

THE LANGUAGE OF MARTIAL ARTS:  
THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU THROUGH  
THE LENS OF DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY

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## ABSTRACT

The Language of Martial Arts:  
The Transformative Potential of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu  
through the Lens of Depth Psychology

by

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Although Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell were both avid athletes, research and theory around engaging in sports as a valuable psychological process is quite rare. Athletic experience has hardly been looked at through the lens of the archetypal hero's journey, or the path of the warrior, in spite of the fact that mythology and literature are filled with stories of such characters and they are often the primary subject of contents of dreams, reverie, and active imagination. Given that martial arts is steeped in rich cultural traditions, and intertwined with political history as well as mythology, this lack of study creates a gap in Jungian literature, particularly with regard to the archetypes of initiation and individuation.

This phenomenological hermeneutic study explores the lives of five Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt professors. The Literature Review was framed around historical perspectives of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, Jungian psychology and somatics, sports philosophy, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. It provides an in-depth perspective of lived experience of a very popular martial art used for self-defense. Brazilian jiu-jitsu was chosen for a variety of reasons, including the ability to teach highly dangerous techniques to a wide range of participants, and because the rapid growth of jiu-jitsu may indicate

places where collective energy is moving. This raises the questions, Why Brazilian jiu-jitsu? Why Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu right now?

The implications of this study and the qualitative data gleaned from the interviews show that the practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu can offer a great deal to individuals and communities, and can impact either, depending on intention. The practice, as lived by five interviewees and many other practitioners who were consulted, offers a safe environment for personal transformation, coupled with a spirited playful atmosphere, an emphasis on social values, and teamwork. With these structures in place, Brazilian jiu-jitsu schools frequently become places to improve quality of life and to inadvertently address a wide variety of maladaptive and clinical issues.

Key Words: martial arts, Jungian psychology, jiu-jitsu, phenomenology, sports, archetypal

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I also thank Dr. Maurice Stevens and Dr. Jarrod Williamson for forming my committee, for supporting me through this arduous process, and most of all, for sharing the love of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. It is a special honor to have two practitioners as part of this project, and I am truly grateful for that opportunity.

Without the great Jigoro Kano, and his contemporaries who helped move Japanese culture into an entirely new era, and Mitsuyo Maeda, Carlos Gracie, Sr., and all of his descendants who solidified their commitment to more than just a "martial" art, there would not be a Brazilian jiu-jitsu movement. Without Dr. Carl Jung and his dedicated followers of so many decades, even when they were not popular, the structure I

have used to map jiu-jitsu psychologically would also not be available. I am truly grateful to these ancients, as well as all current enthusiasts, including all of the jiu-jitsu students I am currently affiliated with, who make a project like this even possible. To jiu-jitsu itself, for giving me a new way to move in the world, in partial remembrance of my first love, gymnastics, but more, a way to participate with the world and a way to walk with power. It is my sincere wish that I do it justice, in giving back, that I may pass along the traditions in a way that helps others feel also that they fit into the scheme of things quite nicely.

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The Style used throughout this dissertation is in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition, 2009), and *Pacifica Graduate Institute's Dissertation Handbook* (2013-2014).

If you know the enemy and yourself you will never be at risk in a hundred battles; if you do not know the enemy but know yourself, you will sometimes win and sometimes lose; if you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will be at risk in every battle.

—Sun Tzu's, *The Art of War*

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study is to explore the experience and potential transformational qualities of the practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, a martial art and combat sport, using a depth psychological lens to discover the underlying psychological life of this body technology.

### **Researcher's Interest in the Topic**

The journey that precedes this study inadvertently began in my early childhood. It was during my early school years that I fell in love for the first time with gymnastics. Although I always remembered my gymnastics days fondly, the deeper version of this beautiful memory was buried until I was at the end of my master's studies in counseling at the age of 36. It was there that a classmate, using depth techniques, assisted me in revealing the very nugget of truth that lay buried under dashed Olympic hopes and years of denial and regret.

At age 4, in the summer of 1964, I watched the Russian Olympic gymnasts on television. Pointing to them, I emphatically told my parents that I wanted to do exactly what they were doing. They took me to a gym to channel my interests, but mostly to create some structure around the dangerous attempts at tumbling and flipping that I had started doing, to mimic what I had watched. By age 5, it was apparent that I was able to

move in unique ways, was a fast learner, and obviously had my heart in acrobatics. For several years, I enjoyed a great deal of success in gymnastics, but recognition was always secondary to the experience of embodied joy, excitement, and contentment I felt whenever I was doing it. It was the most natural feeling to be upside down, twisted and flipped around, and I believed that anyone could do these things if they wanted to. I have no memory of becoming tired of it or of ever not wanting to practice.

When these memories were resurrected during a graduate class exercise a few years ago, I emerged with a new sense of remembering and a charge to forge ahead with experiences that had long been forgotten from consciousness. I had a renewed appreciation for my childhood love of movement, and suddenly realized that I had been like a little yogi, gifted with a unique sense of embodiment from a very early age. I also had a new curiosity about why the memories had surfaced and where they might take me in my depth psychological studies. I began to wonder about the fact that many people may never experience this type of embodied joy and a piecing together of the reasons why I would need to remember, and where I might be heading, began to develop. “The Sanskrit word *yoga* means ‘union’ or ‘yoking’ and has been defined as the union of mind and body, heart and actions” (Kirk, Boon, & DiTuro, 2006, p. 2). As I completed my master’s thesis in mind-body philosophy in counseling, I sensed a new project on the horizon; one that would include a new practice and a path that might also create an opportunity for others.

It was not long before I became heavily involved in yoga and martial arts. As I embarked on a new path in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, along with my husband, daughter, and friends, I found that my revelations from childhood were synchronistic to this time period

and served to further our efforts as a family practicing martial arts. My daughter had started practicing Brazilian jiu-jitsu at age 5, and the opportunity for me to get involved was perfect timing. I had not planned to develop a martial arts practice and had resisted my husband's attempts to try jiu-jitsu for almost 10 years. Joining them at this time quickly became the most natural path with an almost predetermined plan.

With the possibility of opening a Brazilian jiu-jitsu school with my husband on the horizon, I sensed a strong connection between some of my new vocational work and my early experiences as a gymnast, and I had also returned to Pacifica for further study in depth psychology. I decided that I wanted to understand the transformative nature of a practice like Brazilian jiu-jitsu from a deeper perspective, and wondered about how to relate the experiences of martial artists with Jung's theories of a personal and collective psyche. I also wanted to develop an appreciation for what the practical application for working with others might be.

I completed two fieldwork projects in this area of study during my PhD coursework. These projects were requirements for my summer coursework between Years 2 and 3 of the program. Fieldwork is aimed at giving students practical experience of what depth psychological work in the world might really look like: it served as a pilot study for this dissertation, and led to a new career in owning a martial arts school with my husband. First, I studied female participation in Brazilian jiu-jitsu from a phenomenological perspective by asking, "What brings women to Brazilian jiu-jitsu and what do they find when they get there?" Through my own personal experience and that of other women, I found that, like men, women come for a variety of reasons and they do find a potentially transformative activity on a physical, mental, and spiritual level. In

particular, the nature of the techniques and live sparring create a rare and regular opportunity to experience personal breakthroughs and realizations. Carl Jung wrote, “The psychological ‘transcendent function’ arises from the union of conscious and unconscious contents” (Jung, 1916/1959, p. 69 [CW 8]).

Looking at the embodied practice of martial arts training as a substitute for other Jungian methods such as active imagination or authentic movement, I found that the martial arts school environment often acts as a container for the interplay of compensatory and complementary interaction between conscious and unconscious psychic contents. This occurs in many different ways, and is a testimony to the tension of opposites that jiu-jitsu provides for its practitioners. The mental and physical extremes that are experienced in training create unique possibilities for practitioners. In that research, I was able to write and contain those epiphanies that are pertinent, helpful, and even inspirational to the unfolding collective processes between men and women.

My second fieldwork was specifically focused on the question, “What is the psychological experience of training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu?” From a phenomenological perspective, lived experience was studied through informal interviewing before, during, and after training, tournaments, and seminars. Although many people were pleased to discuss their psychological experiences, it was obvious that traditional psychological questioning and interpretation was problematic, and many times counterproductive.

This realization has led me to reformulate my lens and find a new way to study lived experience. Specific questions will be formulated to ask the whole person (including the body) to reflect, speak and interpret the lived body of the jiu-jitsu practitioner. In this sense, the body of the practitioner adds to the text, contributes to the

story and the whole body-mind of each interviewee becomes storyteller. The body is not only a vessel for transformation but it tells the story of transformation. In martial arts, stories that are unexpected and unplanned are constantly unfolding and after completing two fieldwork projects, the need remained for me to formulate better questions in order to hear more of the story and translate the experiences into text that could be understood by others.

During both fieldwork projects and over the several years since they were completed, I have deepened my own Brazilian jiu-jitsu practice, cultivated close relationships within the martial arts community and worked in the community on projects for men, women, and children to further their experience in self-defense training and competition. This work has become very personal to me and I am cognizant of my own emotional attachments to this study, and also aware that this work increases my own self-understanding of the topic. I am committed to the scholarship and rigor that is required to investigate from an objective point of view.

### **Researcher's Transference to the Topic**

I am aware of my emotional attachments to this study and that I am obliged to acknowledge, identify and discuss my own historical, cultural, and autobiographical predispositions to the topic. My immediate assumptions are that jiu-jitsu is an ancient body technology, competitive sport, and martial art that is a physical practice that can be used for personal and collective transformation, and further, that physical activity is transformative and that people need transformative experiences. All of these cognitive suppositions have led me to this study, and therefore serve its facilitation, but it is also possible that these ideas could inhibit the integrity of the study in that they are in large

part, assumptions, that may not always be true. I have developed careful awareness around these ideas, and will continue to monitor these preconceived notions in order to preserve the integrity of this research.

In addition to the above ideas, I have the following beliefs and judgments that form an a priori stance toward the research topic. I carry the biased belief that jiu-jitsu is inherently good for people, helps them grow, and I lean toward the belief that jiu-jitsu creates important social structures, helps most people psychologically, and again, that transformation through physical activity is good for people. These proclivities need to be continuously understood and monitored. These judgments are important to consider throughout my study and attention to them thus far has led me to the realization that there can often be examples when they are not true.

It is my assumption that physical activity is transformative. Because I come from a family of athletes that value competitive and recreational sports, from the beginning of my life I learned to believe that sports are good activities in which to engage. I think the assumption that physical activity for recreation and competition are good varies between families, communities, and cultures. It is further my assumption that the idea of the warrior archetype and initiation are pertinent psychic constructs that validate the presence of such assumptions within the human psyche.

Even though it is not common to use the word *transformation* when discussing sports, we are still inclined to place high regard on athletes who espouse the qualities that are valued in psychologically transformative settings, such as tenacity, commitment, and confidence. Similarly, the character traits that are revered in spiritual traditions such as integrity, honesty, humility, and equanimity are of utmost importance in competitive

sports, although not always elaborated on. Hermeneutic philosophers and depth psychologists are concerned with the personal, cultural, and historical influences that are embedded in the individual and collective psyche. In these traditions, the goal is not to avoid these, but to develop a discipline of self-critical reflection and examination in research that is necessary for the integrity of the inquiry.

Another bias that will need to be monitored in the process of my research is that transformation is good. I understand where this bias originates, personally, and also that the study of Jungian psychology is an area where transformational processes are commonly valued as worthwhile. I wonder also about my need to place positive labels on therapeutic methods that are based in movement practices. In an effort to balance the long-standing tradition of championing the mind over the body in psychological research, there is likely a current cultural bias that embodied practices are inherently good.

Along with my assumptions and biases, there are several hidden agendas to be aware of and to monitor. I am eager to prove the validity of psychological transformation within the physical activity of jiu-jitsu. I have an intentional stance to show deeper value for something that is perceived as violent and often labeled as barbaric, and feel a need to show that these so-called primitive aspects can be useful in both personal and collective ways. I experience them more as lost or suppressed teaching tools attempting to reassert themselves into the collective in order to assist with personal and collective transformation during a time of rampant narcissism in the culture.

This hidden agenda originates from the autobiographical roots of my own experience in training. As an example, during my first fieldwork, I would have quit jiu-jitsu if not for the need to finish the project. As a female minority, I found a variety of

challenges that I had never experienced before. Breaking through that resistance to continue has allowed me, several years later, to experience a great deal of confidence and inquiry into my own internal structures relating to my own male/female (anima/animus) complexes. Experiencing primal body awareness through learning a form of personal combat has offered me many opportunities for reflection on issues of age and gender, passiveness versus aggressiveness and personal versus social gains.

Finally, I have a personal ambition to become an expert on the psychological and philosophical aspects of jiu-jitsu training. Hermeneutic philosophers understand that it is these fore-structures of understanding that are unavoidable and contribute to the momentum of the research. I am committed to the understanding of how they serve or inhibit the integrity and promise of this research and will continue to monitor their influence throughout the entire project.

### **Relevance of Topic for Depth Psychology**

The field of depth psychology offers a vast and intricate way of understanding psychic life. The practice of martial arts lends itself well to the overarching concern that depth psychology places on creating meaning and for developing a metaphoric sensibility for life experiences, often in the form of a personal story or myth. My main interest in studying Brazilian jiu-jitsu is to explore and discover the underlying psychological life inherent in a physical practice. As a depth psychological researcher, I am particularly interested in what meaningfulness may exist, and how it is created and expressed in the body-minds of Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners. Although it is focused on Jungian theoretical constructs, I will rely on an interdisciplinary approach to research as I traverse a variety of disciplines and fields of study. Using a depth psychological lens, I am

curious about the intersections between the essence of Brazilian jiu-jitsu and what is found in current literature on expressive and creative arts, as well as cultural and animal studies, and the quickly emerging fields of sports and somatic psychology.

Many somatic traditions and creative practices have been studied for their psychological impact, but the practice of martial arts has rarely been studied through the lens of Western psychology. Even rarer is a Jungian investigation of sport, which seems unusual considering that Jung himself was an avid athlete, as are many of his followers. In light of the explosion of interest in mind-body-spirit interrelatedness in psychology and the culture at large, it makes sense that the search for meaning in martial arts practices is important to the field of psychology as a whole. Helene Lorenz (1997) expands the description of depth psychology as follows:

Depth psychology is always about the pull of the future, about what has not yet found expression, experienced at the edge of current consciousness. It is itself a kind of third principle, looking for a path between memory and creativity, conformity and freedom, science and humanities, theory and practice, religious experience and mental illness. (p. 35)

The approach of this research is to deepen awareness of the experience of combat sports and introduce a broader understanding of the meanings of Brazilian jiu-jitsu from its founders and followers, in the process touching on the cultural aspects of its development. Further, this research investigates some of the experience of the wide variety of contemporary artists worldwide and seeks to unveil new contributions that might add to mind-body research.

Contemporary depth psychological traditions, originating from the theories of Jung and Freud, have begun to contribute to the foundation of an integrated mind-body approach for the study of psychic experience and humanness. In “The Body in Jung’s

Work: Basic Elements to Lay the Foundation for a Theory of Technique,” Andre Sassenfeld examined Jung’s central ideas regarding the body, and aimed to grant the body a larger place in Jungian clinical practice. In the midst of primarily quantitative approaches in mainstream psychology, the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century beginnings of analytical psychology and Jung’s initial attempt to include the body, although problematic, have withstood the test of time (Sassenfeld, 2008).

Although Jung’s basic conception of the body-mind problem suggests a fundamental interconnection of interdependence of both (Chodorow, 1995; Greene, 2001; Heuer, 2005; McNeely, 1987), through the mid and late 1900s the search for quantitative results in the areas of cognitive and behavioral psychology has dominated the field and until recently, creating most of our contemporary psychological thought. Different researchers have noted the lack of attention given to the body and to bodily experience that has historically prevailed in analytic psychology (Chodorow, 1995; Heuer, 2005; McNeely, 1987). Just as mainstream psychological traditions have been biased by the quantitative approach, “analytical psychology’s historical emphasis on the psychological side of the individual’s psychosomatic totality needs for completeness to be balanced with theoretical and practical knowledge regarding the patient’s bodily side” (Sassenfeld, 2008. p. 1). Although many Jungian clinicians have limited themselves when including the body and somatic experience in psychotherapeutic work and practical recommendations, specifically Jungian contributions regarding the body have seemed to increase in the last 2 decades (Sassenfeld, 2008).

In the midst of an emerging field of mind/body philosophy, depth psychological research has a responsibility to study disciplines such as martial arts and their

phenomena. Sassenfeld (2008) believes that many psychotherapists are of the opinion that therapeutic change is determined in great measure by implicit processes that are nonverbal and also not even conscious; without denying the relevance of better-known change mechanisms, such as making the unconscious conscious through verbal interpretations, researchers and therapists are emphasizing potential therapeutic action, moving toward transformation in implicit interactive processes. Because depth traditions are concerned with the “yet to be known” aspects of experience, and this investigation lends itself toward emphasizing the discovery of the unknown or latent function of psychological life (what is often called the unconscious), it is an ideal way to contribute to integrated research approaches and depth psychology as a whole. Chodorow (1995) thinks that Jung “had an instinctive grasp of movement as the primal means of expression and communication” (p. 392)

Overall, this research seeks to take on the topic of individuation and how the path of the martial artist might mirror the individuation process. Specifically relevant are Jung’s theory of the transcendent function and the question of whether a Brazilian jiu-jitsu practice can serve as a method, like active imagination, for working with the psychic elements of personal and collective development. Camilo Gallardo (2013) says,

Jung’s theory of individuation postulates that a person is pulled forward in a purposive way by the psyche and, as such, this was a central departure from the theories of Sigmund Freud, whose drive theory posited that a person’s life was largely determined by the push of early life events and traumas. (p. 1)

Ultimately this research seeks to find clues about the ongoing conversation between consciousness and unconsciousness. For Jung, “the answer obviously consists of getting rid of the separation between conscious and unconscious . . . it is called transcendent because it makes the transition from one attitude to another organically possible, without

loss of consciousness” (Jung, 1916/1959, p. 73 [*CW* 8]). This investigation seeks to offer reconciliation beyond things simply repressed, and create new questions with regard to transcendent possibilities in a nonconventional modality that may lead toward dynamic psychological development.

I am further interested in looking at the archetypal qualities of sports and how they might influence the potential for athletes to move into transcendent and peak experiences, along with the day-to-day, and long-term experiences that could create more subtle transcendent experiences. Contemporary sports psychology is usually concerned with experiences that relate to goal setting and maintaining performance and results. For depth psychology, there is a different emphasis that is placed more on the psychological development of each individual practitioner and how significant experiences might contribute to individuation.

On a much larger scale, the Jungian perspective is concerned with how potentially transformative experiences are interwoven along with the collective psyche. The individual experiences of martial artists are not always considered separate from the group. Brazilian jiu-jitsu is a team sport and cannot be practiced alone. In addition, the dojo (school) has always been considered a special learning environment, where family and communal principles and values are to be upheld at all costs, and each dojo has its own reputation as a whole. Because of these dynamics, there is a potential for this research to contribute not only to Jung’s theory of individuation, but it may also be considered from a collective point of view in order to determine social impact. I seek to understand how the current popularity of Brazilian jiu-jitsu reflects what is happening in

the collective psyche and why there is currently such enormous attention to it and participation in it.

The path of the Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioner could be considered an initiatory process where the immediate goals are to face transcendent experiences and the long-term goal would resemble individuation. Although new students are immediately faced with challenging situations, it takes many years to become accomplished at jiu-jitsu and many more years to receive a black belt. Murray Stein (2005) describes a two-fold process, where the separation and differentiation of analysis and the synthetic movement that builds up to the transcendent function work in conjunction toward individuation. “Out of this process emerges an identity based on conscious and unconscious, personal and cultural (as well as archetypal) images and contents” (p. 1).

Jung used the label *the transcendent function* to describe the method/process that occurs through the mediation of opposites. “Expressing itself by way of the symbol (body), it facilitates a transition from one psychological attitude or condition to another. . . . Jung considered the transcendent function to be the most significant factor in psychological process” (Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 1986, p. 150).

The “transcendent function” is the term that he used to describe the “factor” responsible for the (sometimes sudden) change in a person’s attitude that results when the opposites *can* be held in balance and which allows the person to see things in a new and more integrated way. (Douglas, 1997, p. 31)

Stein suggests that initiation and the unique psychic space required to foster its development play an important role in the individuation process, and emphasizes that the importance of understanding these principles has relevance for students and workers in many fields (2005). In a field that has not been studied by Jungians, this research addresses the important aspects of individuation, such as initiation and inquires about

potential archetypal experiences of the athlete and the related complexes that arise from them. I will ask questions not only related to outward symbols of individuation such as the black belt, but also seek to understand what happens internally during training and how this relates to development of the whole person.

In his 2004 exploration of the mythic dimension of sports, Phil Cousineau reminds us that the Greek model for the well-lived life reflected the desire to excel in mind, body, and soul. He recounts his first meeting with Joseph Campbell in 1984, who, as one of the most respected mythologists of the 20th century, contributed a great deal to the field of depth psychology. A lesser known fact about Joe is that in the 1920s he was one of the fastest half-mile runners in the world. Joe told Phil that he learned more in his years of running about what it takes to win and what it takes to lose, than from anything else. He said Maslow was always asking him about peak experiences, expecting him to talk about the mystics, but that he had to tell him about running.

Cousineau (2004) contends that athletes have not been encouraged to talk about their peak experiences, and that the current emphasis on mental life and winning biases the intellectual to the point of leaving out the body. This, he feels, is a grave disservice to the roots of competitive sport and play. When Campbell tells of his lifelong regret during the Olympic qualifiers, where he looked backwards and missed his time by a split second, Cousineau believes it is very possible and likely that Campbell's early notion of the descent into pain, struggle, and the courage it takes to endure (the descent of the hero's journey) came not from Jung and Freud, but from this death on the track (Cousineau, 2004).

Campbell told Cousineau that there was never a week that went by when he did not look back and remember that moment. Campbell loved this idea of moving back and forth between the life of the body and the life of the mind. He said the rapture of the deep struggles of your life and the trust in the body to move you through, how you deal with defeat was the measure of success. The thrill of playing sports, the beauty of the unscripted drama, and the unpredictable nature of the outcome prepares you for the life and death struggles to come (2004). These pivotal experiences and memories surely informed the great writings and influences that Campbell is best known for.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### Literature Relevant to the Topic

The main categories of focus for this research are the historical perspectives of martial arts and Brazilian jiu-jitsu, Jungian psychological theory and the philosophy, and phenomenology of sports. There is a great deal of literature available on these separate topics, and they each offer a different lens to view the notion of deep transformative potential of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. There is a very scarce amount of literature that makes specific connections between Brazilian jiu-jitsu and psychology and philosophy, per se. However, both qualitative and quantitative research exploring the relationship between the two is currently on the rise.

#### **Historical perspectives of martial arts and Brazilian jiu-jitsu.**

##### ***Introduction.***

The complete history of human combat is vast and certainly beyond the scope of this Literature Review.

Combat sports initially grew out of primal religious festivities, a replication (or evolution) of the dueling of males of all species during the annual spring mating rites. While such contests originated as bloody duels, people soon realized that killing or maiming their own warriors to determine suitable breeding stock was not in society's best interest. So rules were developed to prevent permanent injury or death and combat sports were differentiated from actual battle, in which, sadly, there are no rules and never have been. (Dervensis & Lykiardoppulos, 2005, p. vii)

In order to situate this investigation, it is important to note some origins of what is now called jiu-jitsu. Although jiu-jitsu itself would have been derived from a collectively shared set of human movements, practices and values, it was named to describe a specific set of fighting skills used for combat survival during the fragmented feudal era of Japan.

The term *jujitsu* was coined in the 17th century to identify a wide array of combat techniques, including a variety of grappling-related disciplines being practiced in Japan (Gracie, C., 2010). The techniques and practices themselves span a vast number of cultural contexts and timeframes since the practice is not limited to the region of Japan, but the naming of ju jitsu and/or jiu-jitsu comes directly from Japanese language.

In a modern sense, our understanding of jiu-jitsu, ju-jitsu, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu, is assumed to be embedded in their respective Japanese, and subsequently Brazilian, cultural contexts, all the while assuming that human expression of combat transcends cultural boundaries and time, as it is an essential aspect of human existence. “The way people fight is as intrinsic to their culture as the way they think, the way they love or what they eat” (Burdick, 1999, p. 1).

#### ***Roots of jiu-jitsu and judo.***

The evolution of jiu-jitsu and judo into more than a fighting lifestyle reserved only for samurai coincided with revolutionary changes in Japanese society and the impact of industrialization and the Meiji Restoration. Further, and a bit later, jiu-jitsu came into the different form of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, and continues to evolve around the globe. Jiu-jitsu is commonly viewed by its proponents as being filled with individual and collective potential for health, well-being, and a strong philosophy to live by (Gracie, C., 2010).

In contrast to the earlier and more militaristic style of Asian martial arts, this research is specifically concerned with the playful and familial nature that developed within Brazilian jiu-jitsu, in the midst of such practical and intense self-defense training. In the early 1900s, the beginnings of a martial arts dynasty were forming in Brazil. Carlos Gracie, Sr. “envisioned Brazilian jiu-jitsu as a powerful method for the betterment of the

individual and passed on this tradition to others in his family” (Gracie, C., 2010, p. 12). Gracie had at least 20 children between 1932 and 1963 (Gracie USA, 1996) with the main intention of furthering the art of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. At the age of 14, Gracie was originally taught the art of jiu-jitsu by Count Koma (Mitsuyo Maeda), a world-renowned “no rules” fighter who had settled in Northeastern Brazil to help form a Japanese colony.

Mitsuyo Maeda was a champion student of Jigoro Kano (1860-1938). Kano is revered in Japan as an innovator, who spent most of his life developing an educational versus a martial style of tactical training he called judo. Kano’s influence triggered a new era for martial arts training after the feudal system in Japan was abolished during the Meiji restoration (1868-1912). As a fighting system, jiu-jitsu had flourished during feudal Japan and remained part of the martial government through the Edo period (1603-1868), which was run by shoguns (Gracie, C., 2010).

Jiu-jitsu proponents assert that ground grappling is nearly always the natural outcome of a physical altercation, whether planned or unplanned. Modern instruction is focused primarily on self-defense and competition, fitness and fun. A sportive side in competition has become more concerned with aesthetics than ever before and involves a rather complicated point system that only very seasoned practitioners understand well. That said, the basic tenets of modern Brazilian jiu-jitsu self-defense instruction, in the following order of priority, remain the foundation of the training: to avoid, neutralize, subdue, control in order to flee, and submit using a joint lock or choke as a last resort.

These principals and techniques are taught in the midst of an insistence of having fun, developing health and balance in all areas of life, and with great focus on the social values of loyalty, teamwork, and camaraderie among all beings. Ironically, jiu-jitsu often

has an animal-like ferocity coupled with a subsequent playful quality, and like the fight/play behavior of animals, it is perhaps as old as human existence, and as such, not necessarily culturally bound or determined. Instead, jiu-jitsu, as a creative art, may be an expression of the cultural context where it is situated. In its earlier forms, Japanese jiu-jitsu originally encompassed brutal tactics, including rogue movements, such as eye gouging, and fishhooks, but these unrefined techniques and weapons, obviously not practical outside of human combat, are mentioned as possible self-defense necessities, but not practiced with training partners (T. Reusing, personal communication, March 10, 2013).

Just as the earlier forms of jiu-jitsu were utilized in battle (this is not to say that modern jiu-jitsu is not still being practiced by military and law enforcement worldwide), the modern refined form of jiu-jitsu is based primarily on the principle of using momentum and leverage in order to achieve a dominant position over an opponent. In a self-defense situation, if a dominant position does not resolve or remedy a conflict or altercation, then the jiu-jitsu practitioner will proceed to apply a submission in order to protect himself.

Submissions are carried out in the form of a choke or joint lock where an opponent is given the opportunity to give up, by saying the word *tap*, or by tapping with the hand. In the event of a real self-defense situation, an attacker might not be given the opportunity to “tap out,” and instead, end up unconscious or with a broken bone. In sport competition and during instruction, the less advanced player taps out, or submits to a partner, before any injury results. Although it may initially sound very aggressive, jiu-jitsu is in large part a defensive art. It is primarily based on utilizing the maximum

efficiency of one's own, as well as a partner's, energy, and requires mental capabilities of cunning and memory, such as those used in playing chess (Reusing, 2007). In summary, Brazilian jiu-jitsu is widely taught to the military and police as an effective hand-to-hand combat system, as a self-defense method to the general population, and is practiced for sport competition, basic fitness, and as a family activity to all skill levels and age groups, worldwide. The key principles of momentum and leverage, so paramount to the jiu-jitsu practitioner, are very psychological ideas. On a deeper level, these principles, as they apply to jiu-jitsu, are being brought forward as a metaphor for human leadership and change and an opportunity to discuss how they can be applied in other areas.

Individual and social change has been intertwined with the early developments of judo in Japan and Brazilian jiu-jitsu in Brazil. Although it is beyond the scope of this research, it is important to note that political and social influences have contributed in large part to the offering of martial arts training to the general population. In the late 1800s, Kano became a powerful organizer in Japan, and although he was concerned with differentiating the most effective methods of fighting, and called upon schools from various regions to test their techniques, he was most concerned with the development of the whole human being. "Kano understood how jiu-jitsu (judo) could serve not only as a combat tool, but also as an effective way to educate the individual and allow men and women to embrace a more balanced lifestyle by developing their potential" (Gracie, C., 2010, p. 17). His contributions led the practice of martial arts in Japan into a new era, widening the possibilities for combat training to be used in the education and development of individuals.

Kano was also instrumental in judo becoming the first official martial art in the Olympics in 1964 (1992 for women). This achievement represents an ironic twist in Olympic history, since the original Olympic Games would have included contests of the disciplines used in warfare. Judo, Kano's derivative of Japanese jiu-jitsu, is still only one of two martial arts styles (other than wrestling, which is also essentially a combat sport) officially present in the Olympic Games, the other being tae kwon do. One could say that Kano's work reanimated the human psyche with the forms of human combat in a new way, one that revealed that a martial arts practice could transform an individual in a humane, creative, and spirited manner. He is also responsible for transforming the educational system in Japan. Still today, Japanese high school students are required to take 4 years of either judo or kendo training, and as a result, Kano is revered as one of the greatest reformers of education in Japan (Reusing, 2007).

***The birth of Brazilian jiu-jitsu.***

In the early 1900s, the beginnings of a martial arts dynasty were forming in Brazil. Carlos Gracie, Sr. "envisioned Brazilian jiu-jitsu as a powerful method for the betterment of the individual and passed on this tradition to others in his family (Gracie, C., 2010, p. 12). Perhaps no one other than Carlos Gracie, Sr. would have guessed that these early beginning would evolve into what is currently being considered one of the fastest growing sports in the world. Carlos Gracie had at least 20 children between 1932 and 1963 (Gracie USA, 1996), with the main intention of furthering his art.

The roots of the Gracie family in South America began in 1801, when a Scottish immigrant, George Gracie moved to the state of Para in northeastern Brazil. There he and his family lived for many years. In the early 1900s, a Japanese immigrant by the

name of Mitsuyo Maeda moved to the same area. The Japanese government was eager to form a colony in Brazil, and Maeda was there to help the colony prosper. In addition to his political skills, Maeda was a former champion in the Japanese art of jiu-jitsu, and he began teaching lessons in Brazil, hoping to pass on the tradition. He became close friends with Gastao Gracie, the grandson of George Gracie (Gracie, C., 2010). Gastao was a prominent businessman and politician, and used his influence to help Maeda and the Japanese colony and in return, Maeda offered to teach jiu-jitsu to Gastao's son Carlos, who was an unruly 14-year-old when he started the lessons.

Mitsuyo Maeda, who was also Jigoro Kano's former student, taught the young Carlos Gracie the fighting styles of jiu-jitsu, judo, and also many other techniques that he had learned abroad. Maeda had travelled extensively and participated in a great many fighting styles. When the training between Maeda and the young Gracie began, the transformative momentum that ultimately led to the creation of Gracie jiu-jitsu (or Brazilian jiu-jitsu) was set into motion.

It was with the hope for personal growth and transformation for his son that Carlos Gracie, Sr.'s father, Gastao, had approached Mitsuyo Maeda for help. According to Carlos Gracie, Jr., his father, "became an avid student . . . the studies under Maeda had a profound impact on the mind of that young man. He never before had sensed that level of self-control and self-confidence that Jiu-Jitsu practice allowed him to experience" (2010, p. 19). After being sent to the master by his parents with the hope that his rebelliousness would be tempered, he studied with Maeda for about 5 years, and found "a sense of peace that he never felt before" (Gracie, C., 2010, p. 19).

These early years of traditional martial arts training led to the creation of the first Gracie Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu School in Rio de Janeiro in 1925. The academy was run by Carlos, Sr. and his four younger brothers, and quickly became an enormous success. Although the early beginnings of the Gracie story are embedded in the traditions and techniques that were originally transmitted from Mitsuyo Maeda, the decades that followed carried many characteristics that were obviously specific to Brazilian culture and the characteristics of the Gracie's themselves. In essence, they spent decades of their lives, and several generations to make jiu-jitsu their own, so to speak. Maeda was able to help transform young Carlos Gracie by teaching him the Kodokan judo he learned in Japan, as well as the innovations he had developed through his own heritage and experiences travelling abroad. When young Carlos was in turn able to teach his brothers, innovations were born and a family tradition of training for self-defense, enjoyment, and competition was begun.

Although several of the first generation of Gracie brothers made their own valuable contributions, today, the most well-known of these is Helio Gracie. He was a very small, frail boy who eventually became a champion "no rules" fighter. He also had nine of his own children who have brought much fame and success to the Gracie name. Most notably, Helio's eldest son, Rorian, moved to the United States in the 1990s and founded the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), which is the longest running, most successful mixed martial arts (MMA) promoter in the world ("UFC," n.d.). Rickson, Royce, and Royler are also very well known for their championship titles, teaching, and proliferation of the art of Gracie jiu-jitsu.

Carlos, Sr. had seven brothers and sisters, but it was he and his brother Helio who had between them at least 29 children. Of these and their numerous offspring, a great many became champion fighters, practitioners, and teachers of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. The third generation brought many Gracie schools to the forefront. Their primary concern was with teaching self-defense to members of the community, and emphasis became uniquely focused on achieving personal safety, with the ultimate goal of avoiding altercations. If unavoidable, then one could be confident in defending him-or herself if proficient in Gracie jiu-jitsu. The assumption in Gracie jiu-jitsu has always been that most altercations or attacks will end up on the ground, although stand-up self-defense was always part of the curriculum as well.

For the better part of the 20th century, the Gracie brothers and cousins have utilized a style that emphasized ground techniques that were embedded in Japanese judo/ju jitsu forms, but their own creative forms based on practical application have evolved over time. During those same decades, judo was developing in Japan and worldwide as an Olympic sport for both men and women. The emphasis in judo has become primarily focused on throwing techniques from standing, making it possible to win a match with one fully executed throw.

This represents an irony where an inversely-proportional relationship was developing with emphasis on groundwork in Brazilian jiu-jitsu forms, and an emphasis on stand-up and throwing technique in Olympic-style judo. As the second generation of Gracie men came to adulthood in the mid-1900s, their style became very competitive in Brazil, which called out many challenge matches from fighters in Asia and other countries. A great deal of attention was brought to the Gracie family, and a keen interest

in their grappling finesse developed as a result of their overarching success in competition.

The Gracie family is heavily responsible for the revival of interest in ground grappling techniques. Although judo schools have taught ground techniques (*newaza*) in their curriculum, and some even specialize in these, they pale in comparison to the techniques of the Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioner, who has emphasized and refined grappling to a new level. Currently, there is a movement to revive the ground techniques in judo practice. This is a direct result of the success of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, and although judo includes them in the original teachings, they do not have the sharply-focused and highly skilled ground grappling results that the Gracie teachings have evolved to be over a century of highly skilled exclusive focus.

The Gracie's developed rule systems based on what they believed would occur in a real fight or self-defense situation. Their beliefs that specific body movements and positioning mimic a real altercation led to the invention of a point system that is used in competition. The development of the competitive phase of Gracie jiu-jitsu brought worldwide success and fame to many family members, and began the process of unveiling the secrets of success they had developed. It also brought new levels of dissention within the family that are common when business endeavors bring financial success.

In the last few decades, several milestones have taken place:

1. In 1994, Carlos Gracie, Jr. (son and namesake of Carlos Gracie, Sr.) was instrumental in organizing the first Brazilian Nationals Championships and established Brazilian jiu-jitsu as a national sport.

2. Carlos Gracie, Jr. founded the International Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation and *Confederacao Brasileira de Jiu-Jitsu* (Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Confederation), which were established to officially represent the sport of Brazilian jiu-jitsu around the world. Its main goals are to popularize, organize and regulate the sport on an international level.
3. Although there are many organized associations and schools worldwide, Carlos Gracie, Jr. as the head of Gracie Barra, convened the largest and most organized group of athletes and instructors under one name. Carlos, Jr. has personally managed to oversee the opening of over 400 schools internationally to date (Gracie, C., 2010). Many of these are home to instructors who grew up and studied in Brazil, and have now relocated in order to fulfill a life's work of teaching jiu-jitsu.

***Renzo Gracie—A modern legacy.***

Renzo Gracie is the grandson of Carlos Gracie, Sr., and is one of the most prominent of the Gracie MMA fighters in recent decades, who also runs several successful schools in North America, with affiliates around the world. He is the subject of the documentary, *Legacy* (Aldous, 2008), featured at the Ventura Film Festival in 2010. He is the nephew of Carlos Gracie, Jr., and one of the most well-known, loved, and respected of all the Gracie family members.

Although Renzo is a fierce fighter, he presents himself as a man among men, expressing a genuine authenticity and humility. It is possibly because he learned to speak English a bit earlier than some of his family members that his voice has become more accessible in the United States and abroad. His infectious grin on the cover of *Legacy*

beckons us to join in the fun, while he stands as a bare-chested warrior, making a fist, always ready to fight. When you watch Renzo and hear him speak of his family, you cannot help falling in love with his zest for life.

Perhaps the most powerful story Renzo reveals in the documentary (Aldous, 2008) is about his mentor and father, Robson. He says his father was known as the wild one of the family. In his early years, Robson was involved in the fight against the Brazilian military, and was one of 200 revolutionaries trying to overthrow them. After 3 months of torture he became the only one who was set free. All of the others were killed. He was the only one who was spared because one of his jiu-jitsu students was a high-ranking military official and pleaded for Robson to be spared (Aldous, 2008).

Renzo says that his father did not talk about the experiences very much, but that one time he asked him about it because he knew that his father overheard the torture of his comrades every day. When Renzo asked him if people would talk, he said yes, and then stared at him saying, “But there are people who will never talk. There are those who never fold. No matter how much they were beaten they never told.” Renzo says that he saw so much admiration in his father’s eyes for those men. “On that day, he made me one of those men. He made me believe that what you believe is the only thing that is important” (Aldous, 2008). Renzo’s father immortalized the courage of his fellow political heroes, inspiring his son to live by a similar code.

Later in the documentary, when Renzo introduces his parents, Robson, who is in his later years says,

Life rewarded me when it gave me a son like you. It is better than if I was a millionaire. What matters in life more so than money is to be happy, to appreciate the friends around you? There are many types of riches but when I am old I will remember because I have all my children. (Aldous, 2008).

As modern day warriors, Renzo Gracie and his father exude the qualities of courage, loyalty, and gratitude. There are a handful of Gracie men who became famous for their success in fighting challenge matches over time, and in the 1990s this came to the forefront, when Renzo's cousins, Royce and Rickson, became very well-known fighters. Always in the background were deeply rooted themes of courage, family, and gratitude; characteristics that many curious martial arts enthusiasts and athletes would come to realize as a very traditional part of studying Gracie jiu-jitsu. There was a very strong emphasis on loyalty, often to the point of secrecy with regard to the techniques, which drew in many seekers to become a part of a very exclusive group of practitioners; the first generation of non-Brazilian people to be taught the specialized version of jiu-jitsu honed and shaped by the Gracie's. This era of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, especially the years prior to the Internet and YouTube, where the teachings of Brazilian jiu-jitsu were first being spread across the United States and to other continents, was one that was steeped in tradition, hierarchy, and many years of rigorous training for all involved. It decisively precluded advancement and recognition through achievement of a blue, purple, or brown belt, and most of all, the coveted black belt. Prior to 2000, there were only a small number of dedicated practitioners who could claim this award.

### ***Brazilian jiu-jitsu and MMA.***

Today, Brazilian jiu-jitsu (Gracie jiu-jitsu) is a relatively common concept, and it is collectively agreed upon that the success of the modern mixed martial arts movement began when Rorian Gracie (founder of the UFC) created a multimedia environment where Gracie jiu-jitsu developed a wider audience and provided a testing ground for its efficacy. After multiple displays of technique and impressive victories over larger,

experienced athletes, the Gracie family fighters suddenly had the world's attention, and the dawn of mixed martial arts (originally, no rules fighting) was on the horizon. "Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) is an emerging sport where competitors in a ring or cage utilize strikes (punches, kicks, elbows, and knees) as well as submission techniques to defeat opponents" (Spencer, 2009, p. 1).

Dale Spencer is one of the first to produce phenomenological research on MMA and he gives a complete description of the development of the rules that made television viewing possible, explaining how MMA has become viewed as an actual sport. Spencer does not credit as much of MMA's development to Brazilian jiu-jitsu athletes, namely the Gracies, as most writers (2009). *No rules fighting* has always been around, but in the early UFCs of 1993 and 1994, when Royce Gracie consistently defeated opponents all larger than himself by using a jiu-jitsu submission technique, he revolutionized the popularity of MMA.

Mixed martial arts is a modern phenomenon, creating a stage where athletes from all backgrounds and traditions come together in the spirit of fierce competition. It is a movement now largely overtaken by commercialism, and as of 2013, is now a setting where women have broken into the action. From television viewership, to press coverage, to record crowds at events, the numbers reveal enormous growth:

- The annual percentage growth of Pay per View (PPV) buys increased from 47% in 2004 (over 2003) to 189% in 2005 to 352% in 2006.
- Gross revenues of PPV events had annual increases of 47% in 2004, 232% in 2005, and 424% in 2006. (MMAFacts, 2010)

Although pay-per-view revenue has not enjoyed the same growth rate in recent years, the UFC continues to penetrate market share and reach more audiences through multiple

lines of product development, including television shows, clothing lines, fitness gyms and much more. UFC programming is shown in 130 countries worldwide, and the UFC plans to continue expanding internationally ("UFC," n.d.). The growth and impact of Brazilian jiu-jitsu and MMA have in many ways taken two separate paths, with the growth of Brazilian jiu-jitsu taking a much less sensationalized and more traditional path. They remain intertwined, and both represent social phenomena and an impact on society that is in its earliest phase of being looked at through an academic lens, as more students become interested in studying the effects of popular sports.

There are a great many texts written on jiu-jitsu technique that include useful, though not extensive, introductory chapters on history and philosophy. This includes, *Mastering Ju Jitsu* (Gracie & Danaher, 2003), which teaches a systematic approach for studying the ancient, but ever-changing, art of jiu-jitsu. The editors argue that their approach avoids the stagnation and repetition found in many modern jiu-jitsu books. The purpose of the collection is to assist athletes in their understanding of the historical roots of Brazilian ju-jitsu and appreciate the unique contributions made by the founding Gracie family members. This source investigated historical and cultural aspects that are still difficult to research in English, because much of the literature is in Portuguese, and encourages a deeper perspective than most current texts on the topic of Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

Kid Peligro is one of the original writers to take on the task of recording and archiving the story of the Gracie family. In *The Gracie Way* (2003), he attempts to illustrate the history and journey of the Gracie family during the last 100 years. He seeks to illustrate the development of the Gracie style from the inside out in a thoughtful

manner. Further, Peligro discusses the transformative nature of jiu-jitsu from a collective perspective.

Jiu-jitsu was developed by Carlos Gracie, Sr. and his brothers, in the early decades of the 20th century, in Rio de Janeiro during a “time when it was considered a crime against the nation for a Japanese national to teach jiu-jitsu to a non-Japanese” (Peligro, 2003, p. 5). Carlos and his brothers spent their lives developing the technical leveraging aspects of their martial artistry, and focused heavily on the philosophical implications of personal and communal development that their way of life modeled. In the past two decades, this heritage of the Gracie family has spread across the United States and abroad, making Brazilian jiu-jitsu a heavily sought after training for men, women, and children. It is considered by many to be the fastest growing martial art and one of the fastest growing sports in the world (Peligro, 2003).

### ***Women in Brazilian jiu-jitsu.***

The art of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, like many martial art styles, has been utilized by women for self-defense training. An article from 1905 tells an interesting story about classes developing around Washington, DC. Theodore and Kermit Roosevelt were studying jiu-jitsu, and some of the women got together to learn it so that they could challenge him. The story was told about a petite Japanese woman throwing a large man with perfect ease, and subsequently clinching him with a series of locks that encouraged him to tap the ground in defeat (Bowen, 1905).

Although the history of a few women learning jiu-jitsu exists, the majority of its development and also the explosion of interest in the United States since the late 1980s has been heavily dominated by men. Brazilian jiu-jitsu as a sport, personal martial art

philosophy, or technology of self-defense has yet to see the full participation of American women. Todd Hester (2006), a prolific writer in the field, says,

Jiu-jitsu for women has not even scratched the surface and I think that once more women learn about what a great workout it is, you'll see an explosion of interest. Not only can women get in shape, but it is the only martial art that I think a woman can genuinely use against a man and have a realistic chance of defending herself. (p.1)

Although women are not specifically excluded; the classes, tournaments, and literature have been primarily directed toward men, and female participation has been minimal. In recent years, this has been changing very quickly.

This research seeks to bring focus to feminine and masculine dynamics in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, addressing vital questions about the marginalized. When I began training in 2005, I was often the only woman in the class. After years of being urged by my husband to train, and finally committing to go to classes, I unexpectedly found myself working through the issues of being a female in a male dominated sport for the first time in my life (Reusing, 2006). Although I have witnessed enormous growth and respect for the female presence in jiu-jitsu since then, I am concerned with questions that Paulo Friere (1989) asked, such as, "Whose voice is not being heard in the dominant paradigm? How does the dominant paradigm oppress the marginalized? How can the oppressed awaken their consciousness to the state of their oppression?" I have further become concerned with the voice of the marginalized and the dynamics of the dominant paradigm. I wondered if and how the dominant paradigm oppresses the marginalized and how the oppressed can awaken their consciousness to the state of their oppression.

Through my own study of women's lived experience in Brazilian jiu-jitsu (Reusing, 2006), I found that women were often not gaining interest, acceptance, and

success in their training. Although some women had not encountered problems and were encouraged by their teammates and coaches, other women had troubling experiences ranging from sexually offensive to extremely aggressive. I also learned that a major shift that was taking place where male Gracie leaders were beginning to take a new interest in feminine participation.

Several years ago, when women's jiu-jitsu in the United States was still very scant, family leader Rickson Gracie spoke on the development of women's categories in competition, saying, "It was another important part of the sport and has been gaining a lot of room. The technical level of women is constantly evolving" (Feitosa, 2006). This statement came from one of the most revered family champions at a time when women were barely beginning to achieve a noticeable presence in schools and in competitions, and reveals a huge change in attitude about women's training. Rickson Gracie's school was at one time known to have turned women away from participating (K. Shaw, personal communication, March 2, 2013), and this new attitude marks a pivotal turning point in the thinking around women's participation in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, and a change in perspective from one of its greatest patriarchal figures. The issues of how to include females in a combat sport, especially one with very close contact, are extremely complicated.

The research on women in martial arts is scant, but one intriguing investigation of female athletes found that objectification is one explanation as to why more girls drop out of sports during adolescents. The researchers found it to be a barrier to participation and sought to "educate students about ways in which bodily objectification and the social construction of femininity interfere with women's participation in sports and other

activities that are beneficial to their physical and mental health” (Scott & Derry, 2005, p. 188). It has also been shown that “a strong relationship is demonstrated between attributes of leadership and attributes developed through somatic and embodiment practices” (Macelveen-Ryan, 1998, p. 6281). I assume this area of study would yield varied results across different types of sports and various cultural contexts, but in jiu-jitsu this rang true for me, personally, and many of the other women I interviewed. Although some very driven women stated that they did not pay attention to gender differences in their training, many others expressed a multitude of issues they had concerns about. Many more had left jiu-jitsu or did not want to try it because of their fear of getting hurt, or lack of trust in a situation where there is such close contact (Reusing, 2006).

During many of my early experiences in Brazilian jiu-jitsu as a minority, I felt a deep respect for my female teammates and especially for those pioneers who were willing to train in a male dominated sport. I also felt an appreciation for the men who had been supportive and compassion for those who had struggled with the male/female dynamics. The amount of memoir available online, where female practitioners have told their stories of training, has exploded in recent years, and is a relatively deep look into the experiences, struggles, and triumphs of female athletes.

A new breed of female athletes has emerged in recent years and they are inspired by women in combat sports who describe themselves as facing their life’s struggles through fighting. Ronda Jean Rousey is an American mixed martial artist and judo practitioner. As of 2013, “she is the first and current UFC Women's Bantamweight Champion, as well as the former Strikeforce Women's Bantamweight Champion” (“Rousey,” n.d.). In Ronda’s own words,

I've been through so much that there isn't much left that can scare me. I've felt the most pain that I could feel, and I've felt the most pressure that I could feel and there's nothing else left. And I believe that I'm capable of doing anything. (n.d.).

Antonia Darder is an internationally recognized scholar, artist, poet, activist, and public intellectual and recipient of multiple fellowships and social justice awards. She speaks of “the notion of love and its manifestation in our work and lives” (2003, p. 497). As the author of the award winning, *Teaching as an Act of Love: Reflections on Paulo Friere and His Contributions to Our Lives and Work*, Darder asserts that the kind of love Freire lived and taught was not about endless streams of unconditional acceptance, but is a love that is unstricted and “rooted in a committed willingness to struggle persistently with purpose in our life and to intimately connect that purpose with what he called our ‘true vocation’—to be human” (2003, p. 498). Darder further explains that Friere was most concerned with “challenging fears with which our dreams of freedom are controlled and ‘false consciousness’ that diminishes our social agency” (2003, p. 499). Modern women participating in combat sports seem to represent this sort of assertion of freedom on a very biological level. They have managed to utilize an ancient art that is not inherently based on size and strength, but more often utilizes embodied physical mechanics, coupled with mental cunning and cleverness to outperform, outwit, and outshine the dominant paradigm of male participation in jiu-jitsu.

To my knowledge, there have not been any formal academic psychological or philosophical investigations into female participation in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. In my Review of the Literature, I came across an interesting study on the martial art-dance-game called Capoeira. In “Transgressing Boundaries and Crossing Boundaries” (Joseph, 2005), investigators looked into the phenomenon of female capoeiristas. This style was

originally exclusive to male African slaves in Brazil. Its clandestine practice was a form of cultural celebration and self-defense. In Brazilian society, women are educated less, paid less, and suffer more disease and violence than men. The study found that when women play Capoeira, they defy patriarchy, racial oppression and gender constraints (Joseph, 2005).

The capoeira study investigates an embodied form of social transgression, and jiu-jitsu goes one step further by adding the actual possibility of physical transgression. Because the practice of jiu-jitsu is so immediate, and its effectiveness creates potential for women to dominate men in a fighting style, it opens the door to a very dynamic form of transgression in almost any culture or community where it is practiced.

From the moment you start, you're already rolling around on the mat and learning how to defend yourself. In kung-fu and kenpo you spend most of your time mimicking the movements of animals and the fighting or practical part of it comes much, much later. With jiu-jitsu you're learning how to defend yourself from the very first day. (Hester, 2006, p.1)

Women's training in jiu-jitsu is creating some very interesting male/female dynamics in martial arts, sports at large, and self-defense theory, and the emerging presence of women in the sport continues to make a significant impact of how it develops and its individual and collective impact. Female participation in combat sports is likely to become an area of focus for researchers, and is already contributing to the social fabric of a great many cultures, including the ultra-patriarchal environments of Arabic countries, especially in the last 10 years.

## **The psychology of jiu-jitsu.**

### ***Introduction.***

With and without regard to gender, several psychological studies have been conducted to measure connections between, and the efficacy of, various martial arts and effects, such as weight control, self-esteem, and anger management. These studies have varied results and are rather problematic since the measures might need additional time and/or controls to achieve valid results.

Even fewer articles specific to jiu-jitsu and psychology exist, although the Internet is teeming with anecdotal stories and examples that illustrate a great potential for this particular martial art to impact people's lives in positive ways. For example, *The New York Times* ran an article on the efforts of a Louisiana resident, Brett Hughes, to relieve himself of the stress inflicted by Hurricane Katrina. To get rid of stress, Hughes, who works as a detective with the sheriff's office in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana in the daytime, conducts training classes on Brazilian jiu-jitsu at night (Eaton, 2007, p. A9). These types of stories are prolific, and lean in the direction of possible uses for jiu-jitsu training with a variety of populations and circumstances.

### ***Jungian individual constructs.***

In order to take a truly authentic psychological look at the practice of jiu-jitsu using a depth psychological lens, the core concepts of the psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung will be reviewed to see how the study of the body lends itself well toward emphasizing the unconscious, the unknown, or latent foundation of psychological life. It is the process of becoming aware of oneself, or of discovering one's true inner self, known as individuation, that is the *sine qua non* of health and well-being in Jungian theory. It is

also the way to become a generative member of society. This research is concerned with looking at the archetypal, or ideally potent, qualities of sports, and the potential for athletes to move into the transcendent experiences that can lead toward individuation. Jung called this “the function that mediates opposites. Expressing itself by way of the symbol, it facilitates a transition from one psychological attitude or condition to another. Jung considered the transcendent function to be the most significant factor in psychological process” (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 150).

Jung described the transcendent function as the universal problem of coming to terms with the unconscious, and analysis as developing a continual readjustment of attitude where man’s difficulties are necessary for health, and where the constant flow of life demands fresh adaptation (Jung, 1916/1959, p. 67 [*CW* 8]). In other words, Jung leads us to believe that it is often the new and unanticipated experiences that occur in challenging situations that are necessary for personal growth. Whether in traditional therapy or in a martial art practice, the process of reflection and continuous adaptation, according to Jung, will be what drives personal growth forward. In order to develop methods for reflection, Jungian analysts turn to a variety of contexts to work with potentially unconscious material. Camilo Gallardo lists experiences that he says Jung considered for gathering unconscious content. In short, they are slips of the tongue; spontaneous fantasies; active imagination; special types of drawing, sculpture, and painting; word association tests; and expressing the mood through bodily movement (2013)

Jiu-jitsu, by the nature of its techniques and practices, is an activity always leading toward a reflective/adaptive paradigm. At its roots lie a variety of “opposites,”

but perhaps the most well-known is the dominant/submissive outcome that is definitive, but only in the moment. Because the outcome may be reversed in the next match or event, every player, team, and organization is charged with constant reorientation to the extremes of winning and losing, dominating and submitting.

This lends itself well to Jung's theory that through our encounters with the opposites, with winning, then losing and being the best, and then not, the partition between conscious and unconscious contents can become more permeable in a way that is useful to psychological growth, namely as a tool for individuation. He says, "The psychological 'transcendent function' arises from the union of conscious and unconscious contents" (Jung, 1916/1959, p. 69 [CW 8]). It is through these experiences, oftentimes unplanned and often unwelcomed at first, that a patient or in this case, a practitioner, would be confronted with unconscious contents. Gallardo wrote that the lack of parallelism is not accidental and purposeless, but more like a necessity to personal growth. Since the unconscious behaves in a compensatory or complementary manner towards consciousness, it challenges the ego.

The transcendent function, Gallardo (2013) says, "is both natural (instinctive) and can be prompted or assisted (developed). The two aspects can occur together, sometimes independently, and sometimes in rhythm with each other" (n.p.)

The "transcendent function" is the term that he used to describe the "factor" responsible for the (sometimes sudden) change in a person's attitude that results when the opposites *can* be held in balance and which allows the person to see things in a new and more integrated way. (Douglas, 1997, p. 31)

My research will take a depth approach toward inquiring into the archetypal experiences of the body as symbol of the athlete, and the related personal complexes that arise out of them. It will ask what is happening to the body during training, and how the

psychology of the individual is intertwined with archetypal experiences. The body is not only the vessel but also the symbol for transformation.

To Jung, archetypes were “innate neuropsychic centres possessing the capacity to initiate, control and mediate the common behavioral characteristics and typical experiences of all human beings irrespective of race, culture or creed” (Stevens, 1983, p. 296). Archetypes such as the shadow, Self, anima and animus (interior feminine and masculine), the hero, warrior, and teacher are of particular importance in the study of martial arts.

Active imagination was frequently used by Jung to coax material from the unconscious (Gallardo, 2013), and it has often been the method of choice among traditional Jungian analysts for working with unconscious material, but in recent decades, working with the body through the use of embodied practices such as authentic movement, yoga, tai chi, and dance has become very popular in therapeutic settings. Somatic psychology simply involves psychological approaches that focus significantly on the role of the body. It is a fairly recent term for a branch of psychology that has been present since the inception of psychology (Aposhyan, 2004).

As stated by Gallardo, somatic studies have become much more common amongst Jungian analysts. The work of Marion Woodman, who has crafted her life’s work around bringing the body to the forefront in theory and practice, offers a large contribution to the field. She quotes the Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who prefigured the psychology of Jung and called the body, “the whole soul of man in activity” (Engell & Bate, 1983, pp. 15–16).

The question that must be asked and is asked, is: What is it that we perceive?  
And What is the body? My approach to this question, which I do not treat as an

answer, lies in my engagement with the Jungian, as distinct from the Freudian, notion of the unconscious as the source of consciousness, rather than its abjection, which is to say what consciousness rejects . . . my work is in celebrating the body. (Woodman, 2008, p. 120)

With the emergence of the interest in the body in Jungian psychology and somatic psychology, and interest in the use and efficacy of various embodied practices such as yoga and the others, there is a need to work on the area of martial arts to develop the literature and experience to move forward to weave together a working knowledge that can contribute to the practice, especially since it has experienced such a fast growth rate in recent years.

### *Ego development.*

The immediate experience between two people in Brazilian jiu-jitsu impacts an individual's sense of self and the experiences within a class, team, or school further define identity. Jiu-jitsu is known for its effectiveness, and because it is based on positions and submissions, the advanced artist, like an accomplished chess player or musician, has the advantage over less-experienced players, although what normally occurs in a school setting is that the higher ranks help newer students. Even with these parameters, live sparring occurs between a variety of ranks where players demonstrate their ability, therefore dominating and submitting each other with choke holds and joint locks. Although this may sound barbaric to some, because of its purity and the lack of physical space between opponents, there is an intimacy and playfulness mixed with intense competition that occurs during sparring.

The Brazilian jiu-jitsu academy is an environment where these dynamics are being played out every day. Long term training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu involves a mind-

body stamina displaying the ability to withstand constant pressure to one's ego. It consists of live training with full resistance and is based on completely dominant/submissive positions and submissions. The advanced artist has had thousands of opportunities to dominate and submit. These practices are very refined and create a pure and immediate opportunity for psychic growth since there is a constant challenge to the ego. These intensely pressurized dynamics occur in small doses for the new beginner and there is a lot of time spent training for fun, with a low level of competition, in order to make the art enjoyable. It is the long-term player who has the most experience with the challenges to the ego and subsequent psychic development, or occasionally lack thereof.

These immediate, intense, and ongoing experiences can be capitalized on from a psychological lens because they pose a constant confrontation for the ego. Although classmates do not regularly render each other unconscious, they learn chokes and are capable of doing so if the partner does not submit. The ego is faced with this constant threat and dramatic psychic rupture is never very far. It can occur if someone stubbornly refuses to submit, and does occur just from tapping out, or admitting defeat. Joint lock submissions offer a similar opportunity for ego deflation/ego inflation, depending on who is the victor. One must submit in order to avoid injury.

These experiences create an opportunity for the jiu-jitsu player to develop healthy ego constructs and a strong ego-self axis over time, because the inflating/deflating experiences always need to be reframed as lessons, instead of final wins and losses, in order to stay in the sport. This is achieved in part by developing finesse with navigating

the experiences of submitting and dominating, winning and losing, on a regular and constant basis, and developing camaraderie in the midst of such definitive competition.

There is always a potential for ego inflation and deflation, and hence, the opportunity to create healthy ego constructs and a strong ego-self axis over time. Jung believed that complexes manifest as incompatible, unassimilated conflicts through interaction with archetypal patterns or structures. Working with and through these personal complexes represents a psychological and spiritual life long endeavor. In jiu-jitsu training, one can see how these complexes are also raised through the body in an archetypally physiological way. They are sometimes described as energy fields, or *nodal points*, that are the driving force of transformative psychic processes. They assist with the process of transformation.

Through these psychic experiences in jiu-jitsu training, we can simply learn to embody what is learned on the mat and use these same lessons in our daily lives. We can extrapolate the concepts and apply them to our interactions with others at work, home and elsewhere. In his work on *Combat and Transformation: The Necessity of Madness, the Numinous, and Reflection*, William Linehan (2003) describes,

Combat is a ritual action that involves the warrior and an opponent. Yet this ritual encompasses more than the physical slash of swords; it involves psychic transformation. Combat is metaphorical in that it does not take place with knives, handguns, or swords. Rather, this combat consists of the daily skirmishes of life. (p. 3)

The internal combat we feel within ourselves and the daily interactions with others are forms of combat that we all must face.

How the path of the martial artist depicts the individuation process and how martial arts training offers a unique process within our culture for individuals to engage

in powerful transformative work, which potentially create a genuine sense of community within their social environments are two things that Gary Moyer has studied. He looked at the experiential learning of the martial artist from a Jungian perspective and found that a karate dojo can provide a community support structure that allows students to work on moving from ego-based concerns for survival to an identity repositioned in a less ego-centered relationship with the community and the larger Self, where the sensei is both teacher and therapist (1994).

Theoretically, the martial artist develops the ability to contribute to the collective in the same way that the analysand, who is engaged in the process of individuation, commits to both individual and collective well-being. Individuation is

A person's becoming himself, whole, indivisible and distinct from other people or collective psychology (although also in relation to these) . . . the person becomes conscious in what respects he or she is both a unique human being and, at the same time, no more than a common man or woman. (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 76).

Carlos Gracie, Jr., son of the founder of Gracie jiu-jitsu, and leader of the largest jiu-jitsu organization in the world (Gracie Barra) reflects,

The principle goal of my family of athletes and fighters . . . has always been to spread jiu-jitsu, and to share the art which brings enormous benefits to one's life . . . growing up in this environment, I learned the art of jiu-jitsu is actually a method through which one strives for self-perfection. (2007)

The experience of individuation and development of a higher self in an athletic environment might become like any other depth psychological practice. Tending soul is an activity that is associated with all martial arts training through the practice of things like breathing exercises, solitary retreat, meditation, and other activities that quiet the mind and focus the senses. The writings of Kamo Mabuchi (1697-1769), Motoori Morinaa (1730-1801), and Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843); the Confucian teachings of

Yamaga Soko (1622-1685); the *Hagakure* of Tsunemoto Yamamoto (1649-1716); and the 17th-century *Primer of Bushido* by Daidoji Usan helped give birth to the *bushido* concept. Self-reliance, spontaneity, equanimity, and indifference to death appealed to many samurai, and eventually formed the culture of *bushido* (Murphy, 1992).

Training to fight can offer a mirror for individual self-reflection, where psyche has very little opportunity to conceal itself. To place the self in defensive situations is naturally challenging. The paradox of learning how to fight in order not to fight, allows men and women to encounter a wide variety of emotions, such as fear and aggressiveness, to experience their physical power and hopefully, temper the raw animalistic parts of the self in order to create community with fellow teammates.

This type of embodied training is a rare opportunity to tap raw power, mend the crippling mind/body split inherent in modern living, and exert an evolved form of self-trust and self-responsibility. The trust in one's own body mind that develops as a result of martial arts achievement has definite credibility as a new form of personal bodily wisdom and potential power. To sum up, sparring in class or tournaments can become more like an improvisational dance between partners, where an actual fight is simulated and the corresponding emotional states are mitigated. Over long periods of time, these techniques have the potential to create a rare sense of sense of self-confidence and finesse with difficult emotions.

### ***Anima and animus.***

In *Movement Toward Wholeness: The Healing Power of Martial Arts Training for Women*, Rachel Masson shares several ideas that illustrate the healing power in long-term martial arts practice that she found, through her research and personal experience. The

lens of depth psychology illuminates the theme of the integration of masculine and feminine opposites. The power of movement, ritual, and the challenge to patriarchal domination that female self-defense training poses, creates an opportunity for deep psychological transformation. Spiritual aspects inherent in martial artistry are built into the muscles and nervous system, and the ancient philosophy that depth psychology borrows is embedded in both processes (Masson, 2003).

Perhaps the most fascinating, controversial, and transformative of all the archetypes are the anima and animus, the internal female and male psychological structures within each person. In certain phases of animus development, women (and men) can be overwhelmed with fear. When these potential shadow elements are aroused, many women tend to disown them. An “archetype should be regarded first and foremost as the magnetic field and energy center underlying transformation of the psychic processes into images” (Jacobi, 1959, p. 48). They are original patterns of experience that we are prewired to have. Oftentimes, the anima and animus are defined purely as gendered soul images. In traditional Jungian terminology, they are described simply as “the fundamental forms which underlie the ‘feminine’ aspects of man and the ‘masculine’ aspects of woman” (Samuels, 1986, p. 23).

In the individuation process, it is useful to distinguish between the archetypal masculine and feminine psychological patterns. Few topics can create such an immediate sense of unease and defensiveness. Finding new language to discuss creating balance between the energies and essences of the anima and animus archetypes could be of great importance, and through dialogue and engaging in embodied practices, we might ultimately create some potential harmony between male/female issues.

The archetypal forces of the anima/animus complex present us with the paramount human challenges of relating and connecting to ourselves and to each other. “There is nothing more archetypal than masculinity and femininity” (Slater, 2006). They “underlie the well-known human drama of love, or attraction” (Liff, 2006), thereby serving to perpetuate our species, or not. It is a priority in the work of individuation to pull back both the negative and positive anima/animus projections and integrate our most unwanted, unrecognized, and unimagined parts. Facing these un-lived, but very emotionally charged, elements of psyche is often required in order to form healthy relationships. To achieve success in psychoanalysis or in any type of personal growth endeavor, they seek our attention in order for healing to occur.

***The archetypal warrior—the hero.***

*The warrior in literature and history.*

In literature, the warrior is a fundamental character who protects and defends against all foes, operating on the premise that strength and power overcome injustice. The warrior/hero character typically embodies the traits of loyalty, devotion, and commitment. Through steadfast strength and tenacity, they will stay true to the goal of right over wrong and uphold these principles at any cost. As heroes, warriors inspire others to overcome their fears and join in the battle. No matter the cost, the warrior is always available to come to the rescue and defend against any threat to home or family. The ordeals of warriors and heroes have always been the subject of story, myth and legend. They are the ones who go forth in service so others might be safe.

Historically and psychologically, the warriors’ attributes offer a wide range of potential. They are oftentimes depicted as simple but mysterious, powerful yet subtle,

and possessing a strong will along with boundless compassion. The principles and practices of the warrior/hero are action, humility, courage, and integrity. These warrior attributes provide us with a possible template for male identity (possessed without regard to gender). It is worth noting that the last several hundred years involve an enormous rise in individualism creating a changing landscape of identity among men and women, leaving socialization methods for men and women in great flux.

Fields (1991) cites the work of archaeologist Marija Gimbutas to account for the global influence of warriorship. Gimbutas argues that 5,000-7,000 years ago, Indo-European “mannerbund” (p. 60) or “warrior bands,” effectively conquered the existing cultures of Eastern Europe. In doing so, they established the hierarchical patriarchy as the dominant organizing principle of civilization. By successfully domesticating horses and training them for battle, Indo-European warrior bands eventually became mobile enough and powerful enough to dominate Asia, Europe, Anatolia, and the Near East. Fields (1991) furthers his investigation into the paths of warriorship by describing the theory on rites of passage by Mircea Eliade, who wrote, “The essential part of the military initiation consisted in ritually transforming the young warrior into some species of predatory animal. . . . He had to transmute his humanity by accessing aggressive and terrifying fury that made him like a raging carnivore” (Eliade, as cited in Fields, 1991, p. 61). Although dramatic, these rites of passage have been used as effective socialization and maturation methods throughout time and cross culturally, giving men an opportunity to cross the lines of aggressor and protector that oftentimes form the template for male identity.

*Jungian constructs of the warrior archetype (hero).*

The concept of the archetype was developed by Carl G. Jung through the early and mid-1900s, and the term is now in general use.

It was applied by Jung primarily to psychic motifs that could be expressed in images . . . ultimately it came to cover all psychic manifestations of a biological, psychobiological, or ideational character, provided they were more or less universal and typical. (Jacobi, 1959, p. 34)

According to Robert Moore (2001), archetypes are energies that carry a high voltage and we would do well to connect with them in a creative playful way. Moore cautions against the dangers of plugging in to archetypal energy.

The warrior archetype is a clear example of such an energy and those engaged with it can be challenged with the potential shadows of aggression, masochism, narcissism. If one evokes and identifies with the warrior archetype, there is no longer a balance in the psyche, but rather a living through of pure archetypal energy, a possession if you will. On the flip side, if one is not related to the warrior archetype at all, there is risk of inviting abuse, of living out a masochistic personality where assertiveness is not developed, courage is not present, and one is afraid of taking action in life (Moore, 2001). Ideally, balanced warrior aspects of the personality would encourage a capacity to adhere to ideals and commitment in the face of great pressures, even if they are not popular.

The principles and practices of warriorship were born of a desire to first unleash and then to temper and channel male aggression. Warriorship has evolved over time into a path of self-mastery undertaken in service to something greater than the self. (Wright, 2002, p. 3)

The warrior is that part of our selves that protects emotional boundaries and asserts our needs in the world. Where exactly it should stand to protect our boundaries is the work of individuation. The parts of the self that negotiate warrior energy are

developed in order to metabolize, neutralize, integrate, and sometimes transcend it. In literature, the king gives cause to this mission or in the military, a general fires charge to his soldier. We need outer figures to initiate it and mentors to become role models for these inner aspects of the psyche to develop.

Robert Moore is perhaps the most outspoken Jungian analyst on the topic of the archetypal warrior. He argues that mature masculinity is generative, creative, and empowering, instead of aggressive and domineering. His work has been a key in articulating the function of warrior archetypal energy in the modern male psyche from a completely Jungian perspective (Moore & Gillette, 1992).

Moore says our warrior is activated throughout childhood and especially in adolescence. Metaphorically speaking, if kings and magicians in our lives do not do a good job, our warrior will be activated in its shadow aspect, falling easily to rages and bullying; or it will barely be activated at all. In addition, when the older men in society integrate the warrior archetype, there will be less pressure on the teenagers to act this out, in which case, there are role models for the young to admire (Moore, 2001)

A primary source for archetypal psychology is James Hillman's (1982) *Re-visioning Psychology*, where he discusses the need for modern psychology to rethink itself. Hillman explores psychology as the path of the soul and explores the need to make connections between life and soul. As psychology and medicine undertake massive revisions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it seems possible for these fields to become more soulful during our era, considering the possibility of archetypal influences.

In *The Spirituality of Sport*, Susan Saint-Sing (2004) says.

the body's temple is at times driven on the fumes of the soul alone—that is to say, there is a place in exertion where an athlete goes beyond normal metabolism and

kicks into an afterburner of something other—something spiritual—found or emerging from a sacredness within. (p. 4)

Considering the underlying archetypal experiences in sports allows us to bring to light the importance of this specialized branch of archetypal psychology to the mainstream.

Hillman (1994) says, by archetypal, he means,

The ubiquitous, passionate, ever-recurring, inescapable patterns bearing value and religious depth. Archetypal also implies “necessary” patterns which govern behavior because they are rooted in psychic life . . . what necessary and essential political purpose could be served by the archetypal phenomenon of urban sport violence. (p.1)

He writes further about the possibility of sport violence being a bridge between our animalistic nature and politics and says that, “fierce physical contests are . . . inherent components of political existence” (p. 2).

It is fairly easy to see the archetypal energy of Mars evoked in any jiu-jitsu class. Hillman wrote extensively about the constellation of Mars in competitive sports. Because Mars is the Roman god of war, it seems appropriate that he would come in to play in martial arts training. The combination of aggression and camaraderie that exists between training partners and the evolution of martial tactics into sport and recreation are of particular interest. Hillman (1994) says Mars is not a god of strategy or victory, but appears in the fury and fever of actual combat. It is an “unstoppable transport to another condition that makes humans passionate about physical combat and addicts them to it, for they are then, during those moments of battle rage, in the embrace of divine energy” (p. 3). This description may sound extreme, but there is no coincidence that when a newcomer is hooked on training, we joke with him about his new addiction. What we are hooked into is the interesting question, and why jiu-jitsu is becoming so popular right now is of particular interest.

Although this description of feverish combat brings up questions about the human tendency for aggressiveness and violence, Hillman (1994) reminds us that “the difference between martial heroism and hooliganism depends largely upon three kinds of discipline” (p. 4). He says beauty, bonding, and hierarchy provide rituals that contain the transcendent infusion of godly martial power. Hillman further explains that we have a lack of differentiation of the martial emotions such as, anger, hostility, aggression, rage, fury, and hatred. Historical Christian biases toward anger and desire have led us to repress these “pagan” impulses. This is why he sees the need to call on Mars as significant in psychic, and civic, life. By exercising and exorcising Mars energy, we develop internal constructs to face difficult situations in new, hopefully mature, ways. In Jungian terminology, we are charged with the responsibility to face and integrate our own shadow material. If not, it is possible we will project it out into the world, blaming outside circumstances and other people, for things we can take responsibility for.

As a window to the collective, as well as an example of personal transformation, there is a great deal of potential for martial arts to address these modern Jungian concerns of integrating shadow material. Not only might a martial arts practice encourage one to address personal shadow issues and develop a healthy ego-self axis through triumph and defeat, but the social elements of combat sports typically require a healthy balance between individuality and collectivity in order for the practice to be generative. That is to say, a dojo, a team, or a club will not remain well formed, let alone successful, if these balances are not intact. In Rickson Gracie’s words,

I’ve always seen martial arts as a complex thing, which doesn’t only teach you how to hit the other person. Thus, the martial artist’s life is to serve! It is to help, to be a person who participates in the community. The martial artist must be a positive person—not someone who stimulates war or confrontation. A person

who, through that power, benefits the whole society. So I see my functions as a fighter and a teacher have always been alike, and in truth people sometimes distort the image of Jiu-Jitsu or of martial arts by thinking that the knockout or the win are the only goals. Once you learn how to view the martial art as a whole, you learn how to handle defeat, how to forgive your foe, how to be patient and balanced, how to apologize as sincerely as you struggle. These are things you learn in the academy and take to your life. You must also learn that the weakest person in the academy is the one who needs the most help, for that is the student who'll be the most gratifying to teach. Sometimes, in the midst of all this information, teachers forget a lot and restrict themselves to teaching the guy to win tournaments and being tough. (as cited in Feitosa, 2006).

***Individual versus collective.***

Like wrestling, the art of grappling, places two human bodies in very close, precarious, positions. In *Archetypal Images in Professional Wrestling*, Eric Zengota (1994) says, “the struggle between two men remains its essence, just as the elemental combat between polarities is one of Jung’s basic thematic concerns” (p. 163). Zengota’s assumption is that in some types of pop wrestling there is a lack of self-control on the part of the participants’ behaviors and that spectators can project unintegrated complexes onto the match, as in a psychodrama.

In addition, traditional martial arts, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu in particular, might also offer an opportunity for the projection of the integrated elements of psyche. It is possible that the container for Brazilian jiu-jitsu is an ideal ritual space for the transcendent function to ripen and for transformation to occur, a *temenos*. In these matches, spectators may project, but they are often challenged by the respect and dignity that they witness. Zengota was looking at a form of wrestling that was much less traditional.

Professional Brazilian jiu-jitsu matches (and those in regular classes) oftentimes end with one person achieving complete domination using a joint lock or choke hold, and the other player submits, or says “tap.” This can be a very intense personal experience

for the ego structure, ranging from very positive to very negative, encouraging ego flexibility/reflexibility to develop. It is an exercise, sometimes multiple times within minutes, in developing a consciousness of failure. “Once the demand is for success at all costs, success is ripe for conversion to automatism. It turns into a slogan and becomes an autonomous complex” (Lopez-Pedraza, 1990, p. 81). Instead, Brazilian jiu-jitsu players are steeped in an ever-evolving practice of tapping people out and being tapping out, never having the chance to sink too long into success or failure.

Because it is a team sport, Brazilian jiu-jitsu always has qualities that reach past the individual into the social realm. That is to say, you cannot improve without developing strong relationships with your training partners. In order to learn these body technologies, a strong social network and a safe environment is required. The ego structure of each individual player is challenged with every practice, leading to a collective experience of social transformation among its participants. A large amount of ego fluidity is needed to sustain the regular and consistent experience of dominating and being dominated, while others look on. This finesse and the deeply rooted friendships that result are developing in jiu-jitsu schools every day. “We must avoid two dangers: that of too much individuality or of too much collectivity” (Henderson, 1984, p. 23).

With regard to the social attitude, Joseph Henderson (1984) tells us that the authority is in the group, not the individual. Man is both individual and communal. “If one becomes too individualistic, the effect is psychic inflation and isolation from one’s fellow men. If one lives too collectively, one becomes uncomfortably deflated and subtly depressed, though one’s conformity may bring certain rewards” (p. 23). It is an intricate balance when one achieves a sense of belonging in conjunction with personal expression.

It is tricky business resisting the extremes of inflating individual needs and the loss of the self that occurs when the needs of a group are overemphasized, as in fundamentalism. In combat sports, there is yet another unique opportunity to experience a balance of these two extremes. Studying embodied practices can allow us to see deeper structures of a person or a community. The body is always giving clues to these underlying psychic structures.

Striving for a balance with these two opposites is surely one of the main challenges in honoring Jungian traditions in the 21st century and carrying forward ancient traditional practices into our technological age. In *The Martial Arts of Ancient Greece*, the authors discuss the concept of the collective unconscious.

A term introduced by the great psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung to describe the part of our mind shared by the entire human race . . . One part of our mind, our unconscious self, manifests in the autonomous nervous system of our body . . . (in the light of Jung's collective unconscious, the aforementioned structure demonstrates the possibility that in infinite space our consciousness is connected, that we are all like the fingers of one hand, connected at the palm: we believe that we are independent beings, but in effect one part of our self is shared in common with everyone else). (Dervensis & Lykiardoppulos, 2005, pp. 210-211)

Unlike most wrestling styles, however, completely finishing the moves of jiu-jitsu would actually break the opponents joint or render them unconscious. These potential threats, though rarely fully enacted, add another layer to the tension of the opposites. Zengota says, "Defeat and triumph are the inextricably linked opposites toward which the entire drama is played out" (p. 163). The uniqueness of jiu-jitsu is that this particular psychic drama (psychodrama) is played out in every class, for every student.

It is a psychological requirement to metabolize the fear of defeat and satisfaction of triumph for every student. The more a martial artist can stay with the process, the more ego flexibility will develop. If someone is able to stick with the ego disintegration

and reintegration process inherent in this constant practice of domination and submission, there is an opportunity for transformation that Jung believed was available in the psychological extremes. “Jung was expressing the first law of thermodynamics which states that energy demands two opposing forces” (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 102). It is the close contact and the effectiveness of the submission techniques that create the container between two people and the principles of the academy that ensure safety. Very few sports can create this type of constant confrontation with the opposites for all participants.

In considering the difference between contact and noncontact sports, Hyland (1990) says, “A preference for contact sports could suggest a healthy exuberance regarding one’s own body and those of others, a playful enjoyment of physical contact. Or it could reveal a precariously controlled desire to physically dominate or even hurt others” (p. 74) This suggests that jiu-jitsu offers an opportunity for close human contact, but for those with unhealthy motives, there might even be a self-cleansing mechanism built into the practice where they will be faced with the necessity to grow or leave the environment. That is to say, those who express their desires of causing harm must endure the experience of being submitted by their senior players.

The archetype of initiation also provides a backdrop for the experience of martial arts training, including physical wounding. In *Initiation: The Living Reality of an Archetype*, Kirsch, Rutter, and Singer (2007) seek to amplify and extend the investigation of this concept of initiation as an archetypal experience. The editors argue that initiation symbolism often underlies contemporary phenomena. The purpose of the collection is to assist explorers of the archetype of initiation in depth by presenting the work of several analysts. The contributors argue that modern initiations can be patterned on old traditions

and that themes of sacrifice and surrender play a central role in the initiatory process. The authors gather and analyze information that exemplifies the archetypal dimension of transformation through initiatory processes. It is possible that the martial arts enthusiast embarks on a process of initiation and that this could be a useful way to work with certain populations in the community.

In his autobiography, *A Fighter's Heart: One Man's Journey Through the World of Fighting*, Sheridan (2007) seeks to reveal his own transformative journey through the world of martial arts where he became a mixed martial arts fighter and a high level Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioner. He illustrates, from a heartfelt place, the ups and downs of his own experiences and those of others in his field. He asserts that fighting, as an art, redefines possibility, and that embodying the virtues of the hunter and warrior are useful and important, but that creating is the true calling of man in service to his community.

### ***Philosophy of sports.***

The philosophy of sports is a modern phenomenon, although physical training, time spent in gymnasiums, and play have been areas of focus for philosophers old and new. Perhaps the evolution of ideas around the mind-body question contributes greatly to the language and level of focus on specific sports. Drew Hyland recalls, "A number of Plato's dialogues (the *Lysis* and *Charmides*, for example) take place in a gymnasium, the place not only of physical training but also of intellectual and moral education in ancient Athens" (1990, p. xvi).

In *Philosophy of Sport*, Hyland (1990) mentions that both Plato and Socrates are referred to as being in athletic condition, and later, many European philosophers used the metaphor of play, sport, and games for important themes in their thinking. One wonders

if in the time of Plato, when pre-Cartesian worldviews dominated the scene, it was possible to experience the body separated from the mind. If not, the fusion of perspective from the mind and body would have emphasized all of their activities, and sport, play, and games would not have been a matter of separate focus, if it was fully integrated into everything else.

How the mind and body relate has been a critical issue in the history of psychology, medicine, and philosophy. Throughout the history of science and religion, the dualism of mind and body is apparent. The Christian church focused on the elite status of the soul outliving the body, while Rene Descartes introduced the ideology that thinking is what we are. In either example, spiritual and cognitive, the true self is not the body. Instead, the body takes a subordinate role either to the soul or to the mind. This is the modern way of being in the world, something we are born into and are taught in subtle and concrete ways throughout childhood. It is our cultural heritage, and we are deeply rooted in this psychic legacy. Even the phrase *mind/body* creates a challenge in the discussion, because this language implies that they are two separate things.

In order to transcend our inherited dualism, it is incumbent on individuals to develop relationship with their own bodies and to build on this knowledge in order to reformulate ideas that are more ecological, less dual. In martial arts training, we can rarely afford to depend on the mind or soul as the single most superior entity. If the body is not in full communication with the rest of one's being, there is a lesson on the horizon.

Phenomenologists have . . . denied the efficacy of the mind/body separation, based not on materialist grounds but on experiential considerations. Their claim is that we simply do not experience such a distinction, that it is an intellectual abstraction which gets in the way of genuine understanding of human experience of oneself. Sporting activity, wherein the mind and the body are so actively

engaged together, offers a marvelous testing ground for the examination of this long-standing issue. (Hyland, 1990, p. xxiii)

Hyland (1990) writes in his dedication, “For those who know that they have souls and bodies, and who love both” (p. ix). This speaks to the necessities of the body that modern philosophy and psychology are challenged with. It seems that in modern times we are so accustomed to being disconnected from the body, that this type of reminder seems silly and stunning at the same time. “The phenomenologist claims that the way we actually experience ourselves is neither as a dualism of mind and body . . . but as a unity of mental and physical activity” (p. 94). It is this emphasis on the experienced unity of the mental and physical that people training in martial arts begin to understand.

Modern sports psychologists place their main emphasis on goal-oriented strategies such as winning and creating relaxation, concentration, and visualization methods to increase success. Obviously, sports, games, or martial arts appear to be primarily physical activities, but are very mental. Whether someone is preparing to do their best or trying to remember strategies, the act of sport is infused with mental activity.

The culturally embedded way of looking at the world is one where the superior mind controls the inferior body. “The very fact that most of the sports that go on in educational institutions are classified as ‘extracurricular’ (literally meaning ‘outside the curriculum’), clearly testifies to the same set of assumptions” (Hyland, 1990, p. 92)

Education is all about the life of the mind and the body is left to the individual.

The point of gymnastics (as we might now say, of sport education), Socrates insists, is not to train the body—as an entity separate from the soul—but is part of the unified education of the whole person. A proper education in gymnastics makes one a better person, not just the body a better body. . . . The Platonic Socrates seems already to appreciate this intimacy of the mental and the physical that the phenomenologists today emphasize. On this view, the real point of

physical education is not to develop only our bodies, but to properly develop our selves. (p. 99)

The cultural construct that filters through to our current educational system where the majority of the day is spent feeding information to the mind alone reflects the loss of the ideal that sports are a place for personal reflection and life lessons. The bias is true even in the field of sports psychology, which carries the primary intention of coaching and motivating athletes to win and creating cognitive abilities and strategies that will foster a competitive edge. Some, as Hyland (1990) suggests, contend that sports do offer “a vivid and explicit combination of mental and physical activity. It thus offers a fascinating occasion for reflection on their interaction” (p. 89).

During many informal interviews, I realized that many martial artists experienced a deep introspective psychic communication between mind and body. I wondered how often progression in martial artistry was dependent on cultivating mind/body awareness, but there were many people who seemed capable of sidestepping this process all together. The field of sports psychology and cognitive coaching for performance and competitive success seems narrow and limited in its scope.

Because we have all been raised in a society where the mind is superior and may rarely learn to communicate well with the body, I found that many jiu-jitsu enthusiasts, including myself, would initially approach their training with this bias, and I wondered about the process of developing a stronger relationship to one's own body. I found that most jiu-jitsu enthusiasts claimed to have developed deeper body awareness through their practices in a very short period of time (Reusing, 2011).

Michael Murphy's (1992) work *The Future of the Body: Explorations Into the Further Evolution of Human Nature* is an exhaustive anthology of somatics and

transformative practices. His historical research and insights are cutting-edge ideas in somatic psychology and philosophy. He covers the basis of the martial arts coming from a spiritual ground and the cultivation of psychological and physical beauty among other things.

Murphy (1992) describes in great detail the following aspects of adventure and sport: beneficial physical changes produced by exercise, improved mental functioning and psychological health, social support and inspiration of small training groups, and sport as a transformative practice. He says,

The worlds of physical adventure and sport dramatize our capacity for self-exceeding. The immense variety of challenges athletes embrace on land, air, and water; the increasing number of new games and contests (and growing complexity of old ones); the exquisite analysis of technique and physiology used to achieve high-level performance; the wide range of physiques cultivated for competitions of many kinds; and the pain, risk, and sacrifice many people accept for the sake of sport all demonstrate our human capacity and drive to achieve new levels and kinds of functioning. Considering sport in its immense complexity, one might imagine that the modern world has unwittingly made it a vast laboratory to experiment with bodily powers. (p. 415)

Phil Cousineau (2004) explored the mythic dimensions of sports and reminds us that the Greek model for the well-lived life reflected the desire to excel in mind, body, and soul. He recounts his first meeting with Joseph Campbell in 1984, who in the 1920s was one of the fastest one-half-mile runners in the world. Joe told Phil that he learned more in his years of running about what it takes to win and what it takes to lose than from anything else. He said Maslow was always asking him about peak experiences, expecting him to talk about the mystics, but that he had to tell him about running.

Cousineau (2004) contends that athletes have not been encouraged to talk about their peak experiences, and that the current emphasis on mental life and winning biases the intellectual to the point of leaving out the body. This, he feels, is a grave disservice to

the roots of competitive sport and play. Campbell tells of his lifelong regret during the Olympic qualifiers where he looked backwards and missed his time by a split second. Cousineau believes it is very possible and likely that Campbell's early notion of the descent into pain, struggle, and the courage it takes to endure (the descent of the hero's journey) came not from Jung and Freud, but from this death on the track. Campbell told Cousineau that there is never a week that goes by when he does not look back and remember that moment. Campbell loved this idea of moving back and forth between the life of the body and the life of the mind. He said the rapture of the deep struggles of your life and the trust in the body to move you through, how you deal with defeat, was the measure of success. The thrill of playing sports, the beauty of the unscripted drama, and the unpredictable nature of the outcome prepares you for the life and death struggles to come.

Cousineau (2004) further reviews the history of sports, going back to the Olympics and beyond to illustrate the playful yet dangerously serious nature of sports and games. Joseph Campbell's own history as an athlete and the impact this may have had on his seminal work, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, is revealed by Cousineau (2004) in *The Olympic Odyssey: Campbell and Sports*. Two chapters by Hillman (1994) and Zengota (1994) in the compiled work, *Psyche and Sports*, are also vital to the discussion of sports psychology from a soulful perspective.

In *Psyche and Sports* Stein & Hollwitz (1984) seek to illustrate the paradoxical nature of sports in modern culture. Sometimes of utmost importance, sometimes denigrated, sports manage to engage the soul deeply. The editors bring together Jungian writers to view sports from a collective and mythical perspective, an individual

transformative practice, and as an inquiry into new methodologies to investigate sports. These essays bring credence to the topic of studying sports from a depth phenomenological perspective.

Instead of looking at soul-eroding trends at work in our culture, my interest has focused on what I believe to be an important soul “revivifying” trend at work and play around the globe. Martial arts have not often been the focus of psychological interest. “In the seventeenth century, the foundation of the study of the natural sciences was based, psychologically, on the premise that science had nothing to do with religion” (Lopez-Pedraza, 1990, p. 33). Because religious differences were the fuel for wars, the work of scientists (and modern psychology) was devoid of anything spiritual or transcendent. Because the body houses the centers of feeling, sensation, and emotion, it is clear that the theories of modern psychology that leave out the body, are a truncated view of the psyche. Perhaps one of the most difficult obstacles of current mind/body research is developing a working language in order to create a dialogue where body and soul are given a voice. It can be a challenge to put these experiences into words.

Brazilian jiu-jitsu is a complete, yet ever-evolving creative process, technology for personal growth, self-defense, and combat that challenges individuals psychologically and physically. I have heard hundreds of people call it the fastest growing sport in the world. There is also a concurrent social and cultural weaving taking place on many levels. One can witness these phenomena in an individual, in an academy, a community, and now between nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

## **Literature Relevant to the Researcher's Theoretical Approach**

### **The birth of phenomenology.**

Out of the growing recognition of the limitations to address questions of the human experience within the requirements of empirical methods, hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology have become increasingly popular as research methodologies. While researchers continue to place a strong emphasis on empirical methods, the use of qualitative methods have emerged as a way to explore description and meaning rather than prediction, control, and measurement (Lavery, 2003).

Post-WWI, in the context of a European society, where ideologies and cultural values were in great turbulence, the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), “sought to develop a new philosophical method which would lend absolute certainty to a disintegrating civilization” (Eagleton, 1983, p. 54). As the father of phenomenology, Husserl argued that people can be certain about how things appear and present themselves to consciousness, and declared that the aim of phenomenology is the return to the concrete using the phrase “back to the things themselves” (p. 54).

A student of Husserl, Martin Heidegger (1962) introduced the concept of “dasein,” or “being there,” and the dialogue between a person and the world, and instead of being as concerned with understanding beings of phenomena, his focus was more on the mode of being human or the situated meaning of a human in the world. Although phenomenology flourished for some time after WWII, and the works of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty furthered the influence of Husserl and Heidegger, carrying forward existential phenomenology (Vandenberg, 1997), it wasn't until the 1970s that a method of phenomenology was actually developed.

The most important aspect of the method became description where the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. According to Welman and Kruger (1999), “the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of the people involved” (p. 189). The theoretical approach of phenomenological research, as described by Clark Moustakas (1984, p. xiv), is a method by which one can gain knowledge about human experiences, human behavior, and human relationships. This method provides opportunities for reciprocal exchanges between the researcher and the participants in the study. Experiences, perceptions, feelings, and interrelationships are validated and considered meaningful in the research process.

#### **Hermeneutic phenomenology.**

"Only when our entire culture for the first time saw itself threatened by radical doubt and critique did hermeneutics become a matter of universal significance" (Gadamer, 1983, p. 100). Born in 1900, Hans-Georg Gadamer was a student of philosophy at Marburg and Freiburg in the 1920s. It was there that he was influenced by the work of both Husserl and Heidegger, and moved to extend Heidegger's work into practical application (Gadamer, 1976). Gadamer saw that the work of hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter, but was in agreement with Heidegger's view that language is the universal medium for understanding, and that they are inseparable. He also viewed a person's range of vision, or horizon, as essential to the process of questioning, understanding, and interpreting (Lavery, 2003).

A broad view of hermeneutic phenomenology reveals the basic tenets of the research model as descriptive and interpretive, respectively. In essence, the two are complementary and create a focus “on meaning that arises from the interpretative interaction between historically produced texts and the reader” (Lavery, 2003, p. 16). It is a methodology, a creative approach to understanding that requires the researcher to be insightful, sensitive to language, and constantly open to experience (van Manen, 1990).

Depth psychology has an established tradition of being concerned with word, image, and symbol, and now the body is becoming a focal point of study for psychologists, namely post-Jungians and post-Freudians. It is a phenomenon of our times that the scholarly community has not only ignored the value that attention to the body and its sensual qualities could bring to light, but it has vehemently favored lofty, intellectual pursuits over the possibility of character and meaning making through sensory awareness. Somatic psychology is a fairly recent term for a branch of psychology that has been present since the inception of psychology, but has received varying degrees of attention throughout the 20th century.

It includes all psychological approaches that focus significantly on the role of the body, and works as a practical philosophy committed to enhancing somatic (or bodily) awareness. Many somatic researchers and practitioners have submitted their work to the particular rigor of quantitative analysis, yet there is still a growing body of qualitative work in the field. From a depth psychological point of view, the attempt to develop an understanding of meaning of embodied practices through research would most often be qualitative in nature.

For many decades, the frontiers of depth psychology have been brimming with the work of phenomenologists such as Merleau Ponty and Hans Gadamer, and the perspective of the body as the great configurer and potential for healing. A great deal of work has been focused on semiotics and the study of word, image, and symbol, beginning with classic structural linguistics and now incorporating the body in new and deeper ways. I believe we are at the threshold of developing a new language around lived body experience and that depth psychology and phenomenology are in a position to midwife the dialogue between body and mind thereby assisting modern somatic psychology in developing new language (Reusing, 2011, p. 3)

### **Chapter 3 Methodology**

#### **Statement of Research Problem and Research Question**

##### **The research problem.**

There is a dearth of depth psychological literature addressing the experience and meaning making activity of practicing a martial art. Because my own experience as a practitioner of Brazilian jiu-jitsu is inextricably linked to my own personal transformation, and has infiltrated every aspect of my studies in depth psychology, and because I have also witnessed transformative collective aspects of the practice, it is my hope that my research might uncover similar material.

There is currently very little formal research available on Brazilian jiu-jitsu, which is sweeping the world stage as a popular sport. Much of what brings considerable attention to this particular style is the collective interest in televised MMA and battles like the UFC. These events have educated viewers on the effectiveness of Brazilian jiu-jitsu as a fighting style, increasing the popularity of MMAs in general and also leading to an explosive growth in Brazilian jiu-jitsu schools. Traditional Brazilian jiu-jitsu schools are primarily focused on self-defense and personal and communal development, and encourage participation in MMA to only a select few athletes displaying unique and very specific abilities and character.

Although martial artistry provokes a great deal of imagery in collective minds, the actual body-mind processes of practitioners is an understudied phenomena. The experience of the body in motion as text, or what the movements demonstrate on an emotional level has not been looked at. In other words, the experiential component of the

practice has not been put into language. The biological components of the complexes or embodied archetypal experiences are of particular interest. For instance, because the essence of the practice is forever rooted in leverage, balance, and momentum of the body and is an activity where every practitioner has the opportunity to tap into the experience of being a warrior and a seeker, the lived experience of Brazilian jiu-jitsu lends itself well toward metaphor and analogy for the psychological experience of daily life. What I am bringing is a depth psychological lens to an embodied practice by attempting to ask it to speak about itself, for itself, through the voice of the experienced practitioner.

Given my own long-standing interest in the phenomena of athletic experiences, I am particularly interested in the body's experience of engagement. There is a gap in the literature regarding sports and psychology, and I acknowledge that the work I am doing addresses that gap. Although it is commonly accepted that activities such as yoga and martial arts can be used to lower stress and increase well-being, these body technologies are under-studied phenomena for their psychological benefits. It is my hope that the proposed study will lead to increased understanding of Brazilian jiu-jitsu training, and embodied transformative practices in general, within the field of depth psychology.

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study will be to describe and interpret the possibility of the experience of the body as a vessel for transformation for participants and observers of Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners. I am interested in reading the body as text through metaphor, studying the aesthetic sensibilities that occur during training, and discovering how the body transmutes the archetypal experiences inherent in martial arts training, such as initiation, and their ramifications for personal and collective transformation. Because the nature of the body is constant transformation, I am

specifically interested in how engaging in the practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu might impact this transformation. What does it interrupt? What does it promote?

**The research question.**

What is the lived experience of Brazilian jiu-jitsu training? What experiences of Brazilian jiu-jitsu training might be put into language, in order to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of the practice through the lens of depth psychology, specifically Jungian psychology, and somatic studies?

**Definition of Terms**

This study is about exploring the experience of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, a martial art that is practiced worldwide, and originates from ancient traditions and in large part from Japanese samurai traditions. It developed in the context of Brazilian culture, through the Gracie family and their followers, and is based on the principles of momentum, leverage, and body knowledge, as opposed to strength. Brazilian jiu-jitsu is also widely known for its emphasis on developing a healthy personal lifestyle, cultivating strong familial and social traditions, and espouses a concerted effort toward humanitarian and worldly concerns.

This study seeks to make connections between the practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu and the field of depth psychology, and specifically the theories of Carl Gustav Jung, as well as the emerging field of somatic psychology.

The modern field of depth psychology originated in the work of Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud, who called attention to the importance of what lies below the surface of conscious awareness. This dimension of psychic reality is revealed in many ways . . . in the literature and art of a culture, in dreams, and in the symptoms of individuals and communities. The concepts of depth psychology that are central . . . (are) the importance of symbol and metaphor in personal and cultural imagery, and recognition of the interplay between the natural world and the human psyche. (Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2012, p. 5)

Jungian psychology in short, is a set of constructs, terms, and ideas that were developed by Carl Gustav Jung to describe the personal psychological process of individuation and the larger notion of a collective (or world) psyche. Somatic psychology contends that

healing can occur through working with profound experiences stemming from myth, imagination, and unconscious motivation. This specialization builds upon the deep conviction that there are forces of the psyche that stimulate the body's capacity to heal itself. The many traditions and practices that address the body-be they old, new, Western, non-Western, scientifically based, or indigenous-call for attention in this specialization. (Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2012, p. 35)

At times I use the terms Brazilian jiu-jitsu, jiu-jitsu, and Gracie jiu-jitsu interchangeably. Although the term *jiu-jitsu* was coined in Japan, its current use today often refers to Brazilian jiu-jitsu; the surviving part of what was originally meant by this term is now known as judo. The older term, adopted by the Gracie family, is used interchangeably, as above. I have also taken the liberty to use the term martial arts, of course not necessarily implying that all martial arts practices are to be included in this research. I use it in the same way one might use the term tennis or dance, while honing in on a particular style of dance, or the playing of tennis on grass courts. It seemed useful to include the larger umbrella term to allow the reading to be smooth and to indicate that Brazilian jiu-jitsu is not the only possible martial art to have these potentials.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Methods and Procedures**

#### **Research Approach**

This dissertation takes an overall hermeneutic phenomenological approach toward research, which reveals my philosophical stance with regard to studying human nature. In order to set the stage for the credibility of qualitative research, I have focused on the historical antecedents of academic research and the shifting emphasis from quantitative toward qualitative analysis that has developed in academia, particularly in psychology in recent decades.

The movement of phenomenology, and the popularity of a hermeneutic phenomenological approach and many other methodologies, has flourished in recent times. Osborne (1994) identifies the early 1980s as a time when greater disenchantment with the limits of logical-empirical research methodologies began. This distinction is also a big part of my ethnographic perspective because, as an undergraduate in college in 1992, I switched from studying physics to psychology, in part because of the restrictions I felt were inherent in the quantitative scientific model.

My approach to this research includes the aspects of studying human nature that have been emphasized by the fields of phenomenology as well as hermeneutics. The phenomenological stance represents a movement away from the Cartesian dualism of reality being something “out there” or completely separate from the individual (Koch, 1996). This way of seeing incorporates the subjective experience of the researcher and encourages a creative process between researcher and subject through the process of bracketing and suspending judgment.

Phenomenology is rooted in lived experience and the study of essences (Merleau-Ponty, 2003). Hermeneutics takes into consideration the background and “situatedness” of all phenomena, and is “the study of human cultural activity as texts with a view towards interpretation to find intended or expressed meaning” (Kvale, 1996). Together, a hermeneutic phenomenological stance is one where “lived experiences gather hermeneutic significance as we (reflectively) gather them by giving memory to them” (van Manen, 1990, p. 37).

Instead of attempting the impossible task of bracketing, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Heidegger’s student, created an ever-evolving approach where our historical presence and preunderstanding are always playing a role in research—the search for meaning (1976). His approach honors and emphasizes personal, familial, and cultural embeddedness, or situatedness, as well as the liminal communion that takes place in dialogues.

This approach results in a symbolic description of experience attempting to evoke the underlying essence of meaning using language. This research, in particular, will take on the task of putting the experiences of the embodied practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu into written language. These interpretations are filtered through the researcher and mixed with the personal history and interests that have pulled them to the work. Descriptions are a creation, “a transaction between the individual and the world as they constitute and are constituted by each other” (Munhall, p. 1989).

The hermeneutic phenomenological approach is especially appropriate to this particular study because its approach, methodology and creative process, mirror that

which is being studied. I needed a method that would allow me to transcend the mind–body problem.

Phenomenologists have . . . denied the efficacy of the mind/body separation, based not on materialist grounds but on experiential considerations. Their claim is that we simply do not experience such a distinction, that it is an intellectual abstraction which gets in the way of genuine understanding of human experience of oneself. Sporting activity, wherein the mind and the body are so actively engaged together, offers a marvelous testing ground for the examination of this long-standing issue. (Hyland, 1990, p. xxiii).

Further, taking on the task of articulating a potentially transformative embodied practice requires this unique approach that allows for an interactive dialogue within and among the phenomena being studied.

### **Research Methodology**

This research is a hermeneutic phenomenological study that explores and interprets the lived experiences of five Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belts. They are a mixture of founders and practitioners. In order to lay a clear map of how my dissertation research was to be conducted, I utilized the six research activities that Max van Manen (1990) proposes as the basic methodological structure for hermeneutic phenomenological research.

1. Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world.
2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it.
3. Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon.
4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting.
5. Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon.
6. Balancing the research context by balancing parts and whole. (p. 30-31)

Because phenomenological research is inherently embodied research, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu is an embodied practice, the required attention and dedication required by the researcher is multilayered.

In describing the phenomena through writing and rewriting, while remembering to set aside judgments and biases, multiple layers of reflective process formed.

Moustakas (1994, p. xiv) describes the phenomenological research model as a method by which one can gain knowledge about human experiences, behavior, and relationships. Because it provides opportunity for reciprocity between researcher and participants, all experiences and perceptions are validated during the process. Max van Manen (1990) describes in his introductory text on phenomenological research how to orient oneself to human inquiry and how to construct a questioning inquiry which evokes a fundamental sense of wonder.

Hermeneutic phenomenology, which is attentive to the philosophic underpinnings of both hermeneutics and phenomenology, was chosen as a suitable methodology for this research because it is concerned with producing rich textual descriptions of the experience of phenomena in the lived experience of individuals. From identification of the experience of phenomena, a deeper understanding of the meaning of that experience is sought through layers of reflection and the use of rich descriptive language (Smith, D., 1997).

Phenomenology is ideal for researching personal journeys in that it is concerned with lived experience, but the main focus of phenomenology is with prereflective experiences and feelings (the essence of a phenomenon). Hermeneutic phenomenology enables the exploration of experiences through further abstraction and interpretation by the researchers, based on researchers' own theoretical stance and personal knowledge. Hermeneutics adds the interpretive element to explicate meanings and assumptions in the participants' texts that participants themselves may have difficulty in articulating, for

example, tacit practice knowledge. Communication and language are intertwined, and hermeneutics offers a way of understanding such human experiences captured through language and in context (van Manen, 1990).

### **Participants**

The aim in participant selection in phenomenological and hermeneutic research is to select participants who have lived experience that is the focus of the study, who are willing to talk about their experience, and who are diverse enough from one another to enhance possibilities of rich and unique stories of the particular experience (van Manen, 1997). In the beginning of conceiving this research, I anticipated conducting up to 25 interviews. As the project progressed, I quickly revised this figure to 12, and comfortably settled on a final figure of five interviewees.

I originally thought that I would select all of the participants from the older generation of Gracie family members. This represented a sample from the founders, or key informants, of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, which seemed rich and intriguing, since these men are seen as leaders and I have ready access to them. The biggest problem with this approach was that it would not include any female participants, since women have only been participating in recent decades, except for a select few who were exposed early on. It was also during a conversation with Carlos Gracie, Jr. that I decided it would be valuable to include some younger participants.

I settled on selecting participants who would represent the current variety in the population of practitioners. Because I have fairly easy access to a great many Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt professors, and because many well-known Brazilian jiu-jitsu

practitioners are used to being interviewed and are pleased with the prospect, I anticipated being met with a positive response.

The age range of the interviewees was 24 to 61, with four male and one female participant. Of the five, only two were native English speaking, with the other three having English as a second language, and in all three cases, United States citizenship was achieved in their adult years. I asked very broad questions, open ended in nature, to reach large categories of lived experience, including possible cultural and political implications. I do not claim that any of the participants were unbiased about Brazilian jiu-jitsu, as all five are living, working examples of the successful impact of it as a personal practice, way of life, and career.

### **Research Procedures**

The first step I took in preparing for this phenomenological hermeneutic study was to formulate a question that had both personal and social meaning for me, and one that I believed would hold meaning for others. My interest in wanting to conduct a study in human science comes from my own deep interest in somatics as a potent method of transformation and healing. After a great deal of reflection, I formulated my research question. What is the lived experience of Brazilian jiu-jitsu training? What experiences of Brazilian jiu-jitsu training might be put into language, in order to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of the practice? Using a depth psychological lens, I set out to formulate interview questions that would stay true to a phenomenological stance, and so my overall approach was to figure out a way to allow each practitioner to share with as little prompting as possible, using as many open-ended questions as possible, and also allowing the interview to take on an informal conversational quality. I formulated several

general questions around the topic of the meaning, structure, and essence of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. I developed a list of important topics where potential transformation could occur, and offered those as talking points, or triggers, to guide the interviewee and help focus the conversation on the important areas of potential transformation that exist in depth psychology.

The first step in the selection of participants was to inquire with each potential participant if they were interested in helping with this project. To do this, I sent out a letter stating that I was currently in the process of writing my dissertation and was seeking knowledgeable practitioners to interview. I explained the purpose of the project and the details of the interview process, the time involved, confidentiality, and that there would be an opportunity to give feedback. It was a surprise to me when I did not hear back from many of my initial inquiries, and I redoubled my efforts to continue to secure interviewees by sending more requests to professors, until I found five who were diverse enough to create a balanced sample of data for the project.

After each potential participant agreed to be involved, I obtained informed consent via e-mail or fax prior to making an appointment to meet for the interview. After the informed consent was received and an appointment was made, I called the participant to reconfirm the time, date, and location a few days prior to each interview. I also let the participants know that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time, and encouraged them to ask any questions they may have or need clarification about.

At the actual interviews, I spoke briefly and informally with the interviewees and asked again if there were any questions or concerns. I tested my audio equipment, since the interviews were documented through recording, and I reminded the interviewees that

our process was more like informal conversations and that at any time, if they wished to stop the interview, we would do so. I then gave them the interview instructions to reread and began the interview asking them what their experience as a practitioner was like, what it meant to them, and what some of the social, historical, and cultural aspects of it might be.

The purpose of the questions was to encourage the interview process to stay as close to their lived experience as possible.

Participants are generally asked to describe in detail their experience of the topic being investigated. The specific question is generally very open in nature, with follow up discussion being led not so much by the researcher, but by the participant. Openness is critical and the exchange may be entirely open, with few direct questions asked. (Koch, 1996)

After approximately an hour in each interview, when the conversation came to a natural close, I thanked them for their participation and let them know that I would mail them a complete transcript within 2 weeks so that they could examine it for accuracy and provide any feedback. Although the interviews may have evoked some emotional content, there were minimal risks in terms of mental health issues and I did not have any initial significant concerns with regard to this. It was not likely this would become an issue, but of course, there was full disclosure of all details written into the informed consent document, and a follow up to confirm how each interviewee had experienced the interview process was sent to each participant, revealing that the experience had been satisfactory.

The primary data for this dissertation research consists of the five formal interviews requiring ethical consent, although prior fieldwork using an informal interviewing process had been conducted in the past and had also served to build trust

among certain key informants and founders in the area of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Although the five formal interviews form the bulk of collected data for this study, and are the new raw data from which to glean meanings, many other numerous informal interviews over time will also contribute to the overall data as they too describe the lived experience of Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners and essences they may share and are an integral part of the hermeneutic circular process that has been engaged in for many years.

The five formal interviews were recorded and transcribed in order to retain as much of the data as possible and to focus on any elements that are pertinent to this research. The data collection process also included, as mentioned, listening in to the context-culture of Brazilian jiu-jitsu phenomena through informal interviews and events, including a large body of experiential texts, such as instructional classes and seminars, tournaments, and personal conversations and informal interviews. These reviews took place on an ongoing basis throughout the research process and became incorporated into the hermeneutic process and textual analysis.

### **Procedures for Analyzing Data**

The vast data that was collected for this study include formal and informal interviews and the study of a large body of texts, all of which was analyzed through “a detailed thematic excavation and analysis which required the breakdown of text into meaning clusters. As these clusters yield revelations about the research question,” van Manen (1990) says, “the researcher can express the themes phenomenologically and build writing into the process” (pp. 94-95). The next step was to identify themes that were unique to the embodied practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu and ascertain whether they were essential to the phenomenon itself. As the themes that are unique to Brazilian jiu-

jiutsu emerged, they became the focus of writing and rewriting with regard to the research question, What is the experience of practicing Brazilian jiu-jitsu? It is this circular hermeneutic process that has led to the findings and conclusions of this research project.

Included in this dissertation are five formal interviews that were performed after obtaining informed consent and then transcribed verbatim. These interviews were then read and reread to glean meaning and emerging themes essential to the practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. The exercise of formal interviewing helped to formalize the hermeneutic process by making meaning of the texts and then circling back to additional texts on the subjects at hand, reengaging with the interviews, and so forth, all the while paying close attention to such aspects as voice, tone, comfort and discomfort, and external or environmental influences during the interviews. This multilayered process led to the foregoing discussion of Brazilian jiu-jitsu using a Jungian psychological lens to name and phenomena of the lived experience.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

I intentionally created limits by setting certain parameters to this research. My ideal was to work with people who have been successful in the field of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, whether through competition or business. That said, the formal interview portion of this study is limited to participants who have many years of experience, perhaps since childhood, and have a predisposed penchant for Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Those persons who have tried this martial art and not enjoyed it or even perhaps, a Gracie family member who became uninvolved in it for whatever reason, are not be represented in this study. In addition, the participants were not self-selected or random; they were handpicked by the researcher, which is a serious limitation in nearly all research. Lastly, because I have a

presence myself in the field of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, it is assumed that there is some influence on the willingness of the participant to comply with the request to be interviewed.

This research can never be the final word on the lived experience of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, and is obviously limited to a partial representation of such a topic. This research itself, because it is qualitative in nature, may lack validity and reliability since the nature of the methodologies might be considered to some unscientific.

### **Organization of the Study**

This dissertation manuscript as a whole is an investigation of the personal experiences of Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners. It was anticipated that the interviews and synthesis of data would serve to bring language to Brazilian jiu-jitsu as a psychologically transformative practice, and not only uncovered new knowledge, but articulate what is already collectively agreed upon amongst practitioners. The consists of six chapters as follows: Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 Literature Review, Chapter 3 Methodology, Chapter 4 Research Methods and Procedures, Chapter 5 Findings, Chapter 6 Implications for Depth Psychology, Chapter 7 Conclusions.

### **Ethical Concerns**

I did not foresee any immediate or significant ethical concerns with the proposed interviews, and I complied with the standards established by the American Psychological Association and the standards and procedures of Pacifica Graduate Institute's Ethics Committee, and where applicable, with the standards and procedures of any relevant community or institution that was involved in any aspect of the research process. I gained ethics committee approval prior to conducting interviews using the ethics

committee application (see Appendix A) in order to conduct myself with the utmost integrity as a researcher, in order to honor the following vital principles: respect for person, beneficence, justice, and the oath to do no harm. Informed consent was obtained from each interviewee prior to the research, and the ethics application also included a description of the research, which was given to each interviewee. Confidentiality was discussed with each participant, and each declined to have their names changed, and gave consent to use their full names.

## **Chapter 5 Findings**

### **Interviews and Analysis**

#### **Introductory overview.**

The formal interviews in this research project generated a great deal of insight into the practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, from the perspective of student, teacher, and expert—three aspects that each interviewee embodies. The interviewees were eager to discuss their passion, interested in the project, and wanted to be helpful. The questions were broad, open ended, and intended to allow the interviewee an opportunity to share in an unbiased manner. The interview took on a conversational quality in order to maintain a flow of dialogue. Instead of asking numerous pointed questions, I attempted to weave the larger topics of consideration, such as gender and culture, throughout the interaction.

It was clear during these interviews that putting bodily knowledge into written language is a tall order, and that psychological research in the area of somatics presents a unique challenge. The principle of somatics is that experience is built into the muscles, nervous system, and biochemistry of each individual and community. Putting these deep transformational experiences of the body, or body-mind, into psychological theory, or mapping them in a way that they can be tracked, is an unfamiliar task for most modern researchers, let alone athletes, and has primarily been left up to the poets and artists in the past.

In this research, it was evident that martial arts practitioners, Brazilian jiu-jitsu in particular, are not accustomed to describing their practice in psychological terms. The entire project has become a welcomed challenge in terms of searching for meaning

clusters and unique themes using depth psychological theory, in order to add to the body of work currently under the umbrella of somatic psychology.

The findings are presented in terms of emergent themes and patterns through the naming of personal and collective experiences, in terms of archetypal motifs, events and figures. With each interviewee, there is a developing story line and a personal psychology, a Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioner's personal myth, along with a vast array of archetypal experiences that coincide, affecting the environment and collective situation of each practitioner, and the Brazilian jiu-jitsu movement as a whole. The archetypal aspects of these interviewees overlapped a great deal. Instead of trying to use all of these ideas with each, I was able to hone in on central concepts and specifically potent aspects of each one in order to deepen and develop each idea further, illustrating that with each interview there was relative ease with which Brazilian jiu-jitsu experience could be seen through the Jungian archetypal lens, or more largely, through a depth psychological lens.

Each interview could have been analyzed using multiple archetypal ideas such as, initiatory experiences, the union of the opposites, separation, ego death and rebirth, the warrior/hero, teacher (wise old man), and anima/animus dynamics were all possibilities of discovery in each interview. For the most part, I chose to use each interview as a representation of depth psychological constructs, which overlap and form an intricate tapestry. The analyzation and reflection of each interview is contained in the presentation and forms a circular hermeneutic before progressing to the next interview. Although this may seem to have stops and starts as a process, I found that it was the only way to fully develop the essence that I was trying to bring to life for each of the five interviews. In each, I introduce background information and important concepts, bringing in the phrases

and comments that intimate or define particular concepts. After going over the data multiple times, and having the archetypal essences of initiation and warriorship, the future paradigm, wisdom and ritual, individuation, and the anima/animus present themselves with each interview, I decided that to develop one at a time would serve this research more fully than to discuss them with regard to each person.

Where the interviews differ is in how they are placed in the history of the development of Brazilian jiu-jitsu over the last 100 years. Personal heritage and cultural factors, when and how they came to the practice, and language were also discriminating factors. It is also important to note that the level of finesse with regard to applying psychological language to jiu-jitsu was an important factor. Regardless of these differences, with regard to the essences of jiu-jitsu, as compared to each other, or since its inception, the five interviewees I spoke with are considered experts.

The changes in jiu-jitsu, during recent years of explosive growth, enabled me to have a more representative sample to work with, since the logistics of how it is introduced to more people have changed to make it an expansive movement across cultures, gender, and age groups. The interviews focused on these social dynamics, not only touching on the individual path of the martial artist, but focusing on the collective potentials for this practice in our modern world.

#### **Interview #1—Professor JP Garcia.**

JP is a young Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt who has competed extensively and teaches martial arts full time. After having his own school in northern Los Angeles and encountering some unexpected financial mishaps, JP Garcia has recently moved to Santa Barbara to assist the owner of a Gracie Barra academy, where he is in charge of the kids

program there, as well as being the main instructor for all of the adult classes. Following is an online biography for JP, where, in his own words, he describes himself, his identity, and affiliation as follows. Although I will not list a complete competition history, or stated philosophies and affiliations for each interviewee, I use the following information as a biological sketch to lay the foundation and illustrate in black and white, the essence of warriorship that exists for all five of the interviewees. Each of the five, if I were to list all of their accomplishments, resembles a decorated warrior in battle, and a recognized leader in their communities. According to his bio,

Professor Juan Pablo Garcia started training Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu back in Ecuador, and after a couple of years he felt he needed more. He started traveling to Brazil and USA to train and to compete. JP is the first Ecuadorian/Chilean Black Belt under the Gracie Barra curriculum, he received his Black Belt from Professor Alberto Crane “UFC Veteran” and Professor Daniel “Montanha” De Lima. He is so great because of his extensive experience and knowledge on BJJ but most of all because of his generous and giving nature for the students to become all they can be.

His passion is to teach and spread jiu jitsu, Juan Pablo help to develop BJJ in Latin America, he has travel many years teaching classes, teaching seminars, competing, training all over the world in countries like Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and all over USA.

Juan Pablo stands out for being a great teacher of jiu-jitsu and self-defense. Teaching children starting at 3 years of age, adults, high-level athletes, police officers, military officers, fireman, UFC fighters, Pride veterans etc. Professor JP is an outstanding role-model and mentor to all of his students. Charisma and teaching skills are just as natural talents to him as Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

Some of his titles are:

- Vale Tudo Absolute Champion “COPA BIDOKAN” (2.000- 2.002 – 2.003)  
Guayaquil-Ecuador
- 3 times NAGA Champion (NORTH AMERICA GRAPPLING ASSOCIATION)  
Florida-USA
- Bahia Open Champion  
Bs As – Argentina
- PANAMERICAN INTERNATIONALS “GRAPPLING DIVISION” GI AND  
NO GI CHAMPION  
MIAMI- FLORIDA
- 16 man Absolute Championship “Best of the Best” SILVER  
Albuquerque- New Mexico

- IBJJF Florida State NO GI CHAMPION
- IBJJF American Nationals Bronze Medalist
- IBJJF Vegas Open Silver Medalist
- Los Angeles Open Silver Medalist”weight and Absolute”

### **Description**

Mission:

To train body, mind and spirit through the highest level of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu instruction as a vehicle for individual development and the strengthening of the family spirit, going beyond the “winning-losing” or “contest” philosophy.

### **General Information**

What is Gracie Barra Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu?

The benefits of Gracie Barra Brazilian Jiu Jitsu are far reaching and will touch every aspect of your life. At Gracie Barra, our students become leaders. Gracie Barra nurtures your independent thinking, supports your fighting spirit, and helps you achieve your personal BJJ goals.

Through GB BJJ, you will begin to understand yourself, on and off the mats, in ways you never imagined. You will test your limits and become the best you can be. GB respects that each student has their own goals and we support you in reaching them. The more you train, the better you will become and the more completely you will reach your true potential in life.

GB BJJ is for anyone who wants to learn how to defend him or herself in combat. What most people don't know, is that GB BJJ will also allow you to apply those same principles to fighting the daily battles of life, like weight loss, stress, relationship issues, and self-confidence. You will learn how to think through problems more constructively than before, on and off the mats.

At GB, you are a part of an extended family. You will join a team that will support you in your quest for self-improvement. Training the techniques and participating in live training sessions, with your partners and coaches, will give you an arsenal of weapons at your disposal whenever you should need them. The more you train, the more you will arm yourself with knowledge and skills to fight all your battles in life like a black belt.

We at GB believe that if everyone trained GB BJJ, the world would be a better place. (Juan Pablo Garcia Facebook Fan Page)

I had witnessed JP's interaction with some of the well-known schools in the northern Los Angeles area over the last few years, and was impressed with his positive attitude and enthusiastic and generative stance toward teaching jiu-jitsu. I reached out to him

regarding my research and he agreed to participate on a Saturday when I was planning to be in Santa Barbara. I met with JP at the academy where he currently teaches.

Although a great many professors are incredibly friendly and warm, JP is one of the most welcoming and pleasant professors that I have ever known. Although I had sent him the documents explaining what I was researching, he seemed a bit confused as to the nature of the interview, but overwhelmingly enthusiastic to help and participate. I showed him the long name of the dissertation again, and the description and instructions, letting him know in general terms that I was simply performing interviews with Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners to find out more about jiu-jitsu, what the experience of it is like, and what it can offer to people and communities.

JP's enthusiasm coupled with my eagerness for the project spilled way over the interview time. I turned the tape off after about 75 minutes, and his was the longest interview of the five. We spent several more hours walking around the area, eating lunch, and discussing jiu-jitsu all afternoon. This was not a huge surprise to me, as most practitioners are eager to talk about their passion, and I imagine that the other interviews could have also morphed into very long informal conversations, had each situation lent itself to that with time and place.

JP grew up in Ecuador, and before he started martial arts training, he describes himself as an overweight boy who fought a lot. Like many, he saw video of the early UFC fights in the 1990s and sought to find a place to learn Gracie jiu-jitsu. Although he says he never let kids bully him, and he got into a lot of fights, it was clear that he was initially looking for a place that would teach the very effective fighting technology that he had seen Royce Gracie use to defeat larger and stronger opponents in the UFC.

*The warrior archetype.*

As a youngster, JP was able to locate a judo academy and attend some Gracie seminars. He says,

I got very passionate about the martial arts. I didn't understand yet the positive, that it would be my life. I'm from a small country. The culture there is a lot of, like, fighting, drinking, from very early, and I really know that at the beginning, for me, it was more training just for, be able like, you know, of course defend myself.

JP reflected further that his early years of training were not about training for tournaments, to become a better person, but instead, it was used primarily for street fighting. He talked about not being proud of that time and losing contact with a lot of friends. It has been a long time. "I'm not that person anymore."

It was clear from what JP was saying that the shadow of martial arts training in certain environments could easily mean turning to violence as a solution, and even though so much of his early motivation to train was fitness and weight-loss related, fighting was a way to deter bullying and to gain a strong reputation as a tough guy. Even so, during this period, JP also described himself as so entrenched with training that it kept him out of the streets, away from drinking and drugs, and allowed him to develop a sense of direction: a dream to go to Brazil, and train with the Gracies and their predecessors. At 19, JP managed to make his way from Ecuador to Chile, then to Brazil, where he convinced his parents to allow him to seek a path toward his goals.

After several years of travel in his late teens, he ended up back home in Ecuador, training and teaching, and eventually travelling again to Italy and to the US, where he is currently settled and determined to continue teaching. His passion is working with young

children, since he believes in the benefits of discipline and a strong code of ethics for young people, especially with regard to bullying.

The qualities of the warrior archetype began to emerge in JP's story, and the theme of an initiatory process also emerged from the beginning of the interview, only to be more fully developed as he told his story of wanting to learn how to fight, fighting and sacrifice, and then wanting to stay away from fighting and teach others the new lifestyle that he had learned. He presented as someone who has travelled an arduous path, emerging victorious over his many battles of childhood and youth.

Although he is still in his 20s, it seemed clear that his path of initiation had already been quite long and layered, and enough to afford him the positive outlook of one who has fought many battles, some won, some lost. His overall demeanor, like that of a victorious warrior, was one of hope, strength, and gratitude. JP described a myriad of obstacles, such as cultural perception of martial arts, family career expectations, lack of business opportunity; yet, he landed in a place where he can focus on his passion of teaching everyone jiu-jitsu, but in particular, kids. "The kids, 100% I believe that it's so important to have the kids in martial arts because . . . you don't really, like, take the time and, and show him how to don't bully people or don't get bully"

In *The Initiation Process in Combat Sports* (2011), Sean Maghami explored the value of ritualized fighting, and through a narrative of his own journey in the world of combat sports, Sean wrote about his own initiatory process he experienced as a young man. In his own words,

In every fight, one loses and another wins, but regardless the experience is bigger than the physical combat. Fighting puts you in touch with primitive energy and brings your body and mind together. It allows you to measure your grandiosity against your opponent. And lastly, fighting embraces the pain which is essential

to the initiatory experiences that bring about true transformation of consciousness. (p. 39)

In traditional societies, the transition from childhood to adulthood is guided by rites of passages, where the elders of the community assist the young through a ritualized process to be endured and witnessed in order for the young person to emerge as a changed individual. There are few such traditions being practiced in modern society, and scholars and some psychological traditions hold concern that the experience needed for the development of healthy psychic structures during the path to manhood and/or womanhood are lacking in modern society. Maghami (2011) wrote about his experience of learning to fight in combat sports, and for him, it contained many experiences, which can provide a transformative process for the practitioner.

This implies that fighting, given the proper conditions, is a container for the archetype of initiation. The process of fighting in combat sports includes several stages which embody initiatory rituals. There is separation from family and friends to a commitment of harsh physical training. Death, of innocence or one's old identity, is continually engaged through sparring exercises and depleting one's physical energy through strenuous workouts. Rebirth is experienced through the small victories during training and as the body transforms itself to meet the demands placed upon it. Teachings are passed down from instructor to student which varies from the practical skills of the "sweet science" to the responsibilities that come with the newfound strength. An ordeal is met through full contact competition where one confronts his fears and needs to draw on inner resources to survive. Finally, the initiate returns as a new person whether he wins or loses the physical battle. (p. 37)

Although Maghami is an accomplished jiu-jitsu practitioner, in his thesis he was reflecting mostly about his MMA career, and although my interviewee, JP Garcia, engaged in some MMA fights in South America, his current lifestyle is one where he is purely involved in traditional martial arts instruction and practice. The distinction

between traditional and non-traditional is tricky, and the differences between Brazilian jiu-jitsu and MMA deserve attention, because of their rising popularity and recognition in the collective psyche, and their intertwined history and evolution. In the simplest sense, traditional means an academy-like atmosphere where certain practices and principles are upheld, where there is a code of conduct. MMA schools may have some of these practices, but they are often not required.

Although the definition of such a code can vary quite a bit, the core aspects of most modern martial arts schools are quite similar. They involve lining up before and after class, some type of bow to the head instructor when entering or leaving the training area, not talking or interrupting while the instructor is teaching, and helping your teammates, new and established, whenever possible. Although many of these structural code-like traditional practices serve to enforce safety, they also help to develop discipline, concentration, humility, and commitment to one's own personal growth, as well as toward the common good of all. These things are evident in the themes of informal conversation among martial artists of all disciplines, as well as the written materials used to describe, market, and perpetuate the ideology of martial arts practice in modern times. Many martial arts schools sponsor accomplished MMA fighters and specialized MMA practices that are in addition to the regular classes, something akin to a wrestler training for the Olympics, versus participating on a high school team. The training would be more varied, highly individualistic, and outside of the realm of regular classes. The main difference is that MMA cannot be offered for all skill levels and age groups.

There are currently many schools advertising and teaching young children MMA, and this is a testimony to the attempts at gaining market share from families who are perhaps uninformed, or otherwise overzealous. It is evidence that in the collective psyche, there is an emerging prominence of the notion that learning to fight has some inherent value, or that learning to defend oneself is a valuable practice. However disturbing this notion of teaching children to fight may be to some, the truth is that it is very uncommon (not to mention unethical or illegal) to teach actual MMA to children, and is more of a marketing ploy, at least in the United States, except in some rare cases.

It would be very hard to teach the full gamut of MMA to children without raising some serious concerns, and oftentimes the term is used in advertising simply to draw interest and not necessarily to engage children in a dangerous practice. JP told me that when he was young, he wanted to learn how to fight. He dreamed of becoming a fighter because that was the cool thing to be. He said he was wild, and that he came from a culture of fighting. "Like I said, it's the law of the jungle there. They try, everybody tries to be the tough person so you get a like a lot of challenges." It was not until much later that he developed the goal of staying away from the nonproductive type of fighting, and was engaged fully instead in a lifestyle of learning and teaching a fighting style in a more evolved and refined way.

MMA as it has been known since the early 1990s, is a style of fighting currently performed in a cage that has fewer rules than martial arts tournaments, and uses multiple styles of striking, wrestling, and grappling at one time. Unlike Brazilian jiu-jitsu, which can literally be practiced at full speed in a safe and controlled environment, it is not possible to simulate an MMA fight without the very likely possibility of some type of

bodily damage. The history of mixed martial arts and Brazilian jiu-jitsu and their current relatedness is an intricately woven ordeal and beyond the scope of this research.

However, I have discussed it in great detail with many jiu-jitsu practitioners, former MMA fighters, students and illustrious athletes. The general consensus is that MMA fighting is an extreme form of training that offers a very potent initiatory experience, but not the type of training that is suitable for a general population. It is an activity that is perhaps meant for a select few individuals, and I have wondered a great deal about whether it draws a certain psychic structure characterized by “woundedness,” and further, embodies the wounded healer/warrior archetype in a way that rivals the extreme examples of traditional societies. It is an activity that involves very high physical risk, as well as commitment and dedication that will not allow serious practitioners to engage in any other type of work or extracurricular activity, while training, because the regimen is so intense.

All told, it is oftentimes the interest and intrigue in MMA that draws potential students to study Brazilian jiu-jitsu. It is in many ways the gateway, originally popularized by the Gracie family, who sent many of their own into public displays of fights. They are, although largely responsible for the popularization of MMA, not necessarily engaged in MMA other than to promote their own practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. It is more likely that you will find Gracie family members, their students, and practitioners enjoying a lifestyle that involves a great deal of leisure, family time, and emphasis on relaxation and healing in between training sessions, than living the current rigorous, highly commercialized, and very dramatic lifestyle of the MMA world.

In recent decades, the Gracie family has become more focused on the growth of the sport of Brazilian jiu-jitsu; MMA contests have gained the interest of a large number of world class athletes, and it is rarer to see a Gracie in an MMA contest nowadays. The full-time MMA fighter's lifestyle and tough guy mentality is a rare trait and again, reserved for a particular character type, although still, nearly all MMA fighter practice Brazilian jiu-jitsu, many successful MMA fighters are accomplished jiu-jitsu competitors, and it is the popularity of MMA that continues to promulgate everything about Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

With the popularization of MMA, there is a paradox in the martial arts industry where so many young people are drawn to it, as in any fad or hero worship, to become MMA fighters, and what they find when they begin training is much more than that. It is the mentality of wanting to learn how to fight, the avenue where one can put their energy, as JP described to me, like they do on television, that draws much of the interest to Brazilian jiu-jitsu. It is an alternative to street fighting, but not one that everyone can participate in. The whole phenomena of collective interest in MMA fighting is also beyond the scope of this work, but the notion that a large percentage of jiu-jitsu students are drawn to learn Brazilian jiu-jitsu through this phenomenon is of keen interest to this researcher. Nearly any young person, like JP Garcia, who wants to learn how to fight will seek out a place to learn Brazilian jiu-jitsu, because it is the style that has the most association with success in fighting. These seekers may be motivated by a variety of circumstances ranging all the way from defending themselves against a bully or would-be attacker, to the interest in learning combat techniques to be used in foul play or to harm others.

It is quite the coincidence when seekers of dangerous techniques, motivated by pop culture and dreams of dominating others, end up in an environment where teamwork and trust are the highest values and learning to fight in order not to need to fight is the sine qua non end result of the training. That is, as if there was an end result, or ultimate goal. Even the coveted black belt, that so many have toiled and sacrificed to pursue, is only a step on the journey, a plateau in the lifestyle known as Gracie jiu-jitsu, that attempts to emphasize personal health and communal values of camaraderie and equanimity.

The principles of trust and loyalty that were the inherent essence of combat training regimes of samurai warriors in the tribal communities of feudal Japan have continued to be emphasized as strong social values, although refined to meet modern times, all throughout the 1900s in jiu-jitsu training. These high levels of trust and loyalty are a necessity to the training due to the nature of the techniques that are practiced, namely joint locks and chocks, where teammates are regularly situated in very vulnerable and/or dominant positions over each other. As long as the techniques hold such inherent power and they are practiced with full speed, the need for trust and camaraderie will be emphasized in any traditional Brazilian jiu-jitsu training, just as in any team sport, if not more.

JP reflected about his past, and what he has learned while being a jiu-jitsu practitioner.

Respect for your coaches. Like, uh, have a good attitude. Respect for your partner. Be friendly, like, you know, so I think it's very positive. And it's usually that uh, again, I think me as a teenager, I think most of the, the reason like, you fight is because you are scared. Now I'm very confident about myself. I don't care like, somebody get in my face and like say something because like, it's not worth it. I know that, yeah. I do it [fight in the dojo] every day. It doesn't

motivate me anymore. And I do it [fight] all the time. Like, training and learning. So it's not like I need to go inside and prove myself, or. You know what I mean.

Further,

If you create a culture like the young kids, they just, you know, they grow up so confident, and believing in themselves and . . . I see uh, kids like they don't even talk to you. They're a little shy and, are very like, into themselves and man, get like so, so much uh, open, so much confident. . . . Their moms come to me and say yeah, he's doing good in school now. Like he talk to, he have more friends in school. He's even doing better on, on the school. So I, I really think I am doing a positive thing. And, and it's making me happy.

Perhaps the archetypal code of initiation that propelled JP Garcia in his early years is the same phenomenon that brings young people to him to study. Although we did not name his own personal journey an initiatory experience per se, but described it in detail, it emerged as the most powerful theme in our time together. The cyclical nature of his process, where what he learned was now being presented as a way to give back to the young (and old) who sought a similar experience, was undeniable. Jung (1968) emphasized that initiation has an archetypal foundation. The constellation of the archetype of initiation, as a structural component of the psyche, has a specific purpose in the development of the human personality:

When the fascinating and unique influence of the parental images has to be loosened, so that the child is liberated from his original biological participation with the parents, then Nature, that is the unconscious nature in the man, in her infinite wisdom produces a certain kind of initiation. You find it with very primitive tribes—it is initiation into manhood, into participation in the spiritual and social life of the tribe. (p. 175)

JP's story was filled with the unmistakable pattern of meaning that I have heard told over and over again, with the specific details of JP Garcia's life being recorded. As we gave memory to those utterings, and then as I reread, and reflected up on their meaning, I interpreted that the nature of the practice of jiu-jitsu is such a powerful tool, that it

deserves to be looked at formally for its potentials with young and old to meet the psychic needs of a culture lacking in initiation as well as to transform the meanings of modern initiation into a palatable experience for larger numbers of participants to utilize.

***The archetype of initiation.***

Robert Moore (2001) stated his belief that

all discussions of the archetype of initiation start with the assumption that life is series of transformations. . . . Initiation refers to something that is part and parcel of the universal spiritual journey, the pilgrimage of human life. Initiation is the process of dying and being reborn. (p. 78)

Within primitive cultures, all important events were marked or celebrated by rituals that signified transformation of consciousness, expanding a young person's role in society to encompass that of the larger community. It signifies a new stage in life and a new level of responsibility, a new awareness.

Detailed and time-honored instructions were given to the male so that he could transfer his psychic energy to the next stage of life through rituals and ceremonies (Jung, 1968). Elders help the young men change their social status through rites and oral teachings and also taught the traditions of their tribes and connected initiates to their ancestors. The old identity had to die so that a new being could emerge. JP Garcia came from a culture of fighting, was driven by a desire to learn to fight, eventually began dreaming of becoming a Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt, and sacrificed many years of his life, just to train and learn.

Although he expressed great love and devotion toward his family in South America, JP is the only person to have left his hometown, and his long-term goal is to return, own a school in his hometown, and teach there.

I'm on a, in a, in a mission. Like I really wanna, I have a, a little like dream going in South America. I, I won't move over there. It, it is great so I really support that and um, I, I don't know. I, I wanted to prove, there's a lot of young kids that, that, that, in, in South America that, the same thing that I they don't have the, the youth in the city but they're so passionate and they wanna do it and uh, like I said, look at me, I left my house, right. I was so close to my family but I see like, I, I left. Just following and, and trying to look like uh, where I can train and where I can get my black belt and to live somewhere. I lived in so many places like I was like I moved a lot. Like, Miami, Orlando, Argentina, Brazil. Uh, Portland. I, I end up in California. New Mexico. Like for, so it was wherever I can train.

Through his years maturing from a potentially violent character to a tempered gentleman who holds the secrets to a deadly corporeal technology, he has traversed what we call initiation. His surrender to a brand new communal and very hierarchical setting and set of values is such that he has an offering to any community where he is situated to teach jiu-jitsu, and in his case, namely to youth.

***Ancient roots of the archetype of initiation.***

Jiu-jitsu training can deliver a steady dose opportunity for ego-development, and MMA offers a glimpse into the extreme of the initiatory quality of combat. At the end of a very important fight, late in his career, Renzo Gracie approaches the camera and said, "If I end up my career without a face like this then I didn't know who I was. You see when I bite, my teeth don't match. It's an incredible feeling." Then he leans toward the camera and whispers so that his wife will not hear, "It's better than sex" (Aldous, 2008). If regular training can offer small doses of change in a person's life, perhaps intense competition or participating in MMA fights are more representative of traditional rites of passage, where the risks of physical harm are high. In indigenous cultural traditions, rites of passage may involve an initiatory crisis and a wounding through sacred illness. Regular jiu-jitsu training offers condensed opportunities of individual personal development, a unique communal experience, and perhaps an introduction to warriorship,

a modern version if you will, whereas engaging in MMA and serious competitive jiu-jitsu involves accessing the warrior archetype on a deeper level.

This often involves an initiatory crisis, with or without illness, but oftentimes with a great deal of contemplation, despair, or wounding. This underworld journey of transformation involves a kind of abyss of isolation. The symbolic expression of this is falling into death—not only a death state, but also a death space—the, afterlife, the realm of the ancestors, the land of the dead, the spirit world. In indigenous cultures, when illness takes the form of an initiation crisis, it can involve isolation from the community and loss of collective identity (ego disintegration) in order to further strengthen a connection to spirit (Ryan, 1999).

The initiate may engage in a planned ceremony or event, or may retreat, unplanned, to a remote location. Each experience involves a confrontation with the unconscious (spirit world), or simply, the unknown. The initiate learns to tend difficult aspects of self and contend with the power of collective energy. Battling complexes of personal imbalance and collective unconscious contents overwhelms a future shaman/warrior/hero, leading to complete disintegration. Indigenous teachings refer to this state as *dismemberment*. Enduring the lack of a cohesive ego and securing helping entities allow the completion of the resolution phase. Insight and personal medicine are gleaned. If there is a reconstitution of the ego and a new submissive relationship to the soul, the initiate returns to the community bearing information and experience (medicine) to share. It is the inner psychic structures, the activated archetype of the warrior, the wounded healer and the hero that assist with this process of boyhood to manhood. For Professor JP Garcia, the activation of these inner structures first appeared at the age of

fourteen, and he sought, with determined enthusiasm, to find the place where he could learn Gracie jiu-jitsu, as a method of fighting. What JP found was more than fighting style or way of defending attack, but a method of learning how to temper anger, a way of living that had a built in method of looking within, challenging the ego to develop finesse and flexibility with winning and losing, every time he showed up to train.

Before, like I want to win this medal. I was thinking what people were thinking about me. I have to win this so to kind of prove somebody and now I realize it doesn't matter. Now I want to learn. I have this mistake so then I then I just learn from it. I do it because I wanna learn and get better.

In jiu-jitsu, the only way one can get better is to remain engaged in a process where they are admitting defeat and claiming victories. This decisive element is something that remains constant in any jiu-jitsu practitioner's career, from Day 1 until the end. Although the level of intensity and what is at stake, the level of competitiveness, will vary over time, and between particular partners, it is the definition of the game. With these parameters, the ego becomes saturated with experiences of unexpected disintegration and reintegration, which are the stereotypical challenges of the path of the warrior and the archetype of initiation. In mythology, the initiate will experience literal dismemberment as a metaphor for such disintegration. Although the practice of jiu-jitsu is considered relatively safe, it definitely involves extreme care and responsibility to teach and practice, as the movements are capable of serious destruction. Most long-term practitioners have sustained some physical injury, and the inability to train often becomes its own literal dismemberment to contend with. Nevertheless, the inner work necessary to remain engaged with the practice is such that a change in identity is almost inevitable. JP's story illustrates quite nicely how a young man, prone to street fighting, might be transformed

as he approaches adulthood, along the path of initiation as a teacher and upstanding member of the community, this being the ultimate gift of the warrior's path.

**Interview #2—Kayron Gracie.**

***Myth of the modern athlete.***

Professor Kayron Gracie is the eldest son of Master Carlos Gracie, Jr., who is currently one of many patriarchal figures from the well-known Gracie family, and currently the most active and responsible for the growth and organization of the sport. Kayron is the grandson of Carlos Gracie, Sr., the founder of the art. He is currently 25 years old and he has been around jiu-jitsu since before he can even remember. Some of his earliest memories are of being tossed around by all the big guys. He is an accomplished competitor, instructor, and runs a school of his own. The Gracie family is steeped in tradition and mystery. They have a practice of naming the majority of their offspring with very unique names beginning with R (pronounced H) and recently begun using the letter K. Some of the very well-known examples: Rorion, Reylson, Royler, Royce, Rickson, Roger, and now Kron, Kyra, Kivia, and Kayron.

When he was 17, Kayron moved from Brazil to the United States to become integrally involved with the development of the Gracie Barra headquarters, and essentially develop his persona as the heir to the growth and future of the sport as a whole. Although Kayron is very young, and lives a humble lifestyle training and teaching, his closest inspiration and formal personal instructor is Marcio Fietosa, the figure in charge of Gracie Barra, and momentum behind the rapid way in which it is developing throughout the world. Because Kayron is very young and still competing, his current responsibilities are primarily in running an academy and honing his skills as one

of the best known competitors and as a professor. For many, this dual role is a difficult task, as world-class level training is a full time job, akin to any Olympic athletic pursuits.

In addition, Kayron, as with many of his Gracie cousins, is charged with the task of defending his family name and creating a path of success that illustrates great prowess, and ingenuity in his family sport. For Kayron, he has the added burden of being the eldest descendent of the most prolific character in the Gracie family today. This is due to the successful growth rates of his father's endeavors, which include heading up the largest chain of Brazilian jiu-jitsu schools and founding the organization that runs the largest tournaments, and a total of 50 worldwide events. All together, the task in front of him amounts to that of a superhero, although he is very laid back on and off the mats.

Kayron was born into quite a communal environment, and discussed, quite frankly, that he knows no other way of living. He said,

When I get on the mat, everybody that's on the mats, it's almost like a family, my dad would trust me to all his students, 'cause he knew everybody and the environment there. Everybody treats you like family. And uh, so I just play around with everybody. Older guys be treating me like they would treat their sons.

These were his boyhood memories surfacing. I said, "It's almost hard to make it separate because you don't know anything different, anything else." He said, "Yes, that's, that is, be all my life. So I've never not have. So I don't know the difference between not having and having."

In the jiu-jitsu world that Kayron was raised in, the principals of equanimity and camaraderie were valued above all else, even individual pursuits (which were also very important and competitive). The environment he grew up in was one where the survival

of the team and the organization were the utmost priority, and taking care of each other, as family, and loyal comrades, was the way of the academy.

While talking to Kayron, I got a feeling of clarity of intention, a rising to any occasion, almost like the qualities of water seeming to emerge from his words and our discussion, making its way back to the highest level of positive impact at every turn. This clear sense comes through an air of simplicity and friendliness, a genuine playful attitude touching on great innocence, yet grounded in ancient wisdom. This was my intuitive sense during this one-on-one conversation with Kayron, and the more times I reflect on the nature of it and contemplate him as a leader in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, the more I realize the worth of his father's suggestion to me that I interview the younger generation of practitioners about what is coming.

*New myths of modern consciousness.*

Many intellectuals and spiritual leaders believe we are in the midst of a new myth. In 1984, leading Jungian analyst, Edward Edinger wrote, "The essential new idea is that *the purpose of human life is the creation of consciousness*. The key word is 'consciousness' " (p. 17). He further elaborates on the etymology of consciousness, which at its root means, "knowing with" or "seeing with" an "other" (p. 36). With this hint, we can understand consciousness as a process of becoming known, being seen, or having been witnessed. A myriad of archetypal symbols illustrate this process. Edinger prefers the eye, or Eye of God, and discusses religious motifs of the process of "knowing with" and "linking back" to connectedness with supreme values and meaning. On an individual level, the witnessing and becoming conscious of previously unknown aspects

of psyche create humility for the ego and in time, an attitude of being in service toward the Self from the ego's point of view.

In Kayron's case, the myth of scheduling ceremony, a therapy session, or anything of the sort, is a thing of the past. He lives in a world where everyone is transforming around him constantly, students see things about themselves to integrate, discard, or modify, every class, every day. Kayron has been a witness to this type of continuous midwifing of soul since he was 2 or 3 years old, and instead of being asked to leave the adults to do their work, a place was made for him in the process, and he is a master at witnessing and teaching others to do the same. He makes it look nearly effortless.

Certainly many modern phenomena occurring as a result of globalization point toward the notion that we are involved in a new myth of creating consciousness, and the exponential growth of Brazilian jiu-jitsu schools may very well be making a contribution to these shifts. Many of the world's spiritual traditions, including bodies of knowledge associated with Eastern traditions and often directly affiliated with martial arts traditions, previously kept secret, are now being shared. Whether or not we are currently in the midst of this new consciousness, it is clear that the experiences, writing, and impact of Jung reaches far and wide across cultures, disciplines, and healing modalities. His work is a testimony to the belief in the inherent creative force underlying the human psyche. His theories provide a place for the unknown and irrational qualities of psyche to be witnessed. Because of this, an open-mindedness and nonjudgmental stance toward symptom and mystery is possible, and now includes somatic studies, which opens the door to a new way of studying the psychology of sports.

Similar views of curiosity toward mystery and symptoms are also evident in indigenous cultural traditions. Quantitative science and therefore, most psychological research, often excludes this type of investigation. Therefore, most Western thought regarding human development is still narrowly focused on statistically-measured results. Concerns about this have been echoed by many and are gaining strong momentum across disciplines in the 21st century. James Hollis (2000) describes:

When we recall that the Greek work *psyche* means *soul*, then we are obliged to discern that the tragedy of most modern psychologies, which divide the person into behaviors, cognitions, and psychobiologies—each true, but each partial—is that their practitioners ignore the most immediate reality of all, namely, the suffering of the soul, as manifest in the consulting room. The bankruptcy of modern psychology is its flight from the soul, and therefore from the transcendent task of meaning. (p. 16)

With the development of integrated/complementary medicine, we are now at a juncture where spirituality, religion, and the body are gaining more currency. Evidence of this can be seen in two of the most encouraging developments in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 4th ed., text revision, 1994). The recent includes an appendix outlining and defining Culturally Bound Syndromes (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 897) and the Religious or Spiritual Problem (p. 741) categories for focus of clinical attention. These two additions are a result of the mandate on the American Psychological Association to become more culturally competent, and to devise spiritual assessment tools. Increasing mainstream interest in the field of psychoneuroimmunology, a deeper focus on concepts such as neuroplasticity, and exponential growth in mind-body technologies like meditation, yoga, and martial arts seem to point toward a new mythology of connectedness, and potential for psychic wholeness in modern times.

These developments point toward the honoring of sacred experiences, and inviting the unknown into our understanding of the human psyche. Ironically, when interacting with someone like Kayron who is already embedded in these new trends, and who has lived a balanced life unknown to most people, I find that all of this language is unnecessary and overcomplicates the idea. However necessary the mental exercise may be to track where we have been and where we are going from an old to a new paradigm, in practice, the best ideas are pure and simple. Kayron is a very intelligent person, a master of his own body and ingenuity, whether in effective moves, business, or long-term visions for what he believes in.

### ***Tending soul.***

The idea of soul, or spirituality, or the *imaginal* have become popularized by new age trends, and a loosening up of the confines of religious dogma, out of a need to accommodate diversity. My interview with Kayron was a reminder that transformational experiences will not discriminate on the mats. It is a very egalitarian space where all souls are treated equally. Although I have been focused on these possibilities for a very long time, while talking with Kayron, I was inspired by his level of understanding, expectation for, and sense of a person's whole self being present while grappling. It seems that in modern psychology we may have a long way to go to catch up to some of these natural-born somatic geniuses.

The tending of soul within psychology was bolstered by the work of early pioneers in the psycho-spiritual movement. This movement has existed from the beginnings of analytical psychology. In time, the psychosomatic and psycho-spiritual fields became separated out of the mainstream and until recently, have been considered subordinate to

cognitive and behavioral perspectives, in large part because they are not readily studied using statistical analysis. It is difficult to study sensual experiences and embodied practices using the scientific method.

William James (1902) in his best-selling series of documented lectures, entitled *Varieties of Religious Experience*, made his revolutionary point that religion is defined by the feelings, acts, and experiences of individuals. He differentiated between a healthy-minded soul and a sick soul that was in need of being born again through a spiritual conversion. Huston Smith (2004), one of the foremost scholars of the world's religions, argued that

since the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> centuries' Scientific Revolution, the ceiling Western science has been locked into is the controlled experiment. For 300 years we have labored under a truncated view of reality. Now the ground is being cleared for a re-enchantment of the sensual in experience, and the wave is open for a restoration of cultural conviction to rejoin humanity. (n.p.)

James was one of the first psychologists to theorize and depict that numinous experiences were pivotal psychic growth opportunities. Many have contributed since James and Jung's work that began in the early 1900s. For example, James Hillman has contributed to the field of archetypal, or imaginal psychology, in which images are honored in the Platonic tradition. Hillman advocates an aesthetic practice in working with images where sensuality is emphasized. Even though ancient philosophers and modern theorists, like Hillman, have already recognized the importance of the imaginal realm in human psychic development, modern science is just now attempting to look at consciousness in terms of the visual cortex and its connections to the biological and energetic systems of the body, such as the neurotransmitter sites and chakra system.

Carl Jung's paradigm was one where a personal mythology, an individual encounter with the archetypal in service to the collective, could bring the individual into right relation with himself and his community. He saw a need for depth and a need for encounter with the unconscious. Hillman furthered the idea with the notion that we need to allow the unconscious an honorable place in daily life. These and the philosophical shifts described above, point toward the cutting edge field of eco-somatics, and securing a place for the study of soma, adding athletics as part of the working knowledge of depth psychology, where the body can be the originator, or generator, or vehicle of the unconscious. Jung treated dreams as the sine qua non of material for psychoanalysis and spent his life's work developing and encouraging a reverence for image and symbol, expanding the view of myth, culture, and spirituality in the field of psychotherapy. As a proponent of somatic psychology, I contend that just as Jung's work brought a contemplative value to the life of the poet and artist in psychoanalysis, that in addition, there is also a metaphorical act occurring in certain body technologies, where some will achieve the same opportunity to work with the unconscious that active imagination has provided for Jungian followers.

Kayron Gracie is in some ways the heir apparent, to the Brazilian jiu-jitsu movement, since his father is currently the most prominent patriarchal figure, and his grandfather was the founder, but this also makes him the subject of great projection, expectation, and pressure. In the middle of this dynamic is the notion that he is still very young, and although early in his career, quite worldly in his own right. He has, after all, made the journey from his home country to reestablish his citizenship, successfully competed on the world stage and travelled extensively as a result, and has now become

grounded in the experience of being a contributor to his community, since he teaches full time. If anyone is to carry a new myth, or a new paradigm forward in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, it will be Kayron and his cohort, to include many of his cousins.

I asked Kayron what jiu-jitsu can do for people and he said,

It, it can do so much I think it fits every like, every family there's a different need. And I think jiu-jitsu fits all those needs 'cause it helps the weak person and it helps the strong person also. Or it helps the one that's being bullied and it helps the bully. So it goes all the way, I think. jiu-jitsu helps, I think, all around.

He explained to me how over time you develop the ability to see how a person really is and read them by watching how they train. He said it is a thing you learn over time, a way to read a person's personality, more than the techniques they use, or the expression on their faces.

In the field of somatic psychology, there is an emerging body of work that is called eco-somatics and it is this cutting edge field that represents the type of new paradigm that young Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners, and many young people in general, are attuned to. Ecology, in its simplest form is the study of organisms and their environment. It is here that I incorporate the notion of Brazilian jiu-jitsu schools and the movement as a whole. There is often an air about accomplished Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belts that speaks implicitly (and at times, explicitly) about the mat being their home, the academy is their home, and whoever comes into this place is like a potential family member.

Within the emerging field of eco-therapy, which already hosts a great deal of evidenced-based research, eco-somatics has originated and points to a view of the world through motion, which assumes that we are constantly changing, co-creating, and that through personal awareness and deliberate self-reflection, multiple potentials and choices

become possible. Rather than seeing our environment and nature, as in early classical ecology, or studying cultures through a purely objective lens, as in classical anthropology, eco-therapy and eco-somatics attempt to transcend the duality of a purely objective-subjective view. Through the development of embodied creativity, awareness, and self-reflection, we rise to the notion that we are a part of the environment rather than merely observers in the midst of a transpersonal field.

One way of illustrating some of the potentials in this new paradigm is to bring thoughtful attention to the intersubjective field as an experientially flowing container for transformation. There is a hierarchical structure in the teaching of theoretical knowledge in jiu-jitsu based on experience, for purposes of creating a safe container (alchemical vessel) for the practice in each “rolling” session or class. This structure is not so rigid that it creates an exclusive atmosphere of students or subjects to be taught. It is very likely that the Brazilian cultural influence of the last 100 years upon the art of jiu-jitsu has metamorphosed some of the linear, martially-driven traditional teaching methods that were present in Japan, as a natural byproduct of its roots in feudal culture. Indeed, the social constrictions and political circumstances will always influence the development of an art. Kayron told me,

Brazilian people are very warm with other people. I think a lot of people, they lack that and most of the people in the world don't have a lot of friends. So they come into the jiu-jitsu school and they see all these people so happy and they make one hundred new friends you know, fast. They are like, Oh my God, this changed my life!

Brazilian jiu-jitsu is a fun and practical way to develop body confidence for fitness, self-defense, and competition. When I asked Kayron about jiu-jitsu as a personal path for growth he told me

Yes, when you start training, you start thinking that you can do a lot of things you never thought you'd be able to. Like, controlling someone or having control of the body or you're even able, if you want, you can even kill someone. You know, easily. If, with your hands. So this gives like, a person a lot of power and a lot of I think, joy. And a lot of confidence to walk around, too. Yeah, but at the, and, but at the same way so gentle. That it can do all that without even scratching the other person. You know, so I think you come here and train super hard and both the guys fall to the side without being able to breathe but nobody got hurt, nobody got even one scratched. You know, and had a great time and had fun.

This discussion serves as a backdrop for a new paradigm hinging on a new language that incorporates mind and body into the field of psychology. It not only gives credence to the incredible potential for transformation when soma is considered as a symbol or metaphor for the possibility of an encounter or ongoing relatedness with the unconscious, but it is the beginning of a new language, a new way to discuss the psychobiology or human activity, in terms of environment and culture. Some young people have been raised with this type of integrated, ecological language, and they are frankly embedded in a slightly different worldview where mind, body, and spirit are not technically separated, in the way that prior generations have struggled with it.

Kayron Gracie told me that

cause kids absorb real much quicker than adults. Their minds are 100% open. The adults a little bit more closed. You have to open the door. For kids, already open so they seek the environments out so if you going to a jiu-jitsu school, you can walk in, and already feel the environments, it's an amazing environment; family.

I believe what Kayron refers to here is the lack of polarity that he has experienced with regard to mind and body and what he recognizes as a natural tendency in children and something that has been lost in many adults.

For practitioners such as Kayron who have spent the better part of their lives practicing and being in constant touch with a lethal animalistic nature that allows one to

choke another human being or break their limbs, using the simple, yet often unlearned physical knowledge of the bodies' mechanistic potential as tools, there is little chance that polarization and disconnection between mind and body would go unnoticed. When a practitioner such as Kayron, who has a lifelong commitment to regular practice, develops his own refined method of fighting and play, he develops a reputation *on the mat*, which will be shared far beyond his particular training partners. Because Kayron has been immersed in such an embodied practice since birth, there yields a unique transpersonal experience; he essentially carries the secrets of a new paradigm, and possibly some of the language that will carry it forward.

Comparing him to a different species that spends a certain part of the day playing and fighting, both for fun and for decisive roles, is an easy task, when this is essentially how he has spent nearly every day of his life. Knowing he is so refined and evolved that his lethal knowledge will not be misused and that he prefers not to engage in an altercation unless it is completely unavoidable, reveals his gentle nature.

The principals of eco-somatics are that every movement matters, the work is viewed through motion, and deliberate self-reflection is critical. Through the development of embodied creativity, awareness, and self-reflection, we rise to the notion that we are part of the environment. There is nothing like the experience of the emotions of being dominated by potentially deadly techniques and learning how to submit others with the same, all along developing a higher sense of gentleness and finesse, to convince a human being that they are a part of the developing environment, rather than a simple subject or observer. The great paradox is too that in the midst of achieving these binary moments of aggressiveness and defensiveness, the momentum continues, shape shifts,

and is constantly in motion, undefined, then defined, then undefined again. It is a special tension of the opposites that is always in place, out of place, and then in place once again.

This notion brings a curious meaning to Jung's ideas, and is furthered by his concerns that humans be engaged in a process of reflection and continuous adaptation, two things that jiu-jitsu requires. It is this point that makes one wonder if humans are in fact the only beings capable of such mental schemata. Any avid jiu-jitsu practitioner will attest to the notion of contemplation of their successes and failures to the point of rumination. It is this angst, in the midst of endearing play and fun, that often drives the engagement with the activity for most students. For Kayron, it is all he has ever known, he knows no different, and he is embedded into a torch-carrying position as the son of the main Gracie patriarch.

It is my belief that practical knowledge is something we share with animals and that ultimately jiu-jitsu is one of the finest examples of trans-performative practice, and more specifically trans-species-performative, because we are allowing ourselves to drop into a state that remembers the wisdoms of the body that we share with the animal kingdom. Perhaps these bits of knowledge were lost in childhood, or they may lie in a dormant state for generations or much longer. The notion is clear from my experience talking with hundreds of jiu-jitsu practitioners and from meeting with Kayron, that we find experiences in these movements that are valuable to us both personally and socially. Most people agree that there is something very special about being able to train with full resistance and access the survival instincts that are our biological nature.

I found by looking at things through Kayron's description that it brought a new lens to the subjective-objective field, not one that I was entirely unfamiliar with, but one

that I had not fully appreciated as a way of life for those born into jiu-jitsu as he had been. It was the beginning of a critical eye to the intersections of individual, communal, and social development, and is an in-depth look at the nonduality of mind and body in martial arts. Brazilian jiu-jitsu is both a technique and a practice, a battle and a game. “The polarity of body and mind is not only the occasion for much individual suffering but is also a great cultural problem of the Western world,” Sassenfeld (2008) says. “Jung could be ambivalent about addressing it” (p. 1). McNeely (1987) points out that Jung was interested in finding a way to transcend the body-mind dualism and to integrate the opposites, and Redfearn (1998), on the other hand, points out that in his writings on alchemy, that Jung emphasized repeatedly the need of an existing separation between body and mind.

It is the archetypal level that may offer a bridge to in the mind-body dichotomy by including in its definition both psychological and somatic aspects (McNeely, 1987). Although I have not analyzed my interview here with Kayron through an archetypal lens, it is important to note that he exudes the potential for it. His life is steeped in archetypal currency, so to speak. He is, for instance, the epitome of the frivolousness and always positive the *puer aeternus* characterizes. At the same time you see the eternal boy/eternal optimist, and hear him say, “I am friends with everybody”; he can shape shift quickly, and show characteristics of the wise sage, or senex. His life, very much like JP Garcia and my other interviewees, has taken a path of hard work and sacrifice, and great physical, mental, and communal learning, in order to bring the same specific teachings to others. All of this experience, in the midst of archetypal patterns that are needed in

psychological initiation, transcendence, and individuation, has been embedded in a sense of play and great fun, emphasizing a family atmosphere extending around the globe.

**Interview #3—Master Jacare Cavalcante.**

Master Jacare is one of the most elite jiu-jitsu figures around. He is the eldest of all my interviewees at 61 years old, and still trains nearly every day. He is one of only a handful of red and black belt holders, and is the head of the prestigious and successful Alliance team. After growing up in Brazil, and training with the Gracie family starting at age 11, he competed extensively, opened his own academy in Brazil, and subsequently moved to the United States where he lives with his family and runs the Alliance headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. I was able to meet with him while I was visiting there, and sit with him and record our conversation.

***The teacher.***

When you meet Jacare, you realize right away that it is someone you need to respect. There is no question about this, and if there was any doubt, you would quickly see the way others are around him and act accordingly. He is friendly, and even warm, but his demeanor really lets you know that he means business. In everything he does, his words, his movements, his teaching style and the way he runs his school and his team, he lives the principle of minimum effort, maximum efficiency, in every way. I remember training with him many years back, and feeling as if he could see everything in the room, no matter which direction he was looking in. It was as if there were mirrors on the ceiling and all of the walls and he had every view at all times.

As we begin to talk and I ask him what it is about jiu-jitsu that people experience, he has the answer ready for me, he said,

Jiu-jitsu makes people feel better. It works your body in general, you know, all of your muscles, and it relaxes your mind. It is a gentle sport, a low impact sport. Of course there are injuries sometimes but jiu-jitsu you can train 100% every day and if you get into trouble, you tap. In muay thai you cannot train like that, in judo, even basketball.

When I asked him about the fact that people call it real or pure because we train at 100%, he said, “Yes, you cannot do that in boxing or in karate, but we can.” It was in my interview with Jacare that I was really struck by what he said about the social aspects of jiu-jitsu. Kayron had said a great deal and talked about how easy it was to make friends and how much people needed this, but Jacare was able to get much deeper into what the lived experience of Brazilian jiu-jitsu is really like. When I asked him what the social experience was like, he told me,

Well, that’s another important thing because you know humans; they like to belong in a group. They like to feel comfortable and in jiu-jitsu, the camaraderie, is really, really good. Everybody likes to be a part of the class. I have my student here, on my side and he’s injured, he’s not training but you know, for him it’s important to come over here to the school and to check the guys’ training and observing people to train and socializing you know, and talking. And I think jiu-jitsu is very, very important you know, this is the second house for everybody.

There it was. I was excited to hear the reference again. So far, all three of my interviewees had told me that the jiu-jitsu school was like home for people. The emerging pattern of home, a friendly atmosphere, but one that was intense enough to challenge character issues, had formed with each interviewee. Through challenge, in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, it seems one can find things out about themselves that were unexpected and perhaps, at times, working things out in this environment proved more useful than actually doing it at home. Jacare started to get animated, which is truly rare, except for during an intense coaching moment, and I found myself really plugging in to see what he would say next. He said,

You know, you can ask any student over here where they feel more comfortable and then they gonna say well, first, at my house and second over here. You know, and that's what it is, you know. I feel more comfortable here than sometimes when I'm staying home. Because you know, I have my friends over here. I have people that I can talk. I can expose you know, sometimes, discuss things, problems.

I was excited to hear him say this and wondered what the next kind of experiences he would touch on. I asked him if it reminded him of the way people used to live in traditional societies and he said,

Yes, exactly. Like, you know, people have the fire and everybody you know, gathers, around and talk and plays music and tells stories. Jiu-Jitsu, instead of doing that and drinking and using other things, we come over here, we exercise vigorously you know, for one hour, two hours, you know, depending on the class. One hour and a half and after all that, endorphin get to our brains everybody's relaxed, that's when people stop and talk and open their hearts and minds to everybody and that's important part of jiu-jitsu.

It seems after going over the interviews so many times, that the notion of relaxation must be part of the playfulness and fun that everyone also agrees on. I wonder also if this is something the children can get to more readily, but that once adults had a taste of it, they could make a habit of it. It is a common phrase in jiu-jitsu circles that it is addicting and this creates a plausible explanation. The underlying neurochemistry and psychobiology, if possible to map, could be so fascinating, but for now, the use of the commonly accepted term for the athletes' inner drug of choice, endorphin, suffices.

As one of the current leaders, and perhaps the most successful teacher of Brazilian jiu-jitsu there has ever been, Jacare has a unique perspective on how to build successful practitioners and a thriving team. He is an expert, and even though his students are spread all around the world teaching at their own schools, I decided to hone in on this idea alone about what the jiu-jitsu environment is and what type of environment is really

being created. Essentially, what is being created in the schools is a ritual space where personal transformation is possible. The initial goal for most people is to get in shape and, little do they know, but they are stepping into a very traditional space, shrouded with potential and layers of meaning. Although it is not advertised as such, or often not even articulated, when I asked about it, Jacare immediately conjured up his own image of ancient people sitting around the fire telling stories.

*Creating sacred space (temenos).*

One of the top priorities for depth psychologists and also for traditional healers is the creation of a safe place to work in. Having the proper environment sets the stage for making meaningful cognitive, emotional, and spiritual connections, often by creating a safe opportunity to enter into altered states. For psychologists, this intention often manifests in the need to create a ritual space where the practitioner can work more effectively with the patient, or where people can simply work together in order to seek transformative practices. “For Jung, ritual functions as a psychic container for transformative processes when psychic integrity and balance is threatened by the unexpected power of the numinosum of the unconscious” (Smith, C. M., 1997, p. 161).

Rudolph Otto developed the use of the term *numinosum* which comes from the Latin *numen*. He set out to describe the human experience of the holy, with strong emphasis on the psychological and emotional components of experience. His preference for feeling over thinking set him apart from his theological fellows and his work set a tone for the super-sensual, experiential basis of religion that Jung borrowed from and transformed. Jung equated numinous experience with the manifestation of unconscious energies, whether they were related to personal complexes or otherwise had autonomous

archetypal qualities (Stein, 2006). In martial arts, it is the intricate combination of feeling and thinking that is woven into each person's own experience, and through the engagement with the archetypal process of warriorship, it becomes incumbent on each person to look within, to seek the unknown, which at times can reach the level of the numinous.

Rudolph Otto was a theologian concerned with the phenomenology of the numinous. Jung was more concerned with the psychological encounter with the numinous as a potential to create balance between opposites and psychic wholeness. Although martial artists are interested in creating physical balance, it is implicitly understood that the key to success involves not only this, but often an extreme level of emotional balance in order to mitigate the energy that is generated in a battle. In spite of their different intentions, both men were focused on the felt sense of the sacred, or archetypal. Although the *mysterium tremendum* may occur spontaneously and arrive uninvited, many cultures and world mythologies are also filled with archetypal symbology depicting the creation of ritual space in order to invite numinous experiences. Hero mythologies typically depict a journey where one is removed from familiar surroundings and encounters the unknown.

Jung makes an important distinction between the classic hero(ine) and the individuation hero(ine) who uses the numinous experience as *prima materia* for an indefinite process. "To remain or 'get stuck' in the land of the *numen*, whether defined as full or empty, would amount to becoming assimilated to the unconscious" (Jung, 1935/1959, p. 128, [CW 7]). This amounts to a state of grandiose inflation, or continual crisis, and can be mediated with a commitment to training, by "making them conscious

and bringing them into relation with other aspects of the Self, and thereby to attain approximate wholeness” (Stein, 2006, p. 50).

Transformative experiences, where the numinosum is invited to participate often occur as a result of creating what the ancients called a temenos.

*Temenous* is a word used by the early Greeks to define a sacred precinct (i.e. temple) within which a god’s presence can be felt . . . [A]nalyst and patient feel themselves to be in the presence of a potentially overwhelming unconscious and daemonic force; the area of the psyche most foreign to the ego and characterized by the numinosity of the self and god-image; and the psychological container . . . distinguished by mutual respect for unconscious processes, confidentiality, a commitment to symbolic enactment and trust in one another’s ethical judgment. (Samuels et al., 1986, p. 148-149)

The intent of creating both the temenos and a sacred ceremonial space, or an appropriate training space, is to seek and allow the unconscious (spirit) to work through the individual and community for guidance and energy.

The mutual goal of ceremony, depth therapy, and martial arts practice is to create balance. This is achieved through making connections both interpsychically and intrapsychically. In order to open up the space to do this, there must be an acceptance of unconscious material present. In a psychological or ceremonial setting these processes are more explicit. Because there is not as much analysis in martial arts settings and the focus is primarily of efficacy of physiological technique, there has been little language to address psychological or spiritual processes in training. The evidence has often been in the telling of individual stories, where it is clear that deep individual work is taking place for students, teachers, and families.

***A class as ceremony.***

The mutual goals of ceremony, depth psychotherapy, and martial arts training are to create balance and a sense of belonging to something greater. This is achieved through

making connections both interpsychically and intrapsychically. In order to open up the space to do this, there must be an acceptance of unconscious material. The primary function of depth work is to allow people to make internal connections with personal material and perhaps associations to the collective. Dream material, active imagination, and personal reverie are all useful.

Indigenous practices are always centered around nature. Sacred space and unconscious material is often directly connected to nature. Central in many indigenous ceremonies is the calling to the four directions. In the Lakota traditions of the plains of North America, this is still being practiced by singing a sacred song acknowledging the four directions, and also the Great Spirit, *Wakan Tanka*, and the Earth, *Makatakaya*. Singing this song opens the space for ceremonies such as the *inipi*, or sweat lodge. Similarly, before each person steps on the mat, training space, they are expected to bow out of respect, and further, prior to the beginning of each class, all students line up by their rank and experience. The protocol is the principal way to create the safety and structure needed for transformation and creativity to flourish.

Traditional ceremonies were connected to the land, grounded much the same way that martial arts is connected to the floor. The entities, energies, and memories of the ancestors, and natural elements associated with the participants' heritage filled the space, just as there are usually photos of important instructors from one's lineage in nearly any type of martial arts school.

Depth psychologists and marginalized indigenous healers have cultivated the evolutionary ability to create sacred space within various contexts. The rekindling of sensual modalities such as art, music, dance therapy, and martial arts are rooted in

ceremonial practices and can form a connection to participants' essential natures. Not only do many Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners create outdoor practice settings, but there is a typical outdoor lifestyle that coincides with the persona, and most importantly, it is the training environment of full resistance practice that allows the practitioner to access their inner nature, whether pleasant or not, and a way of working through it.

Two of the most universal ceremonial methods for achieving these altered states are the sweat lodge and dancing. Through movement or connection with the elements, participants can achieve an altered state lowering the ego's attention, "allowing the unconscious the force it needs to come forward in order for a deeper flow of energy" (Sandner, 1979). The goal of ceremony is often to wear down the ego in order for a deep change to take place. The practice of martial arts also provides the necessary connection to the sensual and elemental experience of the body: activating bodily fluids, blood, sweat, and tears. It is often practiced in nature, and creates the necessary lowering of the ego through rigorous training.

It is taught that the sweat lodge is like the womb, where one emerges anew from the darkness and heat. In the same way, a martial arts dojo is a place where the practitioner enters a space with a sacred gesture or bow, and leaves everyday concerns and social conventions off the mat. It is seen as a center for facing one's weaknesses and cultivating seeds of one's own power. The dojo is a place reserved as a container for potential transformation. It is a place where the body-mind is engaged simultaneously, and the ego hopefully becomes malleable. It is a three dimensional labyrinth where the path is only partially known and the outcome is unplanned, unchoreographed.

The martial arts dojo is one of the few places where we are allowed to connect with the controversial warrior archetype, and its unique ability to teach self-discipline in a socially acceptable way. The potential lessons of the warrior archetype such as mediation of irrational fear and anger, and the balanced development of assertiveness, are huge gaps in our individual and collective psyche. It is almost as if the whole culture is stuck in adolescence, uninitiated, and unmatured.

I did not ask Jacare whether he is trying to create sacred space in his school and whether the mats are a ritual space for individuals to reclaim parts of themselves or to discard unwanted character flaws. He had already told me that, for him, it was a place of extended family, and that the way people interacted with one another was reminiscent of ancient traditions, no longer practiced in modern society. Without asking, he proceeded to tell me stories about students who had come to him, or been sent to him. He said,

Jiu-jitsu you know, I agree with Rorion Gracie when he says, I mean Helio Gracie's, his father, that we balance the individual. If the individual is too aggressive, when he comes to the school and he starts to train the tendency is that the individual gets less aggressive. Once he start to train with other people and people start to like, make him tap and everything, it makes the guy more humble and then it balance the guy. On the other side, the individuals that are really, really shy, and don't socialize. They don't talk much and stuff like that. When they start to train, the tendency is that individual to get more relaxed with the environment and then he started to be more you know, he change you know, a little bit.

Jacare is teeming with stories of transformation from the past, present, and future. He has been teaching for nearly five decades and has watched individuals and whole families train together. Some came with goals and others just because they were interested. They range from the very popular fitness goal and interest in learning to defend oneself against attack, to more psychologically oriented driven intentions. Without being asked, Jacare began to share the stories. He said,

The physical transformation, the guy has like you know, is overweight and he lose weight. The guy that sometimes has a disease because he only lacks exercise. Kids that you know, in America they give you know, drugs, for the behavior. For kids when the kid is too agitated the doctor goes and, and it's perfectly normal for the kids to be like that. I think in my opinion it's healthy. It's not unhealthy. But here people think it's unhealthy. You know, oh, my kid you know, he has Attention Disorder Deficit. Well, just bring him to Jiu-Jitsu. Jiu-Jitsu's gonna balance him more than any drugs, you know. In my humble opinion.

These examples of the collaborative effort between teacher and student, illustrate some type of healing process. The teacher, who has previously experienced healing, provides the *temenos* for the student's own healing. If the mutual connection succeeds and a new dialogue between conscious and unconscious material is forged, both teacher and student may experience change and healing. This dynamic furthers itself by creating a student who can now forge similar connections with others because healing potential is now possessed. Remaining open to this process allows the potential for healing to be exercised. Even when one is not open to it, circumstances and the drive to participate, succeed, and progress may form a spirit of willingness. It may be that a healing is meant to occur whether it is welcome or not. A roadblock can occur when the archetypal figure of the mediating priest is, constellated almost automatically, and a great wave of gratitude comes upon the student (Edinger, 1997). Though idealization of the teacher commonly occurs, if they are conscious of this, and remain humble enough not to absorb the projection indefinitely, the student will have the freedom to gradually regain independence, finding their own teacher within. The practice becomes an apprenticeship to becoming a teacher, and a deeper connection to one's own inner spirit work forms and creates the ability to connect to the inner teacher of the student.

In mythology, initiatory illness illustrates this principle in the healer-patient, and the teacher-student relationship, and both have learned through their own bodies and their own experience, not from books. This inner healing process and integration is a natural process that Jung called individuation and applies to anyone who gains finesse with self-reflective methods, and utilizes the opportunity to uncover unconscious processes, evolving their own consciousness.

Jacare continued,

Lots of other things. I had kids over here that they came, they were totally out of control. They'd fight all the time. They would not pay attention. They did stupid things you know, and once the discipline and the training and the balance that jiu-jitsu brought to their lives, their parents they almost like come to me every day to thank me, you know. For being able to change you know, their kids, you know, because he didn't have hope that the kid was gonna get better and with jiu-jitsu in just a matter of a few months, you know, they completely change.

Erik Zengota (1994) investigates several archetypal qualities of combat sports, such as the role of the trickster, blood, phallus, and eros, but one of the most intriguing of these is the puer and senex where he concludes, youth is possibility and age is experienced bound to be defeated by time. The fact “that either can be the victor demonstrates again the secret intimacy of the two sides of every archetype” (p. 172). To conclude, Zengota reminds us of Jung's preoccupation with the potent image of the “squared circle” as a symbol of the self, wholeness, a mandala. He describes the mat space as ritual space. “As in any sport, boundaries define the field of engagement, bestowing on it the special qualities of a ritual space” (Zengota, p. 174).

In describing the mythopoetics of sports, Phil Cousineau (2003) says, “sports are not an avoidance of life but an embrace of it in all its complexities, a conscious transformation of the battle of life in to the game of life” (p. 59). Not only does the mat

space of fighting area mark off sacred ritual space for combat (sacred play), but the entire competition event (or school) is one of potential transformation for the collective.

Campbell emphasized that throughout human history, the festival's purpose has been to transfigure the unbearably harsh realities of life into bearable realities, and it has done so by lifting the spirit of the individual and the group through ecstatic rituals and through the trials of competition and contest (1994).

It creates an opportunity for what Robert Avens (1984) called *play*. In *The New Gnosis*, he encourages the development of a generally playful attitude. He said, "There is a moment . . . when the Play, does everything and all that is required on our part is nothing less than active attention, a willing renunciation of willing" (p. 99). In this sense, if we attend an event, or a class, perhaps to watch a family member, or participate in a competition, we will be tending something, and also allowing something to tend to us.

In the embrace of a sport and by embracing a sport, Jacare has mastered the skill of building community. With regard to the social attitude, Joseph Henderson (1984) tells us that the authority is in the group, not in the individual. Man is both individual and communal.

One must avoid two dangers: that of too much individuality or of too much collectivity. If one becomes too individualistic, the effect is psychic inflation and isolation from one's fellow men. If one lives too collectively, one becomes uncomfortably deflated and subtly depressed, though one's conformity may bring certain rewards. (p. 23)

It is an intricate balance when one achieves a sense of belonging in conjunction with personal expression. It is tricky business resisting the extremes of inflating individual needs and the loss of the self that occurs when the needs of a group are overemphasized. In combat sports, there is yet another unique opportunity to experience

a balance of these two extremes. Studying embodied practices can allow us to see deeper structures of a person or a community. The body is always giving clues to these underlying structures.

As I watched the students in the class, training, and others milling about, during my interview with Jacare, I imagined the changes that occur over time. As they become engaged with the school, their stance, the amount of confidence they walk with, their readiness to respond, level of respect and reciprocity to others would shift and change. It is as if Brazilian jiu-jitsu plays a song through a person. Music has its own special vocabulary of rhythm, melody, harmony, tone, and pitch, and so too does this practice. The body language of Jacare's students of Brazilian jiu-jitsu sang to me the variety of levels of acuity, sensitivity, resilience, tenacity and decisiveness. Although I have a developed eye and sense for these things because I have been immersed in jiu-jitsu, I can read part of the story without engaging in the actual play.

#### **Interview #4—Professor Tom Reusing.**

##### ***Inner work.***

The experience of Brazilian jiu-jitsu training lends itself well to the idea that individuation is a possible byproduct of commitment to such training. Creating the possibility of finding out more about oneself through an intense experience is a courageously transformative occurrence for young and old. When we experience the unexpected ability to achieve what was thought to be impossible, it is often the cornerstone of the development of self-esteem.

The flipside of this is to find out that you are not as good as you thought you were at something, or you may exhibit behaviors that were unexpected. These challenges are

often the ultimate opportunity to develop genuine humility, grace and dignity in the face of adversity. Although competition in the sport of Brazilian jiu-jitsu exists, the overarching neutralizing principal that mitigate the ups and down of decisive competition is the belief that there is no losing, only learning.

It is the main intent in creating a temenos or sacred space is to seek and allow the unconscious to work through the individual and community for guidance and energy, and on the mat, this occurs between beings, among beings, but first and foremost within each being. Individuation is inner work. It is the cornerstone of psychological health wherein a person becomes whole and unique, yet remains a part of, and ultimately is simply a common being among beings. The person becomes conscious of their inner world and manages to utilize what is found to further contribute to the collective.

According to Murray Stein, Jung's greatest contribution to psychology was the discovery of an inner world. It is the principle that defines the essence of being human. It is an absolutely fundamental part of being human to differentiate themselves from their surroundings. It is the essential nature of individual consciousness and to be oneself, separateness and distinction but be created. It is not subject to cultural differences, not optional, or conditional, but simply in accord with human nature (2005).

In an effort to claim sport as a spiritual enterprise, Therese Miller (2008) explains,

In its most fundamental and pure form, sport is spiritual. The spiritual is defined as that which raises the human condition to a higher level of personal awareness and interpersonal consciousness and heightened realization of a grand scheme of things. (p. 1)

In both, there is the intimation of personal work and great challenge and our goal might be to find a method that is readily accessible to help a person reach a higher level of awareness.

Although very little has been written about sports, spirituality, and individuation, in 1994, Jan DeVeber Marlan, contributed to the compilation by Murray Stein, *Psyche and Sports*, calling hockey a sacred sport. Her premise is such that the sport of ice hockey is a unique form of religious expression. Further, the notion that fanaticism, as a form of sacred possession and experience of the numinous, is a bridge to the archetypal experience of the self in the individuation process is developed. Marlan also investigates the dangers of the ego's identification with the archetype.

This type of ego identification with possibly negative archetypal energies is not something that was explored fully in this research, but an area of concern whenever psychic transformative work is taking place. In jiu-jitsu, as in hockey, there are moments of fury in the practice, mitigated by other states of mind, but it is the case that some jiu-jitsu players are unable to metabolize these shadow aspects of themselves, and further, that they identify themselves so closely with the power of archetypal energy, they are dubbed with certain reputations in the schools or in competitions. Oftentimes, these individuals, should they remain engaged in the practice, eventually work this through for themselves, and ultimately, if they stay long enough, even the most pervasive of these will be touched by life circumstances, injury, or age, in a way that they develop a more reflexive nature.

This circles back to the idea of social environment, or *temenos*, and the notion that Therese Miller worked out where in its most fundamental and pure form, sport is spiritual. For Miller, sports can lead to personal transfiguration, revival of communal understanding, and redemption of life's purpose and possibilities. She pulled from the worlds traditions to form 10 common themes of the world's religions to form a structure

of spirituality in sports. They are the ideas of a supreme being, of the self, of the spiritual path, of knowledge and wisdom, of the good life, of love and service, of devotion and worship, of fate and free will, of death, and of the spiritual sage (2008). She takes these themes and draw on them as analogies between these themes as sport. Although I will not take them up individually here, examples of these themes show up throughout this research in in all of my dialogue with Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners. They are listed to reveal and name parts of the universal structures that exist in some of the world's greatest transformative traditions.

When I sat down to interview Tom, I knew right away that he was extremely grounded in the practical aspects of training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. He immediately stated that jiu-jitsu is, above all else, challenging. He said,

It's a challenging thing. For me, it's been very fun and it's a very complex art. Since I first found out about it, I've been fascinated by it; how practical it is. It's been very challenging, training in it and uh, very exciting.

This triggered my curiosity. In what ways and how does the game of jiu-jitsu challenge its participants, and if it is such a challenge, why would enthusiasts stay committed? The benefit of the training must be more than simple physical prowess, and there ties between learning to fight, to grapple, and the complicated aspects of psychological growth of individuation, seemed to be there in all of the interviews, but now I was hearing more detail. It seemed that through all the interviews, and most poignantly through listening to Tom, that the grappling of jiu-jitsu, is in fact a metaphor for grappling with oneself.

Tom said that his initial fascination with the art revolved around self-defense and that his primary goal in teaching is to help people with learning to defend themselves against a larger, stronger attacker. He said,

Martial arts, what I always thought they were when I was young. Some kind of almost like magical thing that you could learn that would allow someone, through knowledge, to be able to defend themselves against, you know, most people and, you know, and in particular, someone bigger and stronger. It's just extremely practical martial art that is very well defined and, and honed through, realistic application. You know, almost anybody can learn it and, and, and enable them to be able to defend themselves.

Over and over in my discussions with martial artists, I had come across the idea of *magical* powers in martial arts that folklore and modern movies are steeped in. Instead of discounting this idea, Tom was able to move through it and on to the precise practicality of the art and its effectiveness. Then he told me, "It ends up being a lot more than that but, but that's, that's the initial motivation."

The premise of somatic psychology that wisdom is in the body—I questioned further, Are secrets in the body? I asked Tom how it ends up being a lot more than that practical self-defense and he explained.

Well, because it's so challenging physically and emotionally, but especially emotionally. It ends up changing you as a person and of course, as you get more capable of defending yourself physically, most people change psychology just based on that. You know, because we do the live sparring and people end up um, it's very decisive when you spar with someone. So very quickly there's this, this hierarchy established and so it can be very challenging to the ego and, and you have especially I think for men, but women too. You know in any kind of group of men there's a, there's a hierarchy and it's kind of a little bit of a pack mentality. So, like in a jiu-jitsu class or jiu-jitsu school for example, everybody knows who's better than the other person in terms of who can tap who out. And then, you know, there's people that kind of go back and forth, but typically there's an A to Z order of who can tap who out and, and so when you're operating this kind environment um, it can be very challenging to the ego.

It is not so much the personal physical challenge that students think about when they are driving home from class, but how the game played, where they stood in relation to their fellows and what goals to set to keep learning.

***Individuation.***

Western psychological practices such as psychoanalysis, psychiatry and the usual methods of therapy may have strayed far from the actual embodied practices of martial arts training, but the underlying principals may be very similar, and in an effort to find processes that impact psychoemotional-spiritual process, it is interesting to look at these dynamics to ascertain what similar processes to traditional therapy may be occurring.

It is term *ego* that is perhaps the most commonly known concept of psychology. Because Brazilian jiu-jitsu is an embodied practice that provides an immediate visceral experience rooted in the very powerful archetype of dominance and submission, as Tom relayed over and over, it challenges the ego. Whether the meaning of the term *ego* is in terms of formal theory, or in day-to-day parlance, it is generally accepted as the sense of who you are. Further, many people will agree, even if they are not well versed in psychological language, that when the ego is challenged, it is often a useful predicament.

The techniques of jiu-jitsu are based on the laws of energy, motion, and angles and when they are applied they have such an immediate effect, that psychological strength is put to the test the first time you attend a class, and every subsequent class thereafter. This often provides uniquely numinous experiences in a safe container that lead to a healthier ego-self axis. Jung called the self the subject of my total psyche which also includes the unconscious. In this sense the self would be an ideal identity which

embraces the ego. The ego operates only in the conscious realm, and interacts with the world via the persona, which is a kind of social façade (Whitmont, 1969).

The persona is the mask adopted to meet the demands of social convention and it is one of the first things to be stripped in jiu-jitsu training. That is to say, when a student is faced with the primal aspects of survival, they have less use for a well-developed persona, just as an Olympic runner who reaches the last of an important race would not be concerned with attire or hair placement. This opportunity for modern people to strip themselves of the social conventions of work and family, in a safe environment with people of different age, gender, background, and heritage, is quite a unique opportunity to say the least.

Oftentimes the job of the persona is to make an impression on others and to conceal true feelings and thoughts. It is a necessary gatekeeper to shadow parts of the human psyche that have been denied consciousness, the parts of the psyche that are needing to be recognized and reconstituted in order for an individual to develop a more adaptive ego-self axis. Opportunities to access potential personal shadow material that is unconscious and or bubbling up to the surface of consciousness are quite rare, especially ones that are offered in a safe contained environment, where the challenges of such a process can be nurtured and metabolized by the person with the help and support of others.

It is precisely this dynamic which has been described to me by my interviewees, in nonpsychological language. Tom has perhaps the most finesse with psychological terminology and said, “It ends up being a lot more than you expected. It changes people psychologically, challenges people emotionally.”

It is hard on the ego and then the other thing that happens is as soon as you start training you realize, one of the things that comes flooding in almost immediately is how little you know about it and how much there is to know. It depends how big your ego is or what you think you're capabilities are when it comes to hand-to-hand combat. Or, physically pitting yourself against another person. Depends where you view yourself when you arrive. But almost everybody who hasn't trained jiu-jitsu before, the first thing that happens is, however well you thought you might do, or whatever you think you found out about jiu-jitsu and you knew that it worked or very practical. I think almost everybody that tries it is surprised about how little they know and how long it takes to get better at it. So, you know, there's a big leveling of the ego, in the very beginning. And it's difficult. Especially if you'd viewed yourself as someone that had a certain amount of physical prowess.

Ego flexibility becomes necessary as the more advanced practitioner can always make you tap. When you are accomplished, right relationship to the self, and your personal power, becomes necessary because you will always be able to tap out those with less experience. No one ever really likes to tap, but, just like many ego-puncturing experiences, we learn that it is part of the process. The ebb and flow of advancement and humility, of analysis and synthesis of what you have learned, is constant.

Unlike some other purely individual and team sports, the curious position in jiu-jitsu is one of being engaged in a very individual pursuit and needing the practice of sparring one on one others, and also engaged in a larger team or school atmosphere that provides the container espousing growth of the athlete and the individual. Training in jiu-jitsu could very well offer an initiatory potential of shamanic proportions. Robert Ryan (1999) examines a multitude of symbols of death and dismemberment associated with initiation. He explains that these symbols reinforce the break with everyday life and encourage the dissolution of the old self by creating an altered state of consciousness.

Where I see this happening most in the world is in the pure sparring that takes place in most classes, and subsequent personal reflection and redoubling of efforts.

Although it seems brutal at first, because of the dangerous nature of the choke holds and joint locks, if a safe container is created for the practice, it is filled with opportunity. In order for a safe setting to exist for this high level of personal transformation, it is imperative that the teacher is looking closely into the psychological aspects of each student present. It is this level of awareness that is required, as in any therapy setting, and is one reason that belt promotions take a very long time in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and teaching responsibilities are only given to certain students.

***Transcendent function.***

Mental health is based on a certain degree of tension between what one has already accomplished and what one still ought to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become (Frankl, 1984). It is the most decisive qualities about a person that are unconscious and they can often be perceived by others and have to be discovered with outside help. The sensei, or teacher, is often thrust into this role as a therapist, helping students through fear and denial.

Tom told me that even though there is probably an inappropriate amount of trust thrust onto the Brazilian jiu-jitsu professor, it is also a necessity because there needs to be a hierarchy. If people are resistant to taking direction, it can be dangerous because they can cause harm to others. It is the hierarchy that sets in with regard to the techniques that is explicit, while the leadership structure for psychological constructs remains fairly implicit in jiu-jitsu. They often mirror one another with such precision, that they seem inextricably linked. The body binds the personality but it is necessary to mitigate the unconscious, and there is not consciousness without the body, so it is necessarily in the making of meaning.

In his lifetime, Jung developed the method of active imagination as a method to reach unconscious contents, that were immediately below the threshold of consciousness and when intensified through the method, they would most likely erupt into the conscious (Jung, 1916/1959, p. 69 [*CW* 8]). The personal shadow, in Jungian psychology represents all the unwanted and unintegrated parts of the psyche. The conscious ego is unidentified with shadow aspects, whether they are positive or negative.

Encounters with shadow material form a central role in individuation and it is the mechanism of the transcendent function that the union of opposites emerge, the unconscious and conscious are in dialogue and new situations and new conscious attitudes. In essence, when new and surprising, or even shocking, situations arise, there is a possibility that the circumstances are offering new information, new insights, to the ego, or status quo.

This type of process, often involves facing great fear, or the opposite, integrating positive qualities that had been denied, suppressed, or repressed. Tom talked quite a lot about many of these challenges that people face. He spoke about the fear of failure, and also what it felt like to finally get his own black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, something a part of him never thought he would achieve, especially when he had come through a long period of time when there were still very few Americans who had been awarded this honor. If the black belt is a symbol of individuation, then the nearly 15 years of holding a tension of the opposites and creating a dialogue between the conscious and unconscious parts of oneself are the psychological mechanics that brought about this particular symbol.

The list of opposites that can be used to illustrate some of the places where the transcendent function might show up in the practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu is long, but the language does not give justice to the experience without enormous explanation. Nevertheless, they include, union versus struggle, winning versus losing, dominating versus submitting, success versus failure, improve versus decline, compete versus converge, individual versus team, man versus woman, large versus small, fast versus slow, push versus pull, sit versus stand, teacher versus student, stagnant versus enliven, right side up versus upside down, inner versus outer, older versus younger, strong versus weak, new versus seasoned, and I could go on.

These dynamics are in the minds and bodies of practitioners during every experience to some degree or another, and because jiu-jitsu's definition is based on a level of defensiveness versus aggressiveness, depending on the needs of any given situation, it amplifies the psychological constructs that go along with such a definitive moment, when a practitioner is engaged. Most practitioners say they were still engaged imaginally, recreating class experiences long after a class or competition was over, and that dreaming about training is also very common.

This makes it ever so intriguing that there is not more Jungian literature on psychology and sports, and the fact that Jung was an avid athlete, further confounds, as it seems the perfect symbol to bring the deeply involved life of emotion, thrill, and risk that is found there. Perhaps the study of jiu-jitsu, or other sports, is a way to address the disembodied enterprises of modern psychology.

***Individual versus collective.***

Brazilian jiu-jitsu is a team sport. Although each practitioner is challenged to develop individually, there is no way to advance without a strong team. Because of the dangerous techniques, there is a great deal of trust (and sometimes distrust) that develops between training partners. There is so much close contact that men and women training together brings up special issues that need to be contained safely as well.

Indigenous belief systems and the early foundations of martial arts training are grounded in the feeling of interconnectedness. There is an understanding that all things are connected for the greater good of the whole. It is this feeling that is woven through a jiu-jitsu school. Jung believed that in shamanic societies individuation was not as highly valued as participation in the collective life of the tribe. He felt that modern people had lost meaningful connection to the myth of their culture and consequently began valuing independence from the collective more often (Smith, C. M., 1997).

Jung insisted that it was necessary to distinguish individualism, which represents a self-centered notion of free and independent action and thought, from *individuation*, which means bringing to fulfillment the collective as well as the personal qualities of a person. Jung said individuation is the development of the psychological individual as a being apart from the general, collective psychology. It is therefore a process of differentiation, having for its goal the development of an individual personality (Bennet, 1966)

Though tribal societies have their own method of personal integration and highly value the individual journey, it is the unity of the tribe and life as a whole that takes precedence over the individual. This sense of relatedness and connectedness is surely

one of the main reasons for the phenomenal growth of Brazilian jiu-jitsu and most definitely the reason I love it so much. It gives the new student a feeling of being a part of something larger and greater and yet, still offers the opportunity for personal growth. Robert Moore emphasized that the quality of a true warrior is that he is in service to a purpose greater than himself: that is to a transcendent cause (Bly, 1992).

Rites of passage allow the young adult to move forward through life with a connectedness to nature and sense of purpose to serve the world soul, or *anima mundi*. The practices of the traditional indigenous ritual ceremonies serve the purpose to maintain a connection between what is known and unknown, visible and invisible. As in some therapeutic settings, an opportunity for revelation can occur. What was previously known, has been lost, or yet to become known, can be recollected and reconnected.

Murray Stein (2006) distinguishes between two types of initiation, deliberate and spontaneous. In the former, we see planned social activities like bar mitzvahs and weddings that help create personas and define one's social identity. The spontaneous, or spiritual, initiation is like an opening in time, pregnant with meaning. In these instances, one feels personally addressed by the archetypal.

I am proposing that the path of the modern warrior, or martial artist, is an example of initiation that is both planned and spontaneous. I believe that the warrior archetypal pattern is asserting itself in the collective psyche in a way that people can choose to become a part of something transformative and still not have it all figured out ahead of time. All over the world, schools are opening up and giving young people, families, and older, former athletes, an opportunity to train in something that creates a very unique biochemical, spiritual, and psychological experience.

Robert Ryan (1999) says that for ancient people, traditional methods used as paths of transformation employed ecstatic and traditional training techniques relying on psychosocial methods of mind alteration and the symbols and beliefs of traditional lore to awaken the mind to its depths and achieve altered states of consciousness. I do not mean to propose that all students of martial arts are experiencing this level of initiation. Rather, I wonder if instead we are seeing an opportunity for the common man to become more adept with altered states and methods of ego disintegration and reintegration. Perhaps the energies of jiu-jitsu and the warrior archetype are asserting themselves in a way that can capture the attention of more of humanity.

**Interview #5—Professor Tammy Griego.**

*Artemis—balance of the anima and animus.*

Edward Edinger claimed that history and anthropology teach us that a human society cannot long survive unless members are psychologically contained within a central living myth, and that Western society no longer has a viable, functioning myth (1984). According to Robert Bly, our modern images of manhood are worn out (1992). I agree with Bly and ask the same question with regard to images of womanhood. There seems to be a sense of exhaustion with regard to both.

Professor Tammy Griego is one of few black belt professors in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Even though the female participation in the sport has grown exponentially, I still felt very fortunate to interview her, since they are quite hard to come by and many of the female black belts are in Brazil. Tammy is in the prime of her competition career, and when we started talking, that became very evident. I wondered how to deepen the conversation

more into lived experience because I was nervous that essential themes and meanings were not coming through.

After the first transcription and the several times going over the interview, it really struck me how powerful her story was. When she got introduced to Brazilian jiu-jitsu, she made it seem as if it was purely an accident. Her tone was very relaxed and casual, and as she told the story, she nonchalantly explained that she was severely overweight and thought it would be a good way to lose weight.

What happened next is simply a whirlwind of change. In 1 year she lost a huge amount of weight, was competing on a world stage, had already embarked on a path of travel, and had seen and done things, and met people, that expanded her perspective far beyond her small-town upbringing. Once this sunk in, after my third reading or so, there was an excitement I felt that was very real.

During the interview, I was really a bit preoccupied with the fact that I was able to secure her time and energy, and relieved that I would be able to include an interview with a female black belt in this research, that so much of what she said, just did not register. Female black belts in Brazilian jiu-jitsu are a rare breed. This is not true in most every other style of martial art. It is not an easy task to figure out how many exist worldwide, but it is fair to make an educated guess that at this time there are far less than 100 in the United States. Investigating the phenomenology of what brings women to jiu-jitsu and what their lived experience of training is seemed such a useful task to perform.

After her description of how she started and what it was like, I was able to ask her what her experience was like overall. The conversation shifted a little deeper and the theme of family emerged. She said,

I was kind of separated from my family a little bit. When I went to jiu-jitsu, it was like, to be in this new world where everybody's all nice to each other. Why is everybody nice to each other? Everybody knows where everybody's been.

Then she said, "It is a very honest place."

I did not have a chance to ask Tammy to elaborate, but noted with this last interview, that as I read through it again and again, she had touched on this essential meaning of family, and that all five interviewees had also described a sense of family, each in their own personal way. What she was saying is that she did not have a family (not one that supported her), until she got to jiu-jitsu. I realized after going through all the data that what I was finding was the Number 1 theme in Brazilian jiu-jitsu is family. I couldn't help but feel a sense of pride and confirmation, knowing that this was in fact, a reflection of the work of the Gracie family, and even in the face of commercialization and growth, their vision seemed intact.

The interview with Tammy did reveal that she is very motivated by victory. This does not come as a surprise, since she is literally at the height of her competitive career. She talked about her childhood as a tomboy, always competing with the boys, and developing a chip on her shoulder because she was often asked to take care of a lot for the family, keeping her away from the boys' activities. Then she made a statement that, although related to gender, is the sine qua non principle of jiu-jitsu, something all the interviews had touched on, but the way she said it, and the definitiveness of transcending gender, hit home.

I don't care anymore, you know. It's like I just let my skill speak for itself. Just 'because that's the power of jiu-jitsu. You know, you look at you know, 120 pound man going against a 200 pounder and he's schoolin' him. Who cares if he's a boy or girl. You know, he still has the power because of technique. Um, so, jiu-jitsu gave me that. It gave me the ability to, to kind of throw that chip

away you know, and be like, I already knew it and I don't need to prove it, you know.

This statement did not seem subtle at all, but it was not until I reread it a few times that the power of it sunk in. Up until a few years ago, most jiu-jitsu did not even have female students, and for many, this is still true. There were a handful of schools with one or a few women, and in the last few years this has changed quite a bit.

To date, I would still consider all female participants in the category of pioneer, because they are destined to be the minority, and more often than not, will be the single female on the mat. It became incumbent upon the industry as a whole to create openings for women to participate, and the great paradox of this task is this: the underlying principle, perhaps even more than family, is that jiu-jitsu is the natural defense that a weaker person can use against a stronger person. This is not to say that women are weaker than men in general, but the collectively agreed upon biology of men versus women as stronger, leads you to believe that jiu-jitsu would be an ideal self-defense system for women. In spite of this probability, the Gracie family had furthered their art and grown their schools in Brazil and abroad to house primarily men as their student base. In the mid-late 1990s, as the sport was popping up in many major U.S. cities, this became quite an interesting phenomenon.

*Anima—animus complexes.*

Many Jungians feel that there is nothing more archetypal than masculinity and femininity, and that the archetypal forces of the anima and animus present us with the paramount human challenges of relating to and connecting to ourselves and each other. It is a priority in the work of individuation to pull back the negative and positive anima/animus projections and integrate our most unwanted, unrecognized, and

unimagined parts. Jung's theories are that in the unconscious of the male the archetype of the inner feminine, anima, finds expression, and the counterpart to the female, is the inner masculine personality, or animus. In essence, if man's sensitivity is repressed, and woman's power is repressed, then these can become projected onto others, or they may seep into dreams or other personal and interpersonal issues. A complete discourse on these complexes is beyond the scope of this research, and an over-awareness of these ideas is often quite problematic for seekers of insight and change. In addition, the "linguaging" of these ideas becomes quite convoluted, due to the discussion on gender as a secondary feature of the ideology.

Nevertheless, the gender, as well as these deep structures of psyche, are surely at play in the dynamics of such a powerful embodied form that has been relatively unavailable to women until recently. Clarissa Pinkola Estes (1992) says, "The soul force in women is not the animus. The soul for women is feminine and the animus is a force to assist her creation. He is a 'bridging man,' an organizer, and a merchant of soul" (p. 310). The beauty of this image shows the great interdependence that can exist between the two and reminds me of the excitement that is shared among many of the established male jiu-jitsu practitioners to help women gain interest in the sport, to make a safe place for them to practice.

***The Homeric hymns: to Artemis.***

*Hymn 9 to Artemis*

(ll. 1-20) I sing of Artemis, whose shafts are of gold, who cheers on the hounds, the pure maiden, shooter of stags, who delights in archery, own sister to Apollo with the golden sword. Over the shadowy hills and windy peaks she draws her golden bow, rejoicing in the chase, and sends out grievous shafts. The tops of the high mountains tremble and the tangled wood echoes awesomely with the outcry of beasts: earthquakes and the sea also

where fishes shoal. But the goddess with a bold heart turns every way destroying the race of wild beasts: and when she is satisfied and has cheered her heart, this huntress who delights in arrows slackens her supple bow and goes to the great house of her dear brother Phoebus Apollo, to the rich land of Delphi, there to order the lovely dance of the Muses and Graces. There she hangs up her curved bow and her arrows, and heads and leads the dances, gracefully arrayed, while all they utter their heavenly voice, singing how neat-ankled Leto bare children supreme among the immortals both in thought and in deed.

(Evelyn-White, 2013)

### **Interview Conclusions**

The formal interviews, as well as the hundreds of informal conversations I have had over the years, posed a high quality problem with regard to this research. The greatest difficulty was in the existential angst of choosing which Jungian concepts to utilize as a way to view lived experience and the transformative potential of the practice. Although I have stated that somatic research may be problematic with regard to the ease of languaging the psychological aspects of physical experiences, this project reveals that conceptual language lends itself quite well to describing somatic phenomena. This paradox leads me to conclude that Jungian constructs are especially useful in the qualitative research of sports and other embodied practices, in order to glean particular meanings and themes in those particular activities.

The archetype of initiation, once it is unpacked, is a universal theme that most people can relate to. Although I would have had difficulty asking specific questions about it, since my interviewees are not familiar with Jungian parlance, I found that each interviewee's story could have been threaded through the main ideas of initiation, as well as the warrior/hero motif.

### **Quintessential Themes**

It was a fascinating process to go through the interviews, gleaning clusters of meaning, and making lists of potential themes. Although I had anticipated that these interviews would yield convergence of meaning and overlap, I had no idea to what extent, and was fascinated and pleasantly surprised at the amount of confluence that existed between them. At the same time, these findings presented a problem where I actually had more data of meaning clusters than I could sort through effectively.

I looked at a great deal of both quantitative and qualitative phenomenological research and studied the coding and charting processes that are often used to sort through interview data and made a clear decision to stay open to the true spirit of phenomenology, continuously going back to the data. In keeping with the nature of the topic, a sort of embodied gestational period seemed to develop and as the weeks went by the themes seemed to emerge from this embodied contemplative stance.

It took a fair amount of contemplation to come up with a plan to code the interviews for meaning clusters and still be able to present each participant in a way that their story would truly reveal lived experience. In the process of identifying meaning patterns from the participant's statements and including other elements of data, such as voice, tone, comfort, and discomfort, external and environmental factors, and my own subjective experience, I was able to devise a way of sorting for key ideas that would include all the data yet give each interviewee a special place in the project.

After developing a main pervasive theme around each interviewee, I went back though, read, and reread the transcripts and coded for each of the already developed concepts. That is, I looked again at each one through the lens of initiation, warriorship,

new paradigms, leadership, and the creation of sacred space, individuation and the feminine piece. I added new insights to my already extensive list from prior coding, and then sorted through all the data to reach what I am calling the quintessential, or best, most typical, themes of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. The incredible amount of work to come up with such a simple list of themes, is a great example of a metaphor for jiu-jitsu. One studies and practices, and studies again, to arrive at the most simple principle the body has ever known, but what it took to learn it was a grappling of enormous proportions.

The first emerging theme with the most relevance is that Brazilian jiu-jitsu is about developing confidence. It is a method for self-defense, a way to learn how to fight, but more importantly when and how not to fight. Either way, the confidence is paramount, and in jiu-jitsu, the underdog, the weaker and smaller person, can learn how to have the advantage, and this is to be taken seriously.

All five of the interviewees mentioned confidence as a main reason to learn jiu-jitsu. It is perhaps the most commonly agreed upon benefit and one of the most repetitive concepts in the interviews. Kayron (Interview #2) told me that all sports might develop confidence but with jiu-jitsu, you will learn self-defense. Tom (interview #4) said that jiu-jitsu always develops confidence but it is uniquely coupled with humility. All five said something along the lines of jiu-jitsu helping to develop a type of confidence, over and above the kind that one simply receives from success in sports. Confidence is the simple code that was used for this portion of the results, but it is clear that this is a refined type of confidence that the interviewees were alluding to. It is the ideal benefit of training, and perhaps better defined using the more sophisticated notion of Jung's idea of the adaptive and healthy ego-self axis.

Another theme emerging from all five interviews was that Brazilian jiu-jitsu may look like it is about fighting, but it is also a relaxation technique. It is a stress reliever, well known to the point that whatever is occurring with body chemistry, it is commonly considered an addictive activity. This is something that could possibly be an explanation for its exponential growth, especially in the West. Human beings are habitual creatures and it is easy to see that once a habit is developed with a practice that yields positive feelings, it could be hard to break. It also explains the commitment to the work of it, which is rigorous and intense, and often involves a great deal of physical recovery, as well as the psychological challenges discussed in this research. All of the interviewees alluded to these ideas, but Tammy (Interview #5) specifically stated that jiu-jitsu is addicting. JP (Interview #1) also said this and further described the dynamics. He said he goes to sleep thinking about jiu-jitsu and that it is also the family (or social) aspects of training that are addicting.

Another continuous theme that emerged in all of the interviews was that in the midst of all the hard work and rigor, Brazilian jiu-jitsu is fun. It is so playful that many people get their family members involved, yearn for their family members to want to get involved, and if their family members do not get involved, they treat their training partners as if they are family. The words family and fun come up over and over in the interviews. For example, Kayron (Interview #2) told me that you start understanding the techniques, and it starts becoming a lot of fun 'cause you challenge your brain at the same time, not just your muscles. It is like a game.

This theme of fun versus fighting reaches in a very new direction if we were to begin to compare jiu-jitsu and the social behavior of animals, both in their family units

and also aggressive behavior. It is way beyond the scope of this research, but I made a few intimations about this throughout the work and will leave it for the future.

Interestingly, the interviewees are familiar enough with the common animal nicknames of jiu-jitsu players and subtle comparisons that it was difficult to curtail asking questions and going in this direction, as the social practices of jiu-jitsu seem to have much to reveal about biological needs and desires that seem to span species lines.

All five participants described Brazilian jiu-jitsu as a method to help balance a person. For example, Jacare (Interview #3) said,

I think jiu-jitsu has this capacity to do really well and bring balance to one's life because when the guy comes inside the school, the guy gets more discipline and things like that and you make the guy fight, more than if the guy does not do jiu-jitsu.

It is a healthy way to channel energy and it is a challenging way to grow personally and also to learn to do battle physically, both metaphors for each other.

All participants agreed that if you do jiu-jitsu, you will develop confidence.

These are the essential systems of meaning and emergent patterns of self-mastery, and learning physical metaphors for daily living that I found with each of the five interviews. In addition, I use a few more examples to expand the larger themes to address the concepts of aggression in the world, and the idea of culture, and a bit about politics and sports.

### **Beyond aggression.**

Although fighting may seem like a brutal activity, Renzo Gracie reminds us that we learn how to fight so that we don't have to fight, and so that we can fight through our daily lives with vigor and courage (Aldous, 2008). It has always been the Gracie ideal to learn how to defend oneself, ultimately averting the need for altercation but walking with

the confidence to meet a battle. The great paradox being that public display of fighting serves the grand purpose of reaching a larger audience as a proving ground for certain techniques.

In an age where martial styles that involve body technologies are not as necessary in war practices, martial arts has become a sport and mythology in the cultural psyche, oftentimes sensationalized. Gracie jiu-jitsu brings the rootedness of truly practical techniques back into practice and into the human imagination of what battle without weapons really looks like. In daily practice, instead of learning to suppress or express anger in inappropriate ways, we learn how to channel and transmute these emotions during our training. Young people will naturally act out split off archetypal energies as they mature. The academy where Brazilian jiu-jitsu techniques are taught and practiced is a sacred environment, *a temenos*, where transformation is possible, expected, and honored. Like many ancient cultures, the older (more experienced) generation is present to support and contain the wild energies of initiation and growth. Mentoring is a way of instilling character and fostering leadership in those who have learned to fully realize selfhood. This is a path of self-mastery in service to the community.

Perhaps there is a distinct need in our time for a path of personal development and transformation that allows us to be both powerful and intimate. Individuation is,

a person's becoming himself, whole, indivisible and distinct from other people or collective psychology (although also in relation to these). . . . the person becomes conscious in what respects he or she is both a unique human being and, at the same time, no more than a common man or woman. (Samuels, et al., 1986, p. 76).

Renzo says,

Everything that I am, like Johnny Cash said out at Folsom prison, I owe to my father. Because he was the motherfucker who gave me the gravel in my guts and the spit in my eye. Because he was the one who gave me the Gracie name. . . . I

will die like everybody else. But knowing who I was. Knowing for sure truly who I was. (Aldous, 2008)

In addition to personal transformation, there may be an almost greater need to develop social constructs that value the principles of unity in new ways. In the age of individualism, many communal experiences have been devalued. Renzo Gracie gives us a hint with the following story. He says,

I am sitting on a bench waiting with some other fighters before an event. They say, "I wish I was home playing video games," and another one says, "I wish I was home with my wife and family." (Aldous, 2008)

Renzo laughs with mirth and disdain, and as if it is a great secret he wishes to gift you with, he leans into the camera and says, "

There is no other place on earth I'd rather be than here. Those guys were there for the money [in disbelief], to build up some fame. I was there because I thought it was important. I was there to extend the history of my family, not for personal gains. I wanna be on that ring to see what is gonna happen there . . . we are going to battle. These other guys were saying, "I wish I was home with my family." I am there to defend the reputation of my family! (Aldous, 2008)

It is this heartfelt admiration for multiple generations of one's family, friends, and loved ones that has influenced the proliferation of Brazilian jiu-jitsu schools worldwide. Renzo Gracie says, "It's not about winning or losing, it's about getting better for the next generation. The next generation will be 10 times better than we are now" (Aldous, 2008).

### **Beyond culture.**

"Merleau-Ponty takes Heidegger's beingness into becomingness" (Casey, 2007).

The body is the primary communicator and in order to enlarge our perceptual field, we capture bodily sense awareness. Merleau-Ponty (2003) says,

Phenomenological psychology is distinguished in all its characteristics from introspective psychology; it is because it is different in principle. Introspective psychology detected, on the perimeter of the physical world, a zone of consciousness in which physical concepts are no longer valid, but the

psychologist still believed consciousness to be no more than a sector of being, and he decided to explore this sector as the physicist explores his. (p. 68)

He tried to describe the givens of consciousness but without putting into question the absolute existence of the world surrounding it.

According to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, there is ambiguity and we cannot tell at any given time what is natural and what is cultural. We need to put the surrounding world into the question of consciousness. The body has a genius for mixing nature and culture, mind, and body, and has the ability to transcend traditional binary oppositions that have been held apart. In my study of jiu-jitsu, I asked the question, "What is being mixed here?" In jiu-jitsu, the mind is attempting to remember technique, much like a chess player planning future moves. Unlike chess, however, the memories must resonate within all the joints and limbs of the body, if one is to gain success in the game, and all the while, the mixing of social and cultural aspects are also being mixed.

This representation of mixing mental and physical is the most prominent aspect of the individual lived experience and also one that each interviewee was eager to discuss. The idea that the body is the great mixer of experience and knowledge is illustrated in the second interview where Jacare (Interview #3) said,

Yes, it makes people feel better. It's very healthy for, for the individual that practice jiu-jitsu because you know, it's a really good sport. It works you know, everything. It works your body, in general. All your muscles and also, you know, it relax your mind.

It turns out that the system of knowledge, called jiu-jitsu, is seen automatically by the participants as a mixer of opposites. While learning to fight, a participant is also learning to relax. While engaging in an activity that uses every aspect of the mind and body, one transcends normal social constrictions and cultural boundaries of day-to-day life and is

thrust onto a mat where everyone wrestles with everyone, regardless of heritage, culture, or gender.

The individual quest to gain mastery over an ancient system of embodied knowledge is an example of the bodies function as the great mixer of being and becoming. I found for myself and many others, that there is a strong sense of honor and privilege in learning jiu-jitsu. That is, if an ability to metabolize and mix the inherent frustration of learning and integrating new knowledge can be developed. In this sense, the body, or body-mind, is acting as the great equalizer and neutralizer of diversity that Merleau-Ponty believed it was.

Not only is it mixing on a personally experiential level, but studying jiu-jitsu involves the hosting of multiple cultural perspectives. Originally and most obviously these are from a Japanese and Brazilian influence, and the evolution of techniques historically utilized for battle, but moving into beingness no doubt includes a bit of each participant, now involved in the practice, and all that they bring to it. Here, the body-mind is indeed the mixer and integrator of both individual and collective constructs that form the practice of jiu-jitsu.

### **Creative flexibility.**

Merleau-Ponty (2003) believed that the habitual body can reconfigure itself, possessing incredible power to creatively change its direction to meet new circumstances. Because this represents flexibility not necessarily inherent in the mind, I wondered if practicing something like jiu-jitsu can encourage mental flexibility. Because martial arts have become more sport than spiritual practice, unlike yoga, it is less common for teachers to lecture and refer to these concepts. Kayron (Interview #2) explained,

If you want to learn and improve, you have to turn off the need to win all the time. You have to remember to humble yourself. As an instructor, you have to work with so many different kinds of people and try to help them change. No one changes right away and not everyone is gonna change. It takes years and years.

All participants agreed that flexibility and change can be developed, and that in order to progress in jiu-jitsu mental flexibility had to be developed.

Anyone who had been studying for a while recognized this interface between physical and mental flexibility. This creative nature that Merleau-Ponty believed the body ensconced is a daily part of jiu-jitsu practice and instructing. Through a truly lived, embodied perceptual experience, creative freedom can be accessed, showing that if we enter into the felt world, enlarging the thinking and seeing world, modification and creative change are possible.

### **Traditions and horizons.**

There is a great deal of tradition involved in studying Brazilian jiu-jitsu which was originally influenced by a Japanese master in the early 1900s. It is Brazilian jiu-jitsu that has become a popular American (and worldwide) phenomenon but it was developed primarily by one family in Brazil for the last 100 years. In the last decade, schools have been opened all over the world by Gracie family members and their friends and teammates. You can see how the practice of hierarchy in promoting students to new belt levels is steeped in tradition through the description Jacare (Interview #3) gives:

In jiu-jitsu it takes a while, you know, in the serious schools, the more traditional schools, for a person to go from white to black belt, it takes around seven to 10 years, you know. That's pretty normal. In other martial arts, a person can achieve a black belt in only one year. So I think there is a big difference. So we have our standards you know, other martial arts they have their standards and I respect but I think more and more we need to have more like you know, severe you know, in terms of like, being strict.

This statement is indicative of the structured nature that Brazilian jiu-jitsu is steeped in and illustrates the delicate balance of structure versus creativity that exists in traditional schools. That is to say, although jiu-jitsu's main theme is about having fun, and achieving mental relaxation through hard work, there is also a strict hierarchy woven through the structure of the schools. Kayron (Interview #2) said we have rules that have to be followed. Tom (Interview #4) commented that people that train together have to know what the rules are because there's a lot of trust involved.

Hans-Georg Gadamer was focused on embedded traditional perspectives and on the understanding of the lived world and the interpretations that reflect the particular cultural traditions that form one's deep background (Casey, 2007); not past events or particular recollections, but a massive past infusing the present. Gadamer's concern that we are responsible actors in the active production and modification of tradition is probably one of the most fruitful areas of focus for my research. My interview with Tammy (Interview #5) illustrated the notion of evolving tradition best. She said herself that practicing jiu-jitsu as a woman is a nontraditional role. All four of the other participants fully acknowledged that women are a small minority within jiu-jitsu, but that female participation is growing quickly and the impact of this on the sport is being felt.

Placing value on the individual's subjective and embedded perspective, coupled with how this might create inroads and fusions thereby shaping beliefs and expressions, is precisely what I was interested in. Gadamer (1976) emphasized that biases from our preexisting worldviews are embedded and that a loving, open-minded approach toward understanding is needed. Outside cultural influences and the impact of women entering jiu-jitsu are yet to be seen.

Our task it seems to me, is to transcend the prejudices that underlie the aesthetic consciousness, the historical consciousness, and the hermeneutical consciousness, that has been restricted to a technique for avoiding misunderstandings and to overcome the alienations present in them all (p. 8).

This is Gadamer's horizon of the quest which includes the deeper call of what the culture asks of us. It was my intention to converse with people about their experiences training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu knowing ahead of time that there are many aesthetic, historical, and hermeneutical prejudices occurring for individuals and schools, not to mention entire cultural heritages, such as the Brazilian and Japanese perspectives.

The two major curiosities that have developed for me in recent years are the impact that American culture will have on Brazilian jiu-jitsu and what the influx of female participation will look like. Because its popularity is growing so rapidly, it seems that the weaving together of traditional horizons will create an ever evolving culturally infused version of jiu-jitsu. Although these topics were not fully delved into with all five participants, I was able to confirm that each had contemplated the possible impacts that are on the horizon in jiu-jitsu with regard to the quickly expanding demographic in the participant base.

Gadamer focused on our need for language, putting words to experience and extending hermeneutics to include the conversation we are already in with ourselves and the conversation that we engage in with others. "The principle of hermeneutics simply means that we should try to understand everything that can be understood. That is what I meant by the sentence: 'Being that can be understood is language'" (1976 p. 31), including body language.

The power of sport to transform humanity beyond the bounds of culture is revealed in the following story: After Nelson Mandela got out of prison and inherited a

near civil war situation; he went to the Olympics in Barcelona with the idea that you could transform things with sports. Mandela joined forces with the captain of South Africa's rugby team, Francois Pienaar, to inspire the team, and potentially help unite their country. Newly elected President Mandela knew his nation remained racially and economically divided in the wake of apartheid. Believing he could bring his people together through the universal language of sport, Mandela rallied South Africa's underdog rugby team as they made an unlikely run to the 1995 World Cup Championship match.

The research around the social impacts of sports is still in its early stages, as so much of the literature has centered on other areas, and certainly the growth of Brazilian jiu-jitsu is still in the beginning stages. It is yet to be seen what will develop now that schools exist on every continent and standardized practices have been developed to further the work and vision of Carlos Gracie, Sr. What is certain is the original intention,

The principle goal of my family of athletes and fighters . . . has always been to spread jiu-jitsu, and to share the art which brings enormous benefits to one's life . . . growing up in this environment, I learned the art of jiu-jitsu is actually a method through which one strives for self-perfection. (Gracie, C., 2007)

### **Beyond competition—the nature of competition in Ancient Greece.**

The history and origins of the Olympics tell a revealing story of the work of the warrior archetype and initiation. Even today, what sporting tradition inspires athletes more than the goal of the Olympics?

In 8th century Greece, because of constant strife and warfare, the local King of Elis went to the Delphic Oracle and asked what to do to stop war. The Oracle gave a mystifying answer. She said “revive the games and declare a truce during the time of the actual games.” He founded the games in 776 BC and it became the way they measured

all time. The victor of the foot race was so important that his name was used to mark time, thereby naming the following calendar year (Cousineau, 2004).

In these early times, athletes trained for many years and took a long pilgrimage to Olympia. It was the greatest assembly in antiquity with possibly 100-200,000 people gathering for 5 days. The athletes paid homage to their favorite gods because it was believed that you were blessed by them to be there, not just your own ability. You could not discover and become who you were unless you were challenged through competition. *Arte* means the natural desire to display your excellence.

The winners had sculptures made of themselves but not with their faces (that was a great hubris). The athletes were also used as models for the statues of the Gods and their names are etched into the foundation stones around temples in stone in Greece. It was a paradox of humility and being honored. The gymnasium was a metaphor for the pursuit of excellence in mind, body, spirit, and all theatres and temples were situated next to the gymnasium (until they were all destroyed; Cousineau, 2004).

There are several main teams in Brazilian jiu-jitsu that travel and meet at tournaments all over, and they are still very heavily connected to the second generation of Gracie jiu-jitsu cousins. Twice a year in the spring, there are events that last 4 to 5 days, hosting around four or five thousand competitors each. Although these events are examples of fierce competitions, with the top ranked athletes at Olympic skill level, the mood is always extremely friendly. There is an overarching theme among the Brazilian majority, and within the factions of the Gracie family, that there is a much larger purpose taking place: win, lose, or draw.

Although Jacare (Interview #3) told me that some of his best peak experiences involved winning titles and defending titles, there is a general idea that in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, going beyond a winning mentality is the ultimate goal. Renzo Gracie says, “It’s not about winning or losing, it’s about getting better for the next generation. The next generation will be 10 times better than we are now” (Aldous, 2008). Tom (Interview #4) explained it this way,

Well, you know, watching people get better in jiu-jitsu and teaching people jiu-jitsu and seeing the impact it has on their life. I mean, that has been huge for me. You know, I enjoyed competing and winning tournaments and stuff like that, but more than anything, as far as the things that have, you know, that I’ve enjoyed or feel like, are “peak experiences”. The things that come to mind for me are watching the transformation in people that I trained and have trained with me and that have trained in general, but specifically with me and you know, thinking about how they were as far as their self-esteem and their health and then how they are now. I mean, watching that change and not just that, but how much, I guess how much they enjoy it. It’s not something people do casually. Once they start doing jiu-jitsu, it really becomes a big part of their life and it brings them a lot of joy and a lot of happiness and a lot of satisfaction. So, I like watching that.

Many jiu-jitsu practitioners agree that the typical competition model is limited in its scope and if emphasized at the exclusion of other teaching motives, it would not allow jiu-jitsu to be taught to the widest demographic possible. However, competitive aspects are simply inherent in the practice and play of the sport, so it will always be a part of it.

### **Research Design and Limitations**

The phenomenological method of inquiry involves interviewing others about the lived experience continuously attempting to bracket beliefs. I found myself trying to set the ideas such as “martial arts are a way of life,” or “martial arts are fighting techniques,” aside. I found that if these standard beliefs can be set out of play somewhat, then whatever consciousness exists in the field can be revealed, but of course there are limits to this and my personal biases are woven throughout this research.

Using this approach allowed the interviews to develop on a deeper level. If I was able to engage in dialogue without setting up preconceived beliefs, then a genuine presence developed in the conversation. Instead of asking “Why do we do martial arts training?” I might say “What is this that we do in training?” I made an effort to ask phenomenological questions, and that was very limiting, especially when the interviewees were not well versed in psychology, or necessarily making connections with their activities and psychological concepts. Still, I attempted to honor the traditions of phenomenology and create a freely hovering attention to what was going on, and hoped that by bracketing official definitions, phenomena would emerge, and for the most part it seemed successful.

One huge limitation in this study is that the findings are not generalizable to all populations. As much as Brazilian jiu-jitsu enthusiasts would like to believe their art is accessible to everyone, and it is to a great many populations, there are certain demographics that are unable to participate. Even though it is possible to try the practice in spite of many disabilities, and a large range in age, there are some people who cannot accomplish it.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Implications for Depth Psychology**

The use of martial arts as a setting for therapeutic intervention is of particular curiosity, as it is obviously a very potentially transformative environment. The question of what populations would be best served in this setting is a good one. It would be difficult to implement such physical trainings in a clinical setting, although it is plausible that psychoeducation could be very useful, even in a clinical or institutional setting. For example, a most recent development within the Brazilian jiu-jitsu community is the opportunity to visit schools to present anti-bullying seminars. In these educational seminars, there can be anywhere from a small group of youth, to a whole school-wide assembly.

Of course, a large audience does not lend itself well to the practice of very much physical technique, although simple role playing exercises are definitely possible with students breaking into dyads. The main thrust of the presentation is on the philosophy of avoiding personal altercation, along with social skills training and ideology around social networks among friends. In addition to this, it is taught that knowing how to defend yourself when all else fails, is a useful goal, and that learning how to do this can be fun. Not only can you do it in a family friendly setting, but it is enormously fun to do with your own family. All of this reaches far beyond the clinical psychological therapeutic setting in into the community at large, a long-term goal of depth psychology itself being to live and work with depth in the world.

On the other hand, this work is also implicated as a possibility for traditional therapy, or as a stepping stone to illustrate the powerful aspects that working with embodied practices can offer. In 2004, Zari Hedayat-Diba contributed to this growing

body of work when she was able to document her treatment of a 32-year-old woman with a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder due to catastrophic medical experiences and significant childhood traumas. The patient was particularly resistant to the language of psychology, calling it psychobabble, and in order to find a way to form a therapeutic alliance, they needed to agree on a form of therapy, where the process supported wholeness of the mind, body, and spirit as a unit. The therapist learned, through the flooding of emotions during some of the client's tai chi movements, that this type of work showed that the body is a central pathway in the individuation process (2004).

These examples are indications of the possibilities of the implications for depth psychology and the fact that changes in psychoeducation with regard to the body, and levels of inquiry in therapeutic settings with regard to the body are in and of themselves, important aspects of the clinical implications. Brazilian jiu-jitsu is not necessarily for everyone, but many of the principles discussed, and findings here, are transferrable to other disciplines and activities, the breadth of which is nowhere near the point of saturation, as these things have not found their way into mainstream psychology as of yet.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusions**

To date, there is a very limited amount of literature investigating the psychological effects of martial arts training as well as sports in general. Although it is generally agreed that martial arts training promotes good character development, and a handful of quantitative and qualitative studies exist that point to this conclusion, the notion that individuation and strong personal transformation occurs on a regular basis has not been studied. It must be said that every person who engages in Brazilian jiu-jitsu will become their best self. It is not a cure-all modality for personal and collective growth, but an environment where an opportunity exists. Considering the lack of research in Jungian psychology, even though most Jungians agree that there is great potential in working with and through the body, this investigation shows that at the very least, there is reason to confirm these inklings.

Although quantitative research in psychobiology is on the rise, as well as somatic studies and their obscure branches of specialization, this has not been the case with regard to qualitative studies in these areas of specialty. There is a move in the philosophical traditions of phenomenology to bring forth a recognition toward embodied practices, but it is unclear how impactful this knowledge will become as the philosophical traditions do not always reach a large audience. Although I do not expect to see a plethora of psychological studies on Brazilian jiu-jitsu right away, I am aware that the interest in the psychological aspects of it are very much on the rise. A refreshing thought is that because, inherent in Brazilian jiu-jitsu is such a cornucopia of metaphor and paradox and constant tension with opposing forces, that it is less likely than some sports to be subjected simply to the performance-enhancement model that sports psychology has

absorbed in recent decades. Perhaps it offers a resurgence of values that have been forgotten or put on the shelf, a playful way to fight and grapple through the necessary vicissitudes of life, as well as a place to belong.

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Appendix A

Ethics Application

Ethics Application for Approval to Use Human Participants

The Language of Martial Arts: A Phenomenological Inquiry into the  
Transformative Potential of Brazilian jiu-jitsu through the Lens of Depth Psychology

Requested by Holly M. Reusing  
Pacifica Graduate Institute

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Riverside, CA 92503  
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(951)265-2467

August 26, 2013

## Ethics Application for Approval to Use Human Participants

**Brief Description:** This study will explore the lived experience of being a Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioner. Aside from documenting in depth this particular experience, this study seeks to expand the literature on the study of embodied practices.

### 1. PARTICIPANTS

I will interview 5-8 Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners who are considered key informants in the Brazilian jiu-jitsu community(BJJ). The participants will be selected from the main academies/teams situated in the United States. I will write to each potential participant personally (Attachment 1) stating my research intentions and my request for their participation. Interested BJJ practitioners will be invited to contact me and I will explain the study, its procedures, and confidentiality issues.

### 2. PROCEDURES

After the participant responds, I will forward them the Informed Consent form (Attachment 2). Selected participants will participate in one videotaped/recorded interview around 90 minutes long. The interviews will take place at a mutually agreed upon location, most likely the school where they currently train. After the interviews have been transcribed, each interviewee will be asked to review their transcribed interview and add any additional comments or reflections via telephone. At all times, they will be assured about the maintenance of confidentiality.

### 3. CONSENT

Immediately upon accepting to participate, I will send each participant the interview questions and the consent form. I will collect the consent form prior to the interview, and will also clarify any questions or concerns at that time.

### 4. RISKS

Although the potential for psychological risk or harm is fairly unlikely in this study, it is true that strong emotion and memories may surface through dialogical interview sessions. I will ensure a safe place to allow freedom of expression as well as boundaries, taking care to be present with any issues that arise and making sure that the participant is also able to leave if necessary.

## 5. SAFEGUARDS

Participants will initially be screened for their suitability through initial information gathering and phone contact. These steps will most likely result in a group of stable, articulate participants who can suitably manage the discussion of their present and past experiences. Informed consent acknowledges that either the participant or the researcher may discontinue the interview process at any stage. This option is available in case of unforeseen instability. If the interview process proves to be troubling for the participant, referrals for therapy will be provided.

I will ask each participant if they prefer to remain confidential using a pseudonym, instead of their actual name and all transcribed and taped materials will reflect each participant's choice regarding confidentiality.

## 6. BENEFITS

An in-depth exploration of the lived experience of Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners will hopefully lead to:

- 1) A heightened awareness of the psychological dynamics of embodied practices, namely combat sports and self-defense techniques.
- 2) An increased appreciation for the psychological benefits of these types of training.
- 3) A better understanding of what those psychological experiences are and how they impact individuals as well as families, communities and the collective.

In order to achieve these stated benefits, the process will include listening for key themes, rites of passage or experiences with initiatory qualities, and historical/cultural discourse regarding traditional Brazilian influences.

## 7. POST EXPERIMENT INTERVIEW

I will mail each participant's transcribed interview to that participant and follow up with phone contact. Participants will be asked to share their experience of the interview process and to add any additional comment following from their review of the transcript. This will also provide an opportunity to assess for any negative outcomes from the interview process and offer referral if necessary.

The purpose of the study will be described during initial contact with prospective participants and communicated prior to the start of the interview.

## 8. ATTACHMENTS

Included in this application are all of the following supplemental information:

- 1) Letter of Invitation
- 2) Informed Consent Form
- 3) Instructions
- 4) Interview Questions

## Attachment 1-Letter of Invitation

Dear Professor,

I am currently in the process of writing my dissertation in Depth psychology and am seeking knowledgeable Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioners to interview on the topic of Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

The study is titled: *The Language of Martial Arts: A Phenomenological Inquiry into the Transformative Potential of Brazilian jiu-jitsu through the Lens of Depth Psychology*. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience and potential transformational qualities of the practice of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, using a depth psychological lens to discover the underlying psychological life of this body technology.

My research is designed to increase the understanding of the psychological understanding of training and to raise the general awareness of the practice/sport. I feel that as a key figure in Brazilian jiu-jitsu you would be a valuable resource for me during the research phase of my dissertation and therefore, I invite you to participate in my study.

The interview process, should you accept, will consist of one meeting lasting approximately 1-1.5 hours where I will ask questions about your experience as a Brazilian jiu-jitsu practitioner. Once the interview is completed, I will summarize them, and ask you for your feedback, and include the interpretations in my dissertation.

If you agree to participate in my research project, please let me know as soon as possible by calling me at 951-265-2467 or emailing me at [holly@drsconsulting.com](mailto:holly@drsconsulting.com). I will then follow up with a phone call to set up a date, time, and place for the interview. Prior to the interview, I will forward you an Informed Consent Form for you to sign, date and return to me when we meet.

Sincerely,

Holly Reusing

## Attachment 2—Informed Consent Form

The Language of Martial Arts: A Phenomenological Inquiry into the Transformative Potential of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu through the lens of Depth Psychology

1. I agree to allow Holly Reusing to ask me a series of questions on the topic of my experience with Brazilian jiu-jitsu.
2. I will participate in a 1-2 hour recorded and audio taped interview at a mutually agreed upon location, most likely the academy where I train. After the interviews are transcribed I will receive a copy and complete an additional brief interview for additional comment and reflection.
3. The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of psychological experience relating to training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu.
4. I understand that some questions could cause stress or psychological discomfort and that I may take a break or discontinue the interview at any time. I understand that in the event I need to seek professional counseling to continue processing any issues that arise during the interview, the researcher will provide me with names of therapists to do so.
5. I realize that this study is of a research nature and may offer no direct benefit to me and that the research may result in publication of Ms. Reusing's work.
6. Information about this study, the time and location of the interviews, and my contribution to the study was discussed with me by Holly Reusing. I am aware that I may contact her by calling (951) 265-2467.
7. Participation in this study is voluntary. I may decide not to enter the study or to refuse to answer any questions. I may also withdraw at any time without adverse consequence to myself. I also acknowledge that the researcher may excuse me from the study at any point.
8. I give my consent to be audio taped, videotaped, and to have photographs taken during the interview.
9. I am not receiving any monetary compensation for being a part of this study.

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Date

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Signature

### Attachment 3-Instructions for the Interview Participants

1. The interview will be approximately 60-90 minutes and will take place at a mutually agreed upon location and time.
2. The interviews will be taped then transcribed into a written format. Your confidentiality, if you decide not to reveal your name, will be respected at all times.
3. You will be asked to engage in a discussion about your experience training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Although I will initiate discussion with questions, the dialogue will be open, and you are free to comment on anything which seems significant to you. During the course of the interviews, strong emotions and memories may surface. You may feel some psychological or emotional discomfort. You are free to take a break from the interview or discontinue the interview at any point. If, following the interview, you feel the need for psychological counseling, referrals will be provided.
4. Following the transcription of the interview you will be sent a copy of the transcript. After reviewing the document you will be contacted by phone and asked to add comment and/or clarification. Added comments will then be included in the final draft of the dissertation.

#### Attachment 4—Interview Questions

The interviewees will be asked the following questions, not necessarily in the order in which they are written. Some new questions may arise, depending on how the participants respond to the questions.

- 1) What has it been like for you personally training in Brazilian jiu-jitsu?
- 2) What is BJJ to you and what does it mean to you?
- 3) What is the actual experience of training like? What is experienced when witnessing other's participating in BJJ?
- 4) What are the social aspects of BJJ? For everyone, but for women or children specifically?
- 5) How are the historical and/or cultural influences on BJJ, especially those from Brazilian culture, experienced?

## Appendix B

## Interview #1—Professor JP Garcia

Interview #1 Professor JP Garcia 11-10-13

[BEGIN RECORDING]

Holly: Hello Professor. I have turned on the recorder and am ready to begin our interview. Is it ok with you to proceed?

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: So how did, how did you, how did you get into Brazilian jiu-jitsu and what has it been like?

Garcia: Well, well, it was a kind of a, but um, well, I'm, I originally, I'm from Ecuador, like, and, and it's like,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Holly: Oh, Ecuador, okay.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: Okay.

Garcia: Um, so well, I was uh, born in Italy.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: My mother since she met

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: my dad from Ecuador.

Holly: Oh, this is great.

Garcia: Yeah. Since they make travel with them, travel in, in, when they traveled in immigration

Holly: Oh,

Garcia: but uh, yeah. So well I, I grew up in, in Ecuador. I live all my life in Ecuador.

Uh, and I don't know. I r-, I was uh, lit-, overweight when I was little.

Holly: Okay.

Garcia: And I hate to be picked on and like I, I never, I never uh, have temper like when somebody pick on me.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: So I grew up always getting in, in, in fights and

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: you know, um, during that time I saw, when I was like 12, 13 years old. I saw the video of uh, Gracie in the UFC.

Holly: Oh,

Garcia: Yeah. So I said like wow, like, that's what I want to do fight big, big guys and you know I, I always uh, prepared and big kids, I always like, fight and stuff like that, I never let um, uh, bully me. Uh, so I told my mom that I wanted to do that so she start looking with me in the uh, yellow pages.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: To see if we find like a Jiu-Jitsu s-, uh, Jiu-Jitsu school in Ecuador. We find judo so I went check it out and I saw everybody with the same white gis so I look familiar than the, the, the fights I saw in TV. Uh, so I start doing judo for a while. I took my best friend with me. I didn't like it because I was like, you know, a chubby kid like, g-, uh, throw on the ground.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: A lot of times.

Holly: Right.

Garcia: I, it was like, I didn't like it. My friends did it, whatever. I think he's a black belt now. Uh, but then I started doing some boxing. I still like looking for, for this martial art that, that I saw and, you know, and you know, once in a while I was doing wrestling, judo, like, you know. By then I have a uh, it was seminar with Gracie that I, that I went.

Holly: Oh,

Garcia: Yeah, and uh, then, I guess it was like, you know, super into it and I end up getting my blue belt from, from Gracie in the seminar.

Holly: Hmm.

Garcia: Uh, but I got is very uh, uh, passionate about the, the, the martial arts. I didn't understand yet the, the, the positive. The, that it would be in my life.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: Um, 'cause I'm from a small country. The culture there is a lot of like fighting, drinking, from very early and

Holly: Hmhmm. Hmhmm.

Garcia: uh, I think, I, I really know that at the beginning, for me, it was more training just for, be able like to, you know, of course defend myself but

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: I couldn't like uh, it's, it's very typical that they have fights every weekend there.

Holly: Hmhmm, hmhmm.

Garcia: And, and the, So and it, it wasn't any tournaments or nothing that I can put my energy towards, you know.

Garcia: Yeah, so, uh, right now, as far as like, coming to tournament and you want to like, stay away from fighting and,

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: and focus and, and, and do well in your tournament. But before uh, it was very new and it was like hard and, and then,

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Uh,

Holly: The tough guy thing.

Garcia: Yeah, so I, I really, I'm not proud of it. Like I, I, I, I lost a lot of contact with a lot of my old friends. Like I don't, I don't, I, it made me sad because I just don't like to be remembered like that and I

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: it's been a long time. But it's just like, even like uh, well now, it's been so long and I feel like I mature, you know, so much that, that uh, I actually like to go back and, and visit, you know. I always visit my family but I always uh, it was unaffordable for me to go back and maybe go out or, or see people that, you know,

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: they remember that way because I, I'm not that person anymore and

Holly: Yeah, that's one of the things I'm really curious about with um, we, what, just, we jumped way forward 'cause we uh, people like you and I are really familiar with all this positive impact in Jiu-Jitsu but um, but there are shadows

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: and so you're s-, uh, you're saying from wh-, when you were younger, it was a little shor-, shadowy.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: I mean,

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: with street fighting.

Garcia: Yeah, I, yeah. I'd say uh, I don't know. I uh, yeah, I just couldn't uh, I was, I'd say I was kinda wild and the culture too. Like, it's just the way

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: it is, that it was or is [Unintelligible].

Holly: Yeah. So the positive aspects weren't really available so, so available to you then, the opportunities weren't the same.

Garcia: Yeah, I think. Well, I, I left my like, my hometown I was very young. Just following uh, my, my dreams of becoming a black belt. I uh, uh, I, there was a time uh, in Argentina the, the, the, the volumes in money was less than uh, than the dollar. It was very cheap over there.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: Uh, so I find a, a black belt in Argentina who has a school over there. So I convinced my parents I wanted to do university there.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: Uh, just because I wanted to go train but I didn't. They didn't know that. Like I just, I just convinced them that it was cheaper. That my friends are going over there. That's why I moved like a block away from the school. I was in.

Holly: Hmm.

Garcia: Um, I was one of the first ones from, from uh, Ecuador that start traveling and I, my parents afford me, they bring me once uh, eh, sometimes here to California to do some tournaments.

Garcia: Uh, to the seminars.

Holly: So they saw some potential in well, in your Jiu-Jitsu.

Garcia: Yeah, my, my parents always has been very supportive and uh, I did uh, they had like some, uh, uh, some um, uh, tournament in Ecuador before. Uh, I part-, participated like in three or four of them.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: And uh, and I, I won it for three years in, in a row. Uh, that event. Uh, it was with judo uh,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: black belt and, and karate people like boxing and it was. But it was very underground. Like it was in a small dojo like,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: they close the doors and then they have to keep rolling by, yeah.

Holly: Okay.

Garcia: Uh, so I, you know, I didn't, and well, my mom didn't like it but uh, I was so like, even in, in vacations, all my friends go out uh, go away from, from vacations like to the beach and I mean, I stay in my hometown just training. I wanted to be better.

Holly: Yeah, you were [Unintelligible].

Garcia: I wanted to like lose, to lose weight. Get in shape. And uh, but I was very like uh, uh, dreaming on, on, on the fighting and that's what I wanted, I wanted to do at the beginning, like, you know, this young and um, that's always like the cool, the cool thing. Um, but yeah, well then uh, uh, it wasn't a black belt in, in Ecuador. Like I really wanted to, to keep advancing in Jiu-Jitsu. I wanted, I wanted to do Jiu-Jitsu. So uh, but moved to Argentina for a while. Then my uh, uh, have went my university there. Training with this guys but I, very short time when I moved there, he actually moved to Ecuador.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: Like he moved back to my, to my hometown.

Holly: Okay.

Garcia: Uh, yeah, somebody, one of my friends. They have uh, some money like, he knew somehow like I, I connect them but then that money brought him to Ecuador and again I was already in Argentina.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: So from there uh, I went back to the same. Like I was like training with somebody like, you know, like, that could, uh, uh, uh, with a private or, or, you know.

Holly: What you're saying is really something that I, I've um, al-, always been really curious about and we do talk about the war-, the warrior spirit and

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: It's like a structure inside a person. Especially probably for women too but for men especially. We think of it as you know, you know, that wanting to be a warrior because in the old days when you

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: needed to be one.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: Was a necessity.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: So that sounds like what you're saying. It, it sort of brought to your, your young years. A way to focus some of that energy.

Garcia: Yeah. I think uh, yeah. I, I, I really dedicate my, it was hard like to because there was a lot of uh, young people also like, in university. I was always try to, to keep training and getting better while everybody's partying and drinking.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: Like it was kinda like that.

Holly: Yeah. Yup.

Garcia: The same, but just sometimes you get caught up on that and hard to, you know.

Holly: Oh yeah.

Garcia: And, and

Holly: Focus.

Garcia: Yeah. But uh, like I said, I stay awhile in, in Argentina but the guy left from Argentina so I, I met somebody from Brazil and then I, I left uh, to train and my parents didn't know at the time because they were paying my university in Argentina and I, I was.

Holly: Oh,

Garcia: So I left to Brazil like for a while.

Holly: Oh.

Garcia: They were, they were, I start talking to my mom. I said you know what, I really wanna change [Unintelligible] 'cause I wanna do this. Like, I don't, I don't, I don't like Argentina like I love Argentina [Unintelligible].

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: But I'm, I'm just saying like I [Unintelligible] uh, I really want to go to Brazil. I was in Brazil already.

Holly: Hmhmm, Hmhmm.

Garcia: But I was trying to convince her like brainwash her.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: And she said, okay. That's the why

Garcia: If that's what you want to do, okay. Like, you know, like, go or whatever. You're already, I, I'm here already. Okay. What? Yeah, so, I stayed there for a while but till I was, I was young.

Holly: How old were you then around that time? Under 20?

Garcia: Uh, maybe, yeah. Nineteen, 20.

Holly: Uh huh.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: Okay.

Garcia: Yeah. Uh, yeah, but I was like go back uh, and went back home. Teach for a while like, some like with friends. I rent a place in a gym.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: Uh, but the thing that the, the, I really did enjoy with it, because like I said, it's the law of the jungle there. They try, everybody tries to be the tough person so you get a like a lot of challenges

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: like by, by like fight challenges.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: People want to fight you or instead of like being more friendly. Here in the US, I love it because nobody mess with nobody, you know. Everybody like work, you know, worry about yourself like what, like you work and, and you can do a lot. Uh,

Holly: I wonder what that does though about Jiu-Jitsu developing in uh, Brazil, and of course out into other countries, I wonder what, what the cultural influences are now that we're, we're seeing with the larger growth

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: of Jiu-Jitsu because I've heard that story so many times about how Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu developed

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: in those environments for obvious reasons.

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: But um, but it's so refined now compared to that.

Garcia: I've think uh, because [Unintelligible] here's great because you, the ki-, the kids start very young

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: like five, like four or five years old. So you teach them from the beginning

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: like to be respectful like martial art, everything.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: Over there, I don't, I don't remember the kids like they were in, but I lived in Ecuador, it was so, so new that I, I never seen a ki-, little kids.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Always was like teenagers, adults and uh,

Holly: It's pretty new here too, you know, we

Garcia: Yeah, but

Garcia: but here for the busin-, busin-, business wise like it's always is more uh, uh, the should be like more businesslike

Holly: Hmhmm. So we should, so we should pay atten-, we, we should put our focus then on, on the young

Garcia: I really believe that and of course, but the, the adults, they change their mind all the time and they do whatever they want to. Like uh, you know, I, if you have a strong uh, you build a, a strong k-, uh, kid's program and you really focus on the kids. They, they stay with you forever, you know.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: And uh,

Holly: And that, and that, and so a-, will y-, that mean, what does that mean about Jiu-Jitsu? That means a lot of things but to you, because you have so much experience and you have your own childhood experiences, what are we saying about Jiu-Jitsu is that getting them when they're really young is great.

Garcia: Well, and like I say uh, just how my personal experience is that when, when I start, everybody was teenager.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: And or, or adult that age 'cause you wanna, you cannot like wanna be the macho or you, you know, a tough guy. To us, at that time, we don't have that, that many regulations in the country like

Holly: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Garcia: for me is that, you know, you wanna, you know, you drive drunk and you get 24 hours, you know what I mean. And, and they let you go.

Holly: One of the things you're saying is something I haven't thought about too much. Um, and that is the, the, the mixture of Brazilian and other cul-, and other cultures, like yours.

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: Um, with the, with the culture in the US.

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: Is it, it's, it's specifically [Unintelligible].

Garcia: Yeah. Like I said, here, here you have to behave. Like here it's more controlled. Everything is more professional. Uh, you have to be more clean, like, you know, everything is, is, is, here, they make it professional. I think.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Over there it's more uh, it was more like uh, uh, and then like, yeah, I don't know. Like of course you want to, you aspire to, to make a profession but it's so hard over there. Like,

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: also like,

Holly: The challenges.

Garcia: Yeah, it's very challenging. And, and the, and the, the mentality of the mothers or, or family members is like, you know, is violence.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: Uh, things, not positive. They don't see it like a career. They don't see it like a, like a prof-, like a respectful career, you know.

Holly: I see.

Garcia: They expect you to, to be a lawyer, a doctor, something like that, typical so they don't, you don't get the same value, I think, over there.

Holly: Yeah, right.

Garcia: They, they don't, they don't respect you that much. And then, I've been doing Jiu-Jitsu like over 15 years and I can be a doctor if I, I was doing that, you know what I mean. And uh, so I don't know. Like I, I, I do respect the, the, the profession and I, you know, I, I devote my, myself like I'm doing as best,

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: as best as I can.

Holly: And th-, and that's kind of, and what we're focusing on here too is the, now, th-, not, not that it's without shadow or unfortunate things or negative things but we're essentially focusing on the value of the children and/or

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: what the experience is for women when they come. Before we go too far I don't want to forget to ask

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: you about that.

Garcia: The, the, the kids, I, I 100% I believe that it's so important to have the kids in, in martial arts because even in your house you show h-, show him like how to, how to wash your [Unintelligible], how to use the bathroom. Like, but you don't really like take the time and, and show him how to don't bully people or don't get bully or don't, you know, I don't know how you say it.

Holly: Yeah, don't, yeah.

Garcia: Don't be bully.

Holly: Yes. Don't get bullied.

Garcia: Don't get bullied.

Holly: Don't allow bullying.

Garcia: Yeah, so, and I don't know. I, I think like the, the, the h-, the habits they learn here like in, like in very [Unintelligible] like from [Unintelligible] you know, like,

Holly: It's a habit.

Garcia: Just, yeah. Just like

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: Like respectful for the like, you know, like respect for your coaches. Like uh, have a good attitude. Respect your partner, be friendly, like, you know, so I think it's very positive. And it's usually that uh, again. I, I think me as a teenager, I think most of the, the reason like, you fight is because you are scared.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: For sure.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: Now I'm very confident about myself. I don't care like, somebody get in like say something because like, it's not worth it. I know that, yeah.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: I, I do it every day. It doesn't motivate me anymore.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: And I do it all the time. Like, like, training and, and learning. So it's not like I need to go inside and prove myself or, you know what I mean.

Holly: Yeah. It's almost like, what are the things or all these things, like a personal story,

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: it's almost like a personal story of a high level Jiu-Jitsu guy. What you do. And I could condense it into a couple sentences, but basically what you just uh,

talked about is you started out this way growing up and, and learning this and then now you're

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: One of my favorite quotes. "You learn to fight so we don't have to fight."

Garcia: Yeah, I like it. Yeah and again like if you create a culture like the young kids, they just, you know, they grow up so confident and, and believing in themselves and

Holly: And they, those kids are now uh, Jiu-Jitsu is different before in the United States even. Before the children started coming, children's programs. It was a little bit more like of a tough guy era.

Garcia: Because it's new. You don't know what it is. Like everything, everything that you don't know, it's scary. And, and you try to, to go against it like I think.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: And [Unintelligible] like I say, that the, the kids, I, I see uh, kids like they don't even talk to you. They're a little shy and, and very like, into themselves and man, get like so, so much uh, open, so much confident. Their moms come to me and say yeah, he's doing good in school now. Like he talk to, he have more friends in school. He's even doing better on, on, on the school. So I, I really think I'm doing a positive thing. And, and it's making me happy.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: I see a lot of times like how I started like with the kid. Then the dad comes here. So I'm always come and say hi to everybody and I always invite them, I always invite them to train.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Maybe it take like a year sometimes. But they start like, sometimes they, they, they, they feel the commitment. They start coming and now I have like, like, four families that's training and I feel that, that they're the support that's there. That they, that bring them together. You know, like, the, the family.

Holly: And well, and of course this is another area that's a huge curiosity to me is, is um, the social dynamics and, and that sometimes uh, so when we talk about one child, the, the transformation for one child and also what it can do for a family and then the larger one is what does it do for a town?

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: Or what does it do for like the state or the whole com-, our whole community because

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: we're community. That's, you know, whatever thoughts you have about that.

Garcia: I, like I said. I think in, in the family it just give you like uh, something in common that you guys do. And it's so addicting like, you, you get like so, so much uh, um, b-,

Holly: How is it addicting?

Garcia: I mean, bes-, besides the, the, the, the great workout and you know. The family, yourself or, you know.

Holly: Yeah. Yeah.

Garcia: it, it can be karate or whatever martial art. But in Jiu-Jitsu it's never, you never stop to, to, to uh, learn. Like you never stop and sometimes like, even, even now.

Garcia: Even now, yeah, I have like sometimes, sometimes I see something or, or the, it links like a. It's just very addicting like,

Holly: Right.

Garcia: you, you think about it.

Garcia: I still, I still go, yeah. I still go to sleep thinking about it and I still wake up, oh man. Like, yeah. And

Holly: Okay. So then that says one thing about Jiu-Jitsu specifically.

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: That's different than other things but that's like, the big question is, why Jiu-Jitsu? Why Jiu-Jitsu? Why not something else?

Garcia: Uh, it's v-, um, I think th-, as a kid like if you have brothers like around you're ag-, your age, always uh, I feel and, and I, and I knew it myself with my brother. I r-, I really like tum-, like the kids like to tumble and even if you don't show them any martial art, they will wrestle by themselves like on the, on the bed. Like it's fun to them. Like tumbling around and uh, I think

Holly: Playful.

Garcia: Yeah. It's playful. Yeah. You trying to play, have fun. And I think that, that in your self-conscious maybe you're doing it when you're training, like, I, I think.

Holly: Wow, so it has to be something

Garcia: And

Holly: that's innate.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: In everybody.

Garcia: Yeah, I think so. Even let's say, like they, when you hear your name, and the student saying you're, you're here because you hear like all your life and so your name is, is very, you like to hear your name. Right? I think this is something that you, you tumble as, as a kid, right. And play around and

Holly: Well, that's an interesting way of saying that.

Garcia: N-, yeah.

Holly: I never thought of it like that before.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: That's wonderful.

Garcia: Yeah, because

Holly: Wow.

Garcia: as, as, as adults uh, we, you know, we have responsibilities. You have uh, you know, you, you're grown up life but once you're training, you know, you cannot think. It goes back to your, your kid part.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: You know, and the, you know.

Holly: The roots of being a human.

Garcia: Yeah, and it's, it's relaxing. Uh, it's very, it's very positive.

Holly: So that's potential for a family. And it's uh, really quite something unique.

Garcia: Oh for sure. Like I, like I say it, it's your, you know, you get like so close like I see, like, like I see the families. When you have time like if you're working all day and then you go home tired and maybe you go watch TV or drink a beer, you know.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: Uh, when you have time for your kids or do something with them. I think this time it's something that both are doing so, uh, something they both like and [Unintelligible] come with kids, they understand. Like I have, man, I teach like so m-, like so many kids like for so long I have like, uh, the kids are very smart. They, they, sometimes they, they get it faster than the adults.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: And, and they get so much better because

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: it's so natural for them.

Holly: That's interesting because then it sounds like a great equalizer.

Garcia: Exactly. Sometimes

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: I have very, very young talents. Uh, oh I moved now to Santa Barbara when I was, but when I was in Encino to, to you hear about him. He's like, two or three times the world champion and he's like six years old. Uh, even, you know, like I, I think he have like over 50 tournaments. He's very, he's very young but he's, he's very good like happy kid. He just smile all the time. He loves to train but you see him sometimes explaining something to, to an adult

or you know, the parents don't train there, the parents are older but I spend a lot of time at the gym and I see like other people, he like, teach me. Like, he helping like the coach with the kids and he understand. It's, it's, it's [Unintelligible] And he's just six years old.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: But he make it like so mature and it's, it's, it's weird. He just barely like get out of the bumper that thing you know.

Holly: So more than the

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: even the Jiu-Jitsu technique, he has a wis-, some kind of a wisdom.

Garcia: Yeah, it's just so

Holly: When, when he's on the mat with people that are three, four, five times his age.

Garcia: Exactly. He, yeah. same thing you're doing.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: You know, but longer.

Holly: But I, So there again, I go, why, Jiu-Jitsu? Why is it, why Jiu-Jitsu brings that? How does it do that?

Garcia: Just you, you learn about your, a-, about your, your body like all the mechanics and how, how you move and you know, and if I don't hear it can, just can happen and that, you know what I mean. It's just very interesting like, you know.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Discover that, that you can do and at the same time, it's also like, challenging. It's like, you know, you, of course you don't want to lose. You wanna try to commit your partner in a friendly, in a friendly way, you know, sometimes.

Holly: Yeah. Yeah.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: Real competitive.

Garcia: Yeah but uh,

Holly: So the comp-,

Garcia: it's very great.

Holly: so the competition is a good um, topic too and hierarchy where the, the belts

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: and um, uh, I w-, I could ask you a lot of questions about any of those things but um, I'll just see maybe, maybe what you feel like saying with [Unintelligible] out there with 'cause I don't want to keep you too long. But when women come.

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: You know, what happens when the women come and w-, you can think about competition, competition between men and women. Between different women and women or and then, and then the hierarchy, we have that always to deal with. We have a h-, we do have a hierarchy. We

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: and when we have two people. There's always a hierarchy.

Garcia: Hmhmm.

- Holly: It, it might, it might be one way and then change in five minutes because someone might tap and someone else
- Garcia: Hmhhh.
- Holly: might tap but all these things are happening all the time. So many things that we don't usually sit and always talk about.
- Garcia: Hmhhh.
- Holly: To write papers but they're, they're real. And they matter and I think, you know, whatever, whatever you feel like saying about it um, I'd love to hear.
- Garcia: I personally love to have girls uh, training. I think it's very positive and that the, the uh, the uh, uh, oh man, I have a trouble with language. Uh,
- Holly: Oh, your English is great.
- Garcia: I wanna, I wanna remember. Uh, uh, it's, it's, it's
- Holly: What's it related to? Like what, what kind of experience?
- Garcia: Like uh, seeing girls in Jiu-Jitsu it's like the, the, the, the core of Jiu-Jitsu.
- Holly: Hmhhh.
- Garcia: Like because they, they
- Holly: Essence.
- Garcia: Essence of
- Holly: Hmhhh.
- Garcia: Jiu-Jitsu like you know, you know, it's, it's. You don't have to be big, heavy strong, you know,
- Holly: Yeah.
- Garcia: they can be like, you know. A woman

Holly: Yeah, the underdogs.

Garcia: but it, it will, exactly. Right. It is

Holly: [Unintelligible].

Garcia: so that, that, that, that uh, prove that how powerful is martial art like when they, you know, when the girls, you know, get like uh, learn it and get good at it.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: And uh, like I said, I'm very like super supportive of the, of the

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Uh, all, all the time I go uh, I, I've been teaching before. I have my, I'm with my girlfriend now but uh, for example now, I really like uh, like, love girls because I want her to like to train and,

Holly: Hmhm. Yeah.

Garcia: [Unintelligible] training partner. But uh, I always like girls in the, in, in the, in the school when I, when I teach and uh, It's a little b-, it's a little difficult because some guys and again, it's the n-, it's kinda the new people uh, or, or younger people. They have this ego or they're, you know, they don't wanna oh, tap for a girl kinda but so you realize that you cannot get the technique then they start putting like their power, like, manpower so they can hurt the girls.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: So that, you have to be very careful like who you partner u-, partner up and uh, but still, it's, it's up to instructor, you know. It's, it's more, if something happens to a girl, it's my fault. It's not because some

Holly: Yeah. [Unintelligible].

Garcia: You know. And I know the guy doesn't, doesn't know like maybe he doesn't know, but I guess even if guy is very rough with the girls.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: Then I don't take it personally. It's r-, it's, they don't know better, you know. We have to still teach them uh,

Holly: Well,

Garcia: but that's why you know your, your students and you know, you, you should know who partner, partner up.

Holly: Well, what are, what are the things that um, without um, necessarily focusing on children or, children or women, it makes it very specific, the examples, but it happens between the men and the men too. Because the ego, the, you know, the, the feeling of who I think I am. How good I am or

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: how strong I am is always being challenged. Um, well, in my mind it's always being challenged in Jiu-Jitsu. Uh, do you have anything?

Garcia: Ye-, yeah. I, I, I grew up to. If I have a bad day, it will, for example. If it's a, a, if I am gonna train Saturday and I have a, a bad Friday. Maybe I'm tired or I, you know, for the week or sore and I have a bad day training, it will bother me the whole weekend.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Like on Monday and I come back and I do it like right, you know.

Holly: And is that part of, do you think that's part of the addictive process? We talked about the o-, uh, some other parts, the addictive parts uh, but does that count as addictive?

Garcia: Uh, it can be. Uh, it might be different like for in my, in my, in my position. I lead like a l-, a lot of people so I kinda feel the, I have to be like better than everybody and I try to God motivates me to train more, more, more, study more. I, I, I hate it if somebody ask me something and I don't have an answer.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: So I really like uh, uh, study and, and, you know, and I do my homework.

Holly: Well, another thing with, with what you're saying and also the, so many other Jiu-Jitsu folks that I know is that the leaders in Jiu-Jitsu are such strivers. Strivers for, for, for always striving.

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: I wonder, you know, I wonder, I guess that is the inspirational, you know, leader in sports that can, that can, you know or be a great champion.

Garcia: Yeah, um, I think well, for, for me, like I, when I was younger, I used to compete-, to compete a little more and my, my, my focus was that I wanted to compete. I wanted to

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: you know, get medals. That's, that was my, my motivation but now uh, well, recently like I, and I know it's, it really doesn't matter like everybody is gonna get older. Uh, you know and it's not about the, it's not about the getting medals or not. Like, after a m-, a month, you know, I cannot remember what you, what

you did, like, it doesn't matter. It's, what it matters is like how much, you know, you, you put into, into, into your students like uh, the quality of person you are 'cause it doesn't matter how many times you are a world champion. If you're, can't like, teach a kid class or, or, or relate with the, with your students or be there for them. It doesn't matter. Nobody is gonna be uh, want to be around you. You know, some people [Unintelligible] to the head and they're like too, oh, too good for it, you know, and I yeah, so that, that I, I, I really, you know, I think it's, it's wrong. Of course, there's a lot of people that are like great champions and also great uh, instructors or leaders. Like, [Unintelligible]

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: he, he have like so many uh, uh, world titles and have a very strong team and very positive students. Uh, I know that because a lot of my, my students I, I used to have uh, when I used to live in Encino train there now and he's, and he have a great things to s-, uh, say about him. Uh, but again uh, he's, he's, it's something that's very hard to put together like uh, to have a successful like competition and uh, well, be an instructor and run a school.

Holly: Hmhmm. Hmhmm.

Garcia: Yeah, not just to teach and compete because uh, you also have to run the school. A lot of things behind that. You don't have a good team

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: uh, it's, it's kinda hard to balance. Now that I'm just a uh, full time teaching again, I'm getting the, the, the, the, the passion to start competing again. So now I'm getting, you know, I'm training more and I have the time, I'm training

with my students and, and I'm, I'm starting tournaments again so I kinda have the passion again. But for three years, I didn't compete for three years. Why? Because I was like teaching, running the school. Like it was, it was just a lot. I didn't realize but uh, it does like um, uh, it take a lot. A lot from you, you know, and but now that I'm working with my, well, I'm working with R-, Rodrigo like uh, we have a, an excellent team. Like I don't have to worry.

Holly: About everything.

Garcia: About everything and they have uh, you know, everybody have his role in the school and, Rodrigo's very good in delegating like you know.

Holly: Yeah,

Garcia: You know.

Holly: this is really good timing for me. I think to talk with you, just because you're um, not s-, you, in the past although you were teaching you, you had other distractions and then 'cause I'm, obviously the, the competitor is the particular maybe the meat and potatoes and the compet-, competition. Part of it is like dessert and there's cake or something.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: Then it's a part of it, but

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: um, but there's so much more.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: And you've been doing that for a couple of years or the last year

Garcia: L-, like, like I said before I, I don't know. I, I think I'm getting so old now. But uh, before

Holly: Not yet.

Garcia: before really th-, I, I really think of like I want to win this medal. I wanna, kinda thinking what uh, uh, what people were think about me like, try to oh, I have to win this so to kind of prove

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: somebody that I'm not and now I realize it doesn't, it doesn't matter like, it doesn't matter. Now I wanna do it because I want to learn and get like

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: you know, uh, that upset, okay. I have this mistake so then I oh, and you just learn from it. I just, I just do it because I wanna learn and get better.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: And because people ask me here to stop like, you know, so I wanna uh,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: been there [Unintelligible] say it here in, in the school, you know, you know what I mean.

Holly: Yeah. Yeah.

Garcia: So, if I'm [Unintelligible] just competing. How, how I'm gonna really uh, answer or be there for them if I haven't done it.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: So it's more like a learning thing for me now and uh, now I think I, I enjoy it more.

Holly: [Unintelligible] more.

Garcia: Like, yeah, like it's just, it's just, and not fun like, you know. And uh, but I think like before also I have like the, the, the wrong, of course everybody wants to win. Of course I'm trying to win. I'm trying to like do it. But it's not my drive. All I h-, to get the medal or this, or, or this competition 'cause see like to s-, to look for approval of somebody. I don't care like what nobody thinks, thinks, you know, like, I do it because I want to learn and then, and, and I wanna be a better teacher, you know, because nothing else.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: But before as younger like I said, like

Holly: Right.

Garcia: you wanna,

Holly: [Unintelligible].

Garcia: you wanna get yeah, you wanna kinda,

Holly: [Unintelligible].

Garcia: you know, maybe show off and, and as I [Unintelligible] mature, I [Unintelligible] everything change, you change.

Holly: Yeah, that's a great, it's a great story that you're telling about what it was like in the beginning.

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: And then it changed a little. And now it's changing some more.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: And so maybe in five years or ten years

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: what do you think, say that you stay in and doing this. What will, what will, what will it be like for you and then also, what will it be like for everybody? What, it's gonna be different, right?

Garcia: Well, a 100% I know that five, 10, 15, 20, it doesn't matter what. We'll be doing the same.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Like I wanna, I,

Holly: You're still gonna be doing this?

Garcia: I wanna, I wanna, yeah. [Unintelligible].

Holly: Okay. Tell me why. Why Jiu-Jitsu then? Like

Garcia: Uh, not just

Holly: I think you've already said it.

Garcia: I, I know

Holly: One more time.

Garcia: I know and sometime, some point like maybe my bones are not gonna be able to

Holly: Uh huh.

Garcia: to train the same. It's not just about the training but I really, really enjoy like to, to teach. I really like to see the change and like I say, I have some kids like very shy.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: And after a month training

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: it just like, you get so attached and they see that improvement, it's really, very h-, very happy.

Holly: I get it.

Garcia: And uh, personally I'm very close to my family. Like my parents, like everybody. And uh, man, my parents are my best friends.

Holly: Right.

Garcia: And but I'm very

Holly: Is, they're in Chile?

Garcia: Uh, Ecuador.

Holly: Ecuador.

Garcia: They, they live in Ecuador. But

Holly: 'Cause you were planning to go back and open a school in Chile.

Garcia: I have a school for, it's, it's n-, uh, it's, it's not uh, by the school.

Holly: Okay.

Garcia: It's the, the, it's, I have a, a student there.

Holly: Okay.

Garcia: A brown, a, a brown belt.

Holly: Okay.

Garcia: So I travel there.

Holly: But anyways. I'm sorry.

Garcia: Yeah, that's a different a long, a long story.

Holly: Okay.

Garcia: But uh, uh, what I s-, oh, I, I'm very close uh, with my family. I'm very like uh, I, I love to be in my house. I love with a lot of, you know, kids in the house. Like, f-, family. I, I, I love it but I'm the only one who left the house when I was uh, 18 or 19.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: I'm the only one who, who left my house. Like, you know, um, even like so close I am like I, I, I follow like, trying to I, my only reason was uh, I'm not going to go back until I get my black belt. I wanted to get my black belt and go back.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: But now uh, I just very used to the how the culture here and it's just more professional and uh, just so much that I can do here

Holly: More opportunities.

Garcia: than over there, yeah, but now uh, well, I, I have my student, I have a student in Chile and Chile is an excellent uh, country. Very well, like, the economy and, and the people is, I don't know. I think, it's very, it's di-, I know they're, they're Latinos too, but it's kind of different. It's a different culture.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: Like they're very respectful. They, they very I don't know. I have like another, a different uh, uh, experience over there and I, and I really enjoy work with the people there. They're very like professionals too and uh, so i-, it was, it was in a, in a, in a point this year that I kinda was uh, off road. Always my goal has been like well, with Jiu-Jitsu. That, that never changed. I always gonna,

Holly: So you feel like wherever it t-,

Garcia: gonna

Holly: wherever you go, you're gonna, Jiu-Jitsu is gonna be the

Garcia: Wherever I go, I, I, I will do the same and, and I will find. Like, like, I, I just love

Holly: Did you say, did you say or wh-, what mainly because of uh, we use the word transformation. The change

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: the changes in kids. Changes in families. Changes in people.

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: D-, did you say that that's the main reason why, you think now?

Garcia: Say again. What?

Holly: Or uh, a little bit ago you said talk about the children again. So, in five, 10, 15, 20 years or

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: increment, not forever, that's too much, what, is that the main reason why, now, because it, because it changes people?

Garcia: Oh,

Holly: That's what it sounds like you said.

Garcia: Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, sorry. Yeah. So,

Holly: But I don't want to put words in your mouth.

Garcia: Yes.

Holly: It's just that I think that's what you said.

Garcia: No, like I see the, I see the, yeah, like even, I, I really get attached with my students.

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: And uh, uh, it just, it's great to see. It give me a lot of satisfaction, like,

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: they have, like, you know, to see the, the kids getting better, improving. Or say like somebody do a tournament and do a style that I teach them and doing well. It gives like that, the, the, see them happy and you know, like, it's great. Like that

Holly: Just rewarding.

Garcia: It's just, yes, very rewarding. I know here, you know,

Holly: Hmhm. Yeah.

Garcia: and I, I just like that. I don't, I don't have to deal with

Holly: So your feeling is that any kind of bad things that we don't want happening and that might be happening in the background that we don't know about or we find out about later are um, overcome by the positive aspects. That we can continue forward .

Garcia: Um, y-, yeah. You know, we're gonna be uh

Holly: Because I don't even, you know, I'm kind of biased. I, I am really positive. So sometimes

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: I skip over those things.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: But they're there.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: We know they're there.

Garcia: It, it, it's, it's natural, people like a lot of people like the, the, I don't want to say drama. There's people like drama or

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: It's natural, it's people that you always uh, complain or always something bad happen. Always but it's not like

Holly: Everybody.

Garcia: Every, everybody. Everybody complains. It's something uh, like, like, uh, I don't have an example. Yeah, there's people always [Unintelligible] people.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: You always have to like say something bad about somebody. Uh, it's normal. People is just like that. I hate that. I don't like, um, to say that. Even for me to say I hate it, I'm already doing, but I know. I just, I just try to be

Holly: Overcome.

Garcia: over, over, over that way. I'm always like positive. Always happy. Always doing what I love and I, I'm very grateful that I don't have, you know.

Holly: It's pretty simple.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Like I said

Holly: You remind me of the, you know, when I'm talking to the Professors or whoever. Any of the guys

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: you're very positive.

Garcia: Yeah. I, I, really, I really grateful like I say. Like I'm very rich. I, you know, even that I don't, I don't have uh, uh, I don't know l-, I'm, I'm, I'm very, I'm very happy. I get to wake up and do what I love every day and you know, and that's

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: That's what I, you know.

Holly: So just one, just one, one more thing 'cause this is gonna be my like, I'm starting to wonder what you think. I, I haven't thought about this much but in 10 or 20 years, I mean, I know everyone's wondering will, will Jiu-Jitsu. Who's gonna, how many, is there gonna be schools in every city. All these things that

Garcia: I hope so.

Holly: they, they, what, what 'cause you know, you started 15 years ago. Tom started in '95 so we're a jump ahead. Um, you know, 15, 20 years from that point, that's how long I've seen.

Garcia: Hmhm.

Holly: Seen. So, 20 years from now, I wonder, you know, like,

Garcia: Well, in, in

Holly: Can we even imagine?

Garcia: Yeah, well, in my case, I feel like, I'm in a, in a, in a mission. Like I really

Holly: Uh huh.

Garcia: wanna, I have a, a little like going in South America. I, I won't move over there.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: Uh, but uh, I do wanna like [Unintelligible]. I really, really really, really great job like on the family aspect and the, and the positive of uh, of the lifestyle. Different than the other peers that's judged by the competition, competition, you know. And I see, I think good work, you know, like a family affair and they have a competition team.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: It, it is great so I really support that and um, I, I don't know. I, I wanted to prove, there's a lot of young kids that, that, that, in, in South America that, the same thing that I they don't have the, the youth in the city but they're so passionate and they wanna do it and uh, like I said, look at me, I left my house, right. I was so close to my family but I see like, I, I left. Just following and, and trying to look like uh, where I can train and where I can get my black belt and to live somewhere. I lived in so many places like I was like I moved a lot. Like, Miami, Orlando, Argentina, Brazil. Uh, Portland. I, I end up in California. New Mexico. Like for, so it was wherever I can train and, and,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: and, and live but I didn't have like, I, I just devote myself and don't, like tried to do it until, you know, get my black belt. My dream was to have my school

and then you know, I had it for, for a while. For, for a little bit but that took me away like off like any competition or, or even training my like, myself so it was very challenging. Uh, but again, like, like I said. Everything is a learning experience and it came to now, I'm much richer and

Holly: Yeah. And so you'd rather go on, teaching South American kids. That goes without saying if you had an opportunity

Garcia: Oh, so yeah, I would, I would.

Garcia: Uh, I have adult ADD, by the way.

Holly: Well, that was my

Garcia: I get, I get distracted.

Holly: No, no. It's okay. No, all of those details are, are precisely what, what and this is sort of a one way conversation. So, I, and of course there that you're not getting the, the, the, the same, all these same

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: You know, I u-, I know the story.

Garcia: Well, I have to

Holly: I've seen it. I've lived it.

Garcia: I have uh, like I say, I, I really want to support all the uh, all the, the, my students over there. I have students in Ecuador that have a small schools but they're very behind on the, on how to run the, the, the

Holly: Hmhm.

Garcia: program over there and

Holly: Yeah. Yeah.

Garcia: so I'm trying to teach them, you know. I, I, I go over there. Again, it's something that I work all the time. I always talk to them. I go, it's not just about to go do one seminar.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: [Unintelligible] watch and that's it. You know, it's not just about the,

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: the, the technique but more like how they, they, they should be and, and what approach they should have. And uh, Chile is the same. I go, I spend time over there like I, you know, the, the, the certification and like the, you know.

Holly: Uh, so I, I, you know, I know a lot. So many Jiu-Jitsu guys and I don't, we don't get a chance to talk about this too often but if, if you have a long term goal, you know, kind of a mission of having uh, school, more schools for children in places where k-, children, families and adults

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: with you know, mainly particular children that, that haven't had access to training.

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: And all, I mean, I wonder, can we imagine that a lot of Jiu-Jitsu guys have, is this what's happening in Jiu-Jitsu that people have this um, idea to bring something that's positive to large numbers of people and children? I mean, it sounds like we want to change the world.

Garcia: Yeah, I don't know. I, I, I don't know uh, the, a lot of uh, a lot of people and I hear with a lot of people and uh, you know, uh, like I said, I, I haven't,

personally, if I have like I win the lottery. I have a lot of money I would like open like a school that I own and put one instructor there. My instructors so I, I like to, to give opportunity for people that I teach to be

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: able to lead the, the Jiu-Jitsu to. Like

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: 'cause that was my dream and I know a lot of people have that drive. It's just hard to, to

Holly: Yeah. It's really

Garcia: Um, but I know a lot of people that just try to take advantage of

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: get as much as they can.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: Or people that, that you think that, that everybody leave you and, and you're just having cycle.

Holly: Hmhhh. Truth is there are a lot of shadows.

Garcia: Oh, yeah. Me, personally and because I've been with, I, I work with a lot of, with a lot of people. I, I, I have like relationship with different black belts and

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: you know, of course uh, I, I learn from, from e-, from everybody but it's just like it's stuff that I agree or disagree but

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: it's okay. You know. It's their, their, their thinking. And

Holly: Good 'cause I was gonna say um, I was gonna ask you, how was I gonna say this.

Garcia: Uh, like I said, I, I, I had before the, of course I have a student. You're always gonna have a student that or that you care uh, so much about and that, eventually he, he may leave you or, or not, but it's, it's personally. I know because of you maybe they have a, they have another goals or different things. You can't like take it personal but a lot of um, uh, uh, people like take it very, very uh, uh, uh, what's the word. Not serious or personal but uh, I, I don't change, I don't change with everybody else. I still gonna do, be the same with everybody. Doesn't matter if some per-, one person uh, does some, something to [Unintelligible] It doesn't mean that everybody is gonna do it so I still you know, e-, even if it all happened, like, a bunch of [Unintelligible]. You're gonna get like, like, heartbroken is the word.

Holly: Yeah. Yeah.

Garcia: But you can't like change yourself because of that. Of course you're gonna be like harder. Uh, but uh, you, you, you have to still, you, I, I give without expecting nothing in, in change. That's the, that's the, that's the thing. And I, I, there's a lot of people that say no. Like, everybody's gonna leave you and like they just leave, leave recycling.

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: You know, like, just the new people, new people, new people. And of course, I want new people but also I want my experience that I, my dream

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: is to have a line of black belts right next to me, you know, so that

Holly: Hmhhh.

Garcia: I wanna be that, that person. Inspire people like

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: you know, stick, stick with it and, and have a strong team.

Holly: Well, we, we, we learn, one of the things I did not ask you yet. Uh, was about um, you know, sometimes we apply lessons on the mat into lessons in life.

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: And what you just talked about is something that's a very large lesson, the paradox. Well, you know, a paradox is, you know that word? When two things don't go together but you have to accept them both.

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: Like uh, we, you're saying that one of the great lessons is the flex-, flexibility.

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: The flexibility 'cause people are gonna come and go.

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: You can't c-, you can't control it.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: It's, it's gonna happen no matter what.

Garcia: Of course.

Holly: And that's, you know, we, we have to reflect here with our bodies.

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: So then we become, then we become flexible with a thing like that.

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: And with the people.

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: And then also um, at the same time uh, care enough and still not lose our, our, our interest or long term interest and care and connections with people where we have these really strong loyal bonds.

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: Because it's both. Because you have to be, 'cause the very person that's maybe the mo-, you think is the m-, most loyal.

Garcia: Hmhhh.

Holly: May end up being the one you have the flexibility lesson with.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: And it's really, really quite a challenge.

Garcia: Yeah. It help out a lot because like I said, like everybody, once they start like learning more or like even it doesn't matter the age but uh, when you start uh, maybe and you're blue, you're purple. Then you, you start, you have always have that process that you think you know everything already and uh, that's

Holly: That's, that's me for a while. A long time.

Garcia: But uh, yeah, and so everybody, you know, I think everybody it's part of the maturing in the martial art too. So it's just like it takes like, you know, I think that's why it still makes uh, uh, [Unintelligible] maybe like, you know, be uh, uh, don't take that stuff like personal and be able to like address all that stuff, you know, because if I,

Holly: Rise above the challenge.

Garcia: Yeah, because if I have, if I keep my ego again, like if I, you know, try to  
[Unintelligible] myself and make it like, you know, g-, get to me.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: I'm, you know, I'm just like the rest of the, of everybody, you know.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: So,

Holly: Then you might as well just do anything, right?

Garcia: Exactly. So, yeah.

Holly: Because somehow this teaches us how to be

Garcia: Hmhmm.

Holly: more

Garcia: Well, yeah and like people yeah,

Holly: Or we hope it does.

Garcia: Y-, c-, it's fine because I, I, I, I interact every day like, with kids and adults and  
man, the, the adults are like a lot of things. Like it's same as the kids like

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: For example, the promotions that, that they come with the card like with their  
stuff.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Garcia: I really uh, I don't get upset but I kind of uh, it annoys me like when the guys  
like, the kids, it doesn't bother me that much because kids are kids; they're

gonna get excited about it but everybody knows that nobody like talk to me about promotions because you shouldn't train for that.

Holly: Yes.

Garcia: Like I want, I want to like just get better and

Holly: Yeah.

Garcia: focus on that.

Holly: Traditions are okay to keep.

Garcia: Yeah, but when the adult come and ask me about the promotion and that. I don't promote them like for a long time. Like, the kids, kids know that they ask me, they, they know that they don't get promoted for one month.

Holly: That's the, that's the old, that's the way it's been for

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: a long time.

Garcia: I, I, I, I want them to, to love the, the martial art and not because of the promotion. Yeah.

Holly: I thank you so much for sharing your story and bouncing those ideas that it's, it's, all these things are, are real meaningful and to me, they're things that I've thought about for a long time and written about and some people say, oh, just train. I don't want to talk about Jiu-Jitsu and the psychology.

Garcia: For sure, thank you for

Holly: A little bit of a, a little awareness goes a long way.

Garcia: Yeah.

Holly: Carlos told me to talk to the young people, younger. And you're young.

Garcia: Master Carlos?

Holly: It was. Master Carlos.

[END RECORDING]

## Appendix C

## Interview #2—Professor Kayron Gracie

Interview #2 with Professor Kayron Gracie at Gracie Barra Mission Viejo 11/13/13

[BEGIN RECORDING]

Holly: Hello Professor. I have turned on the recorder and am ready to begin our interview. Is it ok with you to proceed?

Kayron: Okay.

Holly: Um, so Kayron, you um, are the son of Carlos Gracie and the grandson of Carlos Gracie, Sr.

Kayron: Yes.

Holly: And you've been around Jiu-Jitsu for a while.

Kayron: Yeah. Tw-, twenty years probably. Like, I think I started like four. Yeah.

Holly: Four years old?

Kayron: Years old, yeah. Before I even remember.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: As a little kid walking around, getting thrown around by the big guys.

Holly: Like a, like a, like a ball game. Throwing the little kids around the mat. You just, you probably don't remember ever not being on the mat.

Kayron: Yep.

Holly: Well um, I guess you looked over my notes a little bit and um, ob-, obviously my, my research is about the psychology of Jiu-Jitsu which is in, goes in a lot of different directions. Um, but um, I'll just start by asking you about your own, your own personal experience which I know is different at different ages.

But um, anything that comes to you, just if you think, you know, what your personal experience is training in Jiu-Jitsu.

Kayron: Okay, the thing Jiu-Jitsu affect a lot of my personality, the way I am. Just being around like a lot of people on the mat since I'm really young. I just very comfortable around a lot of people, you know, and just very outgoing person. I think that's one of the main, main reasons.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: 'Cause Jiu-Jitsu, I've mean, playing around and training since I'm really young.

Holly: Hmhm, yeah. Um, and then, so family is a big part of that, obviously.

Kayron: Yep. Yeah, 'cause I, when I get on the mat, everybody that's on the mats, it's almost like a family, [Unintelligible] my dad will trust me to all his students, 'cause he knew everybody and the environment there. Everybody treats you like family. And uh, so I just play around with everybody. Wouldn't even like, be looking at me too much 'cause you know, older guys be treating me like they would treat their sons.

Holly: Yeah. So you know, some people I might ask them about social things or family and, and for you, it's almost hard to ask that besides, because I know you. And it's almost hard to make it separate because you don't know anything, anything else.

Kayron: Yes, that's, that is, be all my life. So I've never not have.

Holly: Right.

Kayron: So I don't know the difference between not having and having.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: You know what I'm saying?

Holly: So you, so even, even if I ask you a question like, what can um, what can Jiu-Jitsu do for a family or what can Jiu-Jitsu do in a community?

Kayron: It, it can do so much. I think it fits every like, every family there's a different need. And I think Jiu-Jitsu fits all those needs 'cause it helps the weak person and it helps the strong person also. Or it helps the one that's being bullied and it helps the bully.

Holly: Hmm.

Kayron: So it goes all the way, I think. Jiu-Jitsu helps, I think,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Kayron: all around.

Holly: Um, a lot, a lot of my research, and it may not have showed in here, is about um, the, a body, using a body technology. Of, of course in my, in my research it's Jiu-Jitsu in particular.

Kayron: Okay.

Holly: But other people have studied other types like yoga.

Kayron: Hmhmm.

Holly: Or whatever. And so um, I was talking to, in another interview and, and the, the notion, the idea came up that um, Jiu-Jitsu could, can almost be thought of as uh, your na-, like a person's name. Like their identity or something that's like inside all of us.

Kayron: Yes.

Holly: Type of thing.

Kayron: Because um, like Jiu-Jitsu also uh, show so much of personality. Bec-, because you cannot hide who you are when you're trying to survive and when you're training, you know, normally people putting in bad spots and smashing. You gotta survive there. So the way you act and the way you, you moving on the training kind of shows a little bit of your personality.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: If you like, if you're doing sneaky moves, you, is attacks. Everybody knows this guy's kinda, you gotta be like, watch out for him. And while you're doing stuff with him and stuff like that.

Holly: Yeah, so um, survival is a big theme, in Jiu-Jitsu.

Kayron: For s-, for sure. I think so. You can like, read the person really fast by the way they're rolling. You can tell if the guy's a nice guy or a bad guy just by the way he spy on someone and acting.

Holly: Yeah. Well, I'm really curious about that. I'm not sure if I'll get to ask other people so much about that. But since I have you, got lucky to get to talk with you. Can you, will you say a little bit more about what you see when um, when you see people moving a certain way?

Kayron: Like,

Holly: What's going on in there?

Kayron: Like when you're training and um, when you're training and teaching for a long time, you start being able to read people. Just like, the way they're looking or the way their facial expressions are. And,

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: and the way that like, their body's reacting.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: So there's mo-, more, just the main things you wanna see in the person, show like they attack like, kind of their personality.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: More than which technique they're using.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: You know, so it's really hard to explain. It's a thing you learn like over time.

Holly: Yeah, it, well, I, I, it sounds like you're saying that the bo-, that a person's body actually has, so the language it speaks.

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: It says, it tells you a story.

Kayron: Uh huh. And also the techniques, you know. Some people like, are very rough and they doing like, dirty moves. You can tell he's not like a, and there's the nicest guy to have a perfect arm lock and he knows he has it and he'll let you go, let you escape without even caring to tell you that he let you escape. And there's the guy that's, he wants you like, prove his ego that he's good. They gonna try to snap your arm

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: like with everything he has.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: You know, not even caring for the other person.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: It's very common.

Holly: And I bet um, well, I was gonna wait till later but now that it just jumped in my mind. With the women, um, I have other specific questions about women, but wh-, but what happens when you, this, you see the women? What do, what do you see the women doing?

Kayron: I think woman, when they start Jiu-Jitsu, they are very worried because men are more comfortable like with like, rolling around with other people.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: When women are not. So they always worry about oh, it's too much weight on top of me. Like, uh, and what's going on on the, on the rolling so we gotta be more careful. So try to make them uh, on training, try not to put them to roll so much but understand what Jiu-Jitsu is.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: And then when they get way mo-, more comfor-, more comfortable then you can put them to train a little bit. But try to focus them more on like drills and push them in different ways.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: 'Cause I think woman still a little bit worried.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: And also, they worry about their looks. Jiu-Jitsu

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: can, I know it's a little, you're always sweating and rubbing.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: So, breaking nails.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: So this things makes harder for the girls, but

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: we moving towards, try to develop a good program for the women. They can, they can enjoy Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: Well, um, what about the um, with the women that get used to it and get really serious and compete. What, what's it, wh-, why Jiu-Jitsu for them?

Kayron: Of course, you study, but you know, is to help the weak. The [Unintelligible] was created to help the weak be able to defend themselves again, against the strong.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: And who is the normally, I don't want to say anything bad,

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: but the woman are weaker than men.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: So probably they're, they're the one that need it the most.

Holly: Yeah. Well, women have less, women have less power.

Kayron: Less power, yes. They do.

Holly: In the world.

Kayron: So they, they have to know Jiu-Jitsu to protect themselves, you know.

Someone comes to grab them or do something, if they try to power out they're not gonna escape.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: They gotta know a certain technique to be able to defend themselves and be confident around, walking around and just doing whatever they want to do.

Holly: Yeah, so it's, it, after 100 years then it's uh, interesting now that sa-, mas-, in some ways it's almost like it's the women's turn.

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: It was the

Kayron: Well, I think if you have a woman that knows Jiu-Jitsu, like she been training for, for a while,

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: and someone tries to [Unintelligible] that doesn't know.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: She'll have the upper hand ten times,

Holly: It's not gonna go,

Kayron: ten times.

Holly: not gonna go very well.

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: Yeah. And then, I don't know, do we, we do, I mean, there are issues though with women training like, that are difficult.

Kayron: Yep. Jiu-Jitsu is a very complex, so it takes a little bit of time for each to understanding. 'Cause so many moves.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: And so many different positions.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: So, and people want fast results. And Jiu-Jitsu's a, like a long, long term.

Holly: Yeah, a lifestyle.

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: Hmm, well, do, I wonder with the, the concept of survival. If there's a something about um, everybody wanting to be a warrior or everyone wanting to, you know, um, overcome, overcome some, something for themselves. Grow or change?

Kayron: Like every, like, let's say man. Every man wants to feel powerful. So when he's training and he's getting better, he's, he feels more and more powerful and especially when he's training with someone. He wants to win. So he's fighting and trying to give everything he knows to, to, nobody likes losing.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Kayron: So when he's training, instead of just letting the guy smash him, he wants to get out of there. He wants to alive, so he wants to move and attack. And uh, let me think here. Can you ask the question again.

Holly: Hmm?

Kayron: I forgot the question, actually.

Holly: Oh, yeah. It's okay. We can just go um, um, I was tal-, yeah. It, I was talking about, I mentioned uh, survival

Kayron: And overcoming.

Holly: overcoming, changing a person um, making changes. Personal changes. Pers-, a personal uh, a personal path for growth. Do we, is that, is that what we're doing?

Kayron: Yeah, this whole like on Jiu-Jitsu, like, when you start training, you start thinking that you can do a lot of things you never thought you'd be able to. Like, controlling someone or having total control of the body or you're even able, if you want, you can even kill someone.

Holly: Hmm.

Kayron: You know, easily. If, with your hands.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Kayron: So this gives like, a person a lot of power and a lot of I think, joy. And a lot of confidence to walk around, too.

Holly: Yeah, I mean it's, it's an amazing technology for a person to, I don't know if everyone realizes when they get here that's what they're gonna be doing.

Kayron: Yeah, but at the, and, but at the same way so gentle.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Kayron: That it can do all that without even scratching the other person.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: You know, so I think you come here and train super hard and both the guys fall to the side without being able to breathe but nobody got hurt, nobody got even one scratched.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: You know, and had a great time. Had fun.

Holly: Yeah, yeah. It's amazing.

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: That's beautiful. And for the kids, um, based on what we're saying, obviously, for the kids if we get them early.

Kayron: Yeah,

Holly: Now, of course, you don't know any different. But

Kayron: No, but I seen 'cause I been teaching for a while.

Holly: Yeah, you see what happens.

Kayron: A lot of mom's come to me here crying.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: Thanking me, [Unintelligible] have words. Just they thank me. How much like, we influence their kids and change, Jiu-Jitsu help them out. Just walking like, building their confidence. They're being able to make friends easy. Just, just, just even, change, little things, just changing the way they walk. You know, just

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: they stand up a little taller.

Holly: Yeah, so the, so you see, and their bodies are changed. Not just 'cause they got in shape.

Kayron: Yeah, I imagine,

Holly: It's the language they're speaking.

Kayron: Yeah, they're try-, they start to uh, trust themselves. You know, like they believe in themselves. They start doing things, they like, oh. They never thought they'd be able to do it.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: Everybody's super nice and try to help them.

Holly: And this thing that I um, was talking to someone else with, was curious to me. Where um, the children show it, usually right away because they're very playful.

Kayron: Hmhm.

Holly: Where they're doing something, now for you it's curious 'cause you, you've nev-, it's always been natural.

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: But the child that comes in and then is suddenly doing the unnatural thing.

Kayron: Yeah, I think two things 'cause kids absorb real much quicker than adults. Their minds are 100% open. My, the adults a little bit more closed,

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: have to open the door. For kids, already open so they seek the environments out so if you going Jiu-Jitsu school, you can walk in, and already feel the environments, it's a amazing environment; family.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: Everybody helping each other. So the kids already feels this, really fast. He sees the professor, the huge smile his face. He gets huge smile his face, too.

Holly: Hmhhh. Hmhhh.

Kayron: And we teach our kids to help the other kids also. If you get someone that is just started. If he was low down, to help them. That's the way we, we learn, we want to pass it on.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: And we just always try to encourage them. If they are doing wrong, you say very good and then you help them little by little just building their confidence. Slowly. I think every, every kids, they need, they're not very confident on themselves. Especially the ones, 'cause there's some kids they're mean and they keep trying to break the other kids' confidences; always telling 'em they cannot do it, they're bad.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: And then when they come here they train, they see they can do things. They, they start thinking oh, those kids are wrong. I'm, actually I can do this.

Holly: Maybe um, maybe children that do other activities, even when they're successful, they are not experiencing uh, the, the authentic or the, the real sense of confidence that Jiu-Jitsu gives.

Kayron: Yeah, and of course the thing is, like, every sport is really good for kids.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: And every sport will give them confidence but Jiu-Jitsu it give them the confidence and they also learning to defend themselves.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: So I think it's even, they taking away even more confidence and comfortable

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: and you're rolling around. You're actually, uh, it's not fighting but you're sparring ev-, every day you come here.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: So you get used to being contact. You're not afraid of that anymore. You're not afraid to protect yourself.

Holly: Uh huh. Uh huh.

Kayron: If you need to.

Holly: Yeah. Um, go ahead if you want. If you want.

Kayron: No, that's okay.

Holly: So, so yeah, so if we said really, really get into the question why Jiu-Jitsu then, and not something else? Like karate or dance even?

Kayron: Yeah, I think the Jiu-Jitsu thing's the philosophy of Jiu-Jitsu 'cause uh, it brings a bit of Brazilian uh, Brazilian philosophy of being really outgoing and try to always be smiling. Try to be always happy and spread happiness that you have around.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: And I think the philosophy of Jiu-Jitsu is your students are extension of your family. That makes you care wh-, a lot more for your students and that brings

Holly: Yeah, that's a key. I mean, that's a pretty big deal. You don't really see that in a lot of other things.

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: So if, for the Brazilian cultural

Kayron: And also, if you don't even have to say Jiu-Jitsu's the most effective martial art in the world, it's proven. So this easy, like to beat like karate or anything else, you know.

Holly: I'll say that it is. But, but for, for the cultural influences, do you think that that's one of the, like, one of the most important things then? Is the fam-, the idea that everyone is your f-, you're all related?

Kayron: Yeah, 'cause I think

Holly: We're all related; we're all in this together.

Kayron: Yeah, I think that's also true, Brazilians are very warm

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: with other, other people.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Kayron: And I think a lot of people lack that you know, they,

Holly: Friendly.

Kayron: Yeah, most of the people in the world don't have a lot of friends.

Holly: Yeah. Yeah.

Kayron: So they come in the Jiu-Jitsu school and they see all these people so happy

Holly: Hmhmm.

Kayron: and make 100 new friends, you know, fast.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Kayron: They're like, oh my God, this changed my life.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: You know, now I didn't have any friends, now I have a 100 friends.

Holly: Yeah. It makes all the difference, doesn't it?

Kayron: Yeah, for sure. Nobody likes to be by himself doing anything, you know.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: If you have a million dollars but you're by yourself, don't have anyone to share with.

Holly: Well, and then for you um, you've probably had some peak experiences and maybe those were tournaments or maybe they were other things or other people's you know, do you have any of those that are, seem really significant that you want to say anything about? That

Kayron: What kind of uh,

Holly: Like a really big um,

Kayron: Big changes um,

Holly: a big event?

Kayron: A big changes in my, changed

Holly: Something that changed, something that changed you? Yeah.

Kayron: That changed me?

Holly: Or influenced you a lot or even a person. Any, anyone.

Kayron: I think it actually, was for me is start teaching.

Holly: Hmm.

Kayron: It changed me a lot. To like, have the responsibility you know,

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: to be able to touch other peo-, other people's, person on your life's.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: To, that was the thing that changed me the most.

Holly: Yeah. I don't know why I was expecting you to say the, I know better, but I was kinda of expecting you to say the, the tournament or something.

Kayron: Well, no, 'cause I started when I like,

Holly: I know, but I had the picture of the school there, so I was like, of you and your dad.

Kayron: I've been competing for so long and, I, I'm lucky, I've been doing good since I'm early age. So it doesn't

Holly: Yeah, yeah.

Kayron: It's something that I like to do and I don't even, of course I, I want, every athlete wants to be recognized.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: But by now, the, the reason I do it 'cause I like it and I have fun.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: And I like keep challenging myself but what really changed me, to be able to see a lot of things differently was teaching, for sure.

Holly: So if you had a crystal ball and you were gonna say what might happen in the future,

Kayron: For me?

Holly: With, with the

Kayron: With Jiu-Jitsu?

Holly: with Jiu-Jit-, well, yeah, for both. You know, like, you-, with your Jiu-Jitsu, with your family's Jiu-Jitsu.

Kayron: Yeah, I think Jiu-Jitsu is gonna take over the scene for sure. And uh, and everyone that wants to be involved in martial arts is gonna have to learn it.

Holly: Hmhm. Hmhm.

Kayron: If they wanna keep uh, keep it up.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: Otherwise, 'cause there's nothing to, there's no competition, other martial arts doesn't even get close.

Holly: Yeah. Well, and, and so, I, you know, you know I agree with you, but um, since we've touched on a little bit of the reasons why, that's kind of what the question is. So, if that's gonna happen, how, why? We've, and you've already said

Kayron: Yeah,

Holly: most of those things.

Kayron: one of the, one of the reasons why like, if you never did Jiu-Jitsu, you gotta come in and train

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: and then you're gonna see why right away.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: But I'll try to pass the exp-, like what I see from most people, the experience is just, you get a great workout, for, when you're training.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: You're doing for a lot of other people. And don't really even realize that you're doing it, 'cause you're learning things at the same time; you're learning a bunch of techniques. And uh, and it's the most efficient.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: And you're start understanding, you start understanding the techniques, it start becoming a lot of fun 'cause you challenge your brain also at the same time, not just your muscles.

Holly: Yeah, yeah. So it's uh, it's, it's a thinking man's game. What about um, I mean, obviously Gracie Barra's been successful in, in keeping people and drawing new types of people and we don't have any problem keeping people in the schools.

Kayron: Hmhm.

Holly: But at the same, and we know we're gonna grow. But at the same time, Jiu-Jitsu's hard. It's hard to stay sometimes.

Kayron: If, Jiu-Jitsu is hard. Of course,

Holly: Or it's hard to come back.

Kayron: yeah, Jiu-Jitsu's hard because again, it's a thinking game so if you think you're gonna come here and just gonna muscle someone and push, you won't be able to 'cause a small little guy that knows the techniques

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: and is playing smart, he gonna overpower you no matter how strong you are.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: So some people they deal with lose, some people don't like to change, you know, the way they think, so.

Holly: And it does involve losing.

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: Like you have to lose a lot.

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: Right? You have to tap a lot.

Kayron: And some people, and some people cannot take lose, cannot take loss.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: They take loss, they give up right away. They see a wall,

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: they turn around and go back's to [Unintelligible]

Holly: So you, you really have to be able to um,

Kayron: Persistence, right.

Holly: Hmhm, and, and you have to learn how to lose a lot of times.

Kayron: Yeah, and in life you're gonna lose a lot of times. You know, you cannot win in life all the times.

Holly: Hmhm.

Kayron: So most the things you go to the mats, you gonna go through all that. So it kinda relates a lot.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: That's one of the things people, most of the people that train a lot of Jiu-Jitsu, they, all the reference they do, on life, they try to use like, something of Jiu-Jitsu, it's funny.

Holly: Yeah, so if you sometimes we say like the mentality in the western mind, um, the US or where, it's everywhere now, is to win all the time. No matter what, to win. Just always going for the win. So when we come to Jiu-Jitsu, it's almost like we have to turn that off.

Kayron: Yeah, if, if you wanna learn and get better every time, you have to turn that off. 'Cause if you don't turn it off you're gonna

Holly: Hmm.

Kayron: come in, you're gonna train and you're gonna get hurt. And you're career not gonna be long.

Holly: Hmm. So to stay in it, then we have to almost remember something the

Kayron: You gotta remember humble yourself, you know.

Holly: Yeah, humble.

Kayron: You gotta,

Holly: Humility's a big key, right?

Kayron: Yeah, yeah, of course.

Holly: And some people, some people um, they do that and they stay in Jiu-Jitsu and they get good but they still have problems. Don't they?

Kayron: Like what kind of problems?

Holly: Like they still don't necessarily have a lot of humility. Sometimes. Right? Like there's some people that need

Kayron: Yeah, the world's not a perfect place.

Holly: Right.

Kayron: So, you're gonna h-, you got a lot of, that's how the instructor

Holly: Hmmmm.

Kayron: have to know how to deal with a lot of different type of people.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: You know, so,

Holly: It's, it's a lot of responsibility.

Kayron: And then slowly try to change them, 'cause nobody change right away.

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: It's takes years and years. And some people never change. But uh, we have rules on the mats, also, they gotta respect. So you cannot get too, too crazy.

Holly: Hmm, so the stru-, we have a structure that you know, Jiu-Jit-, Jiu-Jitsu has a structure

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: to keep things safe.

Kayron: Hmmmm.

Holly: And then um, just a, the, like the last little topic is um, do you know the word hierarchy? Like with the belts,

Kayron: Yeah.

Holly: is the hierarchy like a pyramid.

Kayron: Hmmmm, yeah.

Holly: And then also with um, with responsibility. It doesn't necessarily have to be about the belts. But um, like you just said, teaching Jiu-Jitsu is a huge responsibility.

Kayron: It is.

Holly: It's huge.

Kayron: 'Cause you're the whole model for your students. So you're, you're a mirror. That gonna reflect on you know, other people you know, so anything you do they will try to imitate you. So you can bring all these people like, influence in a good way or influence in a bad way.

Holly: Hmhm, yeah, so when you have the black belt then it's uh,

Kayron: Big responsibility for sure.

Holly: more than, more than, more than some people might realize.

Kayron: Even if you're not teaching. 'Cause if you're training

Holly: Yeah.

Kayron: and attain, [Unintelligible] partners look up to you, you really have a big influence on them too.

Holly: Yeah. Well, I'm, I'm really glad you were able to take the time. I appreciate you doing it and um, I will um, type up our questions and I'll email it to you and then if you

Kayron: Okay, if you need anything more I will

Holly: Yeah, it was good, um,

Kayron: I'll do it through email.

Holly: good conversation. My, my hope with um, the goal is, the way the res....

[END RECORDING]

## Appendix D

## Interview #3—Master Jacare Cavalcante

Interview #3 Master Jacare Cavalcante 11/25/13

[BEGIN RECORDING]

Holly: Hello Professor. I have turned on the recorder and am ready to begin our interview. Is it ok with you to proceed?

Jacare: Hmhmm.

Holly: And you read, you know what my project is about, Jiu-Jitsu.

Jacare: Hmhmm.

Holly: And uh, lots of different topics that I have been interested in but I'm, I'm asking you, Professor Jacare, that you uh, tell me about your personal experience in training in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. What Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu means to you.

Jacare: Hmhmm. Well, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu to means everything, you know. It's the meaning of uh, you know, my life. I started to train when I was uh, serious very young, you know, kid and teenager. And Jiu-Jitsu is my life, basically. Is everything.

Holly: So, so maybe you could tell me a little bit about um, some of your peak experiences. Or some of the most important experiences that you've had.

Jacare: Well, first, you know uh, competing in the first tournaments in Rio de Janeiro when you know, uh, in the first you know, uh, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu tournaments, it was like you know, a memor-, a memorable you know, experience. In the end, you know, uh, being able uh, to develop you know, The Alliance and

winning you know, defending titles was an honor, you know, uh, peak, you know, in my career, you know.

Holly: Right, right.

Jacare: And that's pretty much, you know, uh, pretty much it, you know, is, is being able to develop you know, uh, now considered the top you know, uh, organization you know, in the world. With eight world titles.

Holly: For someone like you it's, it's almost like um, maybe I'll just put this by you, if it's okay.

Jacare: Hmhmm.

Holly: If you don't mind.

Jacare: Hmhmm. No, no problem.

Holly: Then we're act-, I'm not holding it here.

Jacare: Hmhmm.

Holly: The, you can, for someone like you, you can almost uh, not imagine what it would be like to be doing Jiu-Jitsu or what was it was like before it seems like. Because it's, it is your, it is everything.

Jacare: Yeah, exactly you know, it is everything, you know, I don't imagine you know, my life without you know, Jiu-Jitsu. One way or the other you know, uh, of course and uh, professional you know, uh, I, I depend you know, feeding my family with Jiu-Jitsu you know, because that's what I do, you know, uh, 100% you know.

Holly: When, when people um, what, what do you, what, what do you think brings people to Jiu-Jitsu? What is it about, what are we doing that, that draws people?

Jacare: Well, I think you know, this sport you know, evolves a lot you know. First with the, with the UFC and then you know, uh, Jiu-Jitsu became very popular and then it's a sport you know, that empowers everybody. Everybody likes to do Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: Hmhm.

Jacare: Because you know, uh, it doesn't matter, you don't have to have a special ability, you know, like a boxer or special ability, as a gymnast you know.

Holly: So it's,

Jacare: Anybody can do Jiu-Jitsu, it's very democratic you know, sport.

Holly: Right, so then it's, so, so we really can, anybody, anybody. Any age, any

Jacare: Anybody,

Holly: Or just about anybody.

Jacare: I help a guy that decided to do Jiu-Jitsu, with me uh, over here. He's 54 years old.

Holly: Hmhm.

Jacare: I had another guy that started to do Jiu-Jitsu when he was like 50 something years old.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: And they still doing it, you know, so I think you know,

Holly: And, and you, well, you said it empowers people. So that sounds like when you answered, that's the key. That's, is that, is that the key?

Jacare: Yes, make people feel better. Uh, uh, it's very healthy for, for the individual that, you know, practice Jiu-Jitsu because you know, it's a really good you know, uh, sport. Uh, it works you know, everything. It works your body, in general. All your muscles and also, you know, it relax your mind.

Holly: Hmhm.

Jacare: And

Holly: Yeah, so if we, so if we said why Jiu-Jitsu instead of something else? Is, you know, another sport. You might have some of those same things but something about Jiu-Jitsu might be different.

Jacare: Well, I think you know, uh, less injuries. Jiu-Jitsu is more gentle. For example, the guy that trains judo every day. So it's brutal you know, and then he has to try to throw the other guy down and the-, there's a lot of impact. Jiu-Jitsu low impact sport.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: Of course there is danger you know, that you can twist your knee, you can dislocate your arm and things like that. But in general, I don't see you know, that many injuries in Jiu-Jitsu like, like in other sports. Even people playing basketball, you know, in the court, you know, it's a ply-, play basketball every day. You're gonna see more injuries than you see you know, with people practicing Jiu-Jitsu every day.

- Holly: Yeah. Yeah. And, and maybe other sports don't have that same quality of empowerment because they don't learn the technology, the techniques.
- Jacare: Exactly, yeah.
- Holly: We just can't compare.
- Jacare: Jiu-Jitsu can train for real, every day, 100% you know. And then you know, if you have any problem, you tap.
- Holly: Yeah.
- Jacare: But you're not gonna like just spar, like Muay Thai boxing.
- Holly: Hmhm.
- Jacare: One hundred percent every day
- Holly: Yeah.
- Jacare: because you're gonna get injured. Jiu-Jitsu's not MMA. MMA's different.
- Holly: Yeah.
- Jacare: So people makes you know, confusion, you know, with Jiu-Jitsu and MMA. Jiu-Jitsu is a sport you know, it's the grappling part.
- Holly: Yeah.
- Jacare: Yeah.
- Holly: Something about the word "pure" or "real" is uh, seems to come up a lot when you talk to people, when I ask people questions or when I read interviews and it, and it, but it also seems kind of hard to explain it sometimes, what that means.
- Jacare: Hmhm.
- Holly: That it's pure. What does that mean?

Jacare: Is a what? I don't

Holly: That it's real? That's it pure?

Jacare: Well, is real in terms of like you know, for example, if you do karate you know, you're not watching the guy's face you know,

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: if you're doing you know, other sports than you go for real. Like boxing, the guys they don't spar 100%. They spar, you know, they have to spar with less intensity.

Holly: Hmhm.

Jacare: Then you know, fight otherwise, and plus the boxers they have a lot of injuries, you know,

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: they have a lot of brain you know, uh,

Holly: Concussions.

Jacare: injuries and stuff like that. Concussions and stuff like that. And the Jiu-Jitsu you can train you know, for real every day and you don't see, you know, people getting injured all the time. That's what I mean, you know.

Holly: Yeah, and, and, and it's, and it's real self-defense. So, where, when we I think what you mean is it's a real fight.

Jacare: Yes, exactly.

Holly: It's as real of a fight as we can make it.

Jacare: As real as, as we can make it. We can replicate you know, the let's say a street fight, you know,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: without the punch and everything you know, is with Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: It's the grappling. It's like how you mount. How you, you're able you know, uh, to, to get you know, your, your opponent you know, in situations that you can uh, you can, you can really subdue your opponents you know, using just techniques and not power.

Holly: So I'm, I'm just gonna shift a little bit to a, the, the social part of Jiu-Jitsu.

Jacare: Hmm, hmhmm.

Holly: Which just looking out on the mat is clearly an important part of what we're doing. And so how do you think that the, what, what do you think about the social experience?

Jacare: Well, that's another you know, important thing because you know, uh, humans, they like to belong you know, uh, uh, in a group, you know. They like to feel comfortable and in Jiu-Jitsu uh, the camaraderie you know, is, I, I think is really, really good, you know. Everybody likes to be a part of, of you know, the class. I have on my side and he's injured, he's not training but you know, for him you know, it's important to come over here to the school and to check the guys' training and observing people to train and socializing you know, and talking. And I think Jiu-Jitsu's very, very important you know, this is the second house for everybody.

Holly: Yeah, that's

Jacare: You know, you can ask any student over here uh, where they feel more comfortable you know, and then they gonna say well, first, at my house and second over here. You know, and that's what it is, you know. I feel more comfortable here than sometimes I'm staying home.

Holly: Right.

Jacare: Because you know, I have my friends over here. I have people that I can talk. I can expose you know, sometimes, discuss you know, things, problems and you know, and

Holly: Definitely like an extended family.

Jacare: Extended family.

Holly: Almost like in the old times when traditional communities lived with family all together.

Jacare: Exactly.

Holly: It almost makes a, models that.

Jacare: Yeah, yes.

Holly: Perhaps, a little bit of that.

Jacare: Yes, exactly, you know. Like you know, people have the fire and everybody you know, gathers you know, around and talk

Holly: Tells stories.

Jacare: and plays music and tells stories, you know. Jiu-Jitsu, instead of doing that you know, and drinking and using other things you know, we come over here, we exercise vigorously you know, for one hour, two hours, you know, depending on the class. One hour and a half and after all that, endorphin you

know get to our brains you know, everybody's relaxed, that's when people stop and talk and open their you know, hearts you know, and minds to everybody and that's important part of Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: Yeah, and I, I, the word I've used a lot of times is transformative. I don't know if you've used that word in your, in your English. You probably have other better words in Portuguese for that. Where a person's doing Jiu-Jitsu and their lives change.

Jacare: Hmhm.

Holly: And then in a small group or a school, then social changes are happening all the time.

Jacare: Yeah, Jiu-Jitsu you know, I agree with Rorion Gracie when he says that. You know, I mean Helio Gracie's, his father, that we balance the individual. If the individual is too aggressive, when he comes to the school and he starts to train the tendency is that that individual gets less aggressive.

Holly: Okay.

Jacare: Okay, because once he start to train with other people and people start to like, make him tap and everything, it makes the guy more humble and then it balance the guy. On the other side, the individuals that are really, really shy, they don't socialize, they don't talk much and stuff like that. When they start to train, the tendency is that individual to get more you know, uh, relaxed with the environment and then he started to be more you know, he change you know, a little bit. The, the physical transformation the guy has like you know,

is overweight and he lose weight. The guy that sometimes has a disease because this is only lack of exercise.

Holly: Hmhm.

Jacare: Kids that you know, in America they give you know, drugs you know, for you know, the behavior, you know, a drug you know, for kids when the kid is too agitated the doctor goes and, and it's perfectly normal for the kids to be you know, uh, I think in my opinion it's healthy. It's not unhealthy. But here people think it's unhealthy. You know, oh, my kid you know, he has Attention Disorder Deficit.

Holly: Right.

Jacare: Well, just bring him to Jiu-Jitsu. Jiu-Jitsu's gonna balance him more than any drugs, you know.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: In my humble opinion.

Holly: Well, I, I think that's an informed opinion and you, you've probably seen that happen many times

Jacare: Hmhm.

Holly: and lots of other things too.

Jacare: Lots of other things. I had kids over here that they came, they were totally out of control. They'd fight all the time. They would not pay attention. They'd like, you know, uh, do all, you know, a bunch of like, you know, stupid things you know, and once the discipline and the training and the balance that Jiu-

Jitsu brought to their lives, you know, only their parents they almost like come to me every day to thank me, you know.

Holly: Hmhm.

Jacare: For being able to change you know, their kids, you know, because he didn't have hope that the kid was gonna get better and with Jiu-Jitsu in just a matter of a few months, you know, they completely change.

Holly: Yeah. Yeah.

Jacare: You know, and I'm totally against you know, the, the doctors giving drugs you know, for behavior, you know, all the time, you know.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: I don't think it's necessary.

Holly: Yeah, yeah. It's definitely a powerful environment. Um, I've heard stories so many times I want, I don't want to keep you too long but I, I have a couple, just a couple other quick topics and one, one is the, the cultural influences that we're receiving, and the whole world is really receiving. The Brazilian cultural influences through

Jacare: Hmhm.

Holly: the spread of Jiu-Jitsu. I,

Jacare: Well, just like you know, uh, we, were uh like uh, heavily influenced you know, by the Japanese you know,

Holly: Hmhm. Sure.

Jacare: culture you know. And even here in America like, you know, karate and you know uh, and other you know, martial arts, and in Brazil we were heavily you

know, influenced by, by the Japanese. You know, of course, you know, with you know, Judo and karate and all the martial arts they, they introduced it to us.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Jacare: And then we were able to, to transform you know, one sport and create, we didn't create you know, Jiu-Jitsu exactly, but we, we created the new sport, you know.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Jacare: We refine, yeah, it wasn't a sport before. We, we transform you know, Jiu-Jitsu in a sport and the Gracie's pretty much, you know, invented you know, invented you know, the wheel again.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Jacare: You know, so now we have you know, something that we, in Brazil we are proud and we consider you know, uh, Jiu-Jitsu a genuine you know, uh, uh, you know, uh, culture you know, from Brazil.

Holly: Right, right, right.

Jacare: It's part of our culture now.

Holly: And I hear all your, all what you're saying and I also wanna remember too that that, it has been carried through Brazilian culture

Jacare: Hmhhh.

Holly: And Brazilian people and it's been carrying, carrying itself that way out to lots of other people. So there is something

Jacare: All over the world.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: All over the world.

Holly: Right.

Jacare: Now, you don't have one country you know, that doesn't have Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: Right.

Jacare: You know uh, you go to Guam, you know,

Holly: Hmhm.

Jacare: that's a small island. People train Jiu-Jitsu. You go to Tahiti, people train Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: Right.

Jacare: All the islands in Hawaii that never heard Jiu-Jitsu

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: and I went there long before Jiu-Jitsu was you know, known in Hawaii and now everybody knows what Jiu-Jitsu's all, is all about.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: You know, in Brazil we had Jiu-Jitsu in two big centers. Rio and San Pablo.

Holly: Right.

Jacare: And now it's all over the country

Holly: Yeah

Jacare: and Brazil is like, you know, a huge country.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: And now we have Jiu-Jitsu everywhere. There is not one capital in Brazil that, or one city that you don't have Jiu-Jitsu. Same here in America. Before it was

just in one spot or maybe two spots and now it's spread all over the country.

Like you know, a fever.

Holly: So we, we are experiencing the Brazilian culture in that sense everywhere because Brazilian people have taken Jiu-Jitsu all over the world.

Jacare: Yeah, absolutely.

Holly: That's very curious to me. I, I'm just like su-, really curious about,

Jacare: Hmhmm.

Holly: about that. What, what do you make of that?

Jacare: Well, you know, even, even the, the American instructors, now that they have their own you know, style

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: to teach Jiu-Jitsu,

Holly: Okay.

Jacare: they teach Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. They don't call themselves American Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: Right. Right.

Jacare: Like people decided to disassociate you know, karate with American karate.

Holly: Hmhmm. Hmhmm.

Jacare: You know, thanks that you know, the art is still pretty much you know, uh, pure. You know, in this sense.

Holly: Right. Right.

Jacare: And, and even these guys that have their own schools, they embrace the Brazilian culture.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: And that's a positive, you know, point.

Holly: Which part? Let's, yeah, I see what you're saying about the pendulum, about it kind of going, going out and then stabilizing in new, new areas and, and not staying all the way Brazilian, so to speak. But still, what part of the Brazilian piece of it do you think is the piece that caught on to people? Maybe.

Jacare: I think it's more like you know, uh, friendly. You know, Brazilians, they touch you know, people more you know,

Holly: Hmhm.

Jacare: than we touch over here. You know, we hug, we, we hug each other. We

Holly: Demonstrate affection. Yes.

Jacare: We demonstrate more affection, you know, than each other you know,

Holly: [Unintelligible]

Jacare: It's very common in, in Brazil, for example you know, uh, when introduced to a lady you know, you give her a kiss.

Holly: Hmhm.

Jacare: You know, on the cheek, you know, and here in America we shake hands and that's it you know.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: So in Brazil it's different. In Brazil we hug, you know, each other much more. People uh, here they, they are more formal. They just shake hands and they say hello and then you know, I think uh, we bring in this type of like, you know, culture a little bit over here because we can see that,

Holly: Warmth.

- Jacare: yeah, warmth. You know, we hug more, we talk more.
- Holly: Right.
- Jacare: We, you know, and I think this is
- Holly: Which is goes right along with the technique.
- Jacare: Yeah. Yeah, you look at people finish, you see you know, a guy and a girl w-, stretching. You see the other guy stalking and the guy's over talking, you know. So I think it's uh, it's a real change you know, it's a life style.
- Holly: Yeah. Yeah.
- Jacare: You know, it's a lifestyle.
- Holly: Yeah.
- Jacare: You know, people eat bad or people they, they care, you know, about themselves you know, more when they do Jiu-Jitsu you know, the self-esteem you know, goes up.
- Holly: Hmhm.
- Jacare: You know, and this I think is very important you know, for the human beings you know. The self-esteem is a very important part. When your self-esteem is low, you know, that opens a door you know, for a lot of psychological problems you know.
- Holly: [Unintelligible]
- Jacare: You know, because the guy that has low self-esteem you know, maybe is gonna use drugs. He's not gonna care about his hygiene, you know, or care about you know, things that otherwise you know,
- Holly: His family.

Jacare: his family,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: you know, his kids, you know and then he start to get depressed you know,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: and I think with this sport and this self, the self-esteem goes, you know, up. It, it better everybody in uh, in general you know.

Holly: So, I think it goes without saying, and this is sort of a different top-, another shift.

Jacare: Hmhmm.

Holly: But with the, that we have a saying about the, the warrior archetype. Archetype is like a, uh, uh, a ps-, is like a psychological plan or something that a person is gonna be when they grow up, kinda thing. And that the warrior kinda, the hero and that we, a lot of times people get to try that here. And then they get to try it

Jacare: Hmhmm.

Holly: and get into that and I think it, that's an easy question to ask you because you, you've probably trained more champions than anybody in the last 30 years.

Jacare: Hmm.

Holly: So, I, I, I can almost you know,

Jacare: Hmhmm.

Holly: Imagined, yeah.

Holly: You're the, you're the known, the known professor of, of the era for sure. For doing that. So I don't know what you would say about

Jacare: Hmm.

Holly: training the warr-, you know, the warrior mentality but it would be interesting to hear what you think about that.

Jacare: Well, you know the approach you know, inside you know, the school has to be to, to better the individual in general you know. Not just, you know, the, the warrior you know, spirit you know. But like I said before, it's to, it's to better the individual in general. But of course you know, it's a big part of our you know, uh, uh, uh, uh, let's say um, how can I explain myself better you know, it's part of The Alliance you know, uh, culture you know. To make also you know, uh, a good you know, team you know. So part of the school, they gonna have that you know, warrior you know, because they gonna be the elite you know. And but you know, is, we care about everybody else you know, that,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: we teach Jiu-Jitsu not just for these uh, class of individuals you know. Not just the warriors or the privileged. You know, uh guys that gonna go over there and be award champions. But you know, everybody else but as part of our system you know, to see if our system is really, really like, you know, uh, working 100%, we have to test these in the challenge you know, in the tournaments and see if, you know, if the, if our science

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: is up to date.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: And that's you know, a very important part, of course.

Holly: Well, that's it-, that's interesting for you to put it that way. It almost sounds like you're saying that the, the social, the social part of it comes first. The whole, the whole of it. All of it.

Jacare: Right. Right.

Holly: And that whatever comes up to the top through that is

Jacare: Hmhmm.

Holly: that, that you, that you might

Jacare: Is a consequence of you know, the work that you do every day,

Holly: Good point, a consequence. Yeah.

Jacare: You know, some individuals, they like to be you know, more challenges.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: You know, we have guys over here that they like to be challenged. They like, you know, men only train inside the schools not enough. I need to go and test myself against you know, that's I think part of the humans. You know,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: the challenge, you know. And when they sometimes they go, they are able to discover other you know, aspects you know, in life, you know. That the competition can bring it to them.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: Because you know, uh, life, you always compete you know. You, you go to a job, you know, you compete you know. You go to here, you compete. You go over there, you compete. And then Jiu-Jitsu and the guys they, they start to accept these challenge.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Jacare: They succeed you know, most of the time, you know. They, they succeed better in life than the other individuals.

Holly: Yeah, and so to circle back to the beginning when I said uh, “Why Jiu-Jitsu is, instead of something else?” A lot of the things that we’ve talked about that you’ve mentioned, do other sports allow the, those types of things? Like for the kids that are having ADD or the guy whose you know, can’t keep a job or things that are going on in life that are really, the, the one that’s depressed and then perhaps gets into Jiu-Jitsu and things get better. Can, can Jiu-Jitsu, Jiu-Jitsu do more than other things or is, is it, is it different?

Jacare: Well, I think Jiu-Jitsu has this capacity to you know do really well. And you know, uh, bring balance you know, to, to one’s life because when the guy come inside the school, the guy gets more discipline in things like that and make the guy fight, I think, you know, more than if the guy don’t do it.

Holly: Hmhhh. Hmhhh.

Jacare: You know but of course, other sports you know, can, can do the same.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Jacare: I’m not saying that you know, uh, Judo or uh, Tae Kwon Do or other sports cannot do the same that this martial arts can do it. But I think uh, Jiu-Jitsu in general, I think the percentage are higher in Jiu-Jitsu for people to stick with than any other sports.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Jacare: You know like Tae Kwon Do something like that.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: You came over here in the very cold evening and we had 30-40 guys training. You know, uh, tonight over here at the school, you know. And you go to a regular class, a Judo class or Tae Kwon Do class and sometimes, how many of those you know, uh,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: you have you know, training you know, competing with each other like, you know. So I think you know, it's just something that Jiu-Jitsu is very popular and that's

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: one of the reasons.

Holly: It's popular and so I don't wanna end on anything you know, negative but I know we do, we do have some shadows. Sometimes things, or maybe a better question is to ask about um, what you think about women training. We, we know that's getting big now and, and um, just anything that you might have to say about that. Good or bad, indifferent.

Jacare: I think it's wonderful, you know. Before we didn't have that many girls you know, doing Jiu-Jitsu you know. I still need more to, to have a you know, uh, to attract you know, more, more girls. But I think you know, uh, in every class that we have, we have always girls and more and more it's becoming more popular. In our uh, beginners from the [Unintelligible] class we have a lot more girls, you know, now. In our teenagers' class we have a lot more girls. In the kids' class it's almost half and half now.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Jacare: You know,

Holly: Yeah, yeah.

Jacare: it's like 40% girls now, you know,

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: like uh, uh, in soccer we have more women playing soccer in the west you know, than we have women playing soccer in Brazil. So, I think it's a wonderful thing here in the United States that. Yeah. Hmm. We have more women playing soccer in America than any other country in the world.

Holly: Well, it's a curious, it's a curious phenomenon to see the, the, the kids' Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu growing and now the women growing and it's a, it's a lot. It's a very dynamic sport.

Jacare: Hmhhh.

Holly: And very close contact.

Jacare: Yeah.

Holly: And it, and it takes, it takes a lot of uh, effort.

Jacare: Yeah, they follow the girls because they can really use, you know, Jiu-Jitsu in a real situation. You know, we have one of the highest you know, rates of rape you know, in the world here in America.

Holly: In the United States, yeah.

Jacare: In the United States. And by teaching you know, the girls a realistic self-defense, uh, is uh, it makes them a lot more confident that they can deal with a real situation.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Jacare: So, and that's why I think it's becoming so popular, you know.

Holly: Well, I can imag-, I can only imagine what you would think about this too; if Jiu-Jitsu really empowers people the way we've been discussing and more and more women come and we have the social you know, out in the word more and more women really learning something that is real. That's uh, that's a big change. That's like almost a big change for the culture.

Jacare: Absolutely.

Holly: In a way.

Jacare: Absolutely, yeah. Absolutely, you know, because you know, uh, the girls can, can learn something that is easy and practical that they can apply in any type of like, bad situations.

Holly: Yes.

Jacare: And you know, makes them a lot more confident you know, and, and I think this is very important, you know. And it's a sport like any other sport. Before we didn't have that many girls competing but now we go to the tournaments and we have tons of girls competing.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: Tons you know, we have brackets with 30, 40 girls right now. Back to when I competed we didn't even have a uh,

Unknown: Well, he is still a champion right now.

Jacare: Yeah, we didn't have like you know, girls competing. You know, is, was not like something open to the girls and now it's open.

Holly: Yeah.

Jacare: It's wonderful.

Holly: Yeah, yeah. It's a big change. Lot of changes. And um, I, well, I'll ask one last question and that, and that is um, just what you might comment about hier-, hierarchy. It's the level of um, of uh, belts and promotions and, and uh, status in Jiu-Jitsu. So in Jiu-Jitsu what, maybe what is that like in terms of maybe compared to something else? Is there, is there anything different about it than uh, other martial arts?

Jacare: Uh, no, not really. You know, uh, we have our system you know, of belts that you know, I think is a good system and then you know, uh, all the martial arts they have you know, different sometimes standards, you know.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Jacare: In Jiu-Jitsu it takes a while, you know, in the real, really serious you know, Jiu-Jitsu schools, the more traditional schools uh, for a person to go from white to black belt, it takes around seven to 10 years, you know. That's pretty normal. In other martial arts, you know, uh, a person can achieve a black belt in only one year. So I think you know, there is a big difference. But you know, the hierarchy I know in the same. So we have our standards you know, other martial arts they have their, their standards and I respect but I think you know, uh, more and more we need to have you know, uh, to be more like you know, uh, how you say uh, severe you know, in terms of like uh, be strict

Holly: Strict.

Jacare: on like, you know promoting people you know. People really have to, to deserve you know, to be promoted to, to the next level.

Holly: Yeah, that's important.

Jacare: That's very important.

Holly: Well, I really appreciate you chatting with me.

Jacare: No problem. My, my pleasure.

Holly: Now, now I'll send it to you so um,

Jacare: Yeah, don't worry about it. Just ....

[END RECORDING]

## Appendix E

## Interview #4—Professor Tom Reusing

Interview #4 – Professor Tom Reusing 11-20-13

[BEGIN RECORDING]

Holly: Okay, this interview is with Tom Reusing. I am going to go ahead and start recording. Tom, you've been a black belt in Jiu-Jitsu and, and been training for 17 or 18 years?

Tom: That's correct. Yeah, I've been a black belt for three years.

Holly: And so you're, you're aware, you've looked through uh, some of my questions and you know I'm, I'm doing this project on the psychology of Jiu-Jitsu. So I'll just start with the uh, question about um, what's Jiu-Jitsu been like, what, what is it like training in Jiu-Jitsu?

Tom: Um, training in Jiu-Jitsu is, is uh, it's a, it's a challenging, it's a challenging thing. Um, you know, for me it's, it's been very fun and it's um, a very, it's a very complex art. And I, you know, since I first found out about it, I've been, I've been kind of um, fascinated by it; how practical it is. And so um, it's been very challenging. Tr-, training in it and uh, very exciting. An-,

Holly: What, what is, what, so what do you think that uh, Jiu-Jitsu um, means to you? What would you say if someone asked you what does Jiu-Jitsu mean to you?

Tom: Hmm, well, I don't, I don't, I don't know what you, I mean, if you mean what does, what does it mean to me personally or what does Jiu-Jitsu mean. I, well, I mean obviously now, it's, it's a, it's th- th-, the way I, I make a living and um,

it's a, it's a, you know, it's a martial art that I teach full time. So um, if that's what you, the meaning of it, um, I guess, you know, that's what it means to me as far as in that way.

Holly: So it's a big part of your life, obviously.

Tom: Huge, huge part of my life. I mean, but what is the essence of it? Or was it Jiu-Jitsu? Uh, if that's what you're asking, um, I mean I guess one, one way I could say it is what it means to me is um, it's, it's what martial arts, what I always thought they were when I was young. Some kind of almost like magical thing that you could learn that would allow someone, through knowledge, to be able to defend themselves against, you know, most people and, you know, and in particular, someone bigger and stronger. Um, it's just extremely practical martial art. Um, that's very well defined and, and honed through, through uh, uh, realistic um, application. That, that you can, that, you know, almost anybody can learn and, and, and enable them to be able to defend themselves.

Holly: So you're per-

Tom: Is one thing.

Holly: Yeah. So your personal experience with it um, is that, as a tool for being able, is primarily as a tool for being able to defend yourself?

Tom: Well, that, that's wh-, you know, had to do with my uh, initial fascination with the art. Um, you know, I mean, that's not what I, I mean that's, and when I teach it, that's my, that's my, you know, my primary goal is to get people, initially and the initial and primary goal is to get people where they could, feel like they could, they can defend themselves, yes. You know, I mean, it ends up

being a lot more than that but, but that's, that's the initial motivation. You know.

Holly: How does it end up being a lot more than that?

Tom: Well, because it's so challenging um, and um, physically and emotionally but especially emotionally. Um, it ends up changing you as a person and of course, the you know, as you get more capable, capable of defending your, defending yourself physically, uh, most people change psychology just based on that. You know, and because um, we do the live sparring and people end up um, it's very decisive when you spar with someone. So you very quickly um, there, there's this, this hierarchy is established and so it can be very challenging to the ego and, and you have you know, especially I think for men, ev-, you know, especially um, but women too. You know, men, you know, have, you know, the, the, in any kind of group of men there's a, there's a hierarchy and it's kind of a, a little bit of a pack mentality. So, like in a Jiu-Jitsu class or Jiu-Jitsu school for example, everybody knows who's better than the other person in terms of who can tap who out. And then, you know, there's people that kind of go back and forth but typically there's an A to Z order of who can tap who out and, and so when you, and you're operating this kind environment um, it can be very challenging to the ego.

Holly: That sounds almost re-, reminiscent of uh, traditional societies where everyone has a role they play. What you're saying about the social aspects of it.

Tom: Yeah, yeah, it can, yeah, it can be like that. It also can be like a, a pack of animals you know, where there's a, the alpha dog on down, you know.

Holly: So maybe very biological, biologically determined or instinctual somehow.

Tom: Pretty primal, yeah. It is.

Holly: Primal.

Tom: Um, but at the same time, you know, the, I guess the irony is, or the, the surprise is, it, that it not's particularly brutal or violent. You know, as it's, that, I think that's one of the things that's interesting about it, is no matter why you get into at first or what you think about it, when you start doing it, you realize it is really a gentle art and, and uh, the actual practice of it isn't, even though you're trying to do these joint locks and put the person to sleep by cutting the blood off to their head, it's not as physically, near as physically violent as you might imagine or as people think. And that's, and I think that surprises everybody. You know, because it's all based on technique. So it's um, you know, it's, it's one of the, of the full contact martial arts, it's definitely probably the least um, violent if, you know, as far as trauma. And that's interesting.

Holly: So, if we were gonna talk about what the experience of training is really like for an individual person, you've mentioned challenging here several times.

Tom: Uh, it is challenging. Uh, it's, like I said, it's hard on the ego and then the other thing that happens is as soon as you start training you realize um, may-, one of the things that, that comes flooding in almost immediately is how little you know about it and how much there is to know. It's like,

Holly: S-, so as a person gets better and improves and comes up in the ranks in their, in their class, what happens? What's, what typically is the experience of somebody in that ex-, as they're going through that?

Tom: Well, for almost everybody, and it depends how much you have, you know how big your ego is or what you think you're capabilities are when it, comes to the, in terms of hand-to-hand combat. Or, or, or, you know, physically pitting yourself against another person. Depends where you're, where you view yourself when you arrive. But almost everybody who hasn't trained Jiu-Jitsu before, the very, the first thing that happens is this um, however well you thought you might do, or, or whether you think you, you found out about Jiu-Jitsu and you knew that it worked or very practical. I think almost everybody that trains in Jiu-Jitsu is, is surprised um, ab-, about how little they know and um, uh, you know, they, they and how, how long it takes to get better at it. So, you know, so there's a, there's a big leveling of the ego in, in the very beginning. And um, and it's, and it's difficult. Especially if you'd viewed yourself as someone that had a certain amount of physical prowess.

Holly: And as they get better over time, then what?

Tom: Well, they go through, you know, you, you typically retain a certain amount of the humility because you remember what it was like, but I think people go through stages with it. You know, they, they, you know, a lot of times, they'll get to the point where they know a little bit of Jiu-Jitsu, maybe around the blue belt level or something like that or before. And they, and they, even though there's still a lot of people that can catch them, they, they know more Jiu-Jitsu than most people, so sometimes the ego starts to puff back up and then um, you know, and then as, for, for a lot of people. But some people, not, you know.

Holly: So what you're saying is the ego seems to be affected a lot by training over time.

Tom: Definitely affected. Yeah, it's, it's a challenge to the ego. You know, yeah.

Holly: How?

Tom: Uh, becau-, you know, like I said, because it gives you, it gives you s-, it raises your self-esteem and gives you confidence but at the same time, there's al-, there's no shortage of humility. Um, it's just tough on the ego because every time you roll with someone, there's a, there's a very absolute winner or loser. So, it just can be challenging for a lot of people and, and in the beginning it's devastating because everybody can tap you out. Then later on, once you feel like you know some Jiu-Jitsu, it can be devastating when someone who you didn't think knew very much, or is maybe a little bit more athletic than you, um, or maybe someone who you could tap out, on-, they have more of an aptitude for it and they're getting better faster so they pass you. So you can tap 'em out and then, then six months later, maybe they could tap you out. And so all these things you know, can be a challenge for the ego. Yeah.

Holly: Yeah, that sounds, so what is it that makes people stay?

Tom: It's like uh, the same thing that makes people play chess or try to solve a Rubik's Cube or something like that. Because it just, it becomes like an addiction because there's so many po-, potential uh, moves and things that you can do; it's like a puzzle and um, it demands all of your attention. So, it's kind of like a, it's like a great stress reliever. It's like a game more than it is like a workout in many ways. A very primal game and so, and, and it's addictive

because um, not just knowledge but knowing the mo-, having knowledge of the moves and then practicing them where you can do them on someone who uh, you know, who knows some Jiu-Jitsu um, you know, you can, in a very measurable way you get better and better and better. But it just, it takes a lot of work to do it, so um, but people so-, don't seem to mind because for some reason, when people start doing it, they want to get better at it. They realize how much potential there is and so they want, you know, at first it's hard, most people, and like I, I never thought I would get to like a black belt level. What I considered a black belt level in Jiu-Jitsu. I didn't think it was possible, I think just 'cause of my ath-, athleticism or something like that. It's almost hard to believe that you could get there when you see how far it is to go and how good people that have been doing it for eight years are compared to you when you come in. Um, but you know you can get better than you are. So it's like, and, and it's hard on the, it's hard on the ego in that um, I don't know so much the ego, but the psyche um, to stay doing it because you know, there's all this excitement about getting better but you're also constantly faced with the idea of how far you have to go. And for a lot of people there's doubt whether you'll ever get there. But at the same time, you know you can get better than you are, so um, there seems to be an addictive quality to it. Yeah.

Holly: It sounds uh, like it kind of mimics life's les-, life lessons too.

Tom: Oh, for sure. You know, I mean I think it does in a lot of ways. You know, the people talk about it and I guess it's true, that's, you know, they say you can't hide your real self when you train Jiu-Jitsu. You know, if you throw a temper

tantrum 'cause somebody who's newer than you catches you or if you're, you know, if you're, you know, kind of, you know, if you like being mean to people or if you, you know, kind of uh, taunt people that you can easily dominate, you know, so in a lot of ways um, it is kind of hard to, to, 'cause um, because it's so absolute, I guess. I'm not sure why but it is hard to hide your, your real personality when you're doing Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: And it's obviously very social too, right?

Tom: It is, yeah. The uh, um, every school and, and uh, you know, and every tournament but it's a very intimate activity so the people you do it with um, it is a very social activity and, and uh, becomes a very intimate community that, you know, the people that you do it with on a regular basis and you bond with them. You know, the um, or you don't like 'em. You know, if you don't like, if you don't like 'em then, you know, um, it's challenging because you have to see 'em all the time, you have to, you know, be intimate with 'em, you know, and roll around with 'em. Um, but it, yeah, it's extremely social. Because you, you know, by definition you have to have someone else that does it to, to practice it, so um, and it tends to create, it, it creates these schisms but in, but in general, more than anything, it creates a lot of strong bonds between people that train together.

Holly: A lot of, can you say more about that? The bonds between people.

Tom: Well, there's a trust element to it because when you're doing these submissions um, you know, there's certain things that if you, you do even though you're grappling, you're trying to arm bar the person and you know stretch the joint, or

you're trying to put 'em to sleep. Um, there's certain things that are considered um, that aren't appropriate, you know. Um, making someone tap out, you know, with just pain. Like putting pressure on the side of their face or something like that. There's a li-, it's different, you know, the, putting the, putting pressure on a pressure point and making someone uncomfortable isn't the same as the pain they feel from their arm being stretched. They're not tapping because the pain in their arm. They're tapping because it's gonna break their arm. So, there's things that are appropriate to do and there's things that are, that aren't and so the peo-, the people that train together, they have to know what the rules are and so there's, you know, there's a lot of trust involved because, you know, if you're, if, to, to be able to roll relaxed and practice and roll with people that are better than you, you're gonna be in a situation where your arm is getting stretched or you're about to fall asleep and you're gonna tap. And, and, you know, whether you go to sleep or not or whether you get your arm broken is dependent on whether the person stops applying the technique. So for that reason alone, there's a lot of trust.

Holly: Are there other social aspects that occur in training besides trust? Developing trust?

Tom: Um, yeah, I don't really, I mean, social. There's, there's other things that happen in any social interaction besides just trust. I, I mean, there's, yeah, there's all kinds of things. There's cliques that develop, there's, in any, in any side society or microcosm of society there's all those things. There's envy, you know, certainly with uh, um, you know, with, with women training more there's

you know, um, there's, you know, probably people, you know, get sexually attracted and that's a whole 'nother challenge because, because of the nature of the moves. Uh, that's going on, you know, the uh, there's, you know, people are, just like any other martial arts, or, or, a strict hierarchy environment where there's, there's some message or there's some information being transferred, like an education or a religion or in martial arts. You know, there tends to be um, probably an, inappropriate amount of trust and respect and awe placed on the person who, who knows more or the person, particularly the person who's in the lead role of the instructor or the professor and then on down. You know, it's very typical for people to come in and think that, you know, all of the senior belts are um, you know, put those people on a pedestal and think that because they're good at Jiu-Jitsu it means they're great people and that they should follo-, you know, they should uh, um, mimic them or, or maybe, I don't know if they think of it constantly. They just naturally do that. You know, and they respect their Jiu-Jitsu so they, they um, project on them that they're also, you know, that that means they're a great person or that means that they could be trusted or means that their opinion means something. And it may or may not. I mean, typ-, you know, just like anything else. Typically, people that, that ar-, achieve, you know, a level of excellence at something have redeeming features but um, I say it's, it's in, you know, that's a natural um, one of the strong things that goes on as far as the society or, and the hierarchy, you know, of the, of the Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: So there are obviously some shadows then in the um, and even though Jiu-Jitsu is a personally transformative and uh, a social environment where there's a lot of trust that develops. Then things like hierarchy can be problematic you're saying.

Tom: Uh, clearly. But uh, you know, it's uh, it can't be too flat either. I mean, and there needs to be a very specific hierarchy because um, the, you know, people can't go out too much on their own or can't be resistant of taking direction because it is, you know, it is pretty dangerous. It needs to be controlled. Someone needs to be in control and, and you need to know there's boundaries and that kind of thing. But yeah, definitely. I mean, I wouldn't say it's rampant or anything but, but there's, there's definitely shadowy stuff going on. It's very common, or not very common. It happens where you know, like I said, a lot of the girls that come in, they, they are awestruck by a lot, you know, the instructors or the senior students and uh, and vice versa, now that there's a lot of uh, you know, there's more and more senior women, high level women um, you know, and, and, and, you know, almost, and a lot of the guys that train Jiu-Jitsu um, are gonna be attracted to them and uh, um, this kind of thing. So, yeah.

Holly: So how, how else does the training in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu impact women? Other than what you've already said.

Tom: Well, I mean I think this is, you know, this is what's so great about Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, because it's, it's so practical and um, it's so efficient and it works so well, it's extremely empowering to anybody who is of a smaller, slighter build or smaller stature um, to know that because a person's bigger and stronger, you

know, they can't get dominated by someone. Or, or that, it's not a given that they can be dominated by someone that's bigger and stronger. And so, of course, for women who are um, you know, who are in this role a lot in, in our society or any society um, it's extremely empowering, you know, when, when they realize if they train um, a certain amount of time in Jiu-Jitsu that they can be-, become um, you know, they have control over whether uh, someone hurts them or someone takes advantage of them sexually or whatever. You know, they, they start

Holly: So, it's empowering for women and also for, maybe for children? And for, maybe for people in general.

Tom: People in general. But I mean, I think the, the people that it empowers the most are, are smaller, are smaller people, weaker people who um, you know, that, that weren't already in martial arts or weren't already weightlifters or wrestlers or football players or strong, big people. I mean, I mean I think everybody will feel empowered and more, more confident as far as defending *themselves*. But certainly, uh, people that are smaller and weaker and, and uh, uh, um, have the most to gain because um, they're, they're i-, they're idea before they came to Jiu-Jitsu of whether, you know, what was gonna happen to them based on what other people wanted to happen to them physically, is a much longer distance than someone who's already a wrestler or a football player or something like that. Yeah, it's a huge impact. And, you know, yeah.

Holly: How, uh, how are the historical and um, cultural influences on experience? Especially maybe those from Brazil? The Brazilian culture.

Tom: Well, um, you know, I don't know how much it translates into the Jiu-Jitsu. I mean the, the Brazilian culture in general is, is a much more relaxed um, um, attitude and, and perception of, of uh, sensuality, sexuality, morality, stuff like that. They're, they're, you know, they're pretty, you know the Latin people are pretty passionate um, kind of free and open people. Brazil's a huge hodgepodge of all kinds of different people but in general, the Latin culture's like that. And then also, um, and I think a big part of the reason that Jiu-Jitsu um, thrives so much and, and sprung out of Brazil is because um, you know, it, be-, I think the combination of the Latin culture and the machismo and it being, you know, a very underdeveloped company, country. Um, it's very violent. You know, it's a very violent place. There's a lot of violence in the street, there's a lot of, the, these, you know, these free fights were more common. The free fights and, and the no-rules fighting were there before Jiu-Jitsu. It's not like Jiu-Jitsu brought it there. Um, but it's one of the reasons that it prospered there. There, it's a violent culture and still is. But especially before, even now, because um, much of it's underdeveloped and it's a very male dominated, hierarchy dominated society. There's a lot of, you know, with the Latin blood, so there's a lot of machi-, machismo, you know, macho-ness and, and proving yourself and, you know, there's this, you know, this violence and

Holly: And the

Tom: and being dominate or not.

Holly: And those aspects of Brazilian culture, do you think are being carried through Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as it grows all over the world? Is that what you mean?

- Tom: Um, well some of it comes through, for sure. You, you know, some of it comes through um, yeah. I think, I think so. I mean, um,
- Holly: So the question is
- Tom: specific, yeah, what, repeat
- Holly: sort of why, why, why Jiu-Jitsu? Why Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu if there are cultural influences coming through, then what might those be?
- Tom: Wh-, why, if the culture, can you repeat the question please.
- Holly: What is it about, specifically Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, that is coming through as it's one of the fastest growing sports?
- Tom: Um, the, related to the Brazilian culture, I don't, I mean, well, th-, is, why is it one of the fastest growing sports? Is that the question? Or why is it, is it Brazilian, does being Brazilian or the Brazilian culture have anything to do with it being popular? I don't,
- Holly: Yeah, yeah.
- Tom: I don't really understand the question.
- Holly: Something like, how is the Braz-, the culture, Brazilian culture experienced coming, in the experience of Jiu-Jitsu?
- Tom: Hmm, I, I'm not sure. I mean
- Holly: Is it still there? Maybe it's gone.
- Tom: It is there. I mean, it is there with some of the words, of course. A lot of the, a lot of the people, I mean probably the vast majority of people, there's no question about it, that are experienced or high level instructors, black belts in Jiu-Jitsu around the world uh, you know, are predominantly Brazilian. I don't

know what the numbers are but I mean, in the last probably 10 years, there's, there's, you know, a lot of Americans and people that aren't native Brazilians have been awarded their black belts but it's only been in the last 10 years and there's still, of, you know, the existing uh, black belts that are in the world today, the vast majority of them are Brazilian and of course, as you know, the vast majority of them are men.

Holly: So I guess, is there something about, specifically Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as opposed to just Jiu-Jitsu, other than a fighting style that has anything to do with it?

Tom: I don't know that, if there is or not. I mean I think it helped, like I said, I think the art really took off there because of the, the violent nature of their culture. Uh, and the competitiveness. But um, I don't, you know.

Holly: So as an answer to violence and, and uh, and a

Tom: As, as,

Holly: and a competitive spirit then.

Tom: As an answer to violence in dealing with violent neighborhoods and the violent society but also because of an enjoyment of, of violence. Because they like violence. They like the fights. And so, even though sport Jiu-Jitsu as it's done today is not like the free fighting but, I think that's why um, Jiu-Jitsu caught on and was uh, became so popular in Brazil, because it's a violent culture. They like to fight. They like to watch fights.

Holly: And at the same time, people talk about Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as a lifestyle, a very healthy lifestyle. So, that doesn't really quite fit with what you're saying.

Tom: That's a good point. Um, you know, it has, I mean, I think um, yeah, I think that it uh, the way that uh, I think that's why it was, that it became popular and that it was um, widely accepted in Brazil but um, I don't think that's what you know, Carlos Sr. was trying to promote and, and um, you know, and so, you know, I mean, that's, that's why it was popular and why people came to it. I guess that's the thing, you know, the reas-, the reason that people initially come to it is not what they end up getting out of it. You know, I mean,

Holly: What do they end up getting out of it?

Tom: Well, I think as, as far as their likelihood to get in fights and stuff like that, the vast majority of people become less violent and of course, you know, like you said, they, they become more um, aware of their, their physical body and health and um, you know, live in a certain way.

Holly: So people find it as a personal transformation. A place for personal transformation.

Tom: Oh, clearly. Yeah, there's no question. If, if people stay, it changes them. There's, there's, that's why a lot of people don't stay because it is challenging but also, I mean, you, you know, just the habit of training in Jiu-Jitsu three times a week or even twice a week is, is a difficult habit to establish and it definitely changes them as a person. It changes them mentally, it changes them physically. For sure.

Holly: Is there anything else that comes to mind um, with regard to uh, the experience for people on a personal level or on a social level or even the world or a political level that you can think of?

Tom: Uh, I think that anything that gets you more, anything that gets you more in touch with yourself and has you know, something that, where you're faced with your own insecurities and fears and uh, shortcomings on a regular basis, like Jiu-Jitsu, can't help but have a positive impact on a person.

Holly: Do you have one or maybe more than one peak experiences that you can think of that impacted you a lot or the most?

Tom: Um, well, I mean, you know, watching people um, get better in Jiu-Jitsu and teaching people Jiu-Jitsu and seeing, seeing the impact it has on their life. I mean, um, has been, is huge for me. You know, I mean, I've, I enjoyed competing and winning tournaments and stuff like that, but I, more than anything, as far as the, the things that have um, you know, that I've enjoyed or feel like, that I, you know, when you say "peak experiences". The thing that, the things that come to mind for me are watching the transformation in people that I, that have trained with me and that have trained in general, but, but specifically with, with me and, and you know, thinking about how they were as far as their self-esteem and their health and then how they are now. I mean, watching that change and not just that, how, how much, I guess how much they enjoy, like people wh-, it's not something people do casually. Once they start doing Jiu-Jitsu, it really becomes a big part of their life and it brings them a lot of joy and a lot of happiness and a lot of satisfaction. So, I like watching that.

Holly: So you would say even aside from the personal uh, achievements, that teaching is the place where your peak, your best exp-, your best uh, experiences are?

Tom: Well, I mean, it's the thing that I get the most satisfaction out of. I, I like competing and, and I have, I enjoyed it a lot and I still like to do it when I can. Um, but and it's fun, but it's more of a selfish thing. I mean, it's something that I get you know, a nice kind of rush out of and, and it's nice to uh, and, and I get some satisfaction in it. It's good for my ego to compete and know that I'm at a pretty high level um, but you know, like, like I said, when you, when you mentioned "peak experiences" or you know, what I get out of it, that's what I think about; how many, you know, people I've seen. Where it's really touched their lives and they've changed a lot for the better.

Holly: Hmhmm. Those important moments.

Tom: Yeah, and how, and, and, that, how much it's changed them and also, like I said, how much they, like you can tell how much they really love it. How important Jiu-Jitsu is to them. You know, as much as anything um, you know, I mean, clearly it has a positive impact on their life, just that.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tom: But and it changes them a lot, but they uh, and I think because they know that and they get, you know, so much satisfaction, you know, they know it's changed them and they know its making them a better person by facing with, facing, you know, just you're constantly challenged and you're constantly growing. You know, so it just changes you as a person and so, uh, you know, and it's, you know, yes, the am-, how much people enjoy it. You know,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tom: I like that.

Holly: Yeah, that's great. Well, thank you so much for answering the questions and I really appreciate your time.

Tom: You're more than welcome.

## Appendix F

## Interview #5—Professor Tammy Griego

Interview #5 Professor Tammy Griego 11-30-13

Holly: Hello Professor. I have turned on the recorder and am ready to begin our interview. Is it ok with you to proceed?

Tammy: Okay.

Holly: the first question is just the general how, what, what has it been like for you personally training in, in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu? Anything you wanna say.

Tammy: In regards to?

Holly: Well, you can talk about how you got into it and I guess actually first, maybe um, how long you've been training and how long you've been a black belt? 'Cause I'll need that for later.

Tammy: Um, I've been training seven and a half years and I've been a black belt for a year and a half.

Holly: That is what I thought. Um, and, and so you're, so basically you're personal experience. how you got into it? What, what it was like when you got into it? What, what engaged you? Um, you know, your, your basic overall impressions of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

Tammy: [Laugh] Yeah, that's a very, very broad question.

Holly: [Laugh] It is uh,

Tammy: Uh, I guess, I could go a little bit of the history of my career. Um, I started Jiu-Jitsu, it was like 2006 and uh, I kind of had an understanding of what it was like a friend had told me about it. Uh, I'd never tried it any sports. Um, I

had a good job. Uh, I, I was just looking for something, you know, and I started doing extra activities and trying to find some kind of stuff outside of work. I was 285 pounds. So I was looking for a way to lose the weight too. And so one day drove, I was driving to a job site and I saw the signs for the school. So I just stopped in. I went in one Saturday. I was greeted by somebody. Very nice, you know, um, really impressionable. Showed me around, they were doing open mat. So, I thought it was a very relaxed environment, you know, the guys were just sitting around, talking. Um, rolling and stuff. I just watched for a little bit Uh, almost didn't go back but um, but just, just remember they had this upper belt female that was kind of um, one of the, the lady's there, you know there wasn't really many women except for like one or two. And so I, you know, I ended one on one with her. She taught me, you know, a couple of techniques to do just like uh, the take down and taking them down and taking the back. Something very fundamental, I was able to do all of it, pretty much. And I liked it. So I signed up. I started taking, taking classes. And I was good at it, you know, and I knew if I worked hard I could. Um, and I uh, eventually got to that point where I had signed up for like twice a week. And I upgraded to like three times a week, too. And uh, the guys were talking about going to a tournament and and so I was pretty frugal, you know, and like man, I don't want to spend money. How much, but I, I signed up and paid for event just like the fundamentals program and then I paid for a whole year's worth so that it would cost me less. And then when I upgraded to three times a week, I paid for another year. So then I did that

tournament and I was like, oh I need unlimited training. So I signed up for another year on top of that. But I had already paid it in advance for three years of Jiu-Jitsu instruction. That's like how

Holly: Wow.

Tammy: how, how uh, like you know, how I got this, you know, to be part of this environment and it's really when you looking back at it now, and the school was like fresh. It was still like, in its first year in Albuquerque and now that I have a school and I'm like wow, they could have like closed doors and they could have had my money and walked away and I'm like oh, man. I hadn't even thought about that. Later on I got more into it and so I didn't go back to work and I could study my Jiu-Jitsu 100 percent.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: And then, and then afterwards you know, and so we're cared for well, and they covered my tuition you know, just because I was employee at the academy. But, I mean that's, that's kind of what that story.

Holly: Yeah, so

Tammy: I don't know.

Holly: So you're, you're, your experience transformed very quickly from fitness goals to um, kind of a lifestyle change and then to a definite career change and all of that in a, I mean not overnight but it sounds like fairly quickly.

Tammy: Say like after probably nine months. Through the tournament, I decided to change things. They rented us a, a bus and we all went as a team to a tournament. There'd be 20 of us and it wasn't all so crowded. It was good.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: Then I fought the same woman that was way more advanced than me, because I mean, they just put us all together.

Holly: Hmhmm. Hmhmm.

Tammy: You know, she's more advanced. She's a whole lot bigger than me. She was very intimidating. I was like this, like, this round person, you know. I was still big but I was pretty soft, I'd guess you'd say. And she looked very big and very intimidating and I managed to take a medal that day. You know, and she was the only one that I was losing to and I don't know much about her. I was kind of like, now it wasn't just a weight loss goal, you know, and then because I was having a little bit of success, um, why don't you try another one. You know, there's this big one coming up, why don't you try again there, I went off to another one.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: For, for the match. And so I went to PanAms, you know, my first year fresh. That kind of was the gist of it for me. I was already um, I had started because my ship was kind of going that way and I also realized that I had to start making some changes.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: instead of going out every night or whatever. And little by little, you know, I started to take the challenge, and every little victory just motivated me to work a little bit harder, a little bit harder, a little bit harder. The, the big one was at at The World when I didn't even prepare and I lost, uh. But like this is the

champion and I could have won if things were just a little bit different. You know, if that rep would have raised my hand instead of her hand kind of thing. You know, instead of both, they made it easy for me to believe that I could be successful.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: At a high level.

Holly: Yeah, so and uh, for you Jiu-Jitsu's been an incredible confidence um, journey of confidence it sounds like. That's

Tammy: Just working towards goals, yes

Holly: Right, right.

Tammy: I was already dissatisfied with my job. I was at that point in my career where I was good with business but um, still working for somebody else and itching for money and instead of being content, being dissatisfied with the way I was being treated at the company. Um, and just turned out that there was an incident at work, right before the world championships. And they weren't gonna let me go, you know, I'd been training so hard. I got down, I went from like 210 to 158 in a year. It was, well it was probably closer to 230. You know. The other girls were big and she knew I was big so she was even bigger. So I was like I want a different weight category. So I got down, you know, I lost almost 100 pounds or 100 pounds in a year's time. And yeah, you know, it was just those other goals you kind of have to prioritize. It helped that I was doing something that I liked with my friends in a family environment, it helped.

Holly: Yeah, so um, I was gonna ask you about some of your peak experiences. But uh, and most important moments and I guess you've you've touched on a couple of those. Any others that stand out?

Tammy: Um, well, yeah. First of all, after that year of training hard, I won. You know, and over the course it was hard but I managed to win it and I think that's one of the things that uh, I'm grateful for. Really grateful for that. And that's the one most important to me is because

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: I did the work and I achieved success. A lot of my teammates that worked hard and struggle and, and they're so close but they just don't get it. You know, they don't get what they're after and it's disheartening when you don't have that success to reinforce the work, you know. Like how, if I wouldn't have won, I would have been like what was it all for, you know, I worked so hard and still couldn't win. You know, makes you wonder.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: There's no way to tell. But because I after I came back from that world championship, I was like okay. So I go back and I look for a job, go back to work or I just won a world championship. I, I can be great at this and so that was kind of the moment that I decided to give 100 percent to my Jiu-Jitsu.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: I, I, sublet my own place and started renting with a friend so that, so that the rent would be less and I, and I uh, you know, the moment that, that kind of changed um, that changed the path for me was right after that, that world

championship. That first, first one. Uh, I don't know. I grew up in a small town, very, very uh, not close minded but without a lot of life experience. So I was like 26, 27 before I saw the ocean and never really traveled and then after I got my purple belt because I was on that tournament path I did. And when I got my brown and then my black, I traveled for a few months, you know, coast to coast. I it's like what I'm doing now.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: I did tournaments all over. You know, it was like my, my venture out into the world that I got,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: out you know. Um, and honestly, the life experience that I had over that las-, of those two months,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: was just at the right time. I mean, the people I met, the experiences at the tournaments, you know, I could have like so many great things happen in a day.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: You know, just kind of pushing myself and, and, and that was, that was another moment, you know, that I just getting out into the world and

Holly: Yeah.

Tammy: broadening my perspective.

Holly: Well, so Tammy, you, you've had obviously a very um, successful already, personal Jiu-Jitsu career and also a, a pretty extensive teaching career and

traveled a lot and your, your story is um, quite unique. And you've also had the ability to see many, many people and, and lots of different environments and so I'm wondering, um, one of the things I've been discussing with people is um, kind of the individual um, I don't want to sound too biased but what are the positive benefits because there are other things too. But just you know, so, so with the, that's why I used the word 'experiences'. But the individual experiences and the social experiences, just when I, when I bring that up, what comes to mind that, from the things that you've seen. You know, in other words, when we're doing Jiu-Jitsu, what are we doing? You know, what is a person, an individual person doing when they engage in training in Jiu-Jitsu or, or if it, or what are they experiencing in a, in the social environment? In the classes and on the teams? Um, what's that like for a person? Why Jiu-Jitsu you know, instead of something else?

Tammy: Why Jiu-Jitsu instead of something else? 'Cause I mean, there's different aspects. Like, there's the actual work part of it. Then there's the social part of it. Um, the, the internal struggle part of it. There's different areas that it touches on. Like for instance,

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: I was kind of separated from my family a little bit. Um, so to be in this world where everybody's all nice to each other. Why is everybody nice to each other? Everybody knows where everybody's been.

Holly: Yeah.

Tammy: You know, it's a very honest place and then um, you figure the, the workout part of it, and all of this other stuff, you know, it's a great workout, you know, if you're just doing it for that.

Holly: Kind of addicting sometimes, huh.

Tammy: What's that?

Holly: Kind of addicting sometimes, huh.

Tammy: Yeah, yeah. And then there's the other side of it like for me, the mental side of it. It was great, because I was done, I got disappointed in my job where you know, I was looking for a challenge and here's this, here's this thing where I've got a million and one moves to learn. Like, six years I never repeated the same lesson at the academy. You know, there was always something fresh. Always something new to learn. And the technique, how do you tie them all together? How do you apply them? How do they apply to different body types? So the, the, the mental aspect of it, just is infinite. Especially now that I'm getting into deeper avenues and different aspects, different principles.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: You know, it just seems like the, the mental work that you do is so good

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: You could be forever almost. Um, the, the internal struggle side, you know, um, challenge. You know, physical challenge. I, I kind of wanted to, I was a tomboy you know. And I grew up uh, my two older cousins that were boys that were like kind of favorited they were older and they were boys. And I was always wanted to be doing what they were doing and getting the

privileges that they were getting but I was stuck in the house babysitting you know, even though I was 15, and did the girl kind of thing, you know. But, who did all the work? I did all the work, you know. So I could do everything they were doing. And so they'd come and they'd have all these privileges because they did work and they could play and they could go do this. And I was like, well that's not fair. So, like I had a chip on my shoulder, you know, I, I worked in construction before Jiu-Jitsu. So like anything they can do, I can do just as well, if not better.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: So coming into that environment um, personally, I was driven hey, I can do the same thing you or whatever but I can be good at this too, you know. That's still there a little bit, just because I'm naturally competitive. But that chip that I used to have about boys and girls, I don't care anymore, you know. It's like I just let my skill speak for itself. Just 'cause that's the power of Jiu-Jitsu. You know, you look at you know, 120 pound man going against a 200 pounder and he's schoolin' him. Who cares if he's a boy or girl. You know, he still has the power because of technique. Um, so, Jiu-Jitsu gave me that. It gave me the ability to, to kind of throw that chip away you know, and be like, I already knew it and I don't need to prove it, you know. I'm on the mats every day and I still so

Holly: So I've talked, we've talked about um, in some of the other interviews um, the, the warrior um, aspect of it. Or um, one of the topics that I've researched in the past is initiation and um, and so I, I've always wondered you know,

how much of that it offers, maybe anyone, but especially youth. Where it's almost like um, almost like in the old um, in the old days when young people were, went through initiatory experiences. Um, obviously we don't do it on a large scale but just the, the way Jiu-Jitsu is set up, it um, it has that, some of those aspects where a young person might, for instance, who's kind of wayward or, or a little bit lost or maybe headed for trouble, can come into the Jiu-Jitsu environment. Like many sports, and um, and find a, a safe place to exercise their um, frustrations and their, their issues of growing up, so to speak.

Tammy: Right. Yeah, it's, it's very you know, it's aggressive. It's one of those things where you can fight and still manage not to hurt anybody, you know.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: So finding that release and in a positive manner If you're trying, if you're putting in the effort, you're gonna succeed. Um, I don't know, it's, one of those things that I talked about this same subject but what it is, what is it about Jiu-Jitsu that's so almost addicting or you know,

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: You know, you hear a lot of the same stories. Because its, what makes it so special, I think, I don't really have an answer to what makes it so special but I think that there's certain people that take it for at certain levels. You know, you have the kind of person that's just doing it for exercise, or whatever. Looking for something, or then you have some people that put their whole lives into it. That are obsessed with it.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: And the only thing I, I can figure you know, 'cause I'm one of those. I, I, just went full bore, you know, and it was just a, an accumulation of different circumstances but it spoke to me on a lot of different levels.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: You know, from sports in general, you know, confident, self-defense, physical fitness, you know, um, the potential for a career, you know, where I'm doing something I love.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: The, you know, the potential for a legacy you know, in competition and being a, a high level competitor, all of these things, I mean they speak to different parts of, of who I am and the things I look for.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: that's why I think it grabbed me as, as much as it did. Um, but as to what makes it special. You know, I think everybody's own personal experience.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: You know, had I walked into a different gym, it may not have grabbed me as, as uh, Jiu-Jitsu did. Uh, just because part of it was the environment.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: Was the way the people treated each other. Was the feeling in that, in the group.

Holly: Hmhmm, hmhmm.

Tammy: You know.

Holly: Yes.

Tammy: So, and, it, it's not just the activity but the environment that's something important. I mean, the, the characteristics of the people that are there and how they interact.

Holly: Yeah, so there's obviously something really, well, at least we believe, unique about the social environment that we've experienced and then um, it's interesting that you mentioned the people have tried to figure out what's special about it. I thought, I thought that was uh, uh, that struck a nerve 'cause I, I've spent a lot of time uh, trying to do that and talking with people about it. Um, but I, I'm just gonna shift a tiny bit because um, since I have, since I'm fortunate enough to have you, I, I definitely don't wanna leave this part out which I wouldn't but um, the topic of women um, which um, is, is obviously close to home for you. But the, I don't know what you know, what might come to mind for you to say about you know, the impacts, you can say any, any of these topics. The impacts for women. The problems women face. The benefits for women. Just you know, if you were gonna talk about women in Jiu-Jitsu, what would you, what would you wanna talk about?

Tammy: What would I want to address women in Jiu-Jitsu? Um, well, it's not a traditional role. You know, it's like dad's supposed to be the protector, he's supposed to be the fighter and from that aspect, you know, you kind of take that, that potential for development away from the female population because I mean, my life is a testament to how Jiu-Jitsu can influence a female's life.

Holly: Right.

Tammy: Um, and it's, I've never had an issue from my perspective defeating men you know, and perhaps it's just because I never let that get inside me. I did do lessons for one year of middle school.

Holly: Oh.

Tammy: And, and my coach was like the only sport I had to do. And my coach was uh, fresh out high school. He's uh, just graduated the year before and so he became the middle school wrestlers and so I got to speak to him in the last two or three years that he's a youth pastor and um, one of the other pastors signed up at our academy and we got talking a little bit. So I got to talk to the guy and come to find out that back in like 2000, I mean in 19 what, '92 maybe. I don't know, something like that. And small town America, now, he was kinda bummed with the fact that there were some girls that were trying out for this team. So his goal was to work the team so hard that the women would give up.

Holly: Hmm.

Tammy: That was his goal. Was to work it so hard that the women would give up. And I stuck around, I finished the season. I was, like what I weigh now as an adult, is what I weighed then. I was always big. Um, and so I had that uh, I guess that spirit, in, in that.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: Um, but he's that mentality you know, it's still in some people. I, I got to talk to one student about this. When I ended up doing a private and was helping out and then like a year later, the guy who was doing the private was at the

academy and it was the first day that he standing in line in a fundamentals class, and he saw me in front of him in line.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: He was like, who is this, it was almost like that's stupid, you know, I mean obviously I won him over to the point that he's been paying for privates, you know.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: Um, so my skill spoke for itself but it was a matter of getting that opportunity you know, oh well.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: Yeah, there's so many benefits that, that women you know, we think a lot of times why that don't do it. Oh, that's not for me, nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah. I hear all these things. Same story over and over again. And, and it's because of the feminine role. Yes, there's a lot of stuff that's like, I had to get over some stuff. yadah, yadah, yadah.

Holly: Yeah.

Tammy: Just like any guy could get. You know, so they don't give it a chance to, I mean it's like anything positive; you don't give it a chance, you have no idea

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: what you can achieve

Holly: Yeah, so lots of uh, a vari-, of varied opportunities for women and for anybody.

- Tammy: Opportunities can be there. But it just the mentality that it's not for them or mentality the fear of trying it or
- Holly: Right.
- Tammy: 'Cause that's the stuff that stops a lot of people and it doesn't have to be just women, but when you, you know it's one of the primal things, fighting. But it's not always like that.
- Holly: Yeah. What about um, what about our hierarchy? Is there, do you have any um, thoughts about um, how the hier-, how the hierarchy plays in Jiu-Jitsu with the belts and um, what that's like for us? What it means? Obviously, it's a mark of skill but you know, are there any problems with it?
- Tammy: Like, the ranking system?
- Holly: Yeah, just the, just the idea that we have, well, we have so much hierarchy with the, with you know, from day to day just ta-, having to do with submitting or being dominated and then we have the larger, more visible hierarchy with the belts. So, obviously there, we're all experience, we're all kind of experiencing some part of the hierarchy every step of the way and, and you've paid your dues and anybody who's a black belt is, you know, a, sort of at the top of the food chain, so to speak. At least, at least in some environments. Um,
- Tammy: Right. It's, it's one of those things that I'm starting to um, I'm still learning, you know, and I got to that black belt and it's just a shift in mindset. It's the, the next step on the same journey um, just continual growth and stuff like that.

But uh, the way I'm starting to see that it's because that question a lot, it's very arbitrary sometimes. You know,

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: how can you promote this person and not another person.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: You know, they can't, you have somebody that can't perform the techniques, you know, how can you say that this person is worthy of a belt when this one's far better, you know. I don't know if everybody is extremely efficient at Jiu-Jitsu, you know. That's what the, the gauge is and it's like well, I think we strive, I mean, at least in a world that I've been in, the majority of the worlds I've been in. you know, as far as gyms and instructors. And people that I kind of model my life after, or people that I ask for advice or look to. I think one of the things you strive for is to not just because of technique, but uh, overall self-improvement.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: So the other, like our motto the understanding is for everyone.

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: Not just the belief that we're working on someone's form in just the Jiu-Jitsu because if you get a 70 year old, their performance isn't going, I mean if we say Jiu-Jitsu for everybody, if we get a 70 year old, they're performance isn't gonna match anything. Compared to any of the younger people. But maybe their goals are different. You know, they just want to stay active. They just want to have a social life. Whatever it might be. Whatever it is that brings

them to the academy. You know, as long as they're working on those, they're working through their life, just because it's a different measuring stick doesn't mean that it doesn't you know, um, they're not working their way through the hierarchy as well, you know. What if I'm on the mats in 10, 12 years and I'm doing the techniques on you know, I'm barely, I can't really do 'em because my body won't let me or whatever. It's about our potential. Our potential for improvement and growth.

Holly: I was gonna, I was about to say so, we're back to potential again.

Tammy: Yeah.

Holly: But you said it for me. Um, I, I just kind of, I have one more topic to ask you about and that's um, it's a lot larger. It's kind of more geared toward cultural influences and um, you know, obviously we're dealing with a, a sport that is coined Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. So uh, you had mentioned the word potential and I was laughing to myself thinking I was just about to say so we're back talking about potential again. And, and then I started to ask um, how the, the formal question on my, on my instructions is how are the historical and cultural influences um, on um, or what are they on Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, especially those from the Brazilian culture experienced? So obviously, we're heavily influenced by the Brazilian culture. And um, the question I had to people was how, how is that playing out no-, right now? You know, or, or what-, or what other historical influences effect um, what it is that we do? That are, that might be important or meaningful?

Holly: Well, you know, we're not, we're not doing um, Japanese Jiu-Jitsu for instance, right. So what, what we're doing has something to do with the history of the Gracie family. The, the Brazilian culture. It's been brought to us you know, through that, through that vehicle, so to speak. So my curiosity is, is about what about the Brazilian culture and the history of the Gracie family, the history of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu means something to us um, when we're you know, in what we're doing? What, does that make sense?

Tammy: Um, well,

Holly: Why, you know, or, or, easily like, why Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu instead of Japanese Jiu-Jitsu? You know,

Tammy: Right, right. Well, I mean, on one side of it, I can't speak to the other because this is my only experience. I'll be honest, I'm very, very like

Holly: Hmhhh.

Tammy: A purist. It's possibly not the right word. Very like

Holly: Well, it's all you know.

Tammy: Right.

Holly: It's all you know, right.

Tammy: Right, right. I mean it's all I've practiced. I've had some experience with some Japanese Jiu-Jitsu artists you know, that come in to the academy.

Holly: Right.

Tammy: So, I've thought, I can't speak to the other. But I do feel that the, the morality of it. You know, you think of martial arts and you think of like a lot of or a lot of um, you know, we have the respect and we have the battling and we have

preconceived notions 'Cause that's all we are, I mean I've never really practiced any other martial art. But in my mind, you know, I had this image of you know all these Kung Fu movies I grew up with, all these Karate movies that I grew up with, whatever. Um, but as far as the historical influence, I'm very like one of the benefits to my career I guess, something that I tell people is the experiences that I have are from the people I see every day. Every day and yes I go out to competitions and I get to see the full world too, but um, like but I don't like, I don't go out there like oh my God, thank God it was a female or this person this or you know, I don't do the history part. I'm, I'm starting. I'm learning to get more history of the path and it's starting to become more than technique and so as far as all the, the icing on the cake, all the stuff that's the backstory, I don't really have it, you know. I, I recognize people that are in my life, that are passing through my day to day you know.

Holly: Hmhmm.

Tammy: Like that's one of the things that's coming from my black belt, is taking the structure and I have pulled out of myself understanding of other people because I have to find ways for them to understand. And that's a feature I've always been in that role but I've always been responsible for somebody else so I just learn responsibility to take care of their full development. You know, taking more care, more poking into other like other people, what's about them and to play that part in who they really are today. and hopefully play a historical role and what, I don't know.

Holly: That sounds great. No need to, no need to read too much into it. It's, it's you, all your, all of your answers and conversation have been really great and extremely helpful. It's all, it's all wonderful and I'm so pleased to have had the opportunity to interview a black belt, a female black belt because as you well know, there still are not very many of those. And um, so I really, really appreciate that. You taking the time, very much. And um, I'm, I'm gonna turn the recorder off because I don't have any more questions for my dissertation and I just want to say thanks and um, how much I appreciate it, Tammy.

Tammy: Sure. You are welcome and I was happy to do it.

[END RECORDING]