

# *On Bruce Lee*

By Blas Moros



## Intro

The hope is that this “teacher’s reference guide” provides some color on Bruce Lee, his philosophy and his contributions to acting and the martial arts. Bruce was a deep, multi-disciplinary and independent thinker who challenged dogma because he believed it made people rigid and stagnant. Bruce espoused a more open, growing and adaptive mindset which allows one to continuously learn and react appropriately to whatever the situation calls for. Another central tenet to his philosophy was the importance of honest self-expression. Bruce stressed that striving for self-actualization rather than self-image actualization is vital to foster peace of mind as well as a happy, fulfilling and successful life. His incredible contributions to martial art, acting and philosophy has been fascinating to learn about and his life serves as a template for pursuing mastery in any field.

Please note that this guide is something I plan to update, iterate, improve and expand upon over time. There are surely flaws throughout and parts which true experts would disagree with. I welcome any questions, comments and corrections in this quest to better understand Bruce Lee!

## Bruce Lee, the Man

Bruce Lee was born on November 27, 1940 in San Francisco’s Chinatown during both the hour and the year of the Dragon. His father was a famous opera singer and his mother was from one of the most powerful clans in Hong Kong. Bruce was a child actor from a very early age, starring in many movies before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Bruce was a restless child and eventually this energy (and his predilection for picking fights) got him interested in Wing Chun, a type of martial art, where he was taught by Yip Man. Bruce got into enough fights at school and on the streets that his parents thought it would be safest to send him to America. At 18, Bruce moved back to San Francisco but after a couple months moved to Seattle to finish his high school education and eventually enroll at the University of Washington. Lee studied philosophy and taught gung fu to other students and that is how he met his future wife, Linda Emery. They had two children together, Brandon and Shannon. Brandon would grow up to become a martial artist and actor as well and unfortunately also died at a young age from an accident involving a prop gun while filming a movie. Shannon is also an actress and martial artist and currently serves as the President of the Bruce Lee Foundation and hosts the Bruce Lee podcast.

Bruce taught a version of Wing Chun which he first called Jun Fan Gung Fu (Bruce Lee’s Gung Fu) which later evolved to become Jeet Kune Do (Way of the Intercepting Fist). He performed

some of his techniques and other physical feats at the 1964 Long Beach International Karate Championships where he was noticed by William Dozier, a movie producer. It was through Dozier that he landed the role of Kato on *The Green Hornet*. The show was cancelled after only one season but this got Bruce some experience, training and notoriety. He was soon booked on shows and movies such as *Longstreet*, *Marlowe*, *The Wrecking Crew* and more. Bruce was not happy being cast solely as a sidekick because of his Asian heritage so he returned to Hong Kong and began filming *The Big Boss*. This was to become a box office smash and propelled Bruce to stardom across Asia and eventually America, getting him lead roles and the opportunity to write, direct, produce and star in his own movies. Bruce's movies are so popular and long-lasting because not only does his incredible martial arts skill come through but his deep philosophy is woven throughout.

Bruce released a number of other box office successes after *The Big Boss* but in May of 1973, Bruce collapsed with seizures and was rushed to the hospital. He was diagnosed as having a cerebral edema and given some medication to reduce the swelling. A couple months later, on July 20, 1973, Bruce complained of a headache and was given some medication to help reduce the pain and swelling. The combination of compounds caused an acute cerebral edema which caused his death. He was 32.

Bruce's movies, diaries, former students, interviews and more have provided a good window into Bruce Lee's life and thought process and serve as a great legacy. He was young but lived fully and has given the world a great gift through his deliberate life, reflective writing and honest self-expression.

### Key Philosophical Concepts

Bruce had a deep, thoughtful set of beliefs which he formed through a melding of Eastern and Western philosophies. The major concepts that I took away from reading about Bruce Lee were:

- Self-actualization vs. self-image actualization
- Absorb what is useful, discard what is useless and add what is specifically your own
- Be like water

Bruce embedded these core beliefs into his newly formed martial art, Jeet Kune Do (JKD). Every movement, training regimen, iteration, workout, etc. were influenced by these beliefs. JKD became his philosophy in motion.

What is equally as impressive in my eyes is Bruce's ability to not only take the time and deeply contemplate these topics but also to go out into the world and apply them to all that he did. He was a philosopher who happened to use martial art and acting to self-actualize, honestly express himself and spread his philosophy.

*“Yes, there is a difference between self-actualization and self-image actualization.”*

Bruce's philosophy stemmed from the belief that honest self-expression in all that you do is of utmost importance. So many waste so much energy and time in trying to live up to the (probably false and inaccurate) image and expectation of others rather than diving deep within, getting to know themselves and coming to understand what they truly want and who they truly are. Bruce believed that all knowledge ultimately means self-knowledge and the better one knows himself, the better chance one has of getting and staying on the path towards self-mastery (though never truly attaining it!). This process of shedding the unessential, of what is not useful, of what one is not and does not care about is absolutely vital to fulfilling one's potential. By not worrying about self-image, one frees up the time, energy and focus needed to reach one's full potential. The ultimate source of happiness, meaning, and knowledge that we each long for from so many divergent sources ultimately resides within us. Man loses his way and is at his worst when he does not understand himself.

Bruce believed that art, any art, is a bridge to higher learning and a chance for self-expression and martial art and acting were the mediums through which Bruce chose to honestly express himself. The more he understood himself, the higher up the ladder of martial art mastery he was able to climb and the higher he was able to climb, the deeper he was able to understand himself. He saw clearly that “art was simply a metaphor for life itself and that it was indeed possible to “see the world in a grain of sand.”” Someone who has achieved a high level of mastery in any field has also had to master themselves to a high level. Through this process, they are able to gain profound insights into the human condition and human nature.

*“Absorb what is useful, discard what is useless and add what is specifically your own.”*

Bruce was in a continuous process of ‘shedding.’ He always sought to discover new things, add the essential, hack away the unessential and focus as much time as possible on what truly makes a difference. He looked at things and sought to extract the essence that made for its effectiveness. Simply, trying to do more of what works and less of what doesn’t. Bruce took this further than most and was systematic about hacking away the unessential from his acting, from JKD, from his workouts, from his beliefs and everything else.

I think the last part of the quote above is crucial and often neglected. Adding your own style forces you to truly think about and absorb what you are doing and learning. It is far easier to simply read and imitate but absorbing the information so deeply so you understand where and how you can use it to achieve your own purpose in your own style is where unexpected leaping-emergent effects can occur. As Bruce said, “We have more faith in what we imitate than in what we originate. We cannot derive a sense of absolute certitude from anything that has its roots in us. The most poignant sense of insecurity comes from standing alone; we are not alone when we imitate. It is thus with most of us!” Learning is not simply being able to regurgitate information but in knowing how to apply it within a variety of contexts with a definite purpose in mind. Taking what you have learned and adding your own style, beliefs and goals is what ultimately makes it helpful to you. Embrace your funk!

The process of practicing the fundamentals to the point that they eventually become second nature is vital to mastering any subject. As it applies to JKD, Bruce first had to ingrain the practices and principles of Wing Chun and a number of other disciplines before he could even think about forming his own style of fighting. "To be effective in his arguments against the restrictions imposed by clinging to certain traditional martial art practices, it was first necessary for Bruce to gain a thorough understanding of the roots of these traditions. To his mind there was no unconditional acceptance of styles, forms, or rigid thought patterns, however it was only after he had achieved a high respect for the underlying principles of traditional ideas in martial art that he was able to free himself from being bound by the chains of unreasoned beliefs. Respecting some traditions as beneficial, rejecting others as stifling to personal development, Bruce was then free to liberate his own ideas, to expand his consciousness, to enter fully into his process of becoming a true artist of the martial way and a real human being."

*“You must be shapeless, formless, like water. When you pour water into a cup, it becomes the cup. When you pour water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle. When you pour it into a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Water can drip and it can crash. Become like water my friend.”*

While Bruce was studying Wing Chun in Hong Kong with Yip Man, he became frustrated by his lack of progress and set out in a junk into the Hong Kong Harbour. He eventually got mad enough to hit the water and that is when he had his epiphany. He realized that water embodies many of the principles Yip Man was trying to teach him such as firmness concealed in softness, the importance of flexibility, adaptation, non-resistance and being “empty.” The nature of water is one which is “soft yet not yielding, firm yet not hard” and that is what Bruce tried to portray through JKD.

Bruce further applied these principles to JKD through concepts such as wu hsin, chi sao and wu wei. Wu hsin can be translated as “no-mindedness” and is exemplified by someone in whom no thoughts or feelings are ‘sticky,’ who have total acceptance and are ‘mirror-like.’ They do not let the situation around them dictate their thoughts, feelings, emotions or actions. They simply reflect back the situation at hand and act accordingly. Chi sao refers to a concept of total awareness. Only by not ‘localizing’ the mind on any one foe, object or thought can your mind be nowhere and therefore everywhere. This sort of *seemingly* paradoxical thinking permeated Bruce’s philosophy and was embedded in what would eventually become the logo of JKD, the yin/yang symbol with Chinese characters and arrows surrounding it (see last page). The Chinese characters translate to “using no way as way, having no limitation as limitation.” Chi sao can lead to a state of “choiceless awareness” which Bruce stressed often. This is a state of total emptiness where one can best react and adapt to the situation at hand and Bruce argued that this is the optimal way to live and would also lead to optimal performance. Lastly, wu wei is when one allows one’s mind to be free and trusts it to work without interruption, prodding, strain or resistance from the conscious mind. Only once you have put in an incredible amount of work to master the fundamentals can you achieve this state where every action is done “unintentionally.” In my mind, unconscious competence.

This process of mastery, which Josh Waitzkin has also done a fantastic job describing, involves learning the rules and fundamentals, practicing them to the point they become second nature and then totally forgetting them so that the vastly superior subconscious can take over without being impeded. Learn the rules, keep to the rules, dissolve the rules.

## Jeet Kune Do

Bruce formed his own martial art, Jeet Kune Do, to reflect his philosophy. Beyond simply being a method of fighting, JKD is an all-encompassing approach to living life at the peak of one's potential. Bruce combined his beliefs of honest self-expression, shedding the unessential and being like water into JKD.

JKD was meant to break the mold and challenge the dogma that is so prevalent in other schools of martial art. JKD was meant to have “no style” because, as Bruce said, “style concludes but man grows.” Bruce believed that true observation begins when one is devoid of set patterns and that freedom of expression occurs only when one is beyond systems. The other martial arts seemed so stale, so stagnant in comparison because their training regimens and belief systems were adopted without challenge. New students simply accepted and copied what the school had been doing for hundreds if not thousands of years. JKD was meant to allow one to adapt to any situation and any opponent. Other systems might work well within a tournament where established rules are followed, but JKD would work anywhere, anytime.

JKD exemplified Bruce's ability to be a masterful multi-disciplinary thinker. He was able to effectively combine Eastern and Western philosophy, various schools of martial arts like Wing Chun, gung fu, Western boxing, judo, karate as well as the teachings of Alan Watts, Jiddu Krishnamurti and others. Much like Munger and other great thinkers advocate, he sought to eliminate silos and aimed for total integration. By doing so, he avoided creating false dualities and was instead better able to see the whole picture. We would all be well served to follow his footsteps in this regard.

## Affirmations

Bruce wrote down these seven affirmations and carried them around at all times to inspire and remind him of what he most valued. The Bruce Lee podcast does a good job of analyzing these affirmations and how Bruce thought about and applied them.



### *Willpower*

Recognizing that the power of will is the supreme court over all other departments of my mind, I will exercise it daily when I need the urge to action for any purpose; and I will form habits designed to bring the power of my will into action at least once daily.

### *Emotion*

Realizing that my emotions are both positive and negative, I will form daily habits which will encourage the development of the positive emotions and aid me in converting the negative emotions into some form of useful action.

### *Reason*

Recognizing that both my positive and negative emotions may be dangerous if they are not controlled and guided to desirable ends, I will submit all my desires, aims and purposes to my faculty of reason, and I will be guided by it in giving expression to these.

### *Imagination*

Recognizing the need for sound plans and ideas for the attainment of my desires, I will develop my imagination by calling upon it daily for help in the formation of my plans.

### *Memory*

Recognizing the value of an alert mind and an alert memory, I will encourage mine to become alert by taking care to impress it clearly with all thoughts I wish to recall and by associating those thoughts with related subjects which I may call to mind frequently.

### *Subconscious Mind*

Recognizing the influence of my subconscious mind over my power of will, I shall take care to submit to it a clear and definite picture of my major purpose in life and all minor purposes leading to my major purpose, and I shall keep this picture constantly before my subconscious mind by repeating it daily!

### *Conscience*

Recognizing that my emotions often err in their over-enthusiasm and my faculty of reason often is without the warmth of feeling that is necessary to enable me to combine justice with mercy in my judgments, I will encourage my conscience to guide me as to what is right and what is wrong, but I will never set aside the verdicts it renders, no matter what may be the cost of carrying them out.

### Quotes

“Walk on!” – inspirational phrase he turned to often when he was bedridden with a back injury for many months

“It is not what happens that is success or failure, but what it does to the heart of man. No man is defeated unless he is discouraged.”

“Damn the torpedo! Full speed ahead.” – Bruce used this line a lot when perseverance and determination were required

“Remember my friend, everything goes to those who aim to get. Low aim is the biggest crime a man has. One will never get any more than he thinks he can get.”

“What you habitually think largely determines what you will ultimately become. Remember, success is a journey, not a destination.”

“Like the candle, I fuel myself.” – Bruce believed being self-sufficient was extremely important and this quote highlights that

“There is no help but self-help.”

“What I have found, after much soul searching, that deep down what I honestly value more than anything else is quality – doing one's best in the manner of the responsibility and craftsmanship of a Number One.”

"I feel I have this great creative and spiritual force within me that is greater than faith, greater than ambition, greater than confidence, greater than determination, greater than vision. It is all these combined. My brain becomes magnetized with this dominating force which I hold in my hand."

“To bring the mind into sharp focus and to make it alert so that it can immediately intuit truth, which is everywhere, the mind must be emancipated from old habits, prejudices, restrictive thought process, and even ordinary thought itself.”

“A good martial artist does not become tense – but ready. Not thinking, yet not dreaming. Ready for whatever may come.”

“Each man blinds himself – the fetters are ignorance, laziness, preoccupation with self and fear.”

“Only sober moderation lasts and persists through all time. Only the mid-part of anything is preserved because the pendulum must have balance, and the mid-part *is* the balance. The almighty oak cracks in the wind but the fragile and flexible bamboo simply bends and survives.”

“A choice method is the cultivation of resistance, and where there is resistance there is no understanding. A well-disciplined mind is not a free mind.”

“The most satisfactory marriage is a friendship caught on fire. Romance dwindles and in its place must grow the day-to-day companionship that would endure throughout the couple's life.”

“Simplicity is the end of art, and the beginning of nature.”

“To change with change is the changeless state.”

## Teacher's Reference Guides

My “teacher’s reference guides” are deep dives into a subject, theme, person, or idea which are then distilled into (hopefully) clear, concise, and helpful resources. My goal is to effectively share what I think are the most actionable, impactful, and noteworthy takeaways of the topic at hand.

There isn’t much rhyme or reason to how I choose these teacher’s reference guides. Sometimes I want to dive deep on a specific concept such as complexity and spend months reading about that and sometimes I simply stumble across a person or topic randomly which captures my attention – trying to balance serendipity and chaos with routine and order.

You can find a full sampling of my [teacher’s reference guides](https://blas.com/teachers-reference-guides/) ([blas.com/teachers-reference-guides/](https://blas.com/teachers-reference-guides/)) on my blog, [blas.com](https://blas.com).

If any of this is of interest, you can subscribe to the [monthly newsletter](https://blas.com/newsletter/) ([http://blas.com/newsletter/](https://blas.com/newsletter/)) and you can always reach out to me directly at [rabbithole@blas.us](mailto:rabbithole@blas.us)

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## Appendix

### 1. Books

- [\*The Warrior Within\*](#) by John Little
- [\*Bruce Lee: Words of the Dragon \(Vol. 1\)\*](#) by John Little
- [\*Bruce Lee: The Tao of Gung Fu \(Vol. 2\)\*](#) by John Little<sup>1</sup>
- [\*Bruce Lee: Jeet Kune Do \(Vol. 3\)\*](#) by John Little
- [\*Bruce Lee: The Art of Expressing the Human Body \(Vol. 4\)\*](#) by John Little
- [\*Bruce Lee: Letters of the Dragon \(Vol. 5\)\*](#) by John Little
- [\*Bruce Lee: The Celebrated Life of the Golden Dragon\*](#) by John Little
- [\*Bruce Lee: Artist of Life\*](#) by John Little
- [\*Bruce Lee: The Little Black Book\*](#) by SC Hollister
- [\*Tao of Jeet Kune Do\*](#) by Bruce Lee
- [\*Wisdom for the Way\*](#) by Bruce Lee
- [\*Striking Thoughts: Wisdom for Daily Living\*](#) by Bruce Lee
- [\*Words from a Master\*](#) by Bruce Lee

### 2. Media & Other

- [Bruce Lee podcast](#)
- [Bruce Lee Wikipedia](#)
- Bruce Lee movies
  - i. The Big Boss
  - ii. Fist of Fury
  - iii. Way of the Dragon
  - iv. Enter the Dragon
  - v. The Game of Death
- [Bruce Lee: In His Own Words<sup>2</sup>](#)
- [Bruce Lee: The Lost Interview](#)
- [I Am Bruce Lee](#)
- [Bruce Lee: The Man, The Myth](#)
- [A Warrior's Journey](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Highly Recommend

<sup>2</sup> Highly Recommend

*Bruce Lee: Words of the Dragon (Vol. 1)* by John Little

Summary

1. A compilation of Bruce Lee's interviews from 1958-1973

Key Takeaways

1. He simply knows what he wants and with a great deal of care, goes about achieving it
2. In whatever he does, be it a small action or big decision, he reflects quality
3. He is every minute of every day discovering new things, adding the essential, hacking away the unessential. Forever growing and expanding
4. Walk on! - inspirational phrase he turned to often when he was bedridden with a back injury for many months
5. Lee's basic philosophy was to grasp the absolute necessity for honest self-expression. Understanding and striving for this is the key to fulfilling one's potential
6. The ultimate source of happiness, meaning, knowledge that we each long for from so many divergent sources ultimately resides within us all
7. Gung fu = mastery in virtually any field
8. The most satisfactory marriage is a friendship caught on fire. Romance dwindles and in its place must grow the day-to-day companionship that would endure throughout the couple's life
9. A successful marriage takes two halves which are more efficient whole than either half would ever be alone
10. A husband and wife must simultaneously have both similar and different interests
11. Only sober moderation lasts and persists through all time. Only the mid-part of anything is preserved because the pendulum must have balance, and the mid-part *is* the balance. The almighty oak cracks in the wind but the fragile and flexible bamboo simply bends and survives
12. Each man blinds himself - the fetters are ignorance, laziness, preoccupation with self and fear.
13. Gung fu is deadly simplicity which concerns self-defense and self-mastery, an empty mind
14. Key life philosophy - look at things and draw from them the essence that made for its effectiveness
15. Man is at his worst when he does not understand himself
16. Victory gained by force is no real victory

17. Worst opponent to face is one who's aim has become an obsession
18. Inability to adapt brings destruction
19. "Self-actualization is the important thing. And my personal message to people is that I hope they will go towards self-actualization rather than self-image actualization. I hope they will search within themselves for honest self-expression."
20. Quality comes from never accepting less than your best. Quality > outcome

What I got out of it

1. Good, broad overview of Bruce Lee's career, philosophy and impact

*Bruce Lee: The Tao of Gung Fu (Vol. 2)* by John Little

Summary

1. This book is meant to serve as an introduction to Bruce Lee as a student of life, a designer of his own destiny. It goes into detail about Bruce's development as a martial artist as well as his intellectual growth

Key Takeaways

1. "To be effective in his [Bruce's] arguments against the restrictions imposed by clinging to certain traditional martial art practices, it was first necessary for Bruce to gain a thorough understanding of the roots of these traditions. To his mind there was no unconditional acceptance of styles, forms, or rigid thought patterns, however it was only after he had achieved a high respect for the underlying principles of traditional ideas in martial art that he was able to free himself from being bound by the chains of unreasoned beliefs. Respecting some traditions as beneficial, rejecting others as stifling to personal development, Bruce was then free to liberate his own ideas, to expand his consciousness, to enter fully into his process of becoming a true artist of the martial way and a real human being."
2. "True gung fu values the wonder of the ordinary, and the cultivation of gung fu is not daily increase, but daily decrease. Being wise in gung fu does not mean adding more, but to be able to get off with ornamentation and be simply simple - like a sculptor building a statue, not by adding but by hacking away the unessential so that the truth will be revealed unobstructed...Art is the expression of the self. The more complicated and restrictive a method is, the lesser the opportunity for the expression of one's original sense of freedom!"
3. Ultimate desire for Lee's martial art was equality for all people
  1. "Reality" of martial arts lies in simplicity, harmony and integrity
  2. Absorb the useful, discard the useless
  3. Fulfill utmost of physical potential to help identify who you truly are with humility and pride
4. There are 3 stages of cultivation in gung fu - primitive stage, stage of art, stage of alertness
  1. Object of gung fu is health promotion, cultivation of mind and self-protection
  2. Yin / Yang is central - in reality things are whole and can't be separated, things are balanced by their opposites



3. Chinese character for quality is made up of other characters which signify good and bad
  4. Aim to be, "soft yet not yielding, firm but not hard"
  5. Learn the rules. Keep to the rules, Dissolve the rules
  6. Only one basic principle in self-defense - must apply most effective weapon as soon as possible to opponent's weakest area
  7. Defend the center line - the core of your body
  8. Straight punch is the first thing to master
5. Chi Sao
1. "As soon as your mind stops with an object of whatever nature - be it the opponent's technique or your own, the mode or the measure of the move - you cease to be master of yourself and are sure to fall victim to your opponent."
  2. Give up thinking as though not giving up, having nothing left in your mind, the techniques are so ingrained that the body and limbs act as if independent of your conscious mind
  3. Don't 'localize' the mind - let it fill the whole body
  4. The end of spiritual training is when the mind is nowhere for only then can it be everywhere
  5. No self means there is no foe. True understanding leads to a vanishing self and therefore a vanishing opponent
  6. Observe, deduce and apply - a successful attack includes a fine sense of timing, a perfect judgment of distance and a correct application of cadence
6. Gung fu technique to train body and mind with Tao as the core - spontaneity of the universe
7. Wu hsin (no mindedness) - one in whom no thoughts or feelings are sticky, total acceptance, mirror-like
1. Concentration = quiet awareness of the here and now
8. Wu wei - to let one's mind alone, trusting it to work by itself
1. Every action has to be done "unintentionally" without ever trying
  2. Entirely an action of creative intuition which opens the wellsprings within man
9. Important not to strain in any way - flow and accept the spontaneity of the universe
10. To know the eternal pattern is to be enlightened
11. To change with change is the changeless state

What I got out of it

1. Deep insights into gung fu as well as some history of martial arts

*Bruce Lee: Jeet Kune Do (Vol. 3)* by John Little

Summary

1. Bruce Lee's commentaries on the martial way

Key Takeaways

1. Witnessing a person in mundane day-to-day activities reveals their true character
2. When Bruce wasn't reading or training, he was writing
3. Eliminate silos and aim for total integration - don't bifurcate into "either/or" - take in the whole picture
4. Art is a bridge to higher learning - the higher up the ladder of martial art mastery one climbed, the clearer the view became that art was simply a metaphor for life itself and that it was indeed possible to "see the world in a grain of sand" and for one who had truly mastered a martial art to be availed of a new and wonderful insight into the human condition
5. There are no opposites, only interconnected facets of the existence of which all of us are a part
6. All knowledge ultimately means self-knowledge
7. Style concludes. Man grows
8. Qualities of a great martial artist - natural, instinctive primitiveness, natural blending of stillness and sudden, violent destructiveness
9. Choiceless awareness = total emptiness, the optimal way to live and be
10. Direct intuition is a return to original freedom
11. Observe. Deduce. Apply - do more of what works
12. Golden principle - each movement of yours must correspond to those of the opponent
13. Generally fatal to start a bout with a set plan
14. Courage and decision are essential factors to success in fighting
15. Final choice of attack should depend on opponent's reactions, habits and preferences
16. The attack has to remain as simple as possible
17. Daily minimize rather than daily increase
18. Alertness of foot will transmute to an alertness of mind
19. The whole secret of hard hitting lies in timing and mental application
20. A blow is never hit at a mark. It is driven through a mark

21. The essence of fighting is the art of moving at the right time
22. To find stillness in stillness, not stillness in movement
23. It is not about how much one learns but how much one absorbs what he learns
24. The ultimate goal of discipline in JKD is where learning gained is learning lost
25. Economy of form should always be stressed
26. 3 stages towards mastery - synchronization of self, synchronization with opponent, application under fire
27. Freedom lies in understanding yourself from moment to moment
28. To know totality one has to be a total outsider
29. Like the candle, I fuel myself
30. True meaning of life lies in achieving peace of mind
31. Your mind is the result of a thousand yesterday's - wipe all this away to be born afresh
32. Meditation is a freeing of the mind from all motives
33. There is no help but self-help
34. True observation begins when one is devoid of set patterns
35. Freedom of expression occurs when one is beyond system
36. Intelligence is the understanding of self
37. Truth comes when your mind and heart are purged of all sense of striving and you are no longer trying to become somebody it is there when the mind is very quiet, listening timelessly to everything
38. The 3 faults - the invention of an empirical self that observes itself; viewing one's thoughts as a kind of object or possession, situating it in a separate, isolated "part of itself" - "I have" a mind; the striving to wipe the mirror (totally purifying one's mind simply through thinking and meditating - "mirror-wiping Zen")
  1. Zen is not "attained" by mirror-wiping meditation, but by "self-forgetfulness in the existential 'present' of life here and now." We do not "come," we "are." Don't strive to become, but be.
39. Intelligence is sometimes defined as the capacity of the individual to adjust himself to his environment, or to adjust the environment to his needs
40. Simplicity is the end of art, and the beginning of nature
41. The 4 idea principles - find a human need, an unsolved problem; master all of the essentials of the problem; give a new twist to an old principle; believe in your idea and act!
42. The 5 step idea-getting process - gather materials; masticate the facts; relax and drop the whole subject; be ready to recognize and welcome the idea when it comes; shape and develop your idea into usefulness

43. A choice method is the cultivation of resistance, and where there is resistance there is no understanding. A well-disciplined mind is not a free mind
44. Affirmations - Bruce would carry these around with him at all times to inspire and remind him whenever he needed it
1. Willpower - Recognizing that the power of will is the supreme court over all other departments of my mind. I will exercise it daily when I need the urge to action for any purpose; and I will form habits designed to bring the power of my will into action at least once daily.
  2. Emotion - Realizing that my emotions are both positive and negative, I will form daily habits which will encourage the development of the positive emotions and aid me in converting the negative emotions into some form of useful action.
  3. Reason - Recognizing that both my positive and negative emotions may be dangerous if they are not controlled and guided to desirable ends, I will submit all my desires, aims and purposes to my faculty of reason, and I will be guided by it in giving expression to these.
  4. Imagination - Recognizing the need for sound plans and ideas for the attainment of my desires, I will develop my imagination by calling upon it daily for help in the formation of my plans
  5. Memory - Recognizing the value of an alert mind and an alert memory, I will encourage mine to become alert by taking care to impress it clearly with all thoughts I wish to recall and by associating those thoughts with related subjects which I may call to mind frequently.
  6. Subconscious mind - Recognizing the influence of my subconscious mind over my power of will, I shall take care to submit to it a clear and definite picture of my major purpose in life and all minor purposes leading to my major purpose, and I shall keep this picture constantly before my subconscious mind by repeating it daily!
  7. Conscience - Recognizing that my emotions often err in their over-enthusiasm and my faculty of reason often is without the warmth of feeling that is necessary to enable me to combine justice with mercy in my judgments, I will encourage my conscience to guide me as to what is right and what is wrong, but I will never set aside the verdicts it renders, no matter what may be the cost of carrying them out.

What I got out of it

1. The philosophical part was great and although I don't practice any martial art, learning about his training protocols and some basic techniques was interesting

*Bruce Lee: The Art of Expressing the Human Body (Vol. 4)* by John Little

Summary

1. This book describes in meticulous detail Lee's ever-evolving workout regimens and favorite exercises

Key Takeaways

1. The greatest talents that Bruce brought to realizing his dreams were intelligence and curiosity, dedication and perseverance and focus
2. Jeet Kune Do, which is an all-encompassing approach to living life at the pinnacle of developed potential, naturally includes training the physical body to achieve its peak performance
3. The essentials of training are overload and adaptation
4. It is important to be systematic in your workout routines - track weight, reps, time, etc.
5. Much of the book provides pictures, explanations, routines and the logic behind the workouts - isometric exercises, weight training routines, 20 minute routines, circuit training, abs, forearms, specifics for martial arts, stretching and more

What I got out of it

1. Especially useful if you're training for martial arts but this book is a great reference even for people just looking to get into great overall shape. More than that though, what I found important was seeing Bruce's dedication to his pursuit, the 'shedding' or refinement of techniques and thinking over time to really hone in on what is effective and his open mindedness / disdain for convention when looking to achieve one's full potential

*Bruce Lee: Letters of the Dragon (Vol. 5)* by John Little

Summary

1. A broad view of Bruce Lee's life and personality through personal correspondence with friends and family.

Key Takeaways

1. "Patterns. This is the most important thing to look for as you read Bruce's letters."
  1. Gung fu forming his character and ideas - practice as a physical culture, a form of mental training, a method of self-defense and a way of life
  2. Goal of planning and doing is to find the true meaning in life - peace of mind
  3. Never waste worries or energy on negative thoughts
  4. It is not what happens that is success or failure, but what it does to the heart of man. No man is defeated unless he is discouraged
  5. What I have found, after much soul searching, that deep down what I honestly value more than anything else is quality - doing one's best in the manner of the responsibility and craftsmanship of a Number One
2. There are two ways of making a good living. One is the result of hard work, and the other, the result of the imagination (requires work, too, of course)
3. "I feel I have this great creative and spiritual force within me that is greater than faith, greater than ambition, greater than confidence, greater than determination, greater than vision. It is all these combined. My brain becomes magnetized with this dominating force which I hold in my hand."
4. The nature of water
  1. To be one thing and not to change, is the climax of stillness
  2. To have nothing in one that resists, is the climax of emptiness
  3. To remain detached from all outside things is the climax of fineness
  4. To have in oneself no contraries, is the climax of purity
5. "My theory states, "1) learn the center, 2) keep the center, and 3) dissolve the center. Or, more generally, learn the rules, keep to the rules, dissolve the rules" (aka "[smaller circles](#)")
6. Simplicity - to express the utmost in the minimum of lines and energy
7. Remember my friend that it is not what happens that counts, it is how you react to them



8. Damn the torpedo! Full speed ahead - Bruce used this line a lot when perseverance and determination were required
9. Remember my friend, everything goes to those who aim to get. Low aim is the biggest crime a man has. One will never get any more than he thinks he can get
10. What you habitually think largely determines what you will ultimately become. Remember, success is a journey, not a destination.

#### What I got out of it

1. Wasn't my favorite Bruce Lee book so far but it gives you a feel for what Bruce Lee was like over an extended period of time with close friends and family

*Bruce Lee: The Celebrated Life of the Golden Dragon* by John Little

Summary

1. A beautiful book based on the award-winning documentary, *Bruce Lee: In His Own Words*

Key Takeaways

1. Yes, there is a difference between self-actualization and self-image actualization
2. The past is history and only the future can give you happiness. So, everybody must prepare for their future and create their own future
3. To bring the mind into sharp focus and to make it alert so that it can immediately intuit truth, which is everywhere, the mind must be emancipated from old habits, prejudices, restrictive thought process, and even ordinary thought itself.
4. True observation begins when devoid of set patterns and freedom of expression occurs when one is beyond systems
5. A good martial artist does not become tense - but ready. Not thinking, yet not dreaming. Ready for whatever may come
6. Ultimately, martial art is the expression of oneself

What I got out of it

1. A lot of rare and beautiful pictures of Bruce throughout his career and with his family. The text is mostly quotes from Bruce rather than text being interpreted by somebody who would likely distort at least part of the message

## *Bruce Lee: Artist of Life* by John Little

### Summary

1. "Basically, I have always been a martial artist by choice and actor by profession. But, above all, I am hoping to actualize myself to be an artist of life by daily actualizing my potentiality through soulful discoveries and daily exercising." By artist of life he refers to the process of being an individual who, through the use of his own independent judgment, sought to fully actualize himself as a total human being (physically, mentally, spiritually)

### Key Takeaways

1. "My life...seems to me to be a life of self-examination, a peeling of my self bit by bit, day by day."
2. Bruce was a highly educated man because he never missed an opportunity for a "fact" or "situation" to teach him more about himself
3. Multi-disciplinary thinker - finding a truth in one discipline and then applying that truth to an entirely unrelated discipline is a hallmark of Lee's genius: he saw the connections where others did not (combined Krishnamurti's and Alan Watts' thinking on spirituality into martial arts)
4. Only through process of coming to know self can we come to know anything
5. Wu Hsin (no-mindedness)
  1. No-mindedness is not a blank mind that excludes all emotions; nor is it simply calmness and quietness of mind. Although quietude and calmness are important, it is the non-graspingness of the mind that mainly constitutes the principle of no-mindedness.
  2. The mind should be like a mirror - grasps nothing and refuses nothing; it receives but does not keep
  3. No-mindedness is not being without emotion but being one in whom feeling is not sticky nor blocked. It is a mind immune to emotional influences
6. Gung fu - discipline/training toward ultimate reality of the object (master towards any objective, not only martial arts)
  1. Gung fu values the wonder of the ordinary, and the idea is not daily increase but daily decrease. Being wise in gung fu does not mean adding more but being able

to remove sophistication and ornamentation and be simply simple. The closer one is to the true way of gung fu, the less wastage of expression there is

2. A simple life is one of plainness in which profit is discarded, cleverness abandoned, selfishness eliminated, and desires reduced. It is the life of perfection which seems to be incomplete and of fullness which seems to be empty. It is the life that is as bright as light but does not dazzle. In short, it is a life of harmony, unity, contentment, tranquility, constancy, enlightenment, peace and long life.
7. Art is the expression of the self; the more complicated and restrictive the method is, the less opportunity there is for expression of one's original sense of freedom
8. The measure of a moral man is his happiness
9. On perfection - since perfection is an impossibility, you can never live up to it. You are merely in love with this ideal and there is no end to the self-torture, to the self-nagging, self-castigating. It hides under the mask of "self-improvement." It never works
10. Many people dedicate their lives to actualizing a concept of what they should be like, rather than actualizing themselves. The difference between self-actualizing and self-image actualizing is *very* important. Most people only live life for their image
11. On anxiety - thinking is rehearsing in fantasy for the role you have to play in society. And when it comes to the moment of performance and you're not sure whether your performance will be well received, then you get stage fright. This stage fright has been given by psychiatry the name "anxiety"
12. Maturation is the development from environmental support to self-support
13. On Learning
  1. The best way of learning is not through computation of information. Learning is discovering, uncovering what is there in us. When we discover, we are uncovering our own ability, in our own eyes, in order to find our potential, to see what is gung fu, to discover how we can enlarge our lives, to find the means at our disposal that will let us cope with a difficult situation. And all this, I maintain, is taking place in the here and now
  2. You will find nothing develops your intelligence better than to take any question and turning it into a genuine statement
14. On Resistance
  1. Once we are capable of understanding our reluctance to accept unpleasant experiences, we can get to the next layer, the phobic layer, the resistance, the objection to being what we are
  2. A choice method [toward liberation] is the cultivation of resistance, and where there is resistance there is no understanding. A so-called well-disciplined mind is

not a free mind. A choice method, however exacting, fixes the mind in a pattern - a crystallization. This type of dead drilling is not an adequate response to the ever-changing moment in combat [or life]

15. The self-willed man - A self-willed man has no other aim than his own growth. He values only one thing, the mysterious power in himself which bids him life and helps him to grow. The power can be neither preserved nor increased nor deepened by money and power, because money and power are the invention of distrust. When a man has confidence in himself, when all he wants in the world is to live out his destiny in freedom and purity, he comes to regard all those vastly overestimated and far too costly possessions as mere accessories, pleasant perhaps to have and make use of, but never essential. His only living destiny is the silent, ungainsayable law in his own heart, which comfortable habits make it so hard to obey but which to the self-willed man is destiny and godhead.

#### 16. Jeet Kune Do

1. JKD is not about a more efficient way to subdue one's opponent, but rather a more efficient way to subdue oneself; to rid oneself of hang-ups, insecurities, fears, and suppressed emotions - anything, in other words, that would bind the individual from becoming anything less than the fullest expression of himself
2. True observation begins when one is devoid of set patterns; freedom of expression occurs when one is beyond system
  1. When a system becomes "dogma" it becomes a crutch which limits and blocks the natural growth of a martial artist. Thus, any special technique, however classically correct or cleverly designed, is in reality a disease, should one become obsessed with it.
3. There is no help but self help
4. Accumulating fixed knowledge of oneself externally is not the process of JKD; rather, JKD is a process of discovering the cause of one's ignorance and oftentimes involves a shedding process
5. His physical movement is his soul made visible. Indeed, martial art is the direct expression of the human soul
6. A good student is one who is able to enter a mold but not be caged by it, to follow the principles yet without being limited or bound by them. This is important, for a pliable, choiceless observation without exclusion is so essential in the cultivation of JKD. So what is important here is not to have an organized philosophy of combat, or, for that matter, a method of combat, but to observe neutrally what is taking place in actual combat, inwardly as well as outwardly
7. A good JKD artist rests in direct intuition

17. Efficiency is anything that scores

18. On Understanding

1. Understanding requires not just a moment of perception, but a continuous awareness, a continuous state of inquiry in which there is no conclusion. There is no thinking that is free - all thought is partial; it can never be total. Thought is the response of memory, and memory is always partial, because memory is the result of experience; so thought is the reaction of a mind which is conditioned by experience
2. Awareness is never exclusive, it includes everything
3. To bring the mind into sharp focus and to make it alert so it can immediately intuit truth, which is everywhere, the mind must be emancipated from old habits, prejudices, restrictive thought process and even ordinary thought itself

19. The 3 Faults

1. The invention of an empirical self that observes itself
2. Viewing one's thought as a kind of object or possession, situating it in a separate, isolated "part of itself" - I "have" a mind
3. The striving to wiping the mirror
  1. Zen is not "attained" by mirror-wiping meditation, but by becoming fully in the now. Don't strive to "become," but be

20. Learning to unlearn

1. The knowledge and skill you have achieved are after all meant to be "forgotten" so you can float in emptiness without obstruction and comfortably. Learning is important, but do not become its slave. Above all, do not harbor anything external and superfluous; the mind is the primary (see Waitzkin's [The Art of Learning](#) for more color on this process of mastery)
2. To have no technique is to have all technique

21. The 6 Diseases

1. The desire for victory
2. The desire to resort to technical cunning
3. The desire to display all that you have learned
4. The desire to overawe the enemy
5. The desire to play a passive role
6. The desire to get rid of whatever disease you are likely to be infected with

22. True mastery

1. True mastery transcends any particular art. It stems from mastery of oneself - the ability, developed through self-discipline, to be calm, fully aware, and completely

in tune with oneself and the surroundings. Then, and only then, can a person know himself

2. Remember well my friend that all styles are man-made, and the man is always more important than the style. Style concludes. Man grows
23. Self-knowledge
1. Only self-knowledge leads to freedom
  2. Through my own observation I am convinced that an absolutely honest and direct inquiry into oneself will lead to understanding
  3. Having gone through a lot of ups and downs, I realize that there is no help but self-help. Self-help comes in many forms: daily discoveries through choiceless observation, honestly, as well as wholeheartedly always doing one's best; a sort of indomitable obsessive dedication and, above all, realizing that there is no end or limit to this, because life is simply an ever-going process, an ever renewing process. The duty of a human being, in my personal opinion, is to become transparently real, to simply be.
24. Life is best lived, not conceptualized and squeezed into a pattern of systems. Living exists when life lives through us - unhampered in its flow, for he who is living is not conscious of living and, in this, is the life he lives. Life lives; and in the living flow, no questions are raised. The reason is that life is a living now. Completeness, the now, is an absence of the conscious mind striving to divide the indivisible.
25. We can see through others only when we see ourselves - Batesian mimicry (master knows the impostors)
26. We have more faith in what we imitate than in what we originate. We cannot derive a sense of absolute certitude from anything that has its roots in us. The most poignant sense of insecurity comes from standing alone; we are not alone when we imitate. It is thus with most of us! We are what other people say we are. We know ourselves chiefly by hearsay
27. In every passionate pursuit, the pursuit matters more than the object being pursued

#### What I got out of it

1. Fantastic book! Great overview of Bruce's life, philosophy and depth of thought

## *Bruce Lee: The Little Black Book* by SC Hollister

### Summary

1. A compilation of some of Bruce Lee's most famous quotes

### Key Takeaways

1. Be happy, but never satisfied
2. The key to immortality is first living a life worth remembering
3. Empty your cup so that it may be filled; become devoid to gain totality
4. Now I see that I will never find the light unless, like the candle, I am my own fuel, consuming myself
5. Using no way as way, having no limitation as limitation
6. The more we value things, the less we value ourselves
7. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves. Moving, be like water. Still, be like a mirror. Respond like an echo
8. Obey the principles without being bound by them
9. Relationship is understanding. It is a process of self-revelation. Relationship is the mirror in which you discover yourself - to be is to be related
10. Absorb what is useful, discard what is useless and add what is specifically your own
11. Effort within the mind further limits the mind, because effort implies struggle towards a goal and when you have a goal, a purpose, an end in view, you have placed a limit on the mind
12. In the middle of chaos lies opportunity (like Gribbin said in [Deep Simplicity](#), interesting things happen on the edge of chaos, at complexity)
13. In life there are no limits, only plateaus
14. Art reaches its greatest peak when devoid of self-consciousness. Freedom discovers man the moment he loses concern over what impression he is making or about to make

### What I got out of it

1. A short and excellent gateway into the teachings and beliefs of Bruce Lee. Highly recommend as a starting point to get a taste of Bruce Lee's philosophy





## *The Warrior Within: The Philosophies of Bruce Lee* by John Little

### Summary

1. Bruce Lee is much more than just one of the best martial artists of all time, he is a philosopher who sought to bring his beliefs into everything he did. Lee outlines a framework in order to grow spiritually, mentally and emotionally by living in accordance with Tao, or nature.

### Key Takeaways

1. Tao - the way of nature or the creative force governing the universe
2. "...the height of cultivation should move toward simplicity. It is the halfway cultivation that leads to ornamentation...The process to simplify is like a sculptor who continuously chisels away all the nonessentials until he creates a masterpiece."
3. Lee's quintessential philosophical belief of flowing and not forcing what comes your way can easily be related to how water acts - "Empty your mind. Be formless. Shapeless. Like water. Now you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now water can flow or it can crash. Be water my friend.
4. Like water, very little in life is static. Learn to adapt and change and grow. "To change with change is the changeless state."
5. There is no *experience* to be extracted from, or who can escape from, experience. There is simply *experiencing*
6. "Ultimately one should be "*purposeless*." ... a state of purposelessness (which is also a state of fluidity, empty-mindedness, or simply the everyday mind), the spirit harbors nothing in it, nor is it tipped in any one direction; it transcends both subject and object; it responds empty-mindedly to environmental changes and leaves no track."
7. True masters never feel the need to prove themselves - "...I have learned that challenging means one thing, but how you choose to react to it means something else entirely...If you are secure within yourself, you treat it very, very lightly..."
8. Lee's guide to self-enlightenment consisted of 4 steps:
  1. Research your own experience
  2. Absorb what is useful
  3. Reject what is useless

4. Add what is specifically your own
9. The true meaning of life lies in peace of mind and the highest rung on the ladder of individual achievement is the commitment to honest self-expression
10. "Be like water because it is soft, resilient and formless. It can never be snapped."
11. Westerners try to explain life as opposed to revealing how to experience it
12. Lee believed that although we can simultaneously live and contemplate life, to do so takes something out of it. Recommends simply existing, being present, in the now
13. Life is a constant process of relating
14. The greatest help is self-help; there is no other help but self-help - doing one's best, dedicating oneself wholeheartedly to a given task, which happens to have no end but is an ongoing process
15. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do
16. Mastery reveals presence of mind in every action
17. Lee expressed his philosophy through his martial arts. They were one in the same. Inseparable
18. Part of being great is to accept things as they are without seeking personal gain or using others as a means to your end
19. "The meaning of life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced."
20. Do not dissect and hyperanalyze yourself. Simply open yourself up to experience and serve as a conduit through which reality of living is made manifest in every move, thought, action and experience of the moment
21. Lee masterfully used his opponent's strengths against them through a process of calmness and nonstriving. He took every shot and attack in flow and did not try to force anything
22. "Be soft, yet not yielding. Be firm, yet not hard."
23. The presence of no-mindedness allows one's mind to be present everywhere because it is present nowhere
24. Lee's philosophy directly translates to relationships as well - possessiveness is the opposite of love. You must give your significant other the freedom and trust they deserve. If they take advantage of it, it was not meant to be anyway. A scary way to live but ultimately the only way to live
25. Everything you do should be a harmonious expression of who you truly are
26. By releasing the desire to cling to life for fear of death, we are liberated from the fear of death
27. Lee's martial arts logo was a Yin/Yang surrounded by Chinese characters which read "Using no way as way; having no limitation as limitation." - Same philosophical belief that you must be completely fluid in your approach, never forcing anything

28. Knowing yourself is crucial. It is the most important thing a person can know because it is only once you know yourself that it is possible to truly know anything else.
29. The moral is that one must learn to flow in the natural Tao - without once hesitating or pausing
30. An "unstuck mind" is one that has the ability to be alert and instantly responsive to the entire situation around him
31. You must not be afraid of the consequences of staying to the natural course required to fulfill your ultimate potential

#### What I got out of it

1. One of the most powerful ideas I got from this book is the idea of being completely honest to yourself and expressing that truest version of yourself in everything that you do. His belief in flow, *purposelessness* and simplicity are all concepts that resonate deeply with me too. If you only know Bruce Lee for his movies and martial arts, this is a side of him worth exploring.

#### *Tao of Jeet Kune Do* by Bruce Lee

#### Summary

1. "An organic collection of writings that are meant to convey the essence of Bruce Lee's art of Jeet Kune do...To understand JKD, one ought to throw away all ideals, patterns, styles; in fact, he should throw away even the concepts of what is or isn't ideal in JKD."

#### Key Takeaways

1. Personal evolution is the ultimate message of the *Tao*. The *Tao* represents an individual's pursuit of martial arts for self-realization. There is nothing more powerful than that for human development and martial arts excellence
2. The consciousness of self is the greatest hindrance to the proper execution of all physical movement
3. Art reaches its greatest peak when devoid of self-consciousness. Freedom discovers man the moment he loses concern over what impression he is making or about to make

4. The perfect way is only difficult for those who pick and choose. Do not like, do not dislike; all will then be clear. Make a hairbreadth difference and heaven and earth are set apart; if you want the truth to stand clear before you, never be for or against. The struggle between "for" and "against" is the mind's worst disease
5. How can one respond to the totality with a partial, fragmentary pattern?
6. To fit in with an opponent one needs direct perception. There is no direct perception where there is a resistance, a "this is the only way" attitude
7. The Path to Truth - seeking after truth, awareness of truth (and its existence), perception of truth (its substance and direction), understanding of truth, experiencing of truth, mastering of truth, forgetting truth, forgetting the carrier of truth, return to the primal source where truth has its roots, repose in the nothing
8. When there is freedom from mechanical conditioning, there is simplicity. Life is a relationship to the whole.
9. Relationship is understanding. It is a process of self-revelation. Relationship is the mirror in which you discover yourself - to be is to be related
10. This does not mean to do nothing at all, but only to have no deliberate mind in whatever one does. Do not have a mind that selects or rejects. To be without deliberate mind is to hang no thoughts
11. Acceptance, denial and conviction prevent understanding. Let your mind move together with another's in understanding with sensitivity. Then, there is a possibility of real communication. To understand one another, there must be a state of choiceless awareness where there is no sense of comparison or condemnation, no waiting for a further development of discussion in order to agree or disagree. Above all, don't start from a conclusion.
12. The physically bound go for puffing and straining and miss the delicate way; the intellectually bound go for idealism and lack efficiency and actually seeing into realities
13. Better to discover causes of ignorance than seek knowledge
14. Transcend dualistic comprehension of a situation
15. The knowledge and skill you have achieved are meant to be "forgotten" so you can float comfortably in emptiness, without obstruction. Learning is important but do not become its slave. Above all, do not harbor anything external and superfluous - the mind is primary. Any technique, however worthy and desirable, becomes a disease when the mind is obsessed with it
16. Fear comes from uncertainty. When we are absolutely certain, whether of our worth or our worthlessness, we are almost impervious to fear. Thus, a feeling of utter unworthiness can

be a source of courage. Everything seems possible when we are absolutely helpless or absolutely powerful - and both states stimulate our gullibility.

17. Pride is a sense of worth derived from something that is not organically part of us, while self-esteem is derived from the potentialities and achievements of self. We are proud when we identify ourselves with an imaginary self, a leader, a holy cause, a collective body or possessions. There is fear and intolerance in pride; it is sensitive and uncompromising. The less promise and potentiality in the self, the more imperative is the need for pride. The core of pride is self-rejection. It is true, however, that when pride releases energies and serves as a spur to achievement, it can lead to a reconciliation with the self and the attainment of genuine self-esteem.
18. We are told that talent creates its own opportunities. Yet, it sometimes seems that intense desire creates not only its own opportunities, but its own talents as well.

What I got out of it

1. A great, in depth view of Bruce Lee's philosophy of JKD. The majority of the book is a detailed look on the techniques, routines, training regimens and more that Bruce followed and taught. That part wasn't too useful to me but you can see how Bruce applied his principles of JKD to all he did

## *Wisdom for the Way* by Bruce Lee

### Summary

1. Compilation of Bruce Lee's quotes, teachings and philosophy

### Key Takeaways

1. Remember, success is a journey, not a destination. Have faith in your ability. You will do just fine
2. You have to create your own luck. You have to be aware of the opportunities around you to take advantage of them
3. Learning is definitely not mere imitation, nor is it the ability to accumulate and regurgitate fixed knowledge. Learning is a constant process of discovery - a process without end
4. The problem is never apart from the answer. The problem is the answer - understanding the problem dissolves the problem
5. Success means doing something sincerely and wholeheartedly
6. Be a practical dreamer backed by action
7. Every man today is the result of his thoughts yesterday
8. When I have listened to my mistakes, I have grown

### What I got out of it

1. Another very nice compilation of Bruce Lee's thoughts and philosophy

*Striking Thoughts: Wisdom for Daily Living* by Bruce Lee

Summary

1. A collection of Bruce Lee's thoughts and aphorisms broken out into eight different sections, helping you prepare your own way through challenges and difficulties. The aphorisms are presented in such a way to force the reader to think for themselves about the issue they're having and come up with their own answer

Key Takeaways

1. Independent inquiry is needed in your search for truth, not dependence on anyone else's view or a mere book
2. To free one's self from preconceived notions, prejudices and conditioned responses is essential to understanding truth and reality
3. Reality and perception. There is a difference. The world and our reaction to it
4. Don't neglect life by worrying about death. Have no regrets. Do what you want to do and with sincerity and to the best of your ability. You can't ask much more from life than that
5. Don't seek, but allow
6. Sincere thought means thought of concentration (quiet awareness). The thought of a distracted mind cannot be sincere
7. Instead of dedicating your life to actualize a concept of what you should be like, actualize yourself. The process of maturing does not mean to become a captive of conceptualization. It is to come to the realization of what lies in our innermost selves
8. Concepts prevent feeling. Don't think - feel!
9. Any idea that is constantly held in the mind and emotionalized, begins at once to clothe itself in the most convenient and appropriate physical form that is available
10. Perception is awareness without choice, nonjudgmental observation
11. To be humble to superiors is duty; to equals is courtesy; to inferiors is nobleness; and to all, safety!
12. To be unconsciously conscious or consciously unconscious is the secret of Nirvana
13. Conscience is your pilot
14. To understand your fear is the beginning of really seeing
15. The more we value things, the less we value ourselves. The more we depend upon others for esteem, the less self-sufficient we are



16. Real living is living for others
17. Love is never lost. If not reciprocated, it will flow back and soften and purify the heart
18. Love is an egotism of two
19. The good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction, not a destination.
20. Happiness is the appropriate moral behavior for the appropriate situation
21. The three things most difficult are: to keep a secret, to forget an injury, to make good use of leisure
22. To be able to do the things we want sometimes requires the performance of a few we don't
23. Defeat is education
24. In solitude you are least alone. Loneliness is only an opportunity to cut adrift and find yourself
25. Anxiety is the gap between now and then. If you are in the now, you can't be anxious
26. To change with change is the changeless state
27. It's not the job but how you do it. The reward is in the action, not from it
28. Success means doing something sincerely and whole-heartedly. And you have to have the help of others to achieve it
29. Simplicity is the last step in art and the beginning of nature
30. To formalize something is to make progress impossible. Don't become a slave to borders, styles, patterns, dogma
31. To view totality, one has to be a total outsider

#### What I got out of it

1. A good compilation of Bruce's quotes and thoughts on a variety of topics. Will be useful to turn to at times but doesn't provide the context that some of the other books in the Bruce Lee Library Series do

## *Words from a Master* by Bruce Lee

### Summary

1. Transcript of Bruce Lee interview with Pierre Berton, Ted Thomas and Alex Ben Block as well as the interviewer's reflections

### Key Takeaways

1. Berton mentions that out of the 2,000+ people he interviewed in his life, Bruce was the most intense, like a coiled spring
2. Ted Thomas thought that Bruce Lee personified a tough self-sufficiency and should be remembered for being the first of the great action kung fu movie stars and the man who made a Chinese hold up his head in the international scene and be proud of himself
3. Block mentions that Bruce became a hero for oppressed people of every race as he was able to break out of all the things that seem to bind us in society and keep us from becoming a success, and truly rising above all that. He had a philosophy. A deep system of belief that he brought to everything he did

### What I got out of it

1. Interesting reflections from these three men who interviewed Bruce Lee shortly before his death

