



### Matt Thorton: Skepticism in the Martial Arts



Matt Thornton is a pioneer of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu in the US. He holds a black-belt and is the founder of the SBG School in Oregon, home to champion UFC and BJJ coaches and athletes. In his quest to determine 'what works' and 'what does not work' in combat, he developed the concept of Aliveness to help people distinguish between fact and fiction in Martial Arts. Learn the value of Matt's epistemology of Aliveness, the differences between Functional and Non-Functional Martial Arts and the important role of skepticism in the combat arts.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP:** Remain skeptical, keep open to inquiry, both verbal and physical, to find out what works and what doesn't work in Martial Arts.

#### Skepticism: Be Open to Inquiry in the Martial Arts

- Not all Martial Arts are suitable or effective for combat, one must be skeptical and open to inquiry, as there are many false claims in the field.
- Important to find out what works, and what doesn't work, to help you in real combat.
- The concept of Aliveness helps to define which Martial Arts are really effective for combat

#### Aliveness: Epistemology of Martial Arts for Combat

- Aliveness consists of Timing, Energy and Motion.
- Timing is the sense of time gained when working against a resisting opponent where you have to respond in real time, not to a pattern, or choreographed movement. For example, a headlock.
- Energy is the energy of facing progressive resistance.
- Motion is live, non-choreographed movement, with real combat intent.

#### Functional MA vs. Non-Functional MA: Real-Time Combat or Cultural Art?

- Functional Martial Arts meet the criteria of Aliveness, are also a sport, and have a competitive system (e.g. BJJ).
- Non-functional Martial Arts are patterned or choreographed, fantasy-based and not suitable for real-time combat (e.g. Aikido). They are more an art, or a cultural art.
- If results matter, like in a fight, then Functional Martial Arts are 'what works'.

#### Resources

- ❖ **Website:** <https://www.straightblastgym.com/sbgvideos/>, [matthornton.org](http://matthornton.org)
- ❖ **References:** *The Gift Of Fear*. Gavin de Becker.



## Matt Thornton





## All Martial & Healing Arts Presentations are Proudly Sponsored by

Rafe Kelley, [EvolveMovePlay.com](https://evolvemoveplay.com)



**Rafe Kelley** and **Evolve Move Play** help you become your most heroic self through movement, mindfulness, nature connection, and community practices.



Evolve Move Play is movement training for humans. Through our ecology of practices, we reconnect to the most meaningful aspects of life. Connect to us through our podcasts, online courses, and retreats.

Rafe's work has been featured in TEDx, the Journal of Ancestral Health, Paleo Fx, the Ancestral Health Symposium, The Embodiment Conference, multiple health and well-being podcasts, and he even organized the first international parkour events in the United States.



**[Accept Rafe's Free Gift →](#)** Discover the roadmap to a more meaningful movement practice and download the FREE "Whole Food Movement Blueprint." PLUS get exclusive TEC bonuses when you sign up for the Evolve Move Play Foundations program. Discover the roots of our disembodied fitness culture, and the pathway to a more meaningful movement practice and life with the **[Evolve Move Play Method](#)**.