



### Shawn Desjardins: Trauma Informed Martial Arts



Trauma Survivor Shawn Desjardins discusses his very personal journey from child abuse and mental health breakdown to recovery through Meditation, Martial Arts and his subsequent development of Trauma-Informed Mindful Martial Arts.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP:** Trust your inner guidance and don't be afraid to use your voice to speak your boundaries and needs, they will help you discern if the environment you're in is suitable for you!

#### Stress and Martial Arts

- **The stress we experience in martial arts practice is the same stress we experience in our everyday lives--** Training in Martial Arts Mindfully can help us learn how to navigate challenges, stress and our animalistic self defense mechanisms which in turn support our resilience and our capacity to skilfully navigate the stresses we experience in everyday life.

Self-Defence: **Learning self-defence builds embodied confidence reduces overwhelm experienced by potential physical confrontation.**

- We experience slowing everything down to bring integrity and wisdom mindfully into the art form. This way we can allow ourselves to experience some stress without it becoming overwhelming, and build our capacity to overcome more robust challenges systematically and mindfully.

Trust and Respect are Paramount for Trauma Survivors: **Combat in martial arts can be overwhelming.**

- For trauma survivors, to enter into combat too soon in the martial arts arena can be an overwhelming experience which takes them outside of the Window of Tolerance. Building a foundation of Trust and communication is fundamental to be able to go into the combative training fruitfully and sustainably.

Trauma Informed Framework: **Mindful Martial Arts is a multi-phase system based around the window of tolerance.**

1. Learn Mindfulness Techniques.
2. Learn Self-Defence in a collaborative, safe, trusting and respectful environment.
3. Communication of boundaries, embody choice, embrace values and declare limitations as intensity and complexity of training increases.
4. Add "Monkey Wrenches"

Monkey Wrenches: **The concept of slowly and systematically adding additional challenges to expand tolerance ranges.**

- Learn to train in such a way that combative challenges are added slowly and produce adaptive stressors.

#### Resources

- ❖ **Website:** [mindfulmartialarts.ca](http://mindfulmartialarts.ca)
- ❖ **Facebook:** [Shawn Desjardins](#)



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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.



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