes you to act. If you build your training around the development of a limited number of techniques that can be easily remembered, connected and used effectively in a wide variety of scenarios, you'll be able to develop those skills to the point of mastery or at least be pretty damn good at them.

There's just one more component to consider in controlling the adrenal stress response. Combined with the knowledge above, it'll guarantee that you remain in control and avoid your heart rate going through the roof. You do it every minute of every day...

TAI CHI VS STRAIGHT RIGHT



As Sifu Williams deflects his aggressor's feeling (e.g. pointing, shoving) hand, this creates an expected opening...



...and Williams redirects using his hips and a folding elbow, seizing the attacking arm if it's there...



...and using it to add to the attacker's momentum and upset his balance as Williams counters with a rolling back-fist (impact not shown)...



...creating an opening for Williams to flow into a palm strike, switching hands to keep his foe's punching arm in check.

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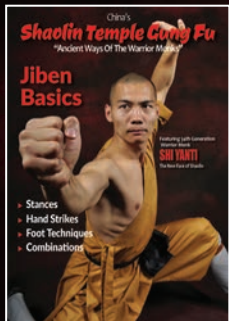
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TAI CHI VS TWO STICKS



1

In this scenario, Sifu Williams' opponent is threatening with two sticks/blunt instruments and as he advances to hitting range, Williams makes contact with the lead weapon...

START

...prompting the attacker to swing his right stick. Williams reacts by entering inside to simultaneously attack the arm and the opponent's neck/clavicle area...



2

...to which the attacker responds by swinging the other stick at Williams' body. Williams moves to meet it with a 'swing block'...



3

...absorbing and drawing it (stick or arm) in as he folds his lead arm over, winding up...



4



5

FINISH

...to unwind into a back-fist to the side of the attacker's face.

BREATHE BETTER

In the second 2017 State of Origin rugby league game, right at the very end, Queensland star Johnathon Thurston took three big breaths, dropped his heart rate from 180 down to 165 and kicked the winning goal.

For centuries martial artists, Taoist/Buddhist monks and yogis have used abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing to bring the adrenal stress response under control. Diaphragmatic breathing is very simple to learn.

Sit up straight in good posture or lie on the ground if you wish. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach, just over your belly button. Now take a deep breath. Which hand moved the most? If your answer is the hand on your chest, you failed! When you use your diaphragm to breathe, your stomach muscles should push outwards. Most if not all of the movement of your inward breath will be your stomach pushing out, because your diaphragm is pushing down on your organs. You might find your chest hardly expands at all. This draws the oxygen down to the bottom of your lungs first. If your chest moved the most, then the upper part of your lungs filled with oxygen but chances are the bottom of your lungs received no air.

When most people are stressed, they breathe rapidly but shallow. They use their chest, not their diaphragm, hence the reason the rate of breath keeps increasing — because they are not filling their lungs with oxygen. Remember, during the adrenal stress response your whole body is involuntarily flooded with extra nutrients and oxygen, so if you do not fill your lungs, you start to breathe faster. When faced with extreme stress or anxiety, people often talk of tightness in their chest or finding difficulty breathing. Your heart rate and rate of breathing are connected. If you are struggling to breathe, you are depriving your organs of oxygen, therefore your heart rate rises to pump the available oxygen to your organs as quickly as possible.

If you consciously focus on pushing your stomach out to breathe in, then stress/anxiety will subside. Keep your breathing deep, steady and controlled. Using this breathing technique will assist in bringing the adrenal stress response under control and prevent your heart rate from racing too fast and triggering the freeze response.

I'm sure your mum always told you to take a deep breath when you were getting stressed or angry. Mum knows best. ■

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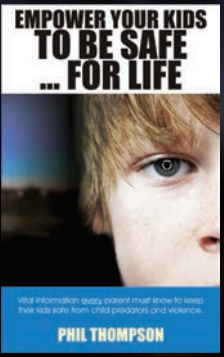
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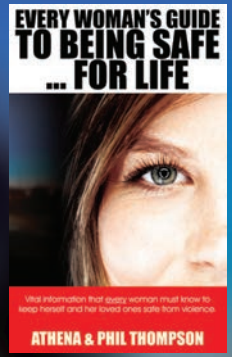
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DEFENCE AGAINST A THROAT GRAB AND PUNCH

Getting grabbed by the throat is dangerous enough in itself, especially when it's done by a larger attacker — think man versus woman for a readily imaginable worst-case scenario. However, when the aim of the grab is to hold you in place for a punch, the need for urgent action is even greater. That's where rapid turns, thrusting arms and 'diving board' crosses come to the fore.

THE INSTRUCTORS



PHILL HOLMES **Crazy Monkey Defense**

West Australian Phill Holmes is a certified trainer in Rodney King's Crazy Monkey Defense (CMD) and a former security professional who worked alongside his wife, Donna, for much of his 20-year career.

Needing to combat school and neighbourhood bullies as a young boy in Melbourne, Holmes began training in boxing, and judo at age seven. He later competed in amateur boxing, judo, kickboxing and muay Thai, and in the early 1990s opened his own club, teaching Zen Do Kai freestyle karate and muay Thai.

Due to his high-risk career, Holmes placed ever more emphasis on street defence in his teaching, later branching out into shoot-wrestling. In Perth he also studied the Wong Shun Leung Wing Chun system before gravitating to CMD — “a striking-based self-preservation program, built upon a street boxing framework” — and Monkey Jits (BJJ), training with Australian CMD chief instructor James Woodfield-Jones. Holmes is also now a trainer in King's Combat Intelligent Athlete and Edge Knife Defense program and has implemented courses for local security firms.



NATHAN HEAD **Jow Ga Kung Fu**

Sifu Nathan Head has over 28 years of experience in martial arts and is the founder of Head Academy Kung Fu, with five branches in Sydney. A member of the International Chau Ka (Jow Ga) Federation, Head primarily teaches traditional Jow Ga kung fu, with some modern refinements, but also teaches and practises Taoist meditation and qigong, in which he's certified by Master Mantak Chia. With 12 years' experience in teaching these Chinese internal arts, and a coaching certification in the HeartMath system, Head has created his own program for spiritual and self-development called the Flow State Program. Trained in 'energy healing' and *chi nei tsang* (Taoist abdominal massage), he also gives regular natural therapy treatments.

Head recently built a retreat centre called Tao de Libertad on a tropical island in the Philippines, where he holds annual kung fu retreats and intensive meditation and qigong workshops.



MIKE WILLIAMS **Shito-Ryu Karate**

Mike Williams Shihan, 5th Dan, became involved in martial arts as a teenager and later, in 1984, began to train in Hayashi-Ha Shito-ryu karate-do.

In 2001, Williams decided to try to get to the source of Shito-Ryu and contacted Kazuo Sakai Shihan, Secretary General of Shito-ryu International Karate-Do Kai in Osaka, Japan. The organisation was headed by the late Kenzo Mabuni Soke, son of the art's founder, Kenwa Mabuni.

Kenzo Mabuni Soke later appointed Williams head instructor for Shito-Ryu Australia Karate-Do Kai, and the West Australian received his shihan menjo (teaching licence) and the title of Renshi from Tsukasa Mabuni Soke in Osaka in 2009. Williams also holds government-recognised Certificate IV qualifications in Sports Coaching (Martial Arts) and Workplace Training and Assessment.

Shito-ryu's combative principles include evasive body shifting, flowing with the attacker's motions, controlling adversaries using posture and whole-body movement generated at the knees, using blocks as attacks, and defending via responsive attack.

Crazy Monkey Defense

PHILL HOLMES // Defence against a throat grab & punch

Q&A

Phill, how has your martial arts training changed you?

For the worse, then the better,

initially as a bullied and underconfident kid and teenager. It has been a work in progress to becoming more at peace and confident within myself. The martial arts gave me the tools to fight and defend myself, especially when I started bouncing as a 17-year-old. When you do your techniques for real and they work, whether it's a punch or choke, this sense of power can easily go to your head. The 'martial' side easily takes over if you let it; I needed those years of experiences to find my own truth.

Years later, I learnt the importance of the arts and how the martial and the art complemented each other. Not until I saw, felt, and really understood what was meant by a beautiful quote by the Dalai Lama — "Violent people fight violent people" — did I appreciate it better.

Whether it's rolling on the mat or sparring, I want to continue to be training smart when I am in my twilight years. When people have thanked me for training them, saying they had more confidence, had lost some weight and had more drive and purpose in their lives, this is what it's all about. Plus, through martial arts I've met many good people who I otherwise would never have met.



START
Approached by an angry driver, Holmes raises a non-confrontational guard or 'fence' as he attempts to talk down the aggressor.



◀ While moving around to manage the distance and angles, Holmes trips on kerbing and is unbalanced as the aggressor comes at him...



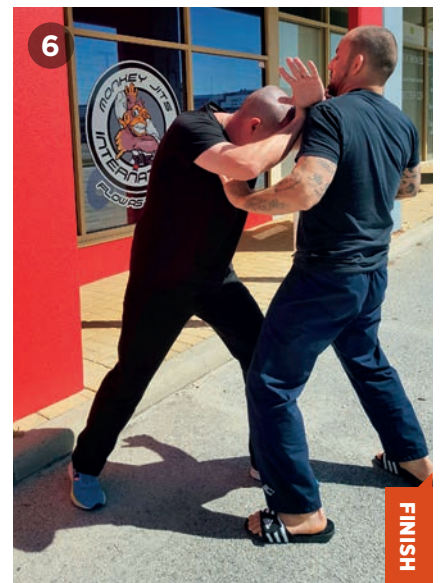
3
...and seizes an opportunity to shove the off-balance Holmes towards the wall...



4
...so Holmes immediately counters with a 'diving board' right cross, punching into his foe's windpipe.



◀ Before the attacker can return fire, Holmes covers using a T-BAR (tactical brace for accelerated recovery)...



...and drives forward to strike his opponent's throat/neck area with his forearm, opening the way for an exit or further counters if necessary. ▶

FINISH

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Jow Ga Kung Fu

NATHAN HEAD // Defence against a throat grab & punch

Q&A

Nathan, what's the secret to longevity in your martial art?

I've achieved longevity in my art, firstly, through being very clear about what I wanted to get out of my training and, secondly, choosing a style that initially met those needs. As I started my kung fu training in my twenties, I was looking for a detailed and varied art that would help me maintain physical health and teach me the skills I needed for self-defence. Because of the philosophy and history of kung fu, I was also inspired to delve into meditation, qigong and the Chinese healing arts. This has added another dimension to my health focus and reinforced my belief in training in a way that is sustainable in the long term and won't lead to overuse injuries or strains.

Your training should include enough rehabilitation and compensation work to reset the body from the rigours of martial arts training. Without it, you will slowly develop tightness and imbalances that will lead to serious injury. So listen to your body: when you have pain, it is a signal from the body that something is not right. Address it early, and hopefully you will avoid any overuse injuries.

Secondly, longevity in training comes from motivation and enjoyment. At Head Academy Kung Fu, our curriculum is diverse. It encompasses everything from empty-hand fighting to more than 30 different Chinese weapons and 70-plus *taolu* (forms/kata).



1 In this scenario, the aggressor grabs Sifu Head by the throat and chambers a punch. Head must move quickly to establish good grounding if pushed back (by stepping the rear foot back a little)...

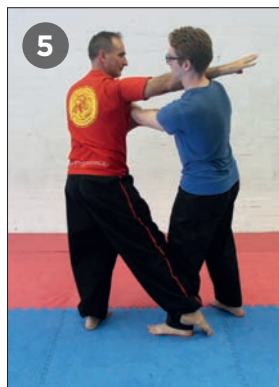
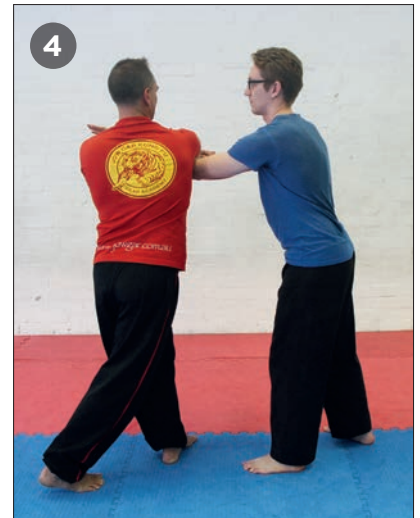


2 ...and cover the strike by thrusting his left arm up and outwards to redirect the punch. Head simultaneously brings his right hand up on the outside of the attacker's grabbing arm...



3 ...and turning fully into a cross-step, dropping his weight slightly and grounding himself to execute a sweep.

...and starts to flip his arm over his attacker's while twisting his torso to the left...



5 ◀ Chopping outwards through the attacker's neck/jawline with his right hand, Head simultaneously cuts through his attacker's legs with his right leg in the opposite direction...



6 ...to sweep the opponent backwards, enabling Head to either break contact or re-engage. (Note for practice: be very careful of your training partner's knees.)

FINISH

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Shito-Ryu Karate

MIKE WILLIAMS // Defence against a throat grab & punch

Q&A

Q&A: Mike, what's an important lesson you've learned in your martial arts journey that *Blitz* readers

would do well to learn sooner rather than later?

During my 34-year involvement with Shito-ryu, I have learned many lessons and continue to learn from my sensei.

One of the more memorable lessons relates to tension, relaxing and control, and the link between mind, body and spirit when training. During a training trip to Japan, my sensei was explaining to me the importance of control when executing techniques. He used the example of a bee and explained that the ultimate achievement of control would be the ability to choose to either execute a punch and stun the bee so that it fell to the ground and later flew away, or execute a punch that killed the bee.

Many Westerners have a habit of relying on brute force to execute techniques; this was not the way of our style, as anyone, regardless of their build and strength, should be able to deliver powerful, controlled techniques by using a combination of relaxation, tension and speed, combined with the correct mindset and body posture. One of the shihans I trained with was in his late sixties and of slight build, but he demonstrated a punching technique on me using the principles my sensei spoke of and I was amazed at the power he generated.

I regularly reinforce with my students the importance of correct technique incorporating tensing, relaxing and control.



1
START
In this scenario, Luke (left) approaches Tony with verbal aggression but is out of range and does not present an immediate threat.



2
As Luke moves in, Tony covers with a passive guard, then when Luke suddenly moves to grab him by the throat, raising his rear arm to punch...



3
...Tony is able to immediately strike the grabbing elbow away as he shifts off to the outside and simultaneously brings his left hand under to take control of Luke's wrist.



4
(It is important to move away from the thumb to avoid injury to the throat. Moving the opposite way would cause the thumb to dig into the soft tissue.)



5
Tony continues his movement, turning the deflection into an arm bar, applying pressure to Luke's shoulder blade while using his body against the elbow....



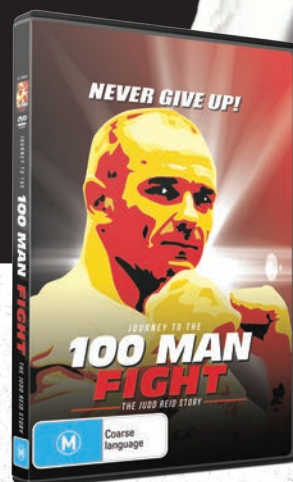
6
FINISH
...to drive Luke to the ground to neutralise the threat. From there, Tony can make an escape or establish full control while scanning for further threats.

JOURNEY TO THE 100-MAN FIGHT

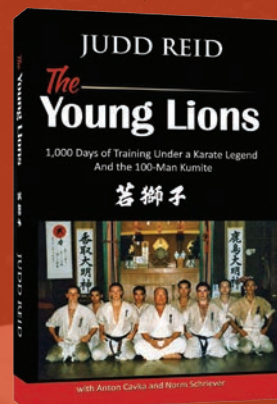
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The Young Lions



As a young man, Judd Reid undertook the most gruelling martial arts apprenticeship ever known. In his revealing autobiography, the karate legend tells what it was really like to be a live-in student under Kyokushinkai founder Mas Oyama for 1000 days.



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When Push Comes to Shove

Teaching self-protection to kids is quite different to teaching them martial arts, given that few martial arts in practice recognise the enormous differences in size and life experience that separates children from adults and even bullies. Here, RAW Combatives and Protect Self Defence instructor Jim Armstrong delivers some drills that for kids are simpler and more versatile than kicking and punching techniques.

Children's self-protection goes way beyond these few physical drills, as it's all about educating them — not making them paranoid but rather informed, so they can make the right choices. We want to build their self-esteem and confidence, and this has little to do with physical responses. That said, the drills

presented here are useful and applicable, being that they deal with a basic, innate physical movement. As human beings, when danger comes towards us, one of our natural responses is to move ourselves away from it and sometimes this includes bringing the arms up to keep the distance. Whether this is just to fill

the gap or to actually push the other person away will depend on the circumstances. Here we will look at three different versions.

THE DRILL

The first action here is to just bring our hands up to fill in the space between us and an approaching aggressor. This

does several things: first, it creates a barrier between us and the other person, keeping them momentarily at bay; secondly, it also means they must get through it before they can lay a hand upon us — and since our arms are up, they can be used either defensively or offensively in the blink of an eye. Doing it this way gives

DRILL 1: CHILD VS BULLY



The first thing to teach young students before any drill is to react to any aggressive advance by putting their hands up in a non-aggressive way, and assume a balanced stance, ready to push.



In this scenario drill, the 'bully' charges forward from a short distance away and the trainee reacts as per the basic drill, hands raised and ready...



...to meet the chest of the incoming bully with forward force (as opposed to 'receiving' energy)...



...through having the feet and body aligned to drive forward through the target...



...knocking the bully backwards and creating space to break away.

us the chance to get away from the aggressor without adding fuel to the fire, and allows for more options if things don't go well. This drill is not all physical, though; we also need to be able to back this up with confident speech. Even saying 'No!' can be enough if said in the right tone and backed up with confident body language; in fact, 'no' is one of the most important words out there.

The second stage in this drill is for when either our first action has failed or the aggressor has simply come at us too fast. With this, we push them hard in the chest to create space and, hopefully, to diminish or quash their will to do us harm. Now, while we might call it a push, this isn't really how it is executed, in the sense that it is more like a strike — a sharp and impactful shove. The essential difference between a push and a strike is intent: it will still make them take a step or two back, but due to it being felt as more of a strike, it may weaken their will to do you harm. If possible, when we push the aggressor we should also take a step back to create more distance so we can get further away from the scene of the altercation.

The third type of push we reserve for scenarios where an adult is trying to do a child harm or take them away. In this one, we put one hand behind the other and launch the push straight into the aggressor's chin — again, this is more of a strike than a push. This can be a hard thing to practise in training as it really sends the head back quite sharply and has a tendency to injure the neck. Obviously if a fully grown adult is attacking a child and the child can't escape, they need to be able to create enough of a distraction to allow them to escape. We have found that this takes away their attacker's balance and structure, while also causing pain and discomfort, which will allow them space and time to escape. If you do want the kids to practise this, they need to do it on a pad, bag or other training aid.

THE RESULT

As mentioned at the beginning here, instilling in children the ability to protect themselves is not about the physical skill so much as it is about building up kids' self-esteem and educating them so that they have the skills to spot potential danger and predatory people (whether adults or child bullies), and avoid them. If something has gone physical and we've had to use our hands-on self-defence skills, then this first line of self-protection has possibly failed. A gram of prevention is always better than a kilo of cure, and with children, doubly so. However, physical altercations can happen to even the most diligent of us, and it's an unlikely prospect that any kid is going to get through childhood without experiencing some kind of physical intimidation or assault from a peer — and this drill is a great start to dealing with that. ■

DRILL 2: CHILD VS ADULT



In this scenario drill, the 'bully' is replaced by an adult. The young trainee keeps his distance while gauging intent...



...but when it's clear the man is coming forward with ill intentions, hands are raised and ready, as in the basic drill.



As the aggressor moves to make contact of any sort, the child must react immediately and drive forward with his whole body...



...into a two-handed palm strike (one hand supported by the other), which employs the strength of a triangular structure and focuses the body like a spear toward the target.

Jim Armstrong began his martial arts journey in the mid-1980s, training primarily in freestyle karate, Thai boxing and Filipino martial arts. Today he is a certified instructor in reality-based systems Senshido (founded by Richard Dimitri), Nasubukang arnis (under Doug Tucker) and Protect Self Defence run by NZ's Phil Thompson, and an apprentice instructor in Urban Combatives (UK). He runs RAW Combatives at The Garage in Glen Waverley, Victoria, and regularly teaches his methods around Australia and Europe.



Get a Grip

A strong grip is essential in many martial arts, but even if it isn't key to yours, developing your grip has many other benefits to boot.

When I was studying, one way of paying the bills was working with my dad, a master builder. One of his tradies was Joe, an old bricky. Joe was in his late sixties, smoked rollies as he worked, had dark, sun-soaked leathery skin and threw 40 kg bags of cement over his shoulder as though they were the Worksafe-mandated 20 kg bags used today. Not only was his work phenomenal, but I will never forget the day that, just joking around, he grabbed me by the wrist and I couldn't get my arm free. The guy had the most ridiculous grip I have ever likely encountered — the product of working with his hands daily from a young age.

Pound for pound, babies are remarkably strong, and grow stronger very quickly. If you have ever had a baby grab your finger, you'll have felt the surprising strength in their grip. In a series of famous and crazy experiments in the late 19th century, Louis Robinson, a surgeon at a children's hospital in England, tested some 60 infants — many within an hour of birth — by having them hang from a suspended "walking stick". With only two exceptions, according to one report, the infants were able to hang on, sustaining "the weight of their body for at least 10 seconds". Many could do it for upward of a minute.

This idea that we are born to swing through trees (brachiate) seems to be behind the peculiar power of grip strength. Strong hands helped keep us in the trees — in other words, alive (to this day, would you believe heavier birth weight

is correlated with higher grip strength?). Then we came down, but our hands adapted to new uses, and the sorts of things that made us human — but also weaker in many ways.

Gripping, then, is a deep part of our biology and evolution as a species. It's also part of a long story in which we have been getting weaker for millions of years, largely because of a decline in physical activity. The human skeleton, for example, is weak compared to hominoids. Those infants tested by Robinson, as awesome as they were at hanging on, cannot compete with infant monkeys, who can hang on for upward of half an hour. Why? Because they need to, or they die.

In a study published in 2015 in *The Lancet*, the health outcomes of nearly 140,000 people across 17 countries were tracked over four years, via a variety of measures including grip strength. Grip strength was not only "inversely associated with all-cause mortality" — every 5 kg decrement in grip strength was associated with a 17 per cent increase in risk of dying — but as the team, led by McMaster University Professor of Medicine Darryl Leong, noted: "Grip strength was a stronger predictor of all-cause and cardiovascular mortality than systolic blood pressure."

Grip strength has actually been found to be correlated more with 'ageing markers' than chronological ageing itself. It has become a key method of diagnosing sarcopenia, the loss of muscle mass associated with ageing. Low grip strength has been linked to longer hospital stays, and in a study of



CHARLIE SURIANO

There are many creative ways to train your grip while developing other key attributes



Gripping heavy jars while working stances is an old grip-training method of karate



Winding a weight up and down (try both overhand and underhand grip) works the wrists and fingers

CHARLIE SURIANO

GRIPPING, THEN, IS A DEEP PART OF OUR BIOLOGY AND EVOLUTION AS A SPECIES. IT'S ALSO PART OF A LONG STORY IN WHICH WE HAVE BEEN GETTING WEAKER FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS, LARGELY BECAUSE OF A DECLINE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

hospitalised cancer patients, it was linked to “an approximate three-fold decrease in probability of discharge alive”. In older subjects, lower grip strength has even been linked with declining mental ability.

Grip strength is not necessarily the be-all and end-all indicator of health, nor is it a direct ‘cause’ of overall health — if you start building your grip strength now, it will not ensure you will live longer. If this were the case, women, who have

a lower average grip strength than men, would not live longer or have lower mortality than men at most ages. It is, however, related to important things — and it’s easy to measure, and not costly.

It’s also worth noting that these studies tend to focus on the measure of lifespan, but overlook morbidity and quality of life. The reality is the data shows we live longer — due to advances in pharmaceuticals, improved surgical procedures, medical care and science — but we also suffer much longer periods of chronic illness as we age, and a big drop in quality of life. Health is not just about life expectancy. Our weakening grips are, if nothing else, a corollary of an increasingly sick population.

Asymmetries or weakness in grip in a Functional Movement Screen (FMS) test for shoulder mobility can also illuminate potential neck and shoulder injuries or concerns. So, with some understanding of our evolution — even putting grip strength studies and health implications aside — we can see

that grip strength for martial artists is extremely important. In fact, for BJJ players and wrestlers, grip strength and endurance plays a huge role in overall performance.

If you already lift heavy stuff or have a physical job that involves gripping, crushing and tearing, or pursue a sport like

rock climbing, then you may not need much additional grip work on top of your grappling art. If you are lifting already, sometimes it is just matter of using a bigger or smaller bar, using a towel, or changing you grip on the exercises you are currently doing to make the grip challenge more significant.

I won’t bore you with yet another grip workout, but offer some exercise suggestions to get you well on your way. Here are some favourites:

1. Loaded carries for time (with kettlebells, dumbbells or barbells): Farmer’s walk/suitcase carry, KB bottoms-up carry
2. Changing grips or using a towel, depending on the implement you’re lifting
3. High-rep swinging and snatching using kettlebells, clubbells or a Bulgarian bag
4. Bar-hanging for time using two hands, one hand, removing fingers, passive and active, adding load, using a towel, etc.
5. Pull-ups: Changing and alternating grips and widths, removing fingers, adding load, using a towel or GI belt to hold



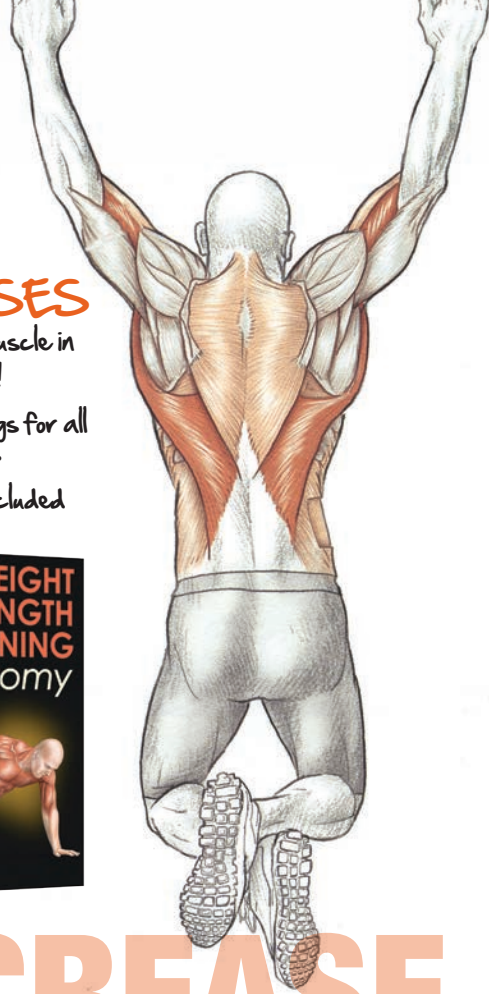
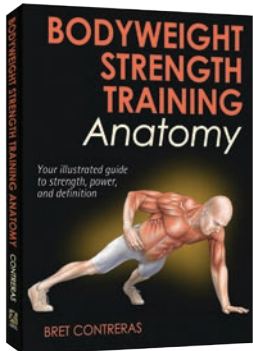
For extra grip work, use a gi, belt or towel around the bar when doing hanging exercises, or even to lift weights

156 EXERCISES

to work every muscle in your body!

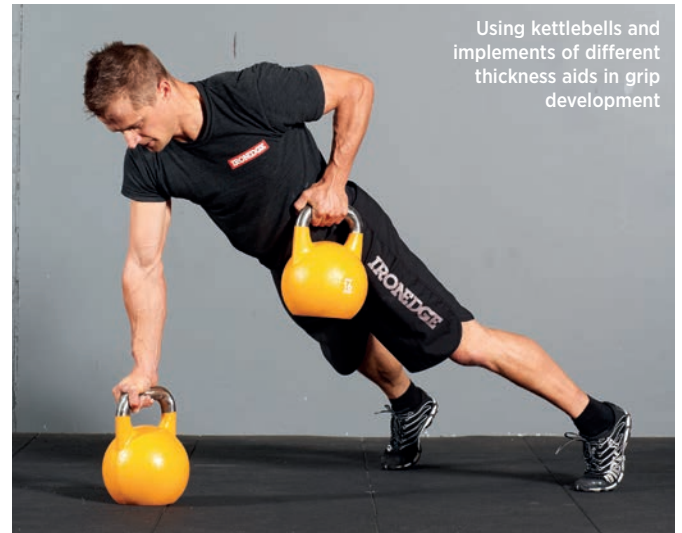
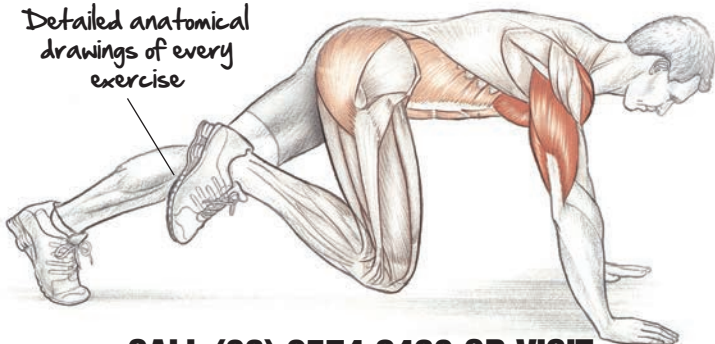
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Using kettlebells and implements of different thickness aids in grip development

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6. Fingertip push-up variations
7. Hand balancing: Handstands and inversions on the hands
8. Accessory work
9. Curling: plate curls, dumbbell curls with towels, reverse curls, wrist curls
10. Pinching: Plate pinches (grabbing a whole plate in one hand or putting a few plates together), dumbbell pinches (grabbing large end of DB)
11. Crushing: Stress ball, squash ball, making newspaper balls, hand grippers
12. Tearing: newspaper, cards, books, etc.

It is important to vary both the load and the time under tension/volume to ensure endurance is trained. There is no point if you are strong but only for a few seconds. In rounds of jiu-jitsu that can play out for five or six minutes, endurance is often the missing link in performance. Look to vary a few of these exercises a few times a week and give yourself a few days to recover, especially if you are rolling regularly.

With all the grip work and flexion, it is important that we also balance out the hands, wrists and forearms with some extension work as well. Opening the hands up into buckets of rice or sand, kung fu style, can fit this bill, as can quadruped rocking, push-ups on the back of the wrists or even push-ups on the first knuckles, palm-heel raises and other exercises used to improve hand, wrist and forearm mobility and strengthening for hand balancing (GMB has some great free resources for this online). These exercises should be used to balance out the body.

Like anything done to excess, too much gripping can lead to elbow tendinopathies, wrist and forearm pain and tendinopathies, carpal tunnel and other problems, so be sure to not overdo it and invest some time in self-care. Massage balls, sticks and other soft-tissue devices are great recovery tools for trigger-pointing and getting rid of knots and adhesions. ■

Matthew Beecroft is a Master RKC and Functional Movement Screen system specialist with over 17 years' full time experience as a trainer. He is an Expert Level 2 instructor with Krav Maga Global, Wing Chun Level 2 under the Sigung Chu Shong Tin/Jim Fung lineage, nationally accredited boxing coach and national fitness presenter. He also coaches amateur and professional Muay Thai fighters and is an instructor in various other movement modalities including Ground Force Method and Animal Flow. He can be contacted via his website www.realitysdc.com.au

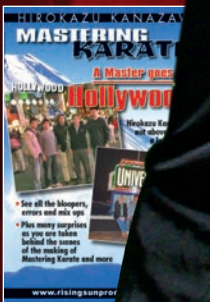
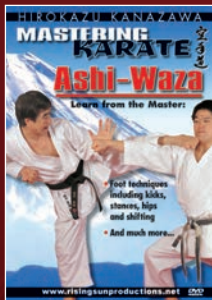
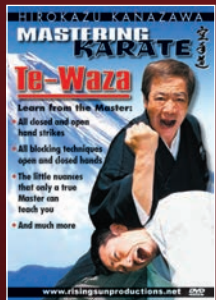


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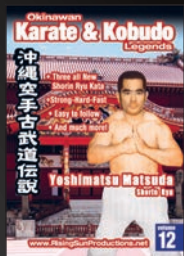
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沖繩空手古武道伝説



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Yoshimatsu Matsuda: Shorin Ryu



Eihachi Ota: Shorin Ryu



Karate Kobudo Masters of the 1900s



Katsuya Miyahira: Shidokan Shorin Ryu



Shuguro Nakazato: Shorinkan Shorin Ryu



Kanei Uechi: Uechi Ryu



Tatsuo Shimabukuro: Isshin Ryu



Shinpo Matayoshi Kobudo



Tetsuhiro Hokama: Bo Jitsu



Shoshin Nagamine: Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu



Chosin Chibana: Shorin Ryu



Eisuke Akamine: Kobudo Hozon Shinkokai



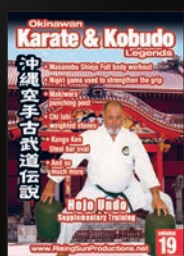
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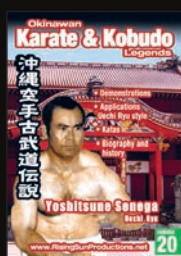
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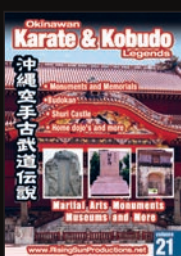
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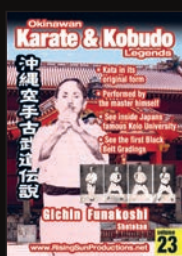
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TO HURT & TO HEAL

PART TWO

Common principles of the martial and healing arts

STORY BY SHERYN GUNG

Many martial artists would be familiar with the importance of applying body weight, using peripheral vision and developing sensitivity — all key abilities for gaining a victory in hand-to-hand combat. Some would be surprised to learn, though, that these same principles, seemingly all about bringing the pain, have a place in alleviating it too. The martial arts of Asia have always been taught in conjunction with their ancient healing methods, and there are many points where the two intersect, says Sheryn Gung, an instructor in Goju Kensha Karate and Balintawak Arnis Cuentada, and an experienced practitioner of the oriental/Eastern healing arts. In the second of this two-part series, Gung examines techniques from the two art forms that look surprisingly similar.



“If you don’t use strength, what do you use?” This was a question posed to me at a push-hands gathering, where martial artists from all schools were invited (although, as you can imagine, most guests had a tai chi background). Strength is largely taken out of the equation for Kyoshi James Sumarac’s students in our endeavour to learn and embrace intelligent martial principles. As Kyoshi James has said on numerous occasions, including to a room full of *yudansha* (Black-belt) men, “In my opinion, women make better martial artists than men because they cannot rely on strength, but technique.” I explained this to my push-hands partner after I collected my jaw from the floor. “And you use sensitivity too,” I added. “This is tai chi, after all.”

One concept that truly eliminates strength in martial applications (bunkai) is applying one’s body weight. This in itself is expressed through several power generation principles and *taijutsu goji* unarmed techniques. The same philosophy extends to the oriental healing arts (particularly ‘bodywork’ such as shiatsu and Thai massage). Other principles that are common to the martial and healing arts are using peripheral vision, and developing and employing sensitivity. Furthermore, there are techniques across both arts that are very similar at first glance.

SAME, SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Beyond the common principles between martial arts and shiatsu that we’ve looked at so far, there are also some techniques that are strikingly similar, such as...

Karate knee strikes and shiatsu knee rotations: *Hiza*

waza, or knee techniques, involve using the knees to disrupt an attacker’s stance and thus weaken their base; while the opponent is destabilised, we can easily move in for a sweep, throw or immobilisation. *Hiza waza* is performed at quite a subtle level; for example, when advancing or retreating in *kumite*, using just regular footwork. Such knee techniques can, of course, be easily integrated in *bunkai*, and can therefore be effectively employed in combat.

The circular *hiza waza*, in particular, are similar to shiatsu knee rotations. The outside crossover *hiza waza* sees our foot placed on the outside of the attacker’s foot with our knee hooked on the inside of the attacker’s knee, so the shins cross. The inside crossover *hiza waza* is the opposite: the foot is placed on the inside of the attacker’s foot, with the knee hooked on the outside of the attacker’s knee, again so the shins cross. In either situation, we can easily circle our knee to destabilise the opponent. These circular *hiza waza* lend themselves to flow drills for sensitivity training, like push-hands (or ‘push-knees’, as it were). In comparison, shiatsu knee rotations are commonly used to loosen the knee and hip joints, facilitate stretches and simply encourage the client to release and relax. Knee rotations with the client in a position (face-up) supine feel very much like *hiza waza*: the therapist’s knee rotates the client’s knee and facilitates deep stretching of the adductors, or the yin meridians of the leg (spleen, liver and kidney meridians). The client feels supported and relaxed with her calf on the therapist’s thigh, knees touching. Developing ‘sensitive knees’ — i.e. knowing how wide to rotate and how far to stretch a client — is as important in shiatsu as it is in *hiza waza*.

MARTIAL ARTS VS SHIATSU: Destabilising vs Stretching



Karate: outside crossover hiza waza



Karate: inside crossover hiza waza



Shiatsu: loosening a client's adductors via knee rotation

Jujitsu's strangulations and shiatsu's seated 'back sedations':

You are probably well familiar with the full Nelson grappling hold and even the shime waza strangulation, kata ha jime, or single-wing choke. Take a look at the comparisons here with shiatsu master Ohashi Sensei's seated back sedation techniques. The first time I practised them, I suffocated an evil laugh, knowing that a slight slip of the hands would bring about an entirely different result for my unsuspecting shiatsu partner!

All in all, there are many similarities between the Eastern healing and martial arts, and it should come as no surprise given that both deal with using one body — our own — to manipulate and affect that of another. While the aims of each may be different, they work with the same tools and thus an understanding of one will inevitably help in understanding and practising the other. This is actually more to do with their sharing of common principles related to how the body and mind work, more than certain techniques appearing similar. For example...

PUT YOUR WEIGHT INTO IT

If you've learnt CPR, you would know how tiring it becomes to perform 30 compressions to two breaths, over and over. To properly execute CPR, one leans slightly over the casualty from a kneeling position, with his arms locked. While the positioning is slightly different for shiatsu therapists (for instance, our arms remain bent to facilitate qi flow — and clients are hardly casualties!), the risk of exhaustion is the same. If proper technique isn't adopted and a small therapist relies purely on strength, they will limit the effectiveness of their treatments and lack the endurance to see several clients a day, so longevity in the art is also unlikely.

The solution is applying pressure using full body

MARTIAL ARTS VS SHIATSU: Strangles vs Sedation



Compare the full Nelson hold (left) with shiatsu's upper-back sedation for thoracic vertebrae 5 and 7



Compare kata ha jime to shiatsu's bilateral sedation for thoracic vertebrae 2 and 5

“KAZUSHI MEANS TO UNBALANCE THE OPPONENT BY FIRST BREAKING HIM DOWN;”

weight, as we would in combat. The techniques of shiatsu, which literally translates as 'finger pressure', include palming, thumbing and using the forearms. In part one of this article, I discussed the importance of working from the *hara*, or abdomen; if we effectively work from the *hara*, body weight is naturally implied and applied. It's not the arms (and sheer strength) that execute the technique, but the entire body, driven by the *hara*, that performs palming, thumbing or gentle rocking. In shiatsu, there is an integral

concept of the 'mother' hand and the 'child' or 'messenger' hand. The child hand 'goes to work' on a meridian and constantly returns to the mother hand, which stays in one area — usually the *hara* if the client is face-up, the *ming men* (energy centre of the lower back) if the client is prone, or perhaps an acupressure point if working on the limbs. Ohashi Sensei points out that there must be equal weight behind the mother and child hands, starting with low pressure before gradually increasing to full-body pressure.

When speaking of applying body weight in martial arts, the power generation principle that immediately comes to mind is *kazushi*. In Japanese martial arts, *kazushi* means to unbalance the opponent by first breaking him down; it is commonly used in the *ju* (soft) arts of judo and aikido. When the attacker's balance is compromised, one can easily move in for a counter attack. In Goju Kensha karate, the principle of *kazushi* is understood as employing whole-body pressure to destabilise an opponent by exploiting his weak or 'triangulation' points. A perfect example of this is an application from the Gojuryu kata, *Seiyunchin*: as the opponent punches, we deflect to the outside, grab the arm and simultaneously strike the ribs with the 'archer's pose' (*yumi*

barai) before sliding our arm over the top to sink and apply pressure in three directions: across, back and down. Ohtsuka Tadahiko O'Sensei, Goju Kensha's late founder, used to point out that the opponent's posture simply cannot handle three opposing forces at once: he must buckle under the pressure, facilitating a takedown (*nage waza*) via *kazushi*.

This same technique and integrated *kazushi* principle originally heralds from the famous ancient martial text, *Bubishi*, as illustrated far right:

Kazushi is difficult to master but it's valuable in that it gives rise to the option of hurting or not hurting the opponent. Taking the example above, the principle of *hobakute* is also used when applying pressure in three directions. *Hobakute* is where the opponent is smothered as if a stingray is wrapping around him or a wet blanket is thrown over him; like *kazushi*, it offers options to the advanced martial artist. Once we have destabilised the opponent using *kazushi*, and thrown or taken them down with *hobakute*, we can end the encounter with a forceful strike or apply an immobilisation (locking technique or *nage waza*) to further control the opponent.

The power of body weight is also harnessed in *taijutsu goji*. For example, when performing an arm bar, a small martial artist is likely to struggle if using strength alone. But by dropping his body weight, lowering his centre of gravity — and dragging down his opponent with him — the *gyaku waza* lock is more effectively achieved. *Nage waza* (throws) are also much easier when body weight is engaged. To perform a hip toss effectively, especially against a heavier opponent, we must first sink the body and garner strength from the legs and glutes. This will also prevent sore lower backs!

DID YOU SEE THAT?

As mentioned in part one of this piece, many a sensei has

instructed his students to look their attacker in the eye during *kumite* (sparring). This might remind us of the old cringe-worthy joke, "But I've never been hit by an eyeball!" However, what these teachers are really encouraging their students to do is engage peripheral vision. Peripheral vision is better achieved by looking at the attacker's face and surrounds in general, as opposed to staring at the arms and legs, waiting for an imminent attack. It's for this reason that upon finishing a *kata*, we seemingly look straight ahead: this symbolises maintaining *zanshin* (awareness) and adopting peripheral vision in readiness for a follow-up attack or new attackers.

In *shiatsu* we use a process called *bo shin*: diagnosis by looking. Ohashi Sensei says that in Western medicine, doctors delve deeper when they are confused, cutting through layers with scalpels to try to detect the problem. In oriental medicine, one can better diagnose by stepping back from the client to gain a full-picture perspective. To demonstrate this philosophy, Ohashi Sensei places a blanket over a student, covering his entire body and face. This way, the therapist is not distracted by one's gender, age or race; prejudices and assumptions cannot be formed. A therapist is only looking at what's immediately available: physical distortions in the back, and imbalances between upper and lower parts of the body, as well as left and right. By stepping back and holistically observing what's presented to him — a therapist's version of peripheral vision — the therapist can better create an effective treatment plan.

In the same line of thought, if we 'step back' from an opponent mentally and energetically, we are not hindered by physical appearances. This is especially important for small martial artists who may be fearful of much bigger, stronger opponents. By stepping back,



Full body weight is applied in *shiatsu* to maximise effectiveness.



we gain clarity of mind and are better able to simply allow our bodies to respond to attacks, allowing our martial arts training to do exactly what it's designed to do.

SENSE AND SENSITIVITY

Detecting and working with subtle energy is the aim of both healing arts and martial arts of the ju variety. One approach is to eliminate sight altogether. This may sound like a contradictory common principle, but it's actually a natural development from peripheral vision; by eliminating sight, we must rely on other senses. Shiatsu and anma are originally healing traditions of the blind, as is toyohari (Japanese needle therapy). My toyohari teacher, Paul Movsessian, emphasised, "Don't look down at the point you're treating. Remember that many toyohari masters are blind — you don't have to see where you're treating. Sink your stance like you're doing martial arts!" By lifting your face, you expand and connect through your hara; by sinking your centre of gravity, you can more readily move from your energy centre.

A decade ago, I attended Toyohari Summer School in Tokyo, where almost all the masters were blind or visually impaired. The late Yanagishita O'Sensei was a revered blind master and, during practice sessions, he went from massage table to table to assist students. I was practising needling when he visited me. He felt my practice partner's pulse and promptly told me that my point location was slightly off. I thought, "But how can you tell? You can't even see my needle!" Eyes wide, I was completely taken aback by how he had developed his fingertips to such a high degree of sensitivity that he could detect such subtle variations in the pulse.

I have since learnt from Yanagishita O'Sensei's wisdom. When I treat a client, there are times I do not look at her at all;

"THE DRILL TRAINS US TO FLOW WITH FORCE INSTEAD OF ACTIVATING OUR INITIAL INSTINCTS TO RESIST."

I glance up, or close my eyes. It's through the hands, not eyes, that we learn to detect subtle shifts in qi life force energy. It is through one's hands that one can feel *kyo* (deficiency) and *jiitsu* (stagnation): a fundamental way that the body communicates yin and yang.

This degree of sensitivity naturally extends to the ju martial arts. From what I've experienced and studied of China's *nei chia*, or internal martial arts, there is a great acknowledgement of oriental philosophy. In particular, yin yang theory (*in* and *yo* in Japanese) is embraced and explained even at a beginner's level. Morihei Ueshiba O'Sensei, the legendary founder of aikido, is well known for his sensitivity and heightened awareness. He once quipped, "When uke comes to attack, he doesn't exist, Ueshiba doesn't exist." What Ueshiba O'Sensei perhaps meant is that an advanced aikidoka should aim to sense and create harmony and unity; that there aren't separate identities or egos, even at the crucial point of impact. To achieve this, one should focus beyond his own centre, and on the common centre between himself and his partner. This common centre is the hub of yin and yang energies in motion — they are not conflicting, but complementing and balancing. If the partner is uke, the aggressor, yang, then one must be *tori* (the 'receiver'), yielding and yin — and sensitive to subtle changes.

This philosophy is mirrored in *nei chia*, where sensitivity



training is an important part of the curriculum, as evidenced by exercises such as push-hands (*tui-shou*). During push-hands, we will be both aggressor and defender at different stages. The drill trains us to flow with force instead of activating our initial instincts to resist, thereby keeping our body and mind calm during combat. Through developing sensitivity, one can detect slight changes in the partner's direction of movement and intent — and importantly, sense a lapse in energy that provides an opportune time for *fa jing*: the release of power through techniques such as *ji* (press), *chou* (elbow strike) or *kao* (shoulder strike). Sensitivity, in turn, is facilitated through adopting *song* — relaxation, or remaining loose, like a wet towel. *Song* grants us just enough power to properly

execute techniques, but our body on the whole remains fluid and pliable, without forced muscular contraction. As you can imagine, this is precisely the yin-yang balance required when performing shiatsu: too soft and the treatment is ineffective, too hard and one risks hurting the client, or having the client 'lock up' his body in alertness and pain.

Sound familiar?

Sheryn Gung (3rd Dan Goju Kensha Karate, Completion in the Art of Balintawak Arnis Cuentada) is a highly experienced practitioner of the oriental healing arts. She specialises in teaching karate to young girls through her program, Girl Instinct Karate, which proudly supports Plan International's Because I Am A Girl campaign. www.GirlInstinct.com.au. ■

Master Wushu

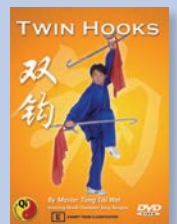
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FEATURE STORY

BEYOND THE SHADOWS

An interview with ninjutsu's
Shihan Mike Hammond

INTERVIEW BY PAUL JOHNSTONE



One of the early pioneers of ninjutsu in Australia, Shihan Mike Hammond, 10th Dan, took his first trip to Japan to further his training in Grandmaster Masaaki Hatsumi's Bujinkan system more than 25 years ago. Not only was he there to understand the art and its traditions more deeply, but he was on a mission to learn life-saving skills for use as a security professional. Hammond was recently interviewed by one of his early students, Paul Johnstone, 10th Dan Bujinkan Black-belt and chief instructor of Bujinkan Jissen Dojos Australia, about the early days of ninjutsu Down Under and what has changed.

Mike, what originally influenced your decision to learn martial arts and when did you start training?

I started in 1975 during my school years, studying and competing in judo and aikido.

Back then it was (military) cadets or judo/aikido...I simply chose judo and aikido.

I believe it was 1983 when a friend first took me to a ninjutsu class. I found there were no limitations and it was a practical art — after a few classes I was hooked.

My first teachers were Brett Reed, Dion Kalos and Dean Gum, through the Wayne Roy organisation.

Which of your teachers had the greatest influence on you as a student?

Dion Kalos probably had the most influence prior to my travelling to Japan. He was a good teacher that could teach, not just beat it into you.

How was your training back in those days different to that of today?

Training back then was hard, as you know, Paul. Back then we trained with the military and law enforcement [personnel], and those guys played for keeps — you couldn't even dream to train like that these days for fear of litigation.

I know you train with weaponry, though — do you have a favourite weapon?

Yes, we do train with weapons. The sword and three-foot stick [short staff] are my favourites: the sword for its

cultural and historical links; the three-foot stick because of its practicality and adaptability.

What difficulties and obstacles have you encountered with regards to teaching martial arts as a career and how did you overcome them?

Interesting question...

Student numbers are the biggest obstacle. When you need to pay rent and so on, the numbers become critical. These days I have a closed class with a definite number of students who I have trained for years, so the numbers game isn't so much of a problem.

What are your thoughts pertaining to the higher ranks now awarded in the Bujinkan — from 11th to 15th Dan — and why do you think this is done?

My thoughts don't matter on this subject — if Soke [Hatsumi] sees the need, then so be it.

What are your thoughts regarding where ninjutsu and, in particular, the Bujinkan are at in 2017?

Many of us started in the same place, yet many deny their roots; it has become about money. Many of the instructors of 20 years ago aren't around; those that are tend to keep to themselves. Many others have opinions that should be kept to themselves. It's pleasing to see that yourself, one of my early students, has progressed to the point where you have your own school and your own students, and have taught all around the world in conjunction with your military and police experiences.

Out of the nine schools of the Bujinkan, which one is your favourite?

If I had to claim a favourite, it would be Gyokko-ryu followed by Togakure-ryu, I guess, with those being, in my opinion, the most practical of the schools.

Why do you think Hatsumi Sensei changed the name of the system from ninjutsu to budo taijutsu?

I had this conversation with Soke once and he was concerned that the word 'ninjutsu' was associated with the wrong image, so it needed to be changed. It was also the fact the nine schools [from which the Bujinkan draws its methods] were not all ninjutsu schools, so it also created an incorrect perception of Soke's art.

When did you first travel to Japan to train with Hatsumi Sensei, and what was the training like back then?

My first trip was in 1991 and things both in Japan and the Bujinkan were very different then. The training was hard, but fair. There was so much to learn, so we all tended to train many, many hours in an attempt to try to understand Sôke's art. Still trying!

How would you describe your teacher, Hatsumi Sensei?

Soke is a kind man; he has been kind to my family, my students and me. He has many skills and talents that we will probably never understand or perceive but, ultimately, he is also a businessman. The Bujinkan is an international business, so he does what he has to do.

How did you first meet him?

I first spoke with Soke in 1990 through my Japanese teacher; he invited me to come to Japan and train with him. In 1991 a group of students and I did just that. I formed a relationship with the owner of the Koshigaya Guest House, Mr Igarashi, who acted as our host and tour guide during the first trip.

What was that first class with Soke like?

The first class was a *tai kai* — a gathering of about 300 students — so time and exposure to Soke was limited. It wasn't until some days later when I got to attend a smaller class that I realised the potential of the art I had chosen to follow.

What did the training consist of?

There was lots of rolling, and then more rolling...and, oh yeah, then there was some rolling! It wasn't till after lunch and then through to days two and three that we saw the true art. We got to see some of the shihans and Soke in his true element. Every technique had so much more to it than what was being translated, and every technique was slightly changed every time it was taught. I'm not sure whether that was to confuse us or to show us there was more to the art than what was being shown [in any given instance].

Did you study any traditional weaponry or survival techniques while you were training in Japan?

Nothing more than the masses did at the *tai kai*. I did spend some time with Shirashi and Naguchi Senseis, where we did some sword and stick work, which was straight from the scrolls. [Hammond is referring to a series of traditional Japanese scrolls that have been passed down via the masters of the various fighting traditions that make up the Bujinkan. These document technique, strategy and philosophy, and form the basis for the modern Bujinkan syllabus.]

Hammond in his heyday: below, on the cover of *Blitz* in 1999



How and when did you first rank for the Godan — the Bujinkan's famous 5th Dan test, involving the blind test of evading a descending weapon?

I got to sit the Godan test in 1992 at the *tai kai* in Adelaide, Australia. I was the last of 21 people who sat the test during this event.

What do you enjoy most about teaching and in that regard what advice can you give to someone who is interested in training in the art?

I enjoy sharing knowledge. I was originally trained back in 1978 as a teacher, so I have formal qualifications in teaching. My advice is to go to as many

dojos as you can and you will find a teacher that suits you... and with any luck they will also know what they are doing.

You have assisted Soke with international *tai kai* events. Can you explain what that was like?

I was fortunate enough to be in Hawaii for a *tai kai* and assisted Soke with some matters there. I also attempted to run a *tai kai* in Australia, but due to politics it never became a reality.

When did you open your first dojo and what was it called?

My first dojo opened in 1988 and it was called Dentotekina Kai — which, loosely translated, means 'traditional group'. In 1989 Bujinkan Dojos Australia was formed, then in 1991 Soke changed the name to Bujinkan Goshu Dojos. *Goshu* means 'big/wide land', hence Australia.

What type of training did you do in your dojos back then?

You were a big part of it back then and, as you know, most of our training in the early days was survival training — bush training and street training. My

team all worked in the high-end security field, so our training was based on the reality of what we were doing for a living.

Do you think training was harder back then compared to today?

Yes, I do. Training has softened over the years, as litigation and attitude from the current generations has changed. You know yourself that back in 1989 we trained very hard and trained for the dangers of the modern world, as well as the traditions of our arts. My closed group still train relatively hard; however, I don't expose them to this type of training until I believe they are ready.

It is well known that you have conducted specialist training for various military and law-enforcement units throughout the world. Can you tell us about which units/groups you have trained?

Hmm, not sure what I can say here... As you know, back then we did training with the 3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (Airborne), New South

Wales Police (State Protection Group, which is an elite tactical team), NSW Corrective Services Academy, Parklea Corrective Services, Long Bay Corrective Services, and members from the Victoria Police Force.

I did some training with a specialist group in Hawaii too, but for security reasons I cannot say who they were.

It's also well known that you have provided security and executive protection to many Australian and international celebrities and VIPs. How did your ninjutsu training assist in this field?

Yes, this is true; the main assistance was that we were always prepared. The art gave us a skill set that others don't seem to understand. I guess just knowing you had put your heart and soul into every waking minute prior to [an incident] gave us the confidence to carry out our jobs with confidence.

Can you tell me more about Takanoha Dojos?

This is my current school. I was given the crossed falcon's feathers — *takanoha* — on my trip to Japan in 1991, so it seemed that this would be the logical succession to Goshu Dojos. It's a Japanese family crest [featuring] two crossed falcon feathers. The name of the crest is Maruni chigai takanoha (丸に違鷹羽) and it belonged to the families Kubo and Hidaka. The hawk was a symbol of a samurai in old days. 'Feather of hawk' was given glory as the decoration worn at times of ceremony such as New Year's Day, and great people of the samurai class were able to arrive at one's crown in the old days. That's why it is one of the family crests of arms liked most by a samurai.

In Japan in 1991, my then-fiancée and I met with a Buddhist monk and were given this ancient crest of the Takanoha family, under which we married the following year with formal kimonos, etc, and today I trade under Takanoha Dojos.

What are the key principles and concepts that you uphold and try to instil in your students?

Giri is the most important principle I try to uphold. I'm not interested in abilities or looks — get in, give your best, but honour your teacher, your family and yourself, no matter what.

What individuals have influenced you most as a martial artist?

Wayne Roy and Hatsumi Soke have had the most influence on me.

“TODAY THOSE WHO KNOCKED ME ARE NOW DOING EXACTLY WHAT I WAS DOING 15 YEARS AGO. STRANGE, THIS CIRCLE OF LIFE!”

Over the past 10 years, various types of so-called reality-based systems and defensive tactics systems have flooded the market. What are your views on this development?

With respect, I don't really have an opinion on these other forms. If they work and make people better, then okay. My concern is that they may be being created as a form of revenue.

In your experience, what qualities do you believe a person needs to be an instructor of ninjutsu?

There are only two qualities: no ego and an open mind. People like yourself who have the experience and credibility within the martial arts, as well as their own experiences in war zones and hostile environments, yet don't talk themselves up. As you know, we have always maintained that type of approach to our school.

What advice or insights can you share with our readers who want to pursue their interest in the Japanese martial arts?



Follow your heart — go to Japan and see what the roots of your choice really look like. I was knocked for many years for doing what I did, but I don't regret it one bit. Today those who knocked me are now doing exactly what I was doing 15 years ago. Strange, this circle of life!

How do you see the future of ninjutsu training?

The future of our art is in our hands. There are too many people ripping the heart out of this to make money from it: Black-belts by mail order, gradings by video... it's all out there. Those in the know will know what has to be done; some of us are already doing it. You can't learn the art from a book, nor can you learn it from someone who has not been taught by Soke. Paul, you understand this.

Do you have any specific plans for your dojo and ninjutsu training?

No, just keep doing what we do. As long as the old-school people still want what is in my head, then we will keep going.

There are some of us that have been fortunate enough to

study with Soke and his shihans, and there are also small groups that continue to share his (their) knowledge with those who have a need to know it. People such as yourself will ensure this art survives and is taught correctly. As long as those people continue to do what they do with a pure heart, then we are in good hands.

A tree falling in the forest with no one to hear it makes no sound; but, it falls nonetheless. So it is with ninjutsu. ■

Paul Johnstone served in the AFP for 10 years, working in protective security and leading its Operational Safety Training Team, following a decade in the Australian Defence Force. He is now a security consultant and close-protection specialist. With 30 years' training experience, Johnstone holds Shihan (10th Dan) rank in Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu and is the Australian representative of Israeli Special Forces Krav Maga (under Nir Maman) and founder of the Street Edge krav maga system. He runs Jissen Dojos in Brisbane, Qld.

A Champion's Journey

Following the recent seminar tour of Benny 'The Jet' Urquidez, we take an extract from the recently released autobiography of one of his many successful protégés: the former kickboxing champ — and aptly named — Nadine Champion, a Black-belt under Urquidez since 1999. In this chapter, 'My Time', Champion recalls her experience as a traditional martial artist competing as a Thai boxer, and going into a bout carrying injury and determination in equal amounts.

EXTRACT & IMAGES COURTESY OF ALLEN & UNWIN

Sensei Benny knew my bout was up next, so he held pads for me and made me move around in the dressing room. The pressure built while we were watched intensely by other fighters and trainers. As time was running out, I had my gloves taped on and checked. I felt all the familiar intense competing feelings, but this time they were pulled tight across me like the skin of a drum. My fight was about to be called. The pressure had reached boiling point. Now was the time.

Sensei, my cornermen and I all formed a line at the dressing room door. Sensei Benny stood directly in front of me, solid as a rock. As the crowd turned to look at us, he shielded me from view and talked to me in a low tone. His calm energy kept me relaxed — well, as relaxed as you can be at a time like that. Before he turned towards the crowd, Sensei reminded me that it was my time. I believed it was true. All doubt was shut out of my mind as I brought forward all my strongest feelings at full volume. I took the last precious moments for myself and turned to face the rear of the dressing room. I bounced on my toes and shook my body out. Andrew Berridge was behind me, so we were now eye to eye. In contrast to Sensei Benny's calm, Andrew's energy was intense. He was a great fighter and I knew he understood the

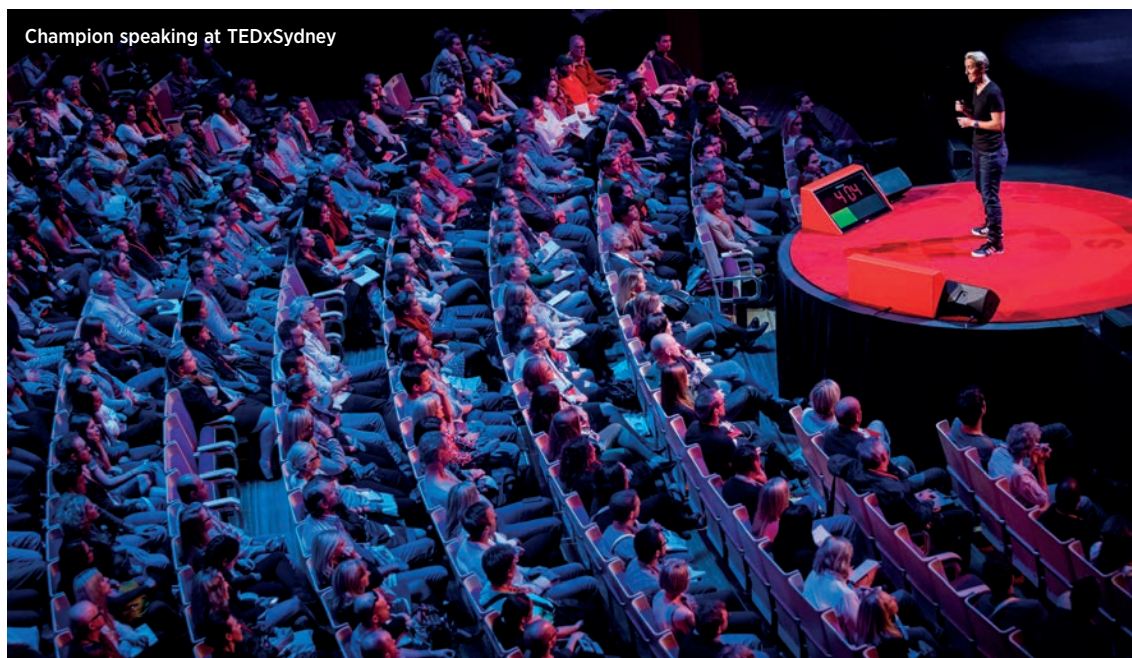


Champion showing her skills in the ring

specific place I went to in my mind. Andrew started talking hard at me, firing me up. 'Go out there and *show them all who you are.*' His strong words hit straight to my heart. I wasn't sure if it was what he said or the firm way he said it. I wanted to go and show everyone outside who I was on the inside. In that instant I felt so much bigger than my small stature and stronger than my injured body. I locked onto that feeling and turned around. I put my hands on Sensei Benny's shoulders as my walk-out music started to loudly play. He moved forward and I moved with him. Suddenly we were walking out to the ring.

Once I was through the ropes, I shook my body out and looked over at my opponent Ashlee Pilgrim. She had a reputation for being hard as nails, but I wasn't scared of her. I was excited as I paced back and forward, always watching her intensely. I had waited a long time for this and I just wanted them to let me at her. When the referee called us to the centre of the ring, Sensei Benny was right behind me. He stood just over my right shoulder and looked at my opponent almost as intensely as I did. We both just wanted to see what she was made of as a person. What was her energy like up close? Was she nervous? Would she show fear or aggression? I looked in her eyes to see if she knew who she was?

What I saw was a woman who had been here before and knew how to handle herself. She looked like a nice enough person, but she was clearly also ready for battle. I looked deep into her eyes and smiled at her. Not in a friendly way, but in a knowing way. On the outside it might have been mistaken for cockiness, but the feeling behind it was just that I was ready to go. I was just happy that we were both



Champion speaking at TEDxSydney

“WE TOUCHED GLOVES TO WISH EACH OTHER LUCK, THEN WENT BACK TO OUR RESPECTIVE CORNERS. I GAVE SENSEI BENNY WHAT FELT ALMOST LIKE A HUG GOODBYE, THEN TURNED AND LET OUT A LOUD SHOUT TO FIRE MYSELF UP.”

there and the night had finally arrived. I had spent months feeling like a giant rubber band was holding me back, always pulling at my shoulders while I strained against it. Now was finally the time when I got to let go and I couldn't wait.

We touched gloves to wish each other luck, then went back to our respective corners. I gave Sensei Benny what felt almost like a hug goodbye, then turned and let out a loud shout to fire myself up. I wiped my feet on the canvas to ground myself and started bouncing with my hands up in a ready position, waiting for the bell. I knew there were only a few seconds left before we would clash.

The bell sounded and I went at her like that rubber band I'd been straining against had just snapped. My strategy at the beginning of a bout was always to be first to fire.

I quickly touched gloves with her and started by blasting a kick straight down the barrel at head level, followed by two punches and a leg kick. Then I circled and changed position so she couldn't hit me back. I wanted her to be caught off-guard from the first second of the fight, hoping she would be uncomfortable and start getting mentally captured.

I loved being a fast starter and it always got the crowd to be vocal from the outset, which increased the energy in the room. Sensei drew huge crowds the world over, so he viewed competition not just from the perspective of the combatants but also the fans and promoters. He knew that a good fighter was interesting to watch and became a crowd favourite. He taught me to *'be worth looking at'*. He gave me permission not just to perform, but to perform at my

unshamed best in spectacular fashion. I loved dynamic techniques like spinning back kicks and superman punches because they were flashy and fun. When I launched myself at my opponent, the audience always knew I was there to fight and put on a show. I was always there to win. This was exactly the feeling I wanted my opponent to understand about me from the bell.

It was a fast and furious fight that was tough, and seemed to only get tougher. It quickly became apparent to me that Ashlee's strategy was to clinch me and pull my head down into a knee. As the taller person, this was a smart move. I knew she was looking to knock me out, as I narrowly escaped her knee repeatedly rushing past my face. As soon as I got close enough, Ashlee would grab my head and pull down hard. By the second round my neck was out of place and painfully stiffening up, which affected my ability to resist as she drove it towards her knee.

The middle rounds were a blur of frenzied attack, movement and increasingly tired arms from all the clinching.

Champion with her mentor
Benny 'The Jet' after a fight



I had hit my opponent with shots that I expected to knock her out, but she stayed standing. I half-wondered if she might be some type of zombie who just wouldn't go down no matter what I did. I started to feel worried about how much gas I had left in the tank.

As I sat down on the stool between rounds in a mini panic, I asked Sensei who was winning. He looked at me with mild disappointment and said, 'Does it matter?'

Instantly I saw how I had lost perspective on what I was doing. The reason I was doing this wasn't to win a bigger trophy than the other woman. I was here to share an experience and give my best, all because of this crazy lifelong love for martial arts. I had to be fully present and enjoy the experience,

“AS I SAT DOWN ON THE STOOL BETWEEN ROUNDS IN A MINI PANIC, I ASKED SENSEI WHO WAS WINNING. HE LOOKED AT ME WITH MILD DISAPPOINTMENT AND SAID, ‘DOES IT MATTER?’”

instead of worrying about the future. That was what mattered more than the final outcome.

When the bell sounded to start the second last round, I was tired and knew the chances of me knocking her out were getting slimmer. Andrew Berridge and I had game-planned in training that if my opponent was still standing at this point, I might need to change strategy. I would use my push kick to keep her away from me throughout the round, so she couldn't clinch. Andrew reminded me of this and as the round started, my

plan began working. Ashlee quickly became frustrated and tried even harder to get close to me, which only served to increase the impact of the straight kicks I was throwing as she rushed in. This gave me a much-needed chance to rest my weary arms and dictate the pace of the round. I knew I had to save my best effort for the last round. Last one, best one.

Sometime during the latter part of the fight, my opponent charged towards me while I threw a big punch and immediately felt my right ring finger snap in half inside my

glove. It was a spiral fracture. I had the perfect excuse to give up and get out of the ring if I wanted to. Nobody would have blamed me for pulling out with all the injuries I had coming in. Despite the pain, I just couldn't do it. I had come too far and this meant too much to me. I didn't show what had happened on my face. Now I knew what all that training around pain was for—right this second when I was in agony but had learnt to hide it from my opponent. In my head, though, I was exasperatedly thinking, 'Oh come on, this has to happen now? Really?' As if three sets of torn ligaments weren't hard enough to handle in the lead-up to the bout, now I had to try to finish the fight with a broken bone in my glove. My focus shifted at that point to seeing if I could get to the

end and be standing for the final bell. If I could make it that far without giving up, I hoped that at least I could be proud of myself for not quitting.

The final round started just like the first round, with me flying full speed across the ring at Ashlee, showing energetically that this was mine. Even though I was exhausted, I wanted her to think that I wasn't. I had to fight like I was fresh. I gave everything I had until my arms were literally moving in slow motion. I had her pinned in the corner but when I told my body to go, it looked like I was slapping her with limp lettuce leaves. This was all down to heart now, instead of cardio fitness. Sensing I was tiring, my opponent charged at me repeatedly, knowing this was her chance to win. As much as I wanted to stay still, I knew I had to move constantly. I had trained for a hard final round and I fought on with wobbly legs. Ashlee charged at me with all her might but I leant back into the ropes and let her run right into a straight kick to the body. Her momentum doubled her over my leg. As she stormed forward again trying everything she could to take me out, I moved at the last second and sent her crashing into the ropes. We were equally desperate to finish strong and pushed each other until the last bell sounded.

When the referee stepped in to stop the bout, we gave each other a tremendous hug. This had been a true test for each of us. I now knew things about this woman's spirit and belief in herself that I could only see from my bird's eye view of competing with her.

We had fought to the bitter end and knowing the fight was over came as the sweetest relief. There was a searing pain in my hand. Unfortunately, when my opponent took out her mouthguard after the fight, part of her front teeth went with it. No wonder I had broken my finger. It was a brutal fight where

we both sustained damage, but Ashlee had very much won my respect. Without her, there was no way I could have experienced the depths of my own fear and found courage. I was so happy that I had found a way to believe in myself enough to even step into the ring that night.

The referee called us to centre ring to hear the judges' decision on the bout. I hoped I had done enough to win but you just never know how the judges are going to see things. I bounced from side to side while waiting for the decision. I held my breath as they announced that I had won. I raised my hands and as Sensei Benny wrapped the title belt around my waist, it was one of the sweetest moments of my entire life. Not because I had achieved my goal, but because of what it took to reach it. I had taken what I thought of as being a hard challenge and multiplied it exponentially. I had been so scared to face all my fears that night, but I had quietly found the courage to do it.

Sensei Benny raised my hand to present me as the winner to the crowd and I had my very own *Karate Kid* moment. I could see all the people I cared about standing on their chairs and cheering for me. I was overjoyed to not have been seriously injured. The best part came when Sensei Benny looked at me and smiled, pride beaming from his face. All those years of learning hard lessons from him came down to this time in the ring, where everything else faded away and I saw that he was happy with my effort. He knew what it took to deal with pain and stare down

your own fear. Now I had the beginnings of the same.

That night was my second last fight, but that wasn't the plan at the time. I would win another title in my next bout, this time in kickboxing. But all the while I had the strongest feeling in my gut that I'd had during that first Thai boxing championship fight. I just knew I needed to take the opportunity even though I was injured during the lead-up training. All I understood was that I had to do it right then, even though it may have seemed a little crazy and illogical to others. I didn't know then that my whole life was leading to a day of

reckoning that I could never have seen coming. A day where I would know what it truly meant to feel afraid. Terrified, even. That day came sooner than I could ever have imagined and tested me to the absolute depths of my courage. ■

For more info on Nadine Champion and her book, visit www.nadinechampion.com



A Right Problem-Solver

Reality-based self-defence instructor Jeff Phillips shares a story that might seem to reinforce one simple lesson — hit first, hit hard — but for him it raised a host of questions that helped inform his training.

I'm not one for telling my 'war stories', as I don't want to look like those guys who make things up to enhance their reputation. Realistically, self-defence is about decision-making and avoidance, and if you are good at that, you don't have many stories. I find it interesting that often it's the big, tough guys who have the most stories, when in actuality they would be a 'hard target' that most people are too scared to mess with. The exceptions to this rule are being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and facing violence as an occupational hazard. Personally, it was my work that put me in a few predicaments — I often spent time in areas of high crime — but I was also a dickhead with an ego! Many of my stories, including this one, I would not consider self-defence because, by definition, self-defence is when you are devoid of choice; if you choose to be there, it's a street fight, not self-defence.

So, this story isn't 'sexy' and won't have you on the edge of your seat or thinking I'm Jason Bourne — but bear with me, as it has a few important takeaways to consider.

Long story short, I became separated from my ride home from the city late one night. My mate who had the car drove to a different club and I had to walk a few kilometres to meet up with him, so I wasn't happy. It was very late, I was tired, hungry and a little intoxicated, and with each step on my half-hour walk, I became angrier. As I walked, cursing his name, I took a shortcut through a few

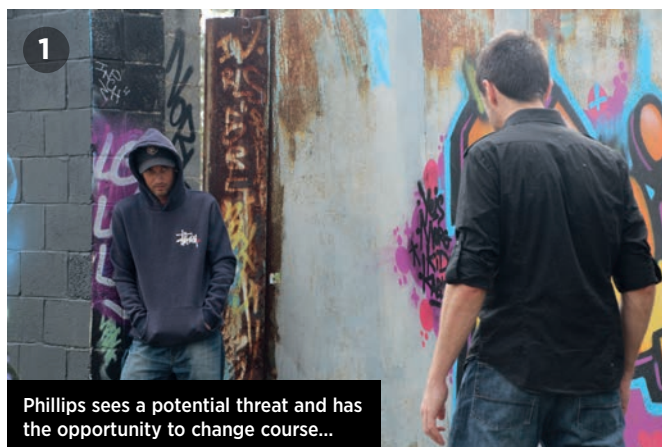
laneways and back streets — I was beyond caring.

As I walked along, I saw someone approaching in the distance. I could tell he was trouble — perhaps it was his trademark identity-concealing hoodie and constant looking around — but I was in angry-man mode and just didn't care. I needed to blow off some steam.

So, the twitchy guy came right up to me and asked for a light, to which I snarled, "I don't smoke and neither should you." By the looks of him, he didn't care too much for his health and was probably an addict. He didn't look too pleased with my response and, as he motioned to put his smoke back in his pocket, he pulled out a blade. Still looking nervous and with his head on a swivel, he asked for my wallet and phone. I reached for my wallet and as I did, he again turned his head to check for witnesses. At that moment, without any thinking or preparation, I threw a straight right that connected flush on the side of his head. It was as if I was on autopilot. It floored him instantly, the knife dropping to the ground. He was breathing and seemed okay, so I offered him some expletive-laden encouragement to change his life decisions. I picked up the knife, threw it down a drain and hurried on.

That's not the coolest story, perhaps, but it's a great story for teaching.

Firstly, it's very important to note that the sample size here (one event) isn't enough to form the basis of assumptions or enough to build a method on. Too many



Phillips sees a potential threat and has the opportunity to change course...



...but being in a bull-headed frame of mind, he continues toward a likely confrontation.



His nervous foe pulls a knife, but keeps looking around, so Phillips fumbles for his valuables...



4

...looking to time his pre-emptive strike with the mugger's next glance away...



5

...and neutralise the threat quickly.



6

Phillips' well-practised right cross catches the mugger flush and knocks him out...

people say, 'I used this move and it worked for me.' Maybe it did, once, and yet there were probably many other things that would also have worked at the time. Self-defence is unpredictable, so what works for scenario A may not work for scenario B due to a slight variation. A lot could've gone wrong in this example, but the stars aligned that night and I was fortunate.

I have to admit, I'm not always such a cool customer in the face of danger; in fact, at another time the result probably would've been very different. Had I perhaps had an illness or an injury, or even had been in a great mood, my response probably would have been very different. My anger overrode my fear, and thus my choice of 'fight' over 'flight' or 'freeze' in response to danger was predetermined by the events earlier that night. However, my anger also caused me to make a number of mistakes. Some possibly obvious questions that should be addressed here are:

1. Should I be travelling alone in the city late at night?
2. Should I be taking shortcuts through secluded spaces?

3. When I saw the attacker, should I have changed direction?
 4. Would it have escalated had I answered more politely?
 5. Could I have managed the distance better?
 6. When he reached into his pocket, should I have been proactive? (The signs were there!)
 7. Should I have just given him my wallet?
 8. Were my actions both 'reasonable and necessary' in the eyes of the law?
 9. What if he'd had an accomplice that I did not see?
 10. What if he took my shot and then came at me?
 11. What if the ground was slippery or uneven and I lost my footing?
 12. What if he lunged at me when I swung?
 13. What if he had a blood born virus and hitting him cut my hand?
- The list could go on and on. So, what did I learn from this?

1 Simplicity is key. I have a saying, 'a big right hand solves a lot of problems', and by that I mean many self-



...so Phillips confiscates the weapon before checking that his assailant is breathing.

7

Phillips' knife incident could have gone many different ways...



defence situations can be dealt with quickly by the ability to hit hard. Many people try to learn complex manoeuvres that probably won't work at 'match speed' and would be better off learning to hit harder. I knew that if I landed flush, it would be lights out for this guy, and I had thrown that punch more times than I care to count. I threw it at bags, pads and people in sparring, so I had confidence in that particular tool. As Bruce Lee said, "I fear not the man who has practised 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who had practised one kick 10,000 times."

2 Selected sport fighting techniques work! When it comes to striking (I was a kickboxer at the time) you learn timing, footwork, placement and all of those things that enable you to land a strike as well as take a shot. The idea that sport fighting doesn't help self-defence is a myth; you just need to know how to adapt and apply it. Punching people on a regular basis will make your self-defence better than punching the air or even pads — this is a fact.

3 I spent my fight career as a southpaw after being naturally orthodox. I switched because I was a JKD guy 30-odd years ago. In this scenario, thousands of hours went out the window and I jumped into

an orthodox stance! Crazy — where's the muscle memory everyone speaks of? Often, you're going to do what you're going to do in spite of the hours you put in, particularly under duress. Lucky I'm ambidextrous!

4 Your state of mind changes from day to day and moment to moment, as do situations, so have more strategies at the ready than just a big punch. Some days if I stub my toe I end up in the foetal position! What if it was one of those days?

5 This incident made me question contemporary unarmed knife defence. Most RBSD schools categorise their knife training into two categories: static and dynamic. This particular scenario, a few other experiences and watching countless hours of CCTV footage made me work on a third, which I refer to as 'dynamic threats'. This is where the knife isn't placed in a static position on your body, nor is it on its path attempting to cut you; however it is used to threaten while in motion. For example, the assailant may be waving it around as if it is an extension of their arm while gesturing. It is essential to train all three, but this is the one often overlooked. Like the others, it requires split-second decision-making and a mistake could be fatal. Like general hand-to-hand combat,

knife defence is not a one-size-fits-all concept. The strategy used needs to be adapted to the user's ability as well as the assailant's. Obviously you don't have time to do a background check on the assailant to determine your course of action, so it is more to do with their physical attributes. My attacker didn't look like he could take a hit, but had he been bigger and more physically imposing, my strategy may have changed.

There are three schools of thought on defence when facing a knife and fleeing is not an option:

1. Attack the person
2. Secure the knife-wielding limb
3. Move away from the weapon (i.e. flanking).

There are also examples where two of these are combined but, from my experience, fixation on the blade occurs, so doing two things at once wouldn't happen. And if it did, you would naturally neglect one and focus on the other. Deciding between these options is where the split-second decision needs to be made. All are right and all are wrong, depending on the circumstance dictating the response. It is too difficult to say that you should always do this one or that one, and quite often in training you will switch between all three. My advice is to become adept at all three and drill them in real time. You will soon see what works and what doesn't. A good rule is that if it works in training, it may work in real life, but if it only works sometimes in training, then it will rarely work when you need it!

A false sense of security can get someone killed, so at our

school we work by the motto 'truth in training'. That is, we only teach techniques that we know will work in your time of need. We don't make assumptions but instead we try it out under stringent testing to ensure it is 'high percentage'. Secondly, this means that the training must reflect real events as closely as possible. We take this to the extreme by fully immersing every sense as best we can, as science suggests this produces the best results. Look at any physical pursuit: training is meant to simulate the actual event. A swimmer doesn't practise their strokes on dry land; they need to get in the water! Martial arts is the one pursuit that fails in this. Bruce Lee said, "Be water"...and I say, get in the water! Look at your training: does it look like anything the event you are training for?

6 Stay in shape. An athlete with better attributes such as speed, power, balance, reaction time, coordination, etc. will do far better than the couch potato technique master. Same goes for running away: it's pretty easy to say 'run away if someone pulls a knife on you'...but can you run? Do you have the speed and endurance required? If the answer is no, then I wouldn't advise it. Adrenaline improves you physically, sure, but it won't turn Kyle Sandilands into Usain Bolt!

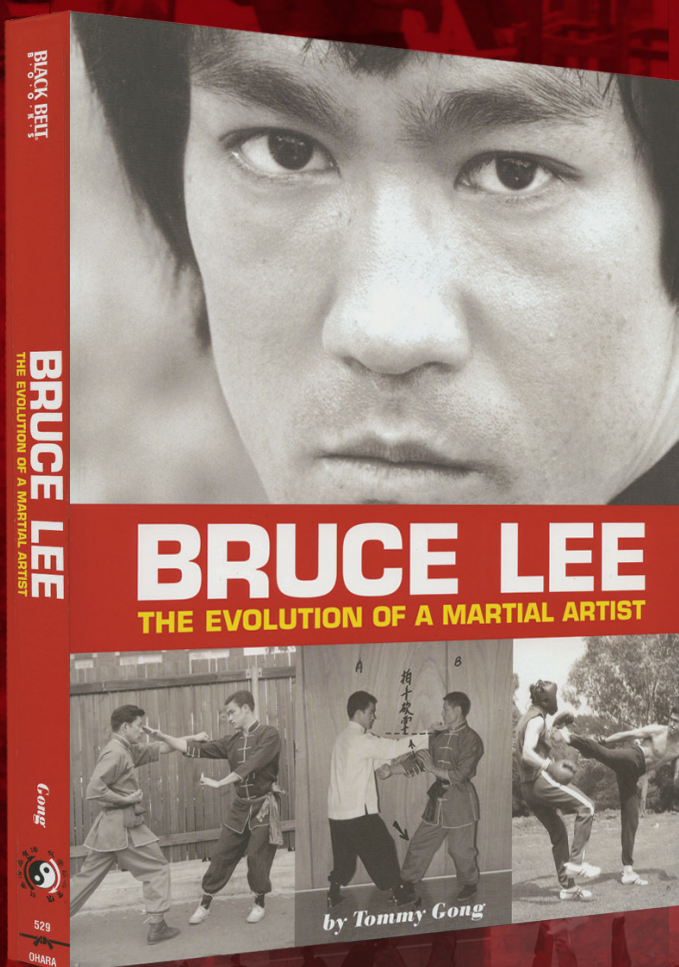
Like I said earlier, self-defence is about decision-making: make the right decisions, then your skill set or lack thereof matters much less. True self-defence is not being there when it goes down! Be smart, be safe. ■

Jeff Phillips is chief instructor at Western Sydney Krav Maga and Combatives, and holds degrees in sports science and education. He is a representative for Canadians Chris Roberts and Richard Dimitri's SAFE International Self Defence, Itay Gil's Protect Krav Maga and Mick Coup's Core Combatives (UK). Previously a successful combat-sportsman in muay Thai, boxing and amateur MMA, Phillips became a krav maga instructor in 2011 and has since designed and delivered personal protection courses for various occupational groups including nurses, taxi drivers and teachers.





Well, if i say I'M GOOD,
probably you will say
I'M BOASTING. But if i say
i'm no good, you'll know
I'M LYING!



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And the Winner is... Reality

Some who saw the latest instalment in decades of 'boxing vs...' ring spectacles believed Conor McGregor was soundly outclassed and never stood a chance. But was he?

Watching the Mayweather–McGregor fight on 26 August 2017 was one of the most enlightening experiences of my martial arts life. Up until now, whenever I've seen a bout with a martial arts fighter taking on a boxer, the former deservedly received a sound thrashing.

Mayweather may have won the fight, but it was only because the rules were so biased against McGregor that, short of a KO, McGregor had no chance of winning.

Before the 1960s, the perennial question among fight fans was: "Who would win a fight between Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano?" (or whichever fighters from different eras the fans happened to fancy).

With martial arts' emergence into the public sphere in the '60s, the question changed to: "Who would win out of a boxer and a martial artist?"

The first time, in my memory, that this question was put to the test was when Muhammad Ali faced Japanese wrestler Antonio Inoki in Tokyo in 1976. Inoki spent the entire fight on his back kicking at Ali's legs, refusing to stand because he knew that if he did, it would be lights out.

In the 40-plus years since, I've seen countless bouts between boxers and martial artists. Initially it was boxers versus karate practitioners, then boxers versus kickboxers, followed by boxers versus BJJ exponents, and finally boxers against mixed martial artists.

Until Mayweather vs McGregor, the results were always the same. The boxers' superior ring craft would win out.

No doubt the points for the pre-fight razzamatazz would go to the martial artist. He would hands-down win the prize for emitting primal screams and casting ferocious looks at his opponent. However, once the bell rang, all the pretence and posturing would count for nothing. The sophistication and the depth of 150 years of boxing evolution would take over and the fight would rapidly hasten to its inevitable conclusion (although it has to be said that the rules, as in the Ali-Inoki bout, were often tailored to the boxer).

In big-money bouts, the experienced eye would even see the boxer electing not to press his advantage for a couple of rounds just to stretch out the bout so that the fans would at least get value for their money.

Up until Mayweather vs McGregor, I was often embarrassed on behalf of the martial arts fraternity when witnessing these bouts. This time, however, I was acutely embarrassed on behalf of the boxing fraternity.

Mayweather was protected from all blows except those that played to his strengths. Even then he was so outfought that, at one stage, he even turned his back on McGregor to protect himself. It is drummed into all boxers from their first moments in the ring that you must never, under any circumstances, turn your back on your opponent. At amateur level this is punished by immediate forfeiture of the fight.

For a fighter of Mayweather's experience to do it meant that he was well and truly outclassed.

I see the outcome of this fight as being one of great benefit to boxing, to mixed martial



McGregor lands one on the elusive Mayweather

SEAN M. HAFFEY/GETTY IMAGES

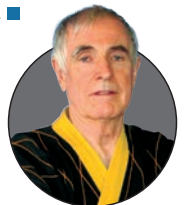
arts and to the entire martial arts community.

The benefit to mixed martial arts is obvious. It is clear for all to see that it has come of age and is now a force to be reckoned with. In the few short years since its inception, it has developed a sophistication which ranks it equal to any on the planet.

The benefit to boxing is less obvious, but of vital importance. Boxing must shed itself of some of the pointless rules that are exploited by every fighter to the detriment of its effectiveness and its credibility. Foremost among these is the rule that you may not strike the opponent on the back of his head. This enables the fighter to evade his opponent's blows not by skill, but by playing the rules and ducking his head down in front of his adversary. In mixed martial arts, if a fighter ducks down in such a manner, he quite rightly receives a knee to

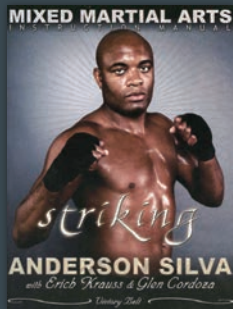
the head. In all the thousands of bouts worldwide since its inception, I have never heard of a mixed martial arts fighter being injured from a punch to the back of the head. Why? For two reasons: firstly because the opponent's fists are padded with gloves, and secondly, because no fighter is stupid enough to duck his head down to the opponent's waist level.

The benefit of the Mayweather–McGregor bout to the entire martial arts community is that, as the public becomes more aware of the effective versus the ineffective in combat disciplines, closer will come the day that instructors of completely useless martial arts will be compelled to stop advertising with such phrases as 'The ideal self-defence for all ages', and start using more honest pitches such as 'Useless for self-defence but great for fitness'. ■



Dr John Jory is a registered medical practitioner and sports psychologist with 55 years' experience in martial arts. He has a 6th Dan in hapkido under Grandmaster Sung Soo Lee, a 2nd Dan in judo with the IJF and is the founder of Rolling Thunder Martial Art.

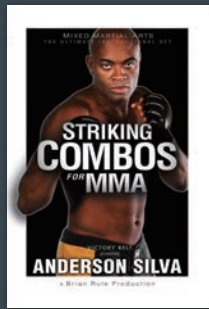
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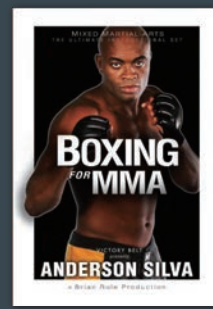
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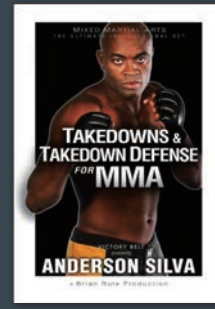
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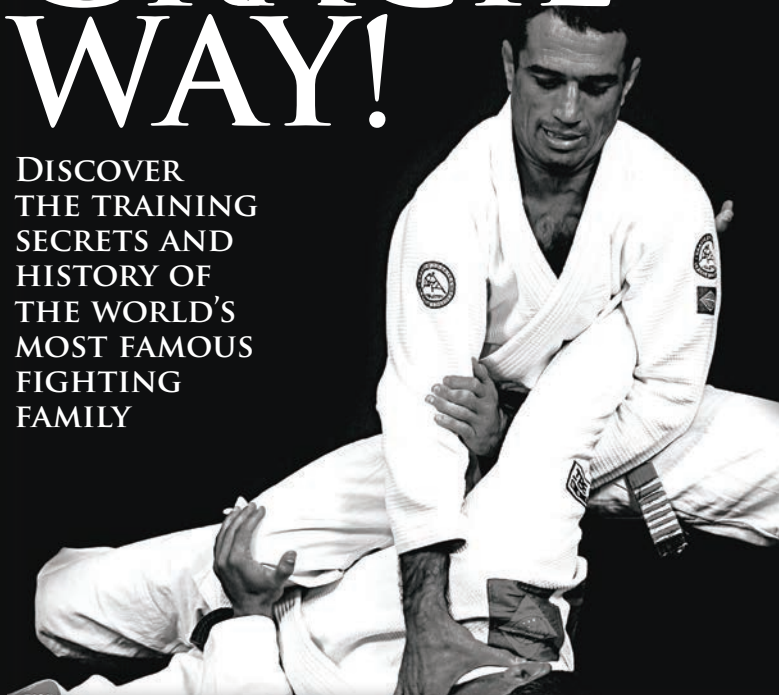
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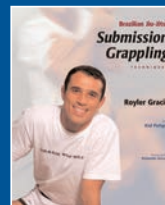
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Can You See a Pattern?

As part of our daily martial arts training, many of us practise ‘patterns’ — aka kata, forms or *poomsae*, depending on your combative persuasion. Few understand that it’s not only about the steps, but the spaces in between.

With kata, we begin by memorising, then studying and finally comprehending, integrating and letting go of the learned pattern. It’s a process we come to take for granted. But what actually constitutes a pattern in the non-martial sense of the term?

We could say that a pattern is an arrangement of objects in a certain layout that may be identifiable as a recurring theme. It could also be said that a pattern is a recurring arrangement of ‘spaces’ — like in music: is it the notes that create the melody or is it the spaces between the notes? Really, it’s the combination of both. It seems very human, though, to attribute value to the objects but not to the spaces.

My Shinto Muso-ryu (Japanese swordsmanship) teacher, Nishioka Sensei, taught me a game one evening that involved manipulating my vision in such a way as to be more aware of the spaces without losing sense of the objects within the spaces. Having cleared our dinner table, he lined up five objects across the table top and invited me to kneel at the end of the table and describe what I saw. I responded by describing the objects on the table, the table surface and the background of wall and doorway. Over time and under his questioning, I began to perceive the scene differently: I became conscious of the space between the objects — in front of, behind, above and under them. Space everywhere.

I learned that the relationship between the objects was only comprehensible if I was

conscious of the spaces because that was where their connection lay. Different spaces or ‘intervals’ between objects underpin different tensions and different opportunities.

Our perception and understanding of patterns that emerge in, and involve, space may also allow for us to deduce what will occur next. It’s impossible in this short column to do justice to the topic; however, Nishioka Sensei said (in the off-hand manner he often used for important revelations) that he believed this may be the meaning of enlightenment. His reason? Because this way of being enriched each moment

through increased awareness of our world.

Specifically, of course, this vision was meant to be employed in Shinto Muso-ryu kata and combat — but I also found it has applications in aikido. In particular, it’s really relevant to multiple-opponent activities. I’ve also introduced this concept and practice to our staff training within the Compass Disability Service. Much of the work involves ‘super-vision’, after all, and the support staff have reported that their awareness has expanded incredibly taking a great deal of stress out of that task.

Watching Nishioka Sensei in action, he would appear to manipulate space and time. But it’s not through some mysterious power — rather, mindful practice over many years has given him a highly developed understanding of space and time. Great players in all sports appear to have so much time to move and are capable of perceiving patterns in play. Repeatedly practising patterns of play (set plays) can bring this about at a simplistic level — we know where the ball will be in a game of football because we have practised a set move over and over — so we have a conscious knowledge of a preset pattern. This is the level of kata training. To remain at this level, though, is to place limits on ourselves and miss the potential of the training.

Famous ice hockey player Wayne Gretzky talks about his method of circling the play waiting for some unconscious signal before darting into the melee to arrive at a certain place at the same time as the puck. This is evidence of a deeper recognition of patterns that are naturally occurring; patterns that have been seen again and again over time until we can intuitively understand or even predict how events will unfold.

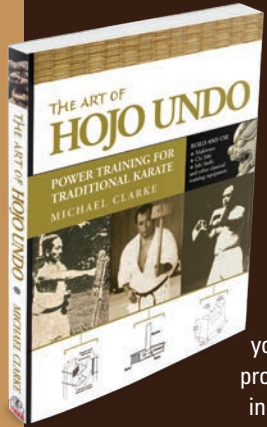
The Japanese term for this interval or space is *maai*. In combat it refers to the space between combatants and the time it takes to cross that space, but also it refers to the intricacies of relative speed, angles, weapon reach and more. In life, however, I’ve come to learn that *maai* is about respectful distances in all our relationships, and that all relationships demand different ‘intervals’. To make it more complex, even one relationship can require different intervals for different occasions. We have to become flexible and adaptable to the needs and the flux of the many relationships in which we are involved. With family, friends, colleagues, dojo seniors and juniors, look for the patterns and learn from them. As martial artists, we have the unique opportunity to be aware of the best possible space in all our relationships. ■



David Dangerfield, 6th Dan aikido, is the author of *Martial Reflections - In Search of Wisdom*. He began training in 1974 and today teaches aikido and Shinto Muso-ryu swordsmanship at his Kenshinryu dojo on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. He is also the founder of the Compass Institute, a charity that provides education and training to young people with disabilities using budo principles.



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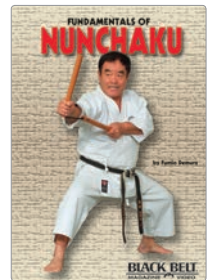
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You Look, But Do You SEE?

Self-protection is primarily about avoiding violence in the first place — or, in military terms, taking action ‘left of bang’. How you interpret what you see is key to this.

Last issue I discussed reacting to violent incidents that seemingly come out of nowhere: those circumstances where one minute it is calm, the next chaos, and you are potentially in the middle. In the majority of incidents there is a build-up; tell-tale signs that something may be about to happen, but only if you are alert to them. There are other incidents where there literally are no warning signs. The perpetrator seemingly ‘flips’, or the bomb goes off or the bullets come in from a distance.

The reference material I listed in the previous article collectively has several lines of action — and hence development training — we can take to enable us to better respond to unexpected violence. To develop our ability to act decisively and immediately amid confusion and chaos, especially where there is an element of danger, we can:

- Enhance our general situational awareness

- Learn the skill of ‘profiling’ or ‘baselining’ to utilise our awareness
- Develop our instinct or ‘gut feel’ and learn to place some trust in it
- Develop and train in generic, immediate-action responses to given situations.

Suffice to say, there are no easy or simple answers — all take time and all require work. But let’s discuss the first two of the steps. For convenience, I will use Endsley’s model of situation awareness, as it is the most widely used, even though it has its critics. In this model, there are three stages:

- 1. Perception** – recognising that *something* is happening
- 2. Comprehension** – understanding *what* is happening
- 3. Projection** – calculating what *might* happen next.

Getting students to the first level of just being ‘switched on’ is a challenge. It’s not about being hypervigilant 100 per cent of the time, but simply being

more aware overall, and more alert in situations where it is warranted — for example, in an environment that presents greater risk than normal, such as an isolated car park or a packed public event.

I give my beginning students a simple homework exercise: choose three circumstances specific to your normal day-to-day activities where you may be more vulnerable than usual to an attack. Examples include: at an ATM; on public transport or at the station (especially after hours); entering your home, especially at night; loading your vehicle in a public place; and so on. Just pick three that align with your lifestyle and make a note to consciously ‘switch on’ at these times, really taking in your surrounds.

Repeating this exercise will develop the habit of doing this at those times, and the practice will then carry across to other times at which alertness is required, becoming a more general habit. Being alert is not just about spotting trouble, but discouraging it: if we have the posture and look of someone who is alert, this may be enough to deter an attack. Predators are likely to move on and seek an easier target.

Gavin de Becker’s group, which specialises in threat awareness, has a drill that I suggest my more advanced students undertake, even though it is intended for security professionals. It is the first step into profiling/baselining. In any

public area where there are many people present, imagine you are a security professional protecting a VIP. De Becker’s group use the acronym SEE, which stands for Suspects Exist Everywhere. A suspect is simply a person who merits your attention. Scan the people in the vicinity and look for what de Becker’s group refer to as stereotypical pre-incident behaviours to identify ‘suspects’. Among them, you may spot the following types: the ‘Inspector’, who displays less interest in the event that others present are watching, and seems more interested in the security personnel or another person in the crowd; the ‘Organiser’, who is constantly reaching into a bag or purse to check on something; the ‘Sweater’, who appears uncomfortable, nervous or agitated; the ‘Fashion Plate’, who wears clothes that stand out and may be inappropriate for the weather or the situation; the ‘Traveller’, who shifts places or seating (and in the hypothetical game may be seeking a better position to attack or testing security); and the ‘Grouch’, who is aloof, uninterested, bored or unhappy.

It is a game, but it helps develop people-awareness skills and is a good way to pass the time if you are yourself something of a grouch when in a public place such as a queue.

To be continued... ■



Troublespotting is a skill that can be enhanced

THINKSTOCK

Graham Kuerschner is a 51-year veteran of the martial arts and can be contacted through his website at www.sdtactics.com.au



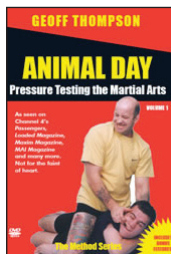
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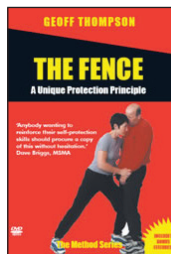
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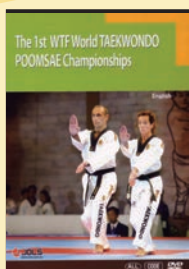
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On a Mission

Lots of people set themselves goals, but if you really want to instil success, try going on a mission.

I'm not a fan of the term 'goal setting'. I see that it's often used as just a way of managing expectations — often low expectations. Goals lack the emotional intent for success and may deny us the flexibility to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. I prefer the term 'mission'. For me, this conjures up strong emotion linked to an absolute need to be successful in achieving 'the mission', whatever that may be. I didn't have a goal to one day become a Kudo Black-belt — I had an unforeseen opportunity appear and I then made it my mission to take advantage of that opportunity.

We don't tend to make uncomfortable goals. You hear things like, 'It's my goal to be a millionaire', 'It's my goal to drive a high-end car', or 'It's my goal to do [insert preferred high-status job]'. I don't hear people say that it's their goal to go bankrupt or to give up everything, or to be badly injured, or worse, no. But when we take on a mission, we accept the hardship that may result in our attempt at accomplishing our mission.

My aim in the army was to be capable of any mission set in front of me. However, this can come at a great cost: the loss of your life or that of friends, or the kind of ongoing pressure that may be too much for your family, such that you lose them. We want to do what needs to be done in achieving our mission and if we weigh up everything correctly and manage the different elements of a mission correctly, we are not only likely to be successful in achieving it, but we are likely



On most missions, the needs of the group are key to success

THINKSTOCK

to do it with minimum adverse effects on us or our group.

Let's now look at how the army looks at the big picture when dealing with a task and how we can adapt it for our everyday use.

In Australian Army doctrine, we have three elements that we take into account when looking at any given task and considering leadership. It is worth taking these on board when setting yourself a mission, as often a mission will fail when the timing given to priorities are not met. These are:

1. Task needs
2. Individual needs
3. Group maintenance needs

You see, when setting goals for ourselves, we tend to do this based on our needs — those of the individual — and don't put enough time into the task needs that are required to achieve that personal goal. For those of us who do focus on the task needs, we may not take into account the effect

that following through with the needs of the task may have on us as individuals.

The third area to look at is group maintenance needs, which are often overlooked when we're not dealing with a defined working group as we would have in the workplace. Know this: you have a group that you need to maintain, whether you realise it or not, so you need to identify who makes up that group. This group may have nothing to do with your mission directly; however, failure to consider them while going after the task itself could result in pressure from friends and/or family problems, for example. Many things worth achieving will not come easily and therefore they may demand a long commitment.

Mission planning is a subject all of its own, but every mission requires you to consider the aforementioned three elements.

The next thing to look at is timing: when should we focus more on one area than the others? The longer the mission, the more its success will rely on maintaining the right balance. During 'slack' periods, when you're waiting for the results of work or you are light-on for tasks, you want to spend more time on group and individual maintenance. This will give you the ability to push hard during the next period when priority tasks are again at the fore.

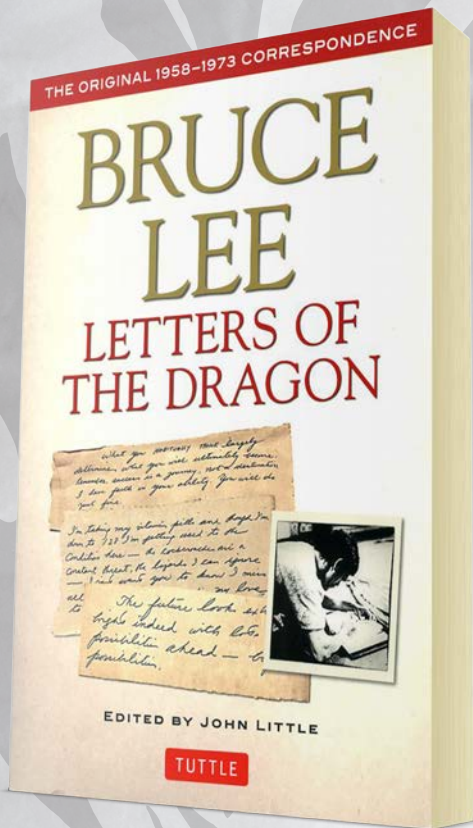
That's when you want to have plenty of group and individual maintenance in the bank because the group may not see much of you, you may not get enough sleep, and so on.

The last key element of a mission is 'intensive training'. In the army this applies to the work group such as the platoon, and during this period, group maintenance needs are prioritised over the task and individual needs. I translate this now into family time, where I make an effort to get away with them and so on. I don't stop dealing with small task needs, but I put the group first at that time, regardless.

When next planning a mission — perhaps your life mission — give some thought to these elements. I wish you all success in achieving it. ■

Sgt (retired) Paul Cale fought in Afghanistan and until mid-2013 managed the Integrated Combat Centre at 2nd Commando Regiment, developing CQC programs for Australian special forces. He is a team leader at the AIS Combat Centre, head of Kudo Australia and delivers CQC training for the Australian Defence Force via his company Kinetic Fighting — check out kineticfighting.com





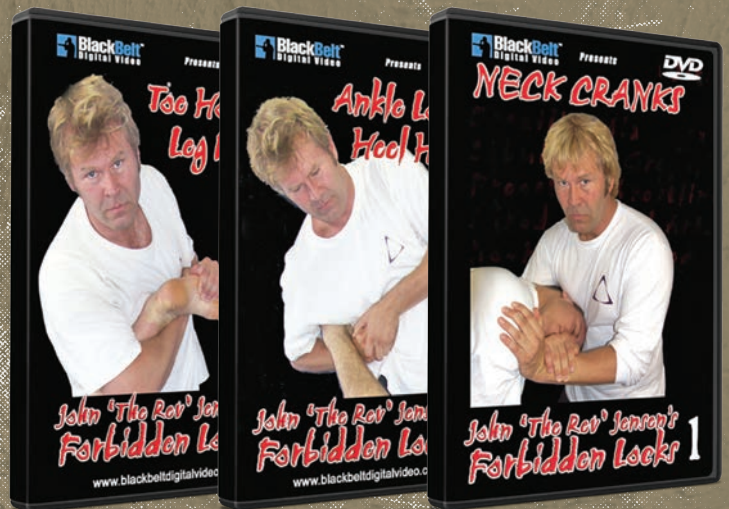
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Changing of the Reasons

You might remember why you first started training in martial arts — but does that reason remain the same as you progress on your journey?

Sometimes we step onto a certain path for a certain reason, and over time we find that we are still walking the same path, but for very different reasons. We evolve and therefore our needs and motivations follow suit...and so we become 'other' versions of ourselves — sometimes better, sometimes not.

Like many *Blitz* readers, I began my own martial arts journey as a means of coping with bullying. I wanted to banish that part of me that had been the victim of bullying and I knew if I could shape myself into some kind of teenage superhero, that scared child would fade into distant memory.

This motivation probably lasted for quite some time; the idea of shaping myself into something more, something better, something capable motivated me to train in a variety of martial arts styles through my late teens and twenties.

Somehow, though, over time, my motivations morphed and evolved. The adventure of it all took over and my imagined Superman character slowly but surely morphed into more of an Indiana Jones type as I began to find more and more joy in the discovery and adventure of it all.

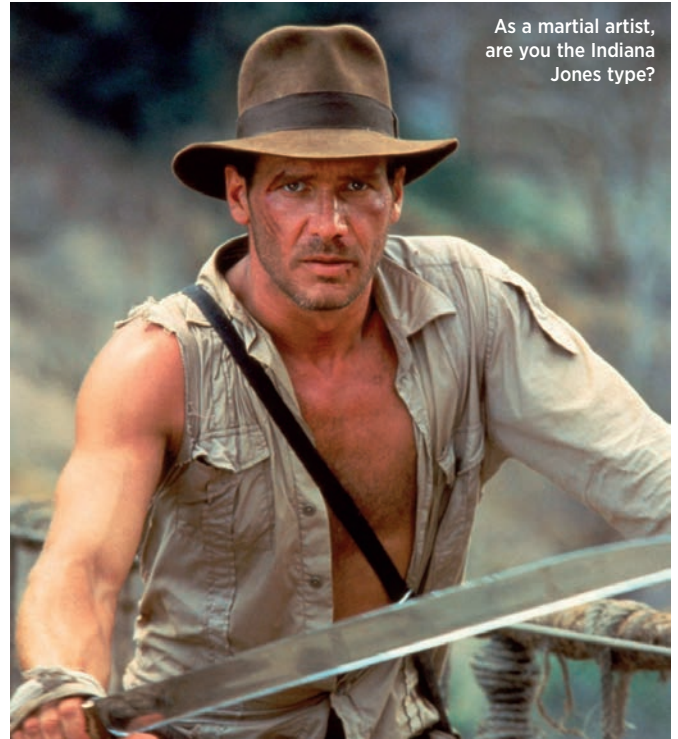
These new reasons for training took me farther afield; I travelled to Thailand, India, Japan, South America and other places in search of deeper mysteries and more exotic training experiences. And again, over time, in keeping with the Indiana Jones character, I began to balance out the more 'martial' elements of my personality with elements more aligned with the scholar. I began to realise

that learning and training were different faces of the same coin.

As I strode happily through my thirties and forties, I realised that my reasons for training/studying the martial arts were very different from those of my youth. It was now much more about the challenge of it; the puzzles that begged to be solved, and so on. For me, the timing of finding Brazilian jiu-jitsu was perfect. As an art that is at once both elegantly simple and deviously complex, it provided a new landscape upon which I could reinvent myself.

Through more by accident than design, I discovered that I had embarked on a course that would see me sharing my knowledge with others — and so I began to find a balance between teaching others and training for myself. It was a marriage that worked well, as each approach fuelled the other. Attention to detail in my own training fostered a detailed and technical approach when it came to helping others do the same, and vice versa.

As my life evolved through my forties and fifties, I began to find many effective ways to transpose the skills and understanding I had developed through training in other areas of my life. I was pretty easily able to use many strategies I had come to understand in training to square away many other 'bothersome' aspects of my life — things that were mostly tiresome and uninteresting to me (for example, becoming financially independent). So with relatively little effort, I was able to design my life using strategic thinking that I had developed through training; which was a



As a martial artist, are you the Indiana Jones type?

boon, as it allowed me to stay mostly focused on the things I loved doing.

The reasons I now have for continuing my efforts on the martial path are vastly different from those that drove me as a teenager or young adult. I am now interested in guiding other people toward similar experiences. I feel I have enough life experience, both within and away from the martial arts scene, that I can confidently assist others in their own journeys of becoming more capable and joyful human beings. Of course, the martial arts and non-martial arts aspects of my life have become somewhat entangled; and it is

difficult, if not impossible, to separate them out. Not that I would want to if I could, for they are interwoven into a tapestry of discovery, strategy, exploration and play.

We each have our own reasons for training and studying the martial arts, but in my view we should most definitely allow those reasons to evolve and change over time. As we evolve as human beings, our reasons for doing the things we do should also necessarily change. Sometimes we change the things we do; and other times, the things we do change us. ■

John B Will is head of BJJ Australia and teaches Brazilian jiu-jitsu, shootfighting and self-defence solutions around the world. Check out his regular blog at www.bjj-australia.blogspot.com.au



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