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The Emotional Benefits of Jiu Jitsu on Your Soul

As we have seen, Jiu Jitsu quite literally makes your mind and body stronger and helps prepare you strategically in your day-to-day professional life. But it does something else, arguably more potent than anything we've previously discussed. Training Jiu Jitsu is a tremendous deliverer of emotional benefits and self-reimbursements. Jiu Jitsu enriches your soul and improves your life beyond the physical and mental manifestations.

Essentially everything that I have needed to know to be happy or successful in life I have learned from Jiu Jitsu. Transitioning from being an egotistical person to one with self-esteem is one such example. Accepting failure and learning from it is another personal milestone that stems directly from my Jiu Jitsu experience. Being patient. Staying in the moment. Never giving up. All of these have been impressed upon me throughout my years practicing the greatest martial art and personal development strategy I have ever known: Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

THE LAWYER'S EGO

> "As I began to love myself I freed myself of anything that is no good for my health—food, people, things, situations, and everything that drew me down and away from myself. At first I called this attitude a healthy egotism. Today I know it is 'Love of Oneself.'" —*As I Began to Love Myself,* attributed to Charlie Chaplin on his 70th birthday, April 16, 1959.

Isn't one of the common stereotypes we hear about attorneys that they are egotistical and arrogant, often with a profanity attached? For fun (which isn't fun but really telling) just search online for the term "egotistical lawyer" and read through some of the results. There are a fair number of people who feel this is the

case simply based on the results count. (Over 3.9 million, actually.) And so maybe you are that type of person. I certainly was.

Ego is not merely being arrogant or self-centered or thinking you are better than others. Ego is also composed of memories, past conditioning, and mental concepts and identification with those things. Ego is the sense of who you think you are. Ego can also be the people who tend to operate in their own world, thinking only about their to-dos and their situations.

I operated this way for many years. I was absorbed by this need, a social need, to be accepted and defined by others. But think about it. This is quite understandable because all of our thoughts about ourselves were developed at a very early age. Our parents would tell us all the wonderful things parents tell their children: "You are a beautiful child." "You are so smart." "You are our pride and joy." And then our teachers and coaches praised us. As we age, we begin to form connections with our peers—friendships and relationships that further give us this attention. And then over time these connections grow to include others in society: bosses, sports teams, celebrities, and social media, all of which influence us and become determining factors in how we perceive ourselves. This then becomes the *center* of our universe.

But this is really a false center, because it does not come from within. Everything that has been created was done by society and this false center is now our ego.

The achievement that I am most proud of, as I've progressed through my Jiu Jitsu odyssey, incredibly, has actually nothing to do with the practice of Jiu Jitsu itself. This achievement is one that took me decades to recognize, acknowledge, and seek to overhaul. It was addressing this concept of changing the focus of my own center to the center I created, not the one dictated by the outside world. And believe me, if I can do this, and if I can continue to work on this, if I can admit and repair this affliction, certainly you too can transform yourself. This will serve you not just in law but also in life.

I also want you to do as I have done and continue to work on this today, tomorrow, and the next day, transitioning away from ego to healthy self-esteem.

I understand the concept of saying "I am now humble" or "I am proud that I have started to transition from a place of ego to a place of self-esteem" is by definition not a humble trait. Being aware of this change happening and then announcing it, as I am in these words and paragraphs, is an egoistic proposition. But I am not saying, "No one is like me," nor "I am this great person because I have embarked, with success, on this change," and then hoping to receive some acclaim or appreciation. In fact, this is the only time and medium in which I have even expressed this change. I do not wear it like a badge of honor wherever I go. I only want for you to read my words, and if you identify with them, if you see in yourself what I have described as being egotistical, then I hope you will find the comfort and simplicity in losing the ego.

It is easy to understand how the egotistical typecast has stuck with attorneys. Lawyers are usually competitive people that yearn for success. We arrived at the decision to become a lawyer during our formative years and we spent those years achieving or trying to achieve certain marks in undergraduate university in order to get accepted to a top law school. When this acceptance occurs, we receive a self-image boost. Then, during law school, we are figuratively thrown into the sea to either become a shark or a minnow.

The Socratic teaching method and stringent testing and grading measures ensure that only the sharks survive and the minnows go off to backpack through Europe and become successful social media–company founders or politicians or consultants, but not second-year law school students or graduates. And so this Darwinian effect is most definitely a self-esteem boost for the strong that survive.

And as we undertake our second and third years of law school, we now compete for class ranking. Those who reach the top half or top quarter or even head of the class get to revel in yet another self-esteem boost. Then we compete for internships and job prospects after law school. Those who receive the coveted internships are boosted again. This continues with the accomplishment of graduation, passing the bar exam, and landing a high-paying position at a reputable firm. Before we've even spent a single day in the working world, we have supremely elevated levels of self-worth because of all that we have accomplished. This is not to take away from these accomplishments. We can all agree they are valid and worthy of praise. However, all too often a certain bravado and smugness takes the place of appreciative and gratified lawyers and lawyers-to-be.

We then spend our first years in practice giving some paid-for opinion, but mostly it's unsolicited advice on every legal matter regardless of whether we've been trained in that area or not. Our family and friends ask us about basic legal issues, like landlord/tenant: "Our landlord won't give us back our security deposit because we accidentally forgot to turn off the bathtub in the bathroom when we moved out and the whole place flooded, is that fair?" (True story.) Or contract law: "I had an agreement with my friend to buy his truck for $1,000 and now he's backing out. Can I sue him?" (Another true story.) Or most likely an employment situation: "Can my boss fire me just because I got drunk at lunch and hit on his wife?" (Unfortunately, this too is a true story (of a friend)).

And so we become empowered and our egos inflate because of these opportunities in which people are relying on us and on our perceived knowledge base. We believe that after three years of law school, passing a state bar exam, and starting work at a prestigious firm we have the secret code to the Voynich manuscript and thus any and all information we disclose is so valuable that our inquirers should be honored that we have even given our time to analyze the matter.

Of course, as our years in practice begin to add up, our rates for our advice (e.g., if you're a transactional or defense attorney) can escalate, depending on where in

the country you are employed, from a few hundred bucks an hour to a thousand or more. This handsome financial reward is an example of how external factors lead to self-worth. We feel empowered by being these oracles of legal knowledge. This boosts our ego. Before we know it, because of our continued attainment of benchmarks and successes, we have thoroughly developed this characteristic of having an inflated sense of our own importance.

The egotistical lawyer's sense of self-worth is mostly determined by all of these external conditions, circumstances, or events. Compare the egotistical lawyer with the self-esteemed lawyer. The self-esteemed lawyer's self-worth is based on the internal ability to evaluate himself truthfully and consent to whom he is. This means recognizing strengths and weaknesses and at the same time acknowledging worthiness and worthwhileness.

Do you fit the above description? Do you rely on external conditions to determine your self-worth? Are you one that others would consider "egotistical"? I know I was, and I am aware that I had this inflated sense of importance dating back long before being a lawyer or even a law student. I also know that within the first few weeks of training Jiu Jitsu that egotistic persona slowly stopped walking through my dojo's front door. It didn't happen overnight, but it did happen organically. I was not forcing this change on myself.

Part of being egotistical is not having the ability to identify that it is even a part of your makeup. I happened to recognize it in myself, but I also happened to not care enough to change it—or know how to change it. I knew that I had reached certain junctures in life being a certain way and therefore I mistakenly felt that it must not have been such a detrimental quality.

The reality was, I was in denial about how much a part of my persona it defined. Being egotistical affected relationships. Including my marriage. After a separation period and during the post-divorce reconciliation months later, I still could not get past certain things that had taken place earlier in our marriage. I was too proud to look beyond the past and move forward with this person that I loved deeply. My ego was not able to handle the blow from an earlier time in the relationship that left me blindsided and lost. And so I ended my marriage for good when I said, "I don't think I can ever forget or forgive you." But of course, if I wasn't so egotistical I could have weathered that storm. I even said to my then wife: "I am not sure why I can't let this go. It's a blow to my ego. I get that. It's something I cannot overcome."

Being aware that my ego was interfering in my day-to-day livelihood was half the battle. But it wasn't enough to say, "I don't want to be this way anymore." I sought out methods to transform from being so egotistical to being someone with positive self-esteem. But it wasn't enough for me to just say, "I want to be more like this and less like that." I needed something to propel that forward.

I didn't get into Jiu Jitsu to curb this egotistical behavior I had been exhibiting, but as soon as guys who were much smaller than I am started choking me out and

submitting me over and over, I realized very quickly that I was no longer the shark among minnows that I either once was or thought I had been. This realization happened every time I stepped on the mats. And since I was training five days a week and sometimes six, I was consistently reinforcing this anti-egotistical persona.

Jiu Jitsu teaches that we are all the same when we cross over that threshold for the first time. Jiu Jitsu doesn't care if you just secured a seven-figure trial verdict or six-digit settlement for your client. Jiu Jitsu doesn't care if you eat at the finest downtown restaurants for lunch or play golf with local politicos on the weekends. And to be truthful, most others don't care either.

Jiu Jitsu will humble you when the smaller, seemingly weaker opponent pulls you into his guard, places one foot on your hip and the other on the ground and while you are trying to figure out what he's doing, your arm and head are caught between his legs and you can't figure out if it's the triangle choke or the arm bar that is causing you to tap out spastically. Jiu Jitsu will humble you when you start into a five-minute sparring session and after one minute you start gasping for air. Jiu Jitsu will humble you over and over and over again.

As you progress through the ranks there will always be someone and something that makes you realize you are not all-knowing and all-being. Submissions that are placed on you and scrambles for position in which your opponent attains a dominant position before you do will be constant reminders of your inferiority. But you will realize that those moments of humility will actually be empowering. These moments of modesty could be considered failures in the sense that what you were attempting to achieve was unsuccessful. But I assure you, you will find inner sanctity in those moments, because these are the essence of Jiu Jitsu. As the saying goes, "Success in Jiu Jitsu is not in the destination, it is in the journey." Or Winston Churchill once said, "Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm."

In other walks of life, we perform acts as ways to suppress the ego. In the Jewish religion, doing a "mitzvah" is a way to subjugate the ego. By doing these "good deeds," we eclipse the ego since we are doing something because God wants us to, not for personal gain. These mitzvahs can be feel-good acts (resting on Shabbat) or strange occurrences (for the orthodox Jew it might be wrapping a *tefillin* around your arm), but they require you to go beyond the human parameters and touch the divine.[1] We perform these good deeds so that we are focused on our purpose and not on ourselves. This same concept applies to Jiu Jitsu.

The months in which my marriage was unraveling were a deeply painful time in my life. I battled with profound emotions that I had never before experienced. I was resentful and even started exhibiting nonviolent but still self-destructive behaviors (arguments and conflict, avoidance, etc.). Most troubling was that I was

1. Tefillin are a set of small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah, which are worn by observant Jews during weekday morning prayers.

no longer the positive person I had been all of my life. I was becoming dominatingly negative. I was defensive about everything, and started exhibiting an extirpative pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting.

I recognized this downward spiral as it began to affect other relationships in my life, namely my professional ones. One day my good-natured and even-keeled business partner walked into my office as though it was his own, pushing open the almost-closed door without so much as a courtesy knock or verbal warning. Closing the door behind him with his foot and pulling up the door-side chair simultaneously in one motion, he said: "I don't want you to get upset when I say this, but 'this' [referring to my attitude] has to stop. You don't realize it, but your demeanor, for better or worse, affects all of us. When you come in here sulking, despondent, or just in a shitty mood, everyone else takes on that same demeanor. It has to stop. Otherwise don't come in."

I sat there in silence. I knew exactly what he meant. Each morning I would come into the office, walk past our bullpen of employees, barely nod my head, continue into my own office, close the door, and only reappear for a bathroom break or when it was time to leave. In a boutique firm of our size (fewer than ten employees) everyone talks and interacts. We function best in collaboration, not in isolation. The office atmosphere is loose and animated. We understand that our firm cannot compete with the larger firms on salary or benefits packages, but we can atone for that in atmosphere, culture, and freedom. But none of that matters if one of the two managing partners is a toxic, walking zombie with false-confidence issues, anxiety, and palpable tension. To put it kindly.

I knew I needed to make some changes. I knew my soul was under attack and only I could take the steps necessary to annihilate the toxins that were infiltrating my thoughts. Instead of sitting at home wallowing in sorrow, waiting for *her* to come home so we could possibly argue more, possibly resolve that day's issues, I decided to put myself in a place of permanent resolve beyond that relationship. I decided then and there that if it was not nourishing my soul, it was not going to be a part of my self.

My remedy was simply more Jiu Jitsu. A lot more. I was increasing the quantity and quality of my time doing the one thing that brought joy and serenity to my life. I upped my Jiu Jitsu training from a few days a week to twice daily. This became about taking action and taking ownership for myself. I became devoted to assuming responsibility for what I wanted. I wanted to be free of the mental turmoil. I knew that the issues in the marriage were complex and delicate and that they were not going to be resolved in a timely manner. I also knew that my well-being depended on my own ego subsiding. To do that, I had to work hard every day. I had to persist in the face of what was my greatest struggle and I had to surrender.

So I made it my goal to train every day, to be around the people in my life that were convivial and supportive. To be in a place where I was surrounded by

positivity was paramount. Ultimately, it would be my Jiu Jitsu family that would help guide me to the destination I otherwise was struggling to reach on my own.

For someone that outwardly projected confidence and had an inflated sense of self (ego), my heart and soul were cowardly and disconsolate. But as I began to take my energy and thrust it into Jiu Jitsu and away from the situations in my life that were pernicious, everything improved. I began to love myself. In those moments before, during, and after a Jiu Jitsu training session, I was freed of those things that were pestilential for my mind or my body, ridding it of the people, the things, the connections, and the drama that pulled me down like an anchor. I was transitioning from an Egoist to someone who loved himself, and this was the nature of healthy self-esteem.

Jiu Jitsu then became my vehicle for purifying my soul. It was this cleansing that allowed me to pursue achieving the best of my personality and my life. Now when I think about my self and my soul, I understand it differently than ever before. We don't *have* a soul. We *are* a soul. We have minds and bodies.

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A HAPPY LAWYER?

I recall my days practicing law before Jiu Jitsu was in my life that my mind felt overwhelmed and disturbingly tangled, much like the assortment of power cords under my desk. This must be what so many other lawyers feel, with the continuum of noises around them at every moment of the day: telephone calls from prospective clients, e-mails from opposing counsel, calendar reminder pop-ups, and administrative assistants constantly infiltrating our space. And conversely, the long bouts of silence as one pores over antiquated case holdings or searches through commercial databases for on-point cases and has to battle with hundreds of flags, filing histories, citing references, and case history notes.

If my Jiu Jitsu mind is a wonderful dreamland made up of bright colors and beautiful sounds, my lawyer mind was a Los Angeles traffic jam with honking horns, suffocating smog, and the sounds of the Top 40 alternative rock band Nickelback blasting from a car stereo with a blown subwoofer.

How can we continue to think like this? More importantly, how can we expect to be productive and happy both in the law office and outside of it if our minds are, figuratively speaking, trapped on the 405 south freeway, at rush hour, with a broken radio and no exit in sight?[2] The answer is we cannot. The follow-up answer is that by incorporating Jiu Jitsu into your daily regimen you will free yourself from this mental traffic jam. Jiu Jitsu isn't the next exit off that crowded freeway, it is the transformation of your car into a helicopter.

2. Unsubstantiated empirical evidence I have collected points to this being the worst freeway for traffic in the history of the world.

It's not just the tremendous chatter we have in our daily legal lives between phone calls, e-mails, appearances, work product, and billing (to name just a few) that makes our minds feel overwhelmed and tangled, but it is also the disdain we have for the profession in general. In my preparation for writing this book, I spoke with, interviewed, and generally prodded former law-school classmates, former opposing counsel, current counsel, and family and friends who practice law. With the exception of one person, every single lawyer admitted to being either extremely or moderately unhappy with the choice to practice law (as it pertained to them being happy).

That's incredible to me. Of course, this is only a limited selection. This may not describe you, but suffice it to say, even if you like being a lawyer, we could all be happier. I have just come upon a healthy handful of lawyers who mostly do not like being lawyers. But I am not surprised. I could spend pages on the many types of lawyers I spoke with who have expressed disdain for the profession, but instead here are just a few examples:

- My ex-wife, who used to come home in tears on an almost daily basis, or at the very least on a weekly basis, because the notion of tracking her billable hours and brutal workplace hours (insurance medical malpractice defense) was too painful to endure. She started as the only associate in a two-man boutique defense firm in which one boss despised the other and the majority partner deflected blame everywhere else but on himself and was disorganized, absentminded, and all around not respected or liked by his staff or clients.
- Friends from law school, who went on to work as corporate counsel for institutional banks, and now complain incessantly about the "cubicle lawyer" delirium. Their daily call was handling multi-hundred-page boilerplate contracts that needed continuous review for finance programs that were being removed from existence or were extinct before the review process was completed due to regulatory or internal protocols.
- The former classmates-turned-public defenders who met daily with repeat offenders, convicted felons, and other less savory souls who knew their clients were guilty but were working on technicalities to escape conviction or lessen penalties.
- My own outside counsel, who by all accounts were (and still are) great people and good family men but abhor their daily routines of having to focus on landing new clients, as opposed to better representing the ones they currently have on retainer.

The list of lawyers that I know who are unhappy in their profession is only part of the story. The other part of the story is told when I asked these esquires

when this harsh distaste for their jobs began. Many recounted a time as a first- or second-year associate when they were inundated with the "shit work" (form pleadings, boilerplate discovery preparation and filing, meeting with clients who failed to show up on time—if at all). Some responded to my question with "I hadn't really thought about it. I just think everyone else was wearing off on me."

I focused on this particular response and decided to delve deeper. This is the concept of "mob mentality." When it takes over, it can be a powerful mechanism for getting a message across to the masses. When the leaders of the mob, or those with the loudest and most powerful and influential voices have adopted a mindset, that mindset is more easily bestowed on all of the members of the mob. When this happens to lawyers it can start in the first year of practice. The underling associate is dumped the bottom-of-the-barrel work, is never allowed to make court appearances, or handles the smallest and least valuable cases in the firm—essentially, none of the things he went to law school to achieve. The seasoned attorney is beaten down by 2,000-hour-plus billable years (which doesn't take into account the hundreds or more other non-billable working hours), and while the income is significant, what value has money that cannot be enjoyed?

So we know that some (in my case, almost all) lawyers are unhappy because the workload is daunting, the hours are extreme, the workplace can be unjust—but perhaps mostly because that's what everyone else is saying. Whenever we hear these opinions, it becomes a part of our belief system. We believe them and so we live them and live unhappily because everyone has told us this, so it must be true.

This condition reminds me of a young associate I knew quite well out of law school who went to work at a plaintiff employment boutique law firm. After roughly one year of being limited to handling incoming calls from prospective clients, drafting complaints and basic discovery pleadings, and generally learning the trade, the new associate was handed his first case to manage. This case would be one that he would oversee himself, which was feasible for the firm since the case was not a terribly lucrative one based on the limited economic and noneconomic damages.

The new associate was excited about the opportunity to represent an employee who claimed racial discrimination by the manager of his big-box retailer employer located in central California. This was an area of law the new associate studied in depth in his final year of law school, identified with personally (he too was a minority), and thought exactly captured his idea of what the law meant to him: being an advocate for the little guy pitted against the much bigger and better-capitalized guy.

Unlike most large defense firms, plaintiff firms tend to give more responsibility to new associates with regard to handling clients, including taking depositions, making court appearances, and generally interfacing with opposing counsel as it pertains to settlement discussions. After all the initial filings had been completed in

this particular instance, defense counsel and the new associate began to have ongoing discussions regarding the status of the case. In the early months, the conversations ranged from case-status conferences to the position of discovery exchanges. As the case progressed, the discussions revolved around settlement opportunities. The discussions of all varieties took the better part of an entire calendar year.

The lead defense counsel was a well-known and well-respected member of a large downtown Los Angeles law firm. The new associate was aware of the lead defense counsel's reputation and, even though he was his adversary, he looked up to him in a way. He knew this particular defense attorney was one who had ongoing cases with the new associate's firm (as a byproduct of the defense attorney's large client) and he wanted to both impress him and hold his own against his more seasoned opponent.

Their conversations took place on the phone and in person over nearly an entire year, and when they were not discussing specific case matters, they almost always included a discussion about their careers. Almost immediately during their telephone meetings, the defense counsel would share his disdain for his client's protocols (the ongoing updates and summaries of every development, particularly; the discovery and motion in limine process, specifically; and all things law, generally). At first, the new associate found himself giving obligatory "uh-huh" responses in agreement just to be polite, even though he did not share the defense attorney's views. Over time, his "uh-huhs" turned into a discussion of shared negative experiences (feelings of burnout, frustrations with clients, and the deluge of paperwork he always seemed to be under) until eventually the new associate was as equally disenchanted with the practice of law as was the experienced lawyer.

The new associate never had those thoughts until he started interfacing with this particular defense counsel. It was this "mob mentality"—the powerful message from the influential person in the "mob" inundating the younger lawyer's mind—that led to the new associate believing this to be true. But it wasn't just a belief. The new associate began sharing these same thoughts of contempt for the practice of law with other associates at his firm. When this happened, everything in the new associate changed, ranging from a suffering in the quality of his work product to a lack of timely responses to his clients' phone calls and e-mails. Eventually the workplace became too toxic for the managing partners and they parted ways with the new associate.

I included this story in addition to all those things that make lawyers generally unhappy to show that whether our happiness is real or it is perceived, we do not have to accept these as truths. We do, however, have to break the way our minds interpret the opinions and beliefs of others. We can do this by telling ourselves not to think that way any longer. Admittedly, this is a difficult proposition. But we can break our minds another way too. We can engage in something that forces us to think differently.

JIU JITSU TEACHES US TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

Jiu Jitsu forces our minds to work in ways that they never had before, especially in law. The Jiu Jitsu mind does not create toxicity as the defense counsel did with the new associate. In Jiu Jitsu we share stories of community and bond with one another. We speak with passion for the sport. We converse about yearning for more information about each and every move.

There is no gossip in Jiu Jitsu, nor do we use the word "hate." In Jiu Jitsu we physically test ourselves while mentally changing the way we think and interact and communicate. When we spar during our training sessions, the more advanced player works on deficiencies he notices in his less advanced opponent. When we have a difficult day in Jiu Jitsu (perhaps being tapped repeatedly during a sparring session), we recognize it as an opportunity to learn and improve.

In Jiu Jitsu we are taught that we don't win or lose. We either win or we learn. This is one of the most famous mantras in our sport. As I am writing this passage, I am literally just a few hours removed from having been defeated in my first match at the Pan Jiu Jitsu Championships (2013). In my first match, I made the grips I wanted, took control of my opponent, pulled and pushed him (while standing), and generally kept him off balance so that he could not attack or pull guard. However, he was able to do just enough to keep me from finishing one of the many takedowns I attempted. Finally, he was able to pull me into his closed guard and get a sweep (two points) with about one minute left. I was left to either pass his guard (three points) or stand up and get a takedown of my own. Being unable to pass right away, I turtled (went to my knees like a turtle and gave up my back) and then used that position to stand back up. However, that yielded my opponent an advantage point. I stood up, as did he, and then shot for a single leg takedown and got it (two points). As I worked to pass, he was able to attempt a triangle, which he did not get, but still received a second advantage point for the attempt. When the match ended we each had two points. However, since he had the two advantage points, which were the tiebreaker, I lost. As I walked off the mat, I replayed the match in my mind, specifically the standing portion.

The night before the event, I had had elaborate dreams about doing a certain takedown that I'd never done before. I believed this was a sign and so I learned the takedown only minutes before the match. I attempted it at least four or five times, never once successfully. As a result, I learned that dreaming about a new move to attempt in a very important tournament is a horrible plan of attack.

When I stepped off the mat, my friend, coach, and professor, Rafael Ramos, met me. He had been yelling instructions throughout the five-minute match. I heard almost every word and genuinely tried to do as he said: "Break his grip on your sleeve!" (I didn't, but I tried.) "Don't let him close his guard!" (I didn't,

but I tried and I was able to open it regardless.) "Shoot the single!! You need the takedown!!" (I did.) Of course, his most prescient advice came in the form of a text message on my way home:

Me: Any medals?
Rafael: Jay, Daniel, and Chad bronze and Lenny gold.
Me: Perfect—everyone medaled but me. . . . Gonna go learn fencing.
Rafael: Just got to go for your singles instead of the "dream" takedown.
Me: LOL. Guess it wasn't a sign.

There will be other tournaments. There will be victories, and those will be rewarding. But there will most likely be more losses, even losses that I would consider worse (getting tapped out in the first minute as opposed to losing on a tiebreaker). But the lessons learned are priceless.[3] Don't be so obdurate in your pre-match approach that you are unable to modify and adjust for new circumstances. Can you apply this to your law practice? I consider this the "pivot" approach, and it's served me well in other areas of life, like business.

The concept of pivoting refers to a dramatic and transformative change in the current direction, strategy, and focus of a company. Some pivots are monumental, when companies adjust their target customer or modify their entire company goods (product line or service offered). But a pivot can also be as small as adjusting a product's price point. The essence of pivoting is identifying a problem and correcting it.

As a Jiu Jitsu competitor or as a lawyer, you need to prepare yourself to think creatively and independently because, more often than not, conditions on the ground will change so rapidly that your original, well-thought-out fighting approach or business model (and yes, lawyers *need* to have a business model) will quickly become irrelevant.

3. I just checked the results of this tournament and discovered my loss went to the person who won the entire bracket. This offers some solace.