

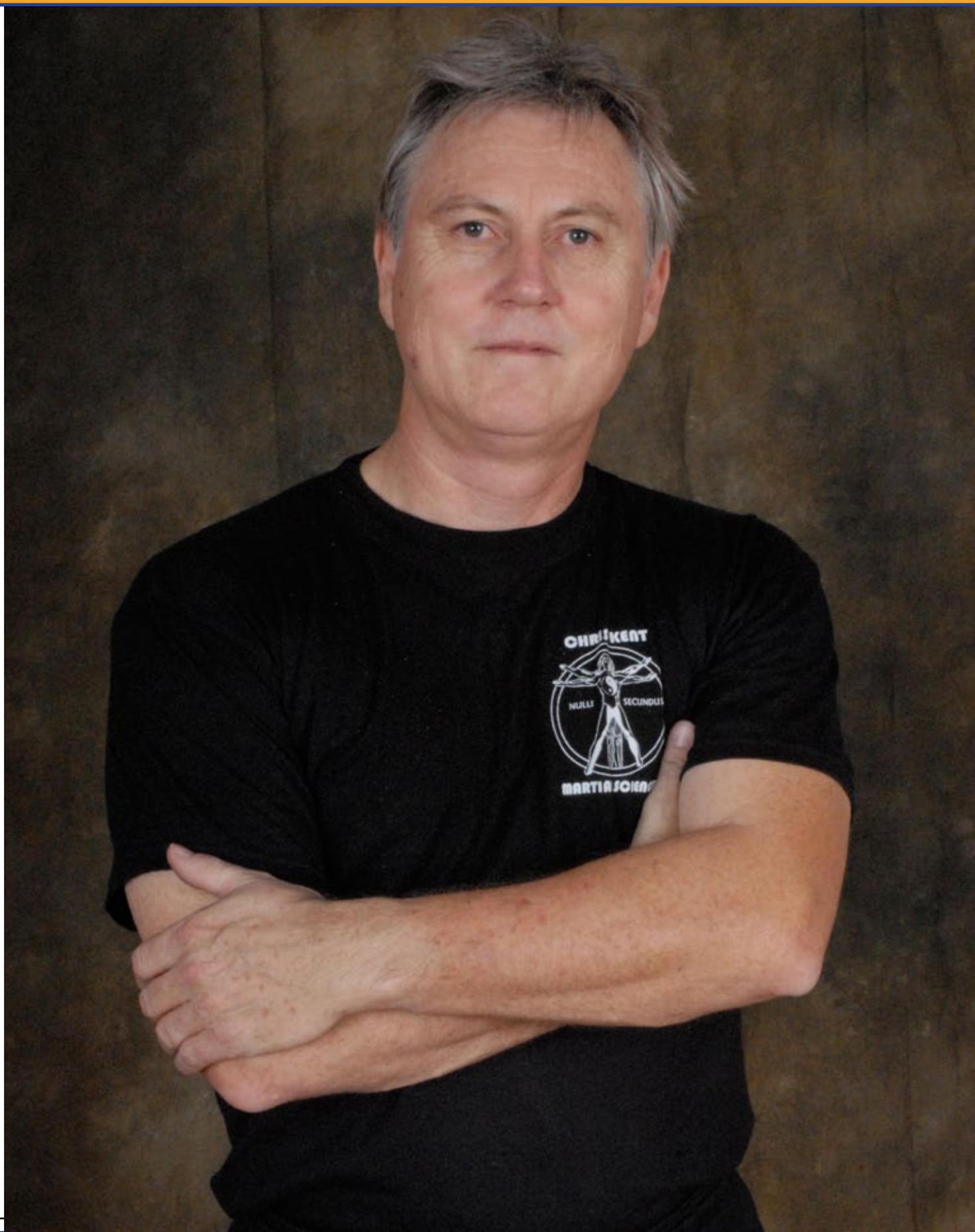
CHRIS KENT

A Timeless Legacy

By Jose M. Fraguas



Teacher, author, speaker, Chris Kent has an incredible pedigree in Jeet Kune Do. At 17, Chris Kent became the youngest member of the Dan Inosanto's backyard Jeet Kune Do class. In June 1973, he started his JKD training while Bruce Lee was still alive in Hong Kong. Since then, he has dedicated his life to the study and teaching of the art and philosophy of Bruce Lee. During the 13 years Chris was with Inosanto he traveled extensively with him, serving as one of Inosanto's personal assistants for seminars and demonstrations. Now recognized as one of the most knowledgeable and highly respected JKD instructors in the world, Chris conducts his own seminars around the world and is one of the most sought-after JKD instructors on the international circuit. He is also an accomplished writer and the author of several of the most well-received books and dvd series on Jeet Kune Do. After many years of living in Santa Monica, California, Chris Kent moved with his wife and daughter to Boise, Idaho, where he currently resides and where he continues to carry on the pioneering tradition of the Little Dragon and keep his timeless legacy alive.



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Q: *You've been involved in Jeet Kune Do for over forty years now. You've trained in every phase of JKD from the time just prior to Bruce Lee's death to the concepts approach of today. What is it that fascinates you about Jeet Kune Do?*

A: Everything. The art, the philosophy... I love everything about it.

Q: *Did you study any other martial arts before Jeet Kune Do?*

A: Yes. I had studied several other martial arts since I was 13, including judo, ju-jitsu, Shotokan karate, and classical five animal style Chinese kung-fu. But nothing seemed to have everything I was looking for. At the time I really wasn't even sure what I was hoping to find. So I was just kind of looking around and searching for something.

Q: *How did you get started in JKD?*

A: I read two articles about Jeet Kune Do, "Liberate Yourself from Classical Karate" written by Bruce Lee, and "Jeet Kune Do is Fast, Powerful, Deceptive" by Dan Inosanto. Something about JKD just seemed to strike a chord with me and I thought, "This is what I want to learn." So I set my sights on doing so. I got a hold of Dan's telephone number from the telephone book and called him. It took a month of calls before I was even able to talk to him personally. When I finally did get to speak to him, he told me that he only taught a group of about twelve in his backyard gym and kept telling me to call back in a week. So I called and called. I guess I must have worn him down because finally after about two months of phone calls he invited me to come down to his backyard gym to talk. So I went to his house and after a two-hour conversation which took place while the JKD class was going on, he invited me to start training. It was the coolest day of my life.



Q: How old were you at the time?

A: Seventeen and a half.

Q: How did JKD training compare to what you had been practicing?

A: It was totally different. Other than my judo training, where we did some freelance 'randori' sparring and groundwork, I had been practicing mostly forms and learning a bunch of different techniques. The JKD training was completely different from anything I had experienced before. Everything we did was contact and based upon reality. We did a lot of the physical conditioning and tool training on equipment like focus gloves, kicking shields, heavy bags, and top-and-bottom bags. We also did a lot of freelance sparring. Sometimes Dan would limit the tools we could use, such as only the lead foot and lead hand, but in the beginning he just kind of let us duke it out with each other. I am proud to say that I had my clock cleaned numerous times by people like Richard Bustillo, Daniel Lee, and Bob Bremer. After I had been there a few months Dan started bringing in sparring drills to show us how we could develop certain skills and qualities with getting our heads bashed in all the time. But it was very "alive," reality-based drilling, where if you made a mistake you knew you were going to get hit. We also worked a lot of trapping hands and did a lot of energy training exercises. However it modified quite a bit from the way it was done in traditional Wing Chun because it had to fit into the JKD structure. We did a bit of grappling, mostly locks and chokes and a few takedowns, but there weren't any mats and we worked out on bare concrete, so we really couldn't do a lot of groundwork or throwing. For me the JKD training was much more intense and realistic, and much more fun and exciting as well.

Q: What was the attitude like in the backyard gym?

A: It was very informal, yet there was a clear sense of decorum. Everybody knew why they were there and respected each other. There was only the one class and the whole idea of different training "phases" or "levels" had not come into existence yet.

Q: At that time, what did you call what you were doing? Jeet Kune Do, Jun Fan Gung Fu, or what?

A: It was referred to simply as Jeet Kune Do, or JKD. The term Jun Fan Gung Fu was not used with regard to training, however, the school itself was known as the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute. There was a group of wooden pegs on the wall that listed everyone's name including Bruce Lee, which had the words "Si Jo" and "Si Gung" under it, and then everyone else's names from Dan down to me. And at the top was a peg which said "Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute." So the basic idea was that we were learning JKD at the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute, which now happened to be Dan's backyard gym.

Q: Were the Filipino martial arts being taught at the same time?

A: Yes. At the end of the class, we'd spend maybe a half-hour working on the Filipino Kali/Escrima. It was primarily a combination of Serrada, De Fondo, Largo Mano, and Villabrille styles, because these were the styles Dan and Richard were studying at the time. Some of the guys stayed and some didn't. Basically it was up to you. I really enjoyed the stick work so I stayed.

Q: Why was the name Jun Fan Martial Arts used so much by so many of the JKD people?

A: What's funny is that the people who were actually there and training in the art never used the name Jeet Kune Do in a commercial way. There was a sort of unwritten code that you didn't capitalize on the name. At the time, we weren't even supposed to wear our school T-shirts out on the streets. But over the years that followed Bruce's passing, all kinds of other untrained people were using the Jeet Kune Do name to establish

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schools and clubs around the world, and to promote themselves as JKD instructors. So Dan told us, "Look, if these people who aren't trained or qualified are using it, then you guys who are qualified should start using the name." He told us that while he had made a personal promise to Bruce not to use the name commercially, we hadn't, so we could feel free to use the name if we wanted to. But it was still always in the back of our minds. That's why, for instance, you see the name "Jun Fan/Jeet Kune Do" on the book Tim Tackett and I wrote. It's not that they're two different or separate arts, it just goes back to the idea of not capitalizing on the name. You know, Dan could have been a millionaire many times over by capitalizing on his friendship with Bruce and using the name and the name Jeet Kune Do, but he has too much integrity.

Q: You enjoyed a unique relationship with Dan in that he was not only your teacher but also a friend. What was he like as a teacher?

A: Yes. Dan was not only my teacher but a good friend, a mentor and confidant...he was without doubt one of the most important people in my life. He did so much for me. He counseled me regarding some important life decisions. It was through my relationship with Dan I that was able to become much closer to my own father. I consider myself to be one of the most blessed people on the planet. What you have to remember is that when I began training, it was all about JKD, with some Kali/Escrima added at the end of training. Everything was fresh in Dan's mind and the focus was on our personal development. In addition to teaching JKD, Dan was a physical education teacher, so his way of teaching was much more like that of a coach than a traditional martial art instructor. And let me tell you, the man could move, and move fast. If Dan did not want you to touch him, you couldn't touch him.

Q: Starting your training when you did, you also enjoyed a unique relationship with many of the top first generation students of Bruce, including such people as Richard Bustillo, Jerry Poteet, Bob Bremer, and later with Ted Wong. Many of these individuals have gone their own way with regard to JKD, and unfortunately some of them are no longer with us. What was it like training with them?

A: It was great. As I said, I was very blessed. I have great memories, not only of them as training partners and my JKD "big brothers" but also as personal friends.

Q: What do you consider to be Dan Inosanto's contributions to the art of Jeet Kune Do?

A: Well, I'd have to say first and foremost that it would be the perpetuation of Jeet Kune Do itself. Since Bruce's death, Dan has been the preeminent and foremost spokesperson for JKD, teaching and educating people around the world about the art and philosophy. Were it not for him I am not sure the art would be around anymore. And definitely the majority of the people now studying the art would never have had the chance. As I said, when I first started training under Dan, besides being a martial artist and JKD instructor, Dan was a physical education teacher. He has excellent organizational and presentation skills. He's also a master teacher. I've seen him teach something five different ways to reach five different kinds of people. So I think that he brought those coaching and teaching skills into play in passing on Bruce's art.

Dan is also, in my opinion, a perpetual student. He loves learning new things. He's



investigated other martial arts and training methods used in different martial art systems, and he incorporated some of those training methods into his own interpretation of JKD and shared them with his students. I'd also like to add, and understand that this is simply my opinion, that I don't feel that the Filipino martial arts would be enjoying the worldwide popularity they are today had it not been for Dan's celebrity status when he taught them to the public in conjunction with JKD. In fact, there are a few arts that benefitted from Dan bringing them more out into the public eye. I'm in no way saying that they're not good arts, just that the public became much more aware of them thanks to Dan Inosanto.

Over the years, other people started coming out of the woodwork and began teaching JKD. Some of them were legitimate and good, and others weren't. But without Dan spearheading the way, I don't think any of the others would have been able to.

Q: Do you think that all the other arts that Dan does has caused JKD to be confused and misunderstood?

A: No. I think that's an over-simplification of a complex issue. First, I think it is important for people to understand that there is a big difference between Bruce Lee's personal martial art evolution and Dan Inosanto's personal martial art evolution. Their evolutionary paths followed two very different trajectories, although they both end up at a similar place. Bruce Lee researched various aspects of martial arts and reduced everything to fit himself specifically. I'm not saying this in a negative or derogatory way, but basically Bruce was into his own personal development. I know that during his research he discovered certain universal truths that are applicable to anyone, but the bottom line is that Bruce was interested in Bruce. He shared what he discovered but believed everyone was responsible for their own growth. Dan has trained in and continues to train in various arts that interest him and then shares these arts with other people, leaving them free to choose what they want to absorb for themselves. That is what I mean by they both end up at the same place. The individual has to choose what to absorb, what to reject, what to add, etcetera. We also have to remember also that Bruce Lee passed away when he was only thirty-two years old, whereas Dan is still training, teaching and sharing today at the age of 78. That's one of the things I most admire about Dan. The bottom line is that with regard to JKD, we all have our own path we have to follow. Dan's path is not my path, and vice versa.

I think some of the confusion has occurred because a lot of people have misunderstood Dan Inosanto's personal evolution as a martial artist and confused it with their own practice of or teaching of JKD. Sometimes people can't differentiate between training methods Dan might be using and an entire art itself, and I think this has led to some of the confusion and misunderstanding. It's okay if you like this particular art or that art, but that doesn't mean that because you're doing it you're doing Jeet Kune Do or even JKD "concepts." To me, there are JKD practitioners and there are martial art practitioners who are using some JKD principles or concepts in their training. They're not the same thing. For example, a boxer can use some of the principles and concepts that exist in JKD, but if he stays only in Western boxing and never goes out of that realm, he is still partialized, and therefore not doing JKD. Keep in mind too that a lot of the principles that exist in JKD also exist in numerous other arts. They are not the sole property of JKD.

I think another misperception shared by many in the JKD world is that if you're not training in the same exact art that Dan happens to be training in at any given moment then you're not really doing JKD, or that somehow you've fallen behind in JKD and need to be "updated." Over the years I've run across JKD instructors and practitioners who were able to perform dozens of techniques from a number of different arts but unable to put them together into a cohesive "whole" or demonstrate the core tenets of JKD.

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By the same token, I've run across instructors that have investigated, or are currently investigating, other arts and who are exceptional at explaining and teaching the basics of JKD. To me, there's nothing wrong with investigating other arts, just make sure you know why you are investigating them and what you hope to get out of it. For example, it isn't necessary for you to study every form of grappling that exists. That would be impossible. What is important is that you understand and grasp the "essence" of grappling, and have a good working knowledge of it so that if you find yourself in a grappling situation you know how to deal with it. Each element still has to fit in your overall structure. Again, totality in combat is the key. See the strengths in each particular element, but also see the potential weaknesses. Keep the big picture in mind.

Q: Why do you feel so much confusion still exists today about JKD?

I think that the confusion that exists today with regard to JKD is a matter of differing and oftentimes conflicting perspectives concerning the art. Over the years, the public received mixed messages concerning JKD. These mes-

sages came from all directions. In some cases it was promoted as "Bruce Lee's personal expression" of martial arts and accompanied by comments such as "Only Bruce Lee could do that." If that's the case then no one else could do it and JKD died when Bruce died. You had what I call "JKD fundamentalists" who preached that if it wasn't in the Tao of JKD then it wasn't JKD, and if you did anything that Bruce Lee didn't do then you were not doing JKD. You had people perpetuating the idea that JKD was some kind of nebulous concept or a catchphrase that anyone could use as an umbrella term for simply doing anything they wanted to do. Over the years there were competing visions over the direction JKD should go and what should be done with it. Some believed it never should have been taken out of the backyard, while others believed it should be shared with as many people as possible. I've been involved in JKD for over forty years now, and it amazes me that I'm still seeing today some of the things I saw twenty or even thirty years ago.

All of these things have aided in the how people perceive Jeet Kune Do today and any confusion that exists. As I said, it is a complicated issue, and there is no single individual or group that is solely responsible.

Q: A lot of people look at JKD as just a combination of different martial art styles and techniques. Is it?

A: Absolutely not. Let me give you my personal definition of Jeet Kune Do – “JKD is a principle-centered training process to cultivate the ability to express the human body in combat without any restriction or limitation.” It’s about cultivating your body as a ‘martial instrument’ and then expressing that instrument with the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness.

It’s not just an accumulation of different techniques from various styles. You can study kicking arts, punching arts, and arts that emphasize trapping or grappling; but if you don’t understand the common thread that runs through all combative arts then what you end up with is an eclectic assortment of various techniques from different disciplines strung loosely together to create a kind of generalized “chop suey” martial art. And that’s not Jeet Kune Do.

There’s this common misconception that Bruce simply took the “best” of various arts and combined them to create his own art. This is essentially wrong. For example, the art of Western fencing deals with bladed weapons, and yet Bruce never fought with a sword, did he? However he drew certain essential elements from Western fencing that he felt had validity to what he was doing. For example, the range factor from epee fencing (in which the entire body from top of head to tip of toe is a valid target) fit in, so did the use of non-rhythmic footwork to disrupt the opponent’s timing and distance, and the principle of intercepting and stop-hitting. These are elements he could cross-reference and integrate with what he was doing. It’s a fact that Lee drew from Western boxing. However he didn’t draw everything from boxing. Boxing is a sport that has rules and specific target areas. You’re only allowed to punch and then only with a specific area of the hand. So the range is set for that. You don’t have to concern yourself with knees, elbows, headbutts, or things like getting kicked in the groin. What’s the best arm lock? The best choke? The best kick? To me it’s the one that you can use and that works at that particular moment and in that particular situation. In another situation it might not be so great.

Through his years of training and research Bruce had developed what Dan refers to as “the discerning mind” and “the educated eye” which allowed him to analyze techniques and quickly discern what was a useful or efficient motion and what wasn’t. He looked at the roots of all forms of unarmed combat in their totality, seeing the common denominators that connected the best components of all styles. He analyzed various motions, techniques and actions not from the viewpoint of style, but from science. Bruce viewed unarmed combat as a science, and investigated it as such. I think his phenomenal skill was the result of the application of research into the human sciences of motion, force production, fitness and conditioning, physiology, physics, kinesiology, et cetera. He wrote, “If you understand motion, you don’t need style.” That means being free of styles or even combinations of styles.

Q: What about all of the advertisements we now see proclaiming things like “Functional” or “Improved” JKD?

A: Be careful, we’re treading on dangerous ground with this question....

Q: What do you mean?

Several years ago I wrote an article voicing my opinion regarding certain things about JKD. Certain individuals from one group took offense to it and then next thing you know I was receiving physical threats from some of these people. I could not believe it. It was ludicrous. Like I said, the article was just my opinion about things in the JKD world.

Anyway, to answer your question... first and foremost, Bruce Lee was above all else concerned with function. His entire martial art was built around functionality, reality,

“Bruce Lee was above all else concerned with function.”

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and totality. From a martial art perspective, JKD is based upon street-fighting, without any rules or regulations and in which anything goes.

So it always makes me wonder when I read something by someone who claims to have come up with such things as “Functional” JKD or claim that they’ve taken JKD to “another level,” what level are they talking about? What level was it to begin with? In what ways have they improved or evolved an art that is based upon totality and complete freedom in combat? I’m not sure. Maybe what the person means is that they have improved their own personal understanding or skill level in such elements as striking or grappling. Maybe they’ve added more techniques to their arsenal. Or perhaps they’ve developed or incorporated new training methods and use the most up-to-date training equipment.

Personally, I think that a lot of these ads might be related more to marketing strategies and attempts by the person to differentiate themselves from other JKD groups and find or create a niche for themselves in the JKD marketplace.

Q: How do you perceive Bruce Lee?

A: As a martial artist, I see Bruce as an iconoclast; a visionary and a revolutionary who sought to de-mystify the martial arts and expose a lot of the B.S. that many unsuspecting and unknowledgeable people were being fed at the time. I think he was at genius level. He was a man who lived, breathed, and dreamed martial arts. It was part of his life twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. I see a man whose extraordinary level of skill and understanding was the result of countless hours of training and researching into all aspects of combat, physical fitness, and philosophy.

But I also see Bruce Lee as a well-rounded human being; he was martial artist, teacher, writer, actor, philosopher, father, and husband. He was also one of the first martial art “human potential” proselytizers. He showed people what levels or heights a person could reach if they were willing to work. In an interview, Kareem Abdul Jabbar said that he views Bruce as “...a kind of a renegade Shaolin priest.” I like that description.

Q: If JKD is a “prescription for personal growth,” as Bruce said, then how relevant is the self-knowledge aspect in the process.

A: It’s a vital ingredient. Because only once you know yourself is it truly possible to know anything else. Martial art training holds up a mirror in which we see ourselves. As we train, we learn about ourselves. However, self-discovery is not always a comfortable thing. You have to face yourself as you are, not as you want to be; and while that can be liberating if you’re willing to do it, it isn’t always a happy experience. We’ve all got bad points as well as good points, and coming face-to-face and dealing with those negative aspects of ourselves is part of our self-discovery as a martial artist. If you look in the mirror, you might not like what you see at that moment. Then you have two choices. One is to change the view, and the other is to walk away and not look in the mirror anymore. So self-knowledge is a continual process that goes hand-in-hand with personal development.

“Martial art training holds up a mirror in which we see ourselves. As we train, we learn about ourselves.”

Q: You’ve said before that you don’t think JKD is for everybody? Do you still feel that way?

A: Why I don’t think it’s for everyone is that JKD is a problem-solving art which requires active participation from the student in solving that problem. This requires independent thought and inquiry. In JKD, one is supposed to develop a “discerning mind,”

but some people only develop a “dependent mind.” As a JKD practitioner you’re supposed to “find the cause of your ignorance.” But a lot of people want to pay someone else to do it for them. They say, “That’s what I’m paying you for. You find it for me!” As we say, they prefer to be given a fish every day rather than learning how to fish themselves. They ask the instructor to give them the answers because they don’t want to think for themselves. This is the antithesis of Jeet Kune Do is about. If a person is looking for someone to give them all of the answers, then I don’t think JKD is the art for them.

However, while it’s true that I don’t think that JKD is the martial art for everyone, I do think that it has something to offer everybody. While JKD is built around combat and reality, it’s not solely about fighting. To say JKD is “just about fighting” is like holding up a single grain of sand and saying “This is the entire beach.” In the same way Bruce Lee did, as a JKD instructor I can customize my teachings to fit the individual needs of my clients. If someone just wants to learn how to fight, no problem; I can develop their skills in that area. If my client is a business professional who wants to get into shape, develop some skills, and release stress, but can’t afford to turn up at a board meeting with a black eye or a missing tooth, I can teach that person, too. Different people have different wants and needs. They don’t all want to be killer martial artists. What about the young boy or girl who suffers from a lack of confidence and self-esteem? Just because a person has no interest in balls-to-the wall fighting, does that mean they cannot or should not learn JKD?

Q: Why do you think Bruce Lee closed the Chinatown school?

A: Basically he shut down all of his schools, not just the Los Angeles Chinatown school. As to why he closed them, I couldn’t tell you the exact reason. But in a telephone conversation with Daniel Lee which Dan taped, Bruce makes the statement that the reason he disbanded all of the organized schools of JKD was “...because it is too easy



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for a student to come in and mistake the agenda as the truth and the program as the way.” Bruce went on to talk about the body being the key. Look at his writings and notes: “Find the cause of your ignorance,” “You are it,” “Don’t go looking for secret moves,” “The answer is with you,” “In this way you become your own teacher.”

From the technical point of view, JKD is about taking every single tool that you have and developing a total understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and how and when to use it against any type of opponent. It’s about developing yourself to your true potential - physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. It requires total dedication and self-examination that a lot of people are not willing to put in or just don’t have the time for. I guess maybe he realized how difficult it was for a lot of people to do what he was doing, and that many people would find it easier simply to follow him and wait passively to be shown the way. And I don’t think he wanted that. But again, that’s only my opinion.

So Dan took a group into his backyard to keep working out. You also have to remember that Taky continued teaching a group in Seattle and there was a group in Oakland from the late James Lee.

Q: What qualities do you think a JKD fighter should have?

A: I think that the most important attribute or quality for any JKD practitioner to possess is adaptability; the ability to fit in with any type of opponent. But if we’re talking strictly about a “JKD fighter,” I think that they should be effective and adept at long, medium and close range, and have a firm command of all of their weapon systems including punching/striking, kicking/kneeing, trapping, and grappling. They need essential qualities such as endurance to be able to last for as long as the fight takes, and power to be able to hurt an opponent or put him away when the moment presents itself.



They should have a good grasp of combative tactics and strategies, to be able to deal with all types of opponents. And finally, I think that they need the proper mental attitude, or “warrior mindset.”

Q: What do you think Bruce Lee would be studying if he were alive today?

A: That’s like asking what kind of music do you think Jimi Hendrix would be playing today if he were alive, or what kind of movies James Dean would be making. Basically, we have no idea what Bruce would be studying or doing. We could assume, based upon what we have learned about his dedication and pursuit of excellence, that he would be keeping up with the latest developments in the fields of martial arts, fitness and entertainment, and would avail himself of the latest technological advances in all these fields. But anything else would be pure conjecture. Some people go around saying that he would be studying things like Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Filipino martial arts, or that he would be very involved in the world of mixed martial arts. Again, I really don’t know. But what I can say with a good degree of certainty is that whatever he would be investigating he would be examining it through, for want of a better term, a ‘JKD perspective.’ Not in terms of style but in terms of motion.

Q: You were a founding member and one of the original members of the board of directors of the Jun Fan Jeet Kune Do Nucleus and Bruce Lee Educational Foundation, is that right?

A: Yes. I had moved my family to Boise, Idaho in 1998. Linda Lee Cadwell was already a resident there, and John Little had recently relocated there in order to work with the Bruce Lee estate on a series of books. I worked closely with both John and Linda and we all put a lot of time and energy into the formation and development of the organization. At the same time, my wife and I were raising our daughter, Sarah, and I opened a training facility there.

Q: What were the goals of the organization?

A: The primary goal was to educate and inspire people. The mission was to offer the public the clearest and most accurate picture of both Bruce Lee and his art and philosophy of Jeet Kune Do.

Q: There seemed to be a lot of controversy surrounding the formation of the Nucleus?

A: That’s an understatement to say the least. There was a huge backlash against the Foundation from certain individuals and certain groups.

Q: Why do you think this happened?

Personally, I think it all had to do with power and real estate. Anyway, that’s all water under the bridge now.

Q: How long were you on the board?

A: From 1997 until 2002 when I stepped down

Q: With the formation of the Bruce Lee Educational Foundation and the release of the Bruce Lee Library Series by Tuttle Publishing, an enormous amount of Bruce Lee material was made available to the public. Was there any concern about the material being distorted or misinterpreted?

A: Of course. The potential was there. But the bottom line is that you can make information available to the general public but you can’t control what they do with it once they have it. The goal of the Bruce Lee Educational Foundation was (and is) to educate, not indoctrinate. If people know how to interpret and use the material correctly, there won’t be a problem. Bruce’s writings and notes make his positions very clear with regard

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1. Members of the JKD class at the Filipino Kali Academy – circa 1974. 2. Linda Lee Cadwell visits Chris Kent’s first JKD class at his school in Boise, Idaho in 1999. 3. Chris at the Filipino Kali Academy – circa 1974. In background are original Chinatown school signs and one of the steel dummies built for Bruce by James Lee. 4. Chris discusses training with Linda Lee Cadwell during a JFJKD seminar. 5. Members of Dan Inosanto’s JKD class – circa 1974. 6. Chris teaching at a JKD seminar in Florida during the early 1980’s with Richard Bustillo, Bob Bremer and Tim Tackett. 7. Chris assisting Dan Inosanto at seminar in Chicago – circa 1981. 8. Chris, Cass Magda and Dan Inosanto share a laugh while working out at the Inosanto Academy in Marina del Rey, Ca. 9. Dan Inosanto’s backyard gym in Carson, Ca., where Chris began his JKD training in June, 1973. 10. Chris with Dan Inosanto, Larry Hartsell and two of Larry’s students in North Carolina. 11. The exterior of the original Filipino Kali Academy located at 23018 S. Normandie Ave. in Torrance, Ca. 12. Bruce Lee’s custom-made 300 pound heavy bag hanging in Dan’s backyard gym – circa 1973. 13. Dan’s backyard training gym.



14. Early photo of Chris – circa 1973 15. Chris teaching with Daniel Lee and Tim Tackett at JFJKD Nucleus seminar – circa 1999. 16. Richard Bustillo holds focus gloves as Chris demonstrates punching mechanics during seminar at Degerberg Academy -- circa 1982. 17. Chris in the JKD ready stance – circa 1975. 18. Chris, Dan Inosanto and Daniel Lee discuss the “JKD Kicking set” at the Filipino Kali Academy in the late 1970’s. 19. Chris working on sparring drills with Jerry Poteet while Dan Inosanto looks on. Fellow students Richard Bustillo and Daniel Lee are working out in the foreground. 20. Chris paying respects to Bruce and Brandon Lee at the resting place in Seattle. 21. Chris, with Bob Bremer, Tim Tackett, Daniel Lee, Ted Wong and Cass Magda at a JKD workshop hosted by Cass. 22. Chris, Ted Wong and Richard Bustillo playing around at a JFJKD seminar in New York. 23. Original members of the JFJKD Nucleus at the first Nucleus seminar. 24. One of the first group photos of members of Dan Inosanto’s “backyard JKD” group, taken in the gym – circa 1973.

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to his own personal development as a martial artist and the application of his philosophy to his way of living.

Q: How do you think the material should be used?

A: The Bruce Lee Library Series or any of Bruce's notes should be used in a way that works for you personally. That's the key, making Bruce's notes work for you. It's up to the practitioner to bring them alive, put them to work, and use them to help achieve their fullest potential as a martial artist.

Q: What do you think is the correct use of Bruce's notes?

A: His notes should be viewed as guideposts or directional aids that can help lead an individual to their own self-expression in martial arts. They're signposts that will help guide a person to the correct path toward learning how to make good use of themselves. However, the individual still has to take the journey themselves.

Q: It's obvious that applying Bruce Lee's notes to one's personal development is not an easy task. What are some of the most common pitfalls you see in the process, and how can they be avoided?

A: One of the big problems with regard to the notes is in how the material in the books is organized and put together. It's sort of all thrown together in one pot like a stew. By this I mean that there are dates on some of the material but not on other stuff, so something that might have been part of Lee's earlier development and which he no longer used was put with material that happened later in his evolution. If a person doesn't know what they are looking at it can become confusing.

I think the major pitfall to avoid is the temptation or inclination to solidify or "concretize" the material. Don't take the material in Bruce's notes to be the Bible, to which nothing should ever be added or taken away, and turn it into law. And don't just memorize the material and develop the ability to repeat it by rote. Finally, don't start studying Lee's notes from a conclusion. Empty your cup in order to taste Bruce's tea.

Q: Are you still involved with the Bruce Lee Foundation in any way today?

A: Linda Lee Cadwell and I both live in Boise, we're good friends and we get together on a fairly regular basis when she is in town to have coffee and chat about things - our families, what we are doing, etc. Sometimes the subject of what Shannon and the BLF are doing comes up and we discuss it and I offer my opinion on things. I have also spoken to Richard Grewar, the new guy working for the BLF and he has asked my opinion about certain things. He seems like a nice guy. I have also volunteered my services at certain BLF events that have taken place like the Bruce Lee Weekend in Seattle which took place last October.

Q: You have maintained a good friendship with Linda Lee Cadwell over the years -

A: Yes. It has been an honor and privilege to know her. She is one of the most gracious people I have ever met. I don't think many people realize how big a part she played in Bruce's development. But if you ask her about it she will refuse to discuss it. She likes to keep a very low profile.

“Don't take the material in Bruce's notes to be the Bible, to which nothing should ever be added or taken away, and turn it into law.”

Q: What makes teaching JKD so challenging?

A: There are several things. As Tim Tackett and I wrote about this subject in our book, "Jeet Kune Do Kickboxing," - Jeet Kune Do is a single art, but it can express itself in many ways. When it comes to teaching JKD, individual interpretation is all that any JKD instructor can really offer, and that interpretation will be based upon their learning, research, understanding, their own inclinations, and perhaps likes and dislikes as well.

One of the primary challenges is that in JKD there is no standardized or formalized curriculum. There never has been. That's one of the things I love about the art. One of my favorite quotes from Dan is, "JKD can be taught but it cannot be standardized." While there is a natural form of training progression there are no iron-clad rules of what has to be taught or when. One JKD instructor may choose to focus on a different aspect or element of training than another instructor at different times. For example, perhaps one instructor chooses to focus more on the kickboxing element at the start of training, whereas another may put more focus on the understanding of immobilization and tactile awareness. Neither is wrong in their approach. One instructor may teach a particular kick to his beginning students, whereas another may wait until the students are at an intermediate or even advanced level before introducing it. The point is do not make the mistake of thinking that because one instructor may teach slightly differently than another instructor, that they are not teaching what in your mind is "authentic" Jeet Kune Do.

I am sure that some people in the JKD world would argue this point with me. Nowadays there are some people who say things like, "Jun Fan Gung Fu is the set curriculum whereas Jeet Kune Do is the personal expression," but I disagree. To me, JKD is what evolved out of Jun Fan Gung Fu. It was the next step in Bruce's martial evolution.

Teaching JKD is about giving students experiences that either allow or force them to grow. As an instructor, you're always working on ways to allow students to experience something without boxing them in. For example, when I'm teaching students how to use combination punches on focus gloves, I might show them some combinations they can use, but explain to them that those are not the only combinations available to them. The essence is developing the ability to combine both hands in combination. These combinations then have to relate to an opponent's defensive reactions or countermoves.

If a student only practices the combinations demonstrated instead of learning to think for themselves and developing the ability to combine punching tools in various combinations, they become dependent upon the instructor to feed them more techniques.

Another challenge is that unlike the majority of other arts, Jeet Kune Do doesn't have any sort formalized ranking system. For example, one school teaching JKD may have four levels of training that a student has to progress through, whereas another school might have seven or ten. And the requirements for those training phases or levels are subject to an individual instructor's discretion. Having said that, it seems to me that over the last several years "instructor certification" has become the "black belt" of Jeet Kune Do.



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Q: *You don't like that?*

A: We live in a goal-oriented society. One of the first questions that a lot of people ask when they go into a martial arts school is, "How long will it take me to become a black belt?" It's the end-goal or objective that people have their attention fixed on. In JKD, because we don't have a black belt, a lot of people ask, "How long will it take for me to become certified? How long will it take for me to become an instructor?" What I find interesting is that when you ask them why they want to become certified as an instructor, many of them can't really give you a clear answer. It's kind of like, "Because it's a cool thing to do." Another thing is that it seems that as soon as someone becomes certified as an instructor, they immediately want to turn around and start creating their own associations and making instructors.

Q: *But without any standardized curriculum or formalized ranking system, don't you feel there can be a disparity in the level of JKD teaching quality*

A: Sure. But that's really no different than any other martial art. In the same way two different karate schools may have vastly different standards for attaining a black belt two JKD schools may have very differing standards for instructorship or certification. But in the same way 'Joe Public' simply sees two black belts and lumps them together, when it comes to JKD they say, "Oh, he's certified as an instructor and so is he so they must be the same." For example, to me there is a definite difference between someone who teaches a handful of people in a backyard as a hobby, and someone who does it professionally. If someone chooses to do it as a sideline, that's fine. I'm in no way putting them down. But JKD is not a hobby for me. It's my life, my passion, and my profession. As a result I've invested thousands of hours in not only researching the art and philosophy of Jeet Kune Do, but also studying exercise physiology, teaching methodology, and sports psychology, in order to improve my quality as an educator.

“People need to keep in mind that initially Bruce established a form of ranking for his art, but then tossed it out.”

Q: *Do you think that JKD will ever have some kind of formalized ranking system?*

A: God, I hope not. To me that would definitely be a step in the wrong direction. How do you reconcile Bruce's belief that belts and ranking systems are non-essential with regard to martial arts and his refusal to give them out as indicators of progress if you're handing them out. You're telling the student that belts are not important or necessary as you give them one. To me it's kind of like telling an obese person that too much food is not good for them as you are handing them a plate overflowing with food. People need to keep in mind that initially Bruce established a form of ranking for his art, but then tossed it out. Unfortunately in the last several years I have been seeing schools which boast about JKD being a major part of their curriculum that award belts.

Q: *But what about kids? Don't you think they need belts or sashes?*

A: No. I think it's more of a "perceived" need. It's an external reward system that has been fostered upon people over the years, and part of reason has been for business purposes. It keeps the student coming back. Name one other athletic endeavor that has such a formalized ranking system. In baseball for instance, they don't say, "Okay, Tommy, you know how to hit curve balls and catch fly balls, so now you're a red cap in baseball. Now you can work on becoming a brown cap." I don't think that there is anything wrong with giving a student something like a certificate of advancement when they move from one training phase to another. And as for other martial arts a belt system might be okay. I just don't think belts belong in Jeet Kune Do.



Q: What about people misrepresenting themselves as JKD instructors?

A: That's bound to happen. It's the nature of the beast, so to speak. So the "caveat emptor" or "buyer beware" is if you visit a school or training facility where a person claims to be an instructor, investigate their credentials. Find out who they were trained by and how long they trained, and if necessary, call that person and verify their credentials. Dan Inosanto will gladly tell you if a particular instructor has been trained by him. So will Richard Bustillo, Tim Tackett, and myself. So do your homework.

Q: How long do you feel it should take for someone to become a JKD instructor?

A: It all depends on the individual. To me, a person should be ready and willing to invest a minimum of 3 to 4 years of serious study and regular training. I think it takes at least that amount of time. There are also different levels of instructor such as a trainee instructor versus a master teacher. A person can become a instructor trainee while they're still a student.

Q: So you don't feel that someone who has say, taken a special weekend course would be qualified to become an instructor?

A: Not in JKD. Be honest, would you? How can a person who has studied for say, 10 hours even hope to be qualified to teach JKD or teach any art for that matter? It's ridiculous. Let me ask you something. If you have to go into hospital for an operation, who do you want to work on you, a doctor who has attended medical school, studied medicine and completed his residency, or a person who has taken a weekend seminar in surgery fundamentals? I don't know about you, but I know which person I'm going to choose.

Q: How did you become an instructor?

A: It was a natural, evolving process. I started off by assisting Jerry Poteet (who at the time taught classes at the Kali Academy along with Richard Bustillo), and helping Dan when he taught the JKD class. I would observe Dan and see how he taught. Then

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I started traveling with Dan and assisting him on demonstrations and seminars. I used to open the Filipino Kali Academy on Saturday mornings for open workout, then we started some Saturday classes. Dan would usually come down later in the morning and teach a Filipino Kali class. Afterwards a group of us (Dan, myself, Paul Vunak, Jeff Imada, and others) would go to a local Chinese restaurant and eat lunch and talk martial arts. It's funny, but sometimes I would learn more about JKD over lunch than I did in the class. In 1982, when I turned up to train I was given Full Instructor Certificates in both the Jun Fan Martial Arts (Jeet Kune Do) and Filipino Kali/Escrima. There was no big elaborate ceremony. It was, "Here you go." And I said, "Oh, that's cool." And then I put them in my bag and worked out. That doesn't mean I wasn't proud as hell to receive them. It's just that the emphasis wasn't on getting certificates.

Q: What qualities do you feel a person should possess in order to be a JKD instructor?

A: First and foremost I think they should have a passion for what they do and a strong desire to help others. They should not only be able to physically perform the art well, but also be able to break various actions, techniques, and material down into its various component parts and teach it several different ways to reach different types of students. They should also have a firm grasp of the philosophical foundations upon which the art is built, and be able to discuss or debate them with their peers.

When I'm looking at potential instructors I'm looking for potential, not polish. And I'm looking at their personality and character. One of the things I keep foremost in my mind with regard to both students and instructors is something Dan told me that he said Bruce told him, which was, "Dan, if you have to choose between personality and ability, choose personality."

“When it comes to JKD, it's not about teaching an art but becoming a great teacher.”

Q: You are one of the most highly respected JKD instructors in the world, yet you do not have a large organization and schools everywhere. Why is that?

I don't really know. I guess it's just not my thing. Over the last ten or so years my direction has been moving more towards the role of a "teaching consultant" and a teacher of teachers. When it comes to JKD, it's not about teaching an art but becoming a great teacher. My goal or mission now is to assist people in becoming great teachers. So I work in a consulting/advisory capacity. I created a teacher development program that encourages the attitude of curiosity and problem-solving and that promotes the open exchange of ideas and information. After working with someone for a period of time I can give them my endorsement, my "seal of approval" so to speak. I like this approach because I think there is an opportunity for me to have greater impact. I can help set the direction for various schools. I can help them develop such things as curriculum, training program structure. Furthermore, it frees me up from various factions. I can help someone who considers themselves to be a "JKD concepts" person as well as someone who considers themselves to be an "original JKD" person.

Q: What about somebody who lives in an area where there aren't any qualified JKD instructors? How could this person learn Bruce's art?

A: Well, with the immense amount of material now available through books, videos, and on the Internet, people have more opportunity than ever study what Lee was doing, the direction he was going, and his thought process. Some of the technical material, such as tool development, footwork, and mobility can be practiced alone. However other

material, such as trapping hands, energy training, requires a training partner. The thing to keep in mind is that JKD ultimately deals with relating to alive, non-cooperating opponents, and in order to be able to do that you need to work out with other people. Bruce Lee ultimately became his own teacher, and did mostly self-training. But this was training with imagination, concentration, and intensity. Then he would work out with people like Dan Inosanto, Ted Wong, as well as other students at his various schools.

Q: *If JKD is all about self-discovery and personal development, then why is a school even necessary?*

A: If everyone thought and actualized themselves like Bruce Lee, then JKD schools really wouldn't be necessary. Bruce understood that training serves as the trigger mechanism for the internal process of discovery and self-knowledge. If a person is able to apply the principles that exist in JKD and do the work themselves, then they really don't need a school. But what about those people who can't or don't know how to find their own way? It's the same as all the motivational seminars you see going on. Why do thousands of people pay big bucks to go and listen to motivational speakers, who in turn tell them that they have to do everything for themselves? I think it is human nature to always want to look outside ourselves for answers.

Q: *We hear a great deal about self-expression in JKD. How does a person become, as Bruce Lee put it, "an artist of self-expression"?*

A: Bruce talked a lot about "honestly expressing yourself," be it in martial art or anything else you do. To "express yourself" is to give expression to your feelings, emotions, and imagination in whatever you do. We become an artist of self expression in the same way that great athlete or musician or artist does. There are three main requirements. The first is that you've got to know yourself inside out; not just on the surface, but inside out; physically, mentally, and emotionally. You've got to know your good points and bad points, your strengths and your weaknesses. You've got to know what frightens you, what makes you angry, what makes you happy, all those sort of things. The second is that you've got to have a strong technical foundation in what you do. I can't just tell a student who has no training to "express themselves." Well I can, however the results might not work out too well for them when they do. So you need to possess the physical tools and skills that will allow you to fully express yourself. And those things should be continuously refined and upgraded or improved. And the third thing is that you've got to take whatever you do, integrate it with your personality, and add your own personal modifications to "make it your own." In this way whatever you do becomes an expression of who you are.

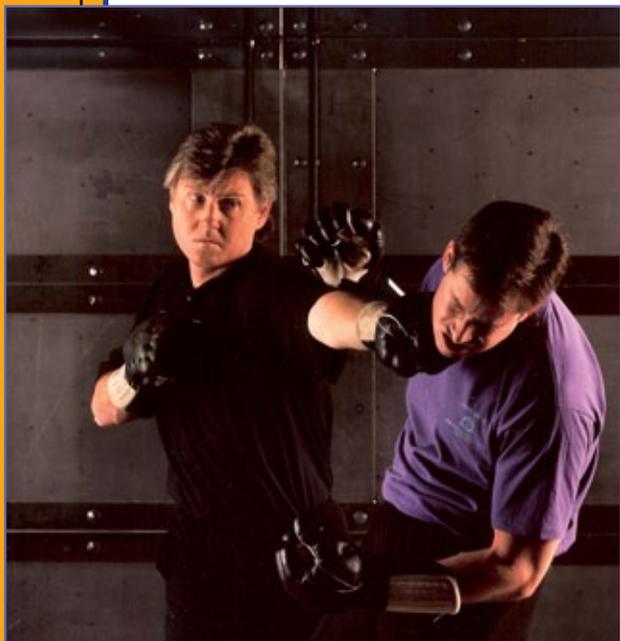
To me, the most important word in the phrase "honestly express yourself" is "honestly," because it means truthfully expressing yourself either through words or actions, to the core of your being without any pretense or façade. It's about being authentic and natural.

It's through the understanding and application of this principle that a person becomes liberated from attempting to mimic or imitate Bruce Lee, and instead learns to express themselves. Then they become an artist of self-expression.

Q: *You've stated before that you feel that the philosophical foundations are a very necessary and integral part of JKD. Why?*

A: In my opinion, JKD is philosophy in action. Like yin/yang, the physical and the philosophical elements are two halves of a unified whole. You can't have one without the other. Both are essential elements of Jeet Kune Do.

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Q: Could you give us a couple of examples?

A: Sure. Take the principle of “Using no way as Way.” Let’s say you’re a person who always likes to charge in and pound away against any opponent. That’s the answer to everything for you, your “way.” But what happens if you come up against an opponent who either doesn’t allow you get in close or who has the ability to charge in and pound away better than you? Your “way” has now become a limitation, and you may very well be defeated in that particular situation. So the idea is you should never be “boxed-in” or locked into a “way.”

Another example would Bruce’s statement that, “My truth is not your truth.” While we may all be the same physiologically as human beings, we all have individual differences with regard to such things as physical characteristics, temperament, attitude, etc. So what might be suitable or work well for one person might in a combative situation might not necessarily be suitable or work with equal results for another. I don’t think this statement means that each one of us will all have totally different truths. You and I may travel different paths and yet end up at the same truth. But you have to take the journey by yourself.

Another good one is, “You should adapt like a shadow, respond like an echo.” In JKD, your goal as a martial artist is to be able to fit in with the unpredictability and spontaneity of combat and reach a point where the action becomes thoughtless, where there is no separation between the fighter and the fight. That’s what I mean when I say that JKD is philosophy in action.

Q: Do you think the art of Jeet Kune Do will keep evolving?

A: JKD is a dynamic, living, breathing art, and as such it has to remain in motion and in use to survive. But as I stated earlier, I think we need to be very clear on what we mean by the term “evolve” and how we use it in reference to Jeet Kune Do. It’s not about change simply for the sake of change; if it leads to improvement that’s different.

Q: How has your personal JKD evolved or developed?

A: I have always followed two main guiding principles in everything I do related to JKD, and they are both quotes made by Bruce Lee. The first is, “We have two arms and two legs. The question becomes how to use them with maximum efficiency and effectiveness?” The second, and perhaps more important, is, “How, in the process of learning how to use my body, can I come to understand myself?” Everything I do with regard to JKD revolves around those two things. I am continually researching the martial arts and seeking to increase my level of understanding in all of the various aspects such as technical training, physical conditioning, mental training, etc. I am always on the lookout for better ways to train and better ways to impart knowledge to my students.

Also, for me it is about seeing the bigger picture, seeing what Lee was pointing at. To understand how I can use the art to become a more evolved human being.

As result, we are now seeing Jeet Kune Do being offered alongside a plethora of other styles at some martial art schools. I have spoken to and read about people who have decided to add JKD to the list of martial arts they teach or offer in order to cast their net as wide as possible and offer a variety of options to potential students or clients. I’ve even seen advertisements in martial art magazines suggesting that martial art school

owners should consider adding Jeet Kune Do to their school's curriculum as a means to increase their revenue. Again, this goes back to a person's perception of what Jeet Kune Do is. If they perceive JKD as simply another style of martial art or a combination of various arts, it makes it very easy for them to simply add another dish to their menu. Some JKD groups have reverted to following business ideas put forth by the martial art "industry." For example, as I said earlier, we are now seeing some martial art schools handing out "belts" in JKD. Also, when I look around the JKD world, it seems to me that since somewhere around the early to mid-1990's there has been an on-going kind of "classicalization" with regard to certain aspects of Jeet Kune Do.

Q: What do you mean by "classicalization"?

A: I am sure that there are some people who are going to take offense to this, but it seems as if there is an attempt to make JKD more Chinese and more traditional. More and more jargon seems to be creeping into the JKD vernacular. For example, the never-ending use of the words "Si Jo" and "Si Gung" as prefixes in front of Bruce Lee's name every time someone writes something or says something about him. I can write about Bruce Lee or talk about him, but I don't have to put those words in front of his name. Understand that I am not saying these people are wrong or that they shouldn't do it. That is their choice. But if you look back to any of the early articles in which Dan spoke about Bruce, he usually referred to him as Bruce and/or Sifu. Remember, you've got to look at the time when I began training in JKD and what the attitude was back then. It's got nothing to do with respect or being disrespectful. The respect was always there, it just wasn't done in such a formal way. And now you see terms such as "Simo" (Sifu's wife) being tossed about all over the place. During a conversation over coffee I had not too long ago with Linda, I broached the subject and asked if she was ever referred to as Simo at any of Bruce's schools. Her response was that she was simply called "Linda." Why has this term now made its way into JKD? Is it supposed to be out of respect for the teacher? I don't know. What I do know is that I'm not Chinese and I'm not living in China. My wife is Leslie. She never has, nor ever will be referred to as Simo by me or anyone else. What I also find interesting and somewhat puzzling is that many of the people who routinely use these terms such as Si Gung, Si Jo, Sifu, as a prefix to Bruce's or Dan's name, and Simo for their wives rarely, if ever, use all of the other hierarchical terms that go along with them such as Si Hing (senior, older brother) or Si Dai (junior, younger brother).

You have instructors using all of the Chinese terms for the various kicks and punches when they are teaching as opposed to English terms. I have copies of a lot of Bruce Lee's notes, and when I read through them I see terms such as the side kick, the reverse hook kick, the leading straight punch, and questions such as, "How can I be a master of the hook kick?" What I don't see is, "How can I be master of the O'ou tek?" I do see Chinese terms in the notes as well, but it usually is listed under sections titled "traditional" or "classical" techniques. It seems to me that so much of it is being done in a way so as to make the person teaching seem more authentic.

Also, a lot of things seem to be becoming much more structured and formalized in teaching.

You've now got various forms such as the "Ung Moon" form and "JKD" wooden dummy sets being brought in and taught as part of the curriculum. It's interesting because I asked Linda about the Ung Moon form and her response was that she had never heard of it or observed Bruce teaching it.

Q: Why do you think these people now reverting to using such formalized teaching and more Chinese terminology?

To be honest, I'm not really sure. Perhaps it's an attempt to help JKD retain some form of link with Bruce Lee's roots in Wing Chun Gung Fu. Perhaps some people are using it

“Also, when I look around the JKD world, it seems to me that since somewhere around the early to mid-1990's there has been an on-going kind of "classicalization" with regard to certain aspects of Jeet Kune Do”

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as some sort of sorting device to separate those who supposedly know JKD from those who supposedly don't. Perhaps it's being done to help JKD retain characteristic differences that help differentiate it from the multitude of hybrid and eclectic martial art systems and methods that are now flooding the market. Perhaps it has something to do with all of the things going on to do with Bruce Lee back in China. Maybe it is due in part, to all of the recent Ip Man movies. As I said, I can't really say.

Q: Do you ever use Chinese terminology?

A: Yes, but only when I am explaining specific hand immobilization actions. Then I will often use Chinese terms such as pak sao, lop sao, etc. However, even then it is often combined with English terms such as "inside pak sao" or "outside lop sao," or abbreviated such as "pak" or "lop." When I was training in Sifu Dan Inosanto's backyard and at the Filipino Kali Academy we did an extensive amount of HIA and tactile awareness training exercises. But even when we worked compound trapping actions, it was usually cut down to such things as "pak sao, lop sao" or "double pak

sao," not "pak sao chung chuie go da, gnoy lop sao, gua chuie." I try to use English as much as possible. However, and don't laugh now, I have difficulty telling a student that they need to practice "jerking hand."

Q: So are you against the use of Chinese terminology? Do you think it should be removed from the JKD lexicon?

A: The answer to both questions is no. I can see the use of such terms when it comes to such things as understanding the original terms for the forms, techniques and actions utilized in Wing Chun, and for the sake of historical reference with regard to Jun Fan Gung Fu and JKD. I give my students a glossary of the Chinese terms so that they can look at them and learn them if they choose to. But I don't require them to memorize them or use them

Q: What are your thoughts about teaching JKD in conjunction with other arts?

A: I think it depends on how it's done and what is meant by "in conjunction?" Do you mean at the same time, or do you mean mixed together as a blend? For example, at my training facility I teach Jeet Kune Do as my main curriculum. But I also offer my students the opportunity to train in the weaponry aspects of Filipino Kali/Escrima if they desire. But I do this as a separate class and also from a non-style perspective. Part of this relates back to the philosophical foundations underpinning JKD. You have to remember that JKD is about doing away with the idea of separate styles. It's also about totality, the whole pie. This includes kicking, punching, trapping, throwing, locking, et cetera. Now if a person wants to take one slice of the pie and have a class that specializes in one particular aspect, such as trapping, I don't see anything wrong with that. But I wouldn't call it a Wing Chun class, or advertise that I teach JKD and Wing Chun. Again, I think

it goes back to how a person perceives JKD. If they see it as just another martial art or simply as a bunch of concepts then they may teach it as simply a part of the overall curriculum. I don't see it that way. Another thing is that sometimes it seems to me that the name Jeet Kune Do is used primarily as a draw to get the people into a martial art school. Then once the people are in the school they find themselves learning several other arts. So as I said, I think it all depends on how it is done.

Q: What's your opinion about the so-called "mixed martial arts" systems and "hybrid" styles that seem to be popping up everywhere these days?

A: I think there are both good and bad points. On the upside, I think that people are becoming more educated about martial arts and are interested in developing a more well-rounded approach to training and fighting. On the downside, it seems to me that a lot of people are attempting to create their own martial art purely from the standpoint of dealing with commercial competition. For example, if I'm School A, and I teach only one style of martial arts, and School B down the road teaches three styles, commercially he has an advantage.

Q: With the proliferation of all of the "mixed martial art methods" now popping up all over, why do you think that JKD still appeals to so many people?

A: Well, obviously part of it is due to the legendary status of its founder, Bruce Lee. But I think that another part is that Jeet Kune Do possesses a deep philosophical base which goes far beyond simply how to beat someone up or defend yourself in a fight. When people really start to understand JKD, they see how it affects all other areas of their life, and that it's about so much more than just fighting. It's about living your life to the fullest and achieving your true potential, not only as a martial artist but also as a human being.

Q: Do you think there is too much politics involved in JKD today?

A: You know, for years I used to try to avoid politics with regards to JKD. But politics are a part of JKD just like they're a part of life. So I changed my perspective. Politics are about mutual accommodation, compromise, and understanding. Politics exist in everything: businesses, schools, churches; you name it. Politics are just a fact of life. You've got to learn to deal with them.

Q: What would like to see happen with all of the various JKD groups?

A: I used to say that I would like to see a unity based on our understanding of Bruce's art and philosophy of JKD. But I realize that that is very unlikely to ever happen because in reality, when you get down to it, as I said before, it usually ends up being all about real estate and power. Who has the most students, which group is right or wrong, who has the "real" JKD. So now I would simply like to see mutual respect and open communication between the various groups based on commonality of desire. I think that's the best we can ask for now.

Q: What are your goals as a JKD instructor?

A: Simply to share what I know and about JKD without recourse to factions or political groups. To help impart the DNA of Jeet Kune Do to future generations of practitioners and instructors. To help instill in people the "JKD attitude" and serve as a "finger pointing to the moon," while I simultaneously learn and continue my own process of self-discovery.

Q: You recently wrote and self-published a book titled "Liberate Yourself! – A Guide to Personal Freedom." Can you tell us how it came about and what it's about?

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A: Liberate Yourself! has been in the works for probably twenty years at least. It's something I've always wanted to write but one reason or another never taken the time or got around to doing it. Finally the opportunity presented itself to be able to do it, and the time just seemed right. When I first started training in JKD I was primarily interested in the physical things that Bruce Lee did, like how he was able to swing a three hundred pound heavy bag and stop it dead in its tracks with a single kick and how he could hit an opponent with a finger jab from ten feet away before they could even react. But as I continued training and my training progressed and I learned more and began to research more, I realized that there was much more to Jeet Kune Do than just the physical component of the art. What made JKD different from the other martial arts out there was the underlying philosophical foundations upon which the art was built. The central theme of this philosophy was self actualization and personal liberation -- liberation of body, liberation of mind, liberation of spirit through greater self-knowledge. So I began to start looking at the broader application of these principles and this philosophy. How it could be applied in our daily lives. When I wrote Liberate Yourself! My goal was to share the fundamental tenets of Lee's philosophy of self-actualization and personal liberation with everybody and take it out of the martial arts arena and put into the arena of daily living. 🐼