Ali

**Charlie:** [00:00:00] Today's guest has a condition known as cerebral palsy. However, he's also trained in the art of Brazilian jujitsu with the hope of competing in his first competition later this year, He would also like to share his journey to a black belt in the event with the world, through his social media, I had a great time having this conversation with Ali.

It was so insightful, so inspirational. It was just great to speak to someone. So like-minded so please sit back, relax and enjoy. Welcome to the Not Quite podcast. I'm Charlie Randell. Let's get ready to rewrite the rule book. We are here today with Ali. Um, Ali is a bit of a fitness freak like me. I, in fact, you know, I'm just going to give the stage to yourself if you want to introduce yourself,

**Ali:** right.

Uh, hi guys. My name is Ali I'm 24 years old. Um, I was born with cerebral palsy. Um, and I [00:01:00] basically do a martial art called Brazilian jujitsu, and I also weightlift. Um, and yeah, that pretty much sums me up. In the most short and sweet way, I suppose. Yeah. Yeah.

**Charlie:** Fair. Um, right. So I guess my first question for you is like what got you into Brazilian jujitsu?

Because I've, I've tried, uh, martial arts myself and found it quite inaccessible. I don't know whether, I just had a bad group or whatever. Um, yeah. So how, tell us a story of like how you sort of got into it.

**Ali:** Um, well, I think, um, so I've, I've always been into martial arts since those, uh, oh, I was a kid, um, like growing up, I was always into like anime and basically everything to do with Japan.

Like, you know, I'm a massive nerd for that sort of thing. So that does kind of like where my interests, um, started from. [00:02:00] Uh, and I've actually done. Other martial arts in the past. Um, but, um, a couple of years ago, pre COVID, um, I started doing some research into Brazilian jujitsu and Cerebral Palsy and basically found out that, um, not only have people with the condition like competed, um, there's also one guy that's medalled.

As well. Wow. So, and on top of that, um, many people suggested that there's a lot of benefits to doing the martial arts in terms of kind of, um, alleviating the symptoms if you like. Um, so then. Ever since then I wanted to get into it and, um, obviously COVID hit. Um, but then when it calmed [00:03:00] down, I actually.

Run across my, um, sensei's profile by accident. I'm on Instagram and he happened to be on an Instagram live. So I just, I just kind of hit him up and said like, yo, you know, this is who I am. Like, I want to train, like, can we get something going? And he was like a hundred percent. Like let's, let's do it. And, uh, and, uh, we haven't really looked back since,

**Charlie:** I mean, that actually brings you on really nicely to my next question I had, which was like, what sort of benefits have you noticed from doing Brazilian Jujitsu?

Like day to day? In terms of your day-to-day life, how has it sort of supported you? Cause I know for myself, everyone asks, why do I train so much? And it's because it makes my day to day life so much easier because I'm stronger. I'm more able to do the things I need to do. So I didn't know whether that was the same vein really for

**Ali:** yourself.[00:04:00]

Yeah. I think, I think with Brazilian Jujitsu. Like your, you know, you, um, you end up getting into the maddest positions like, so, so in that sense, like, and yeah, everyone gets a laugh out of that one, so that's always a good one, but like, in that sense, it really helps increase your, your flexibility and your kind of, um, sort of range of movement like it, um, because it forces you to, to get used to certain things that your body is unfamiliar with.

And then, and then that that kind of, as you say helps you within, uh, within day-to-day life, whether that be like being able to, I don't know, reach a bit further or, or something like that, but then obviously in combination with [00:05:00] the weight training, as you know, that that also means like, Uh, I'm stronger, which makes things easier for me.

So I think, I think they all, all the training that I do kind of contributes to my overall wellbeing. That's the best way of describing. I think

**Charlie:** this is the same for me. I mean, um, I now it's like the it's almost like therapy. If I don't go, I feel like really shitty. Um, so

**Ali:** exactly the same as me. Yeah.

**Charlie:** I think it is.

I think anyone that gets into fitness, it becomes just like a way of life. It's like, I hate this whole thing of like, oh, I'm going to jump on this six week diet. Be shredded as fuck for today for like two days. Turn it into a fat shit next week. Okay.

So I always say to people, if you want to get fitness, like you got to commit permanently to it. It's not something you need to just jump in and out of. [00:06:00] Um, so I, I do, I feel the exact same. Have you ever been like badly injured from, from Brazilian jujitsu?

**Ali:** No, like, luckily I haven't. And I always tell people this as well, the, the risk of injury in BJJ is like pretty low compared to other martial arts, simply because there's no striking involved.

So you're not, you're not punching and kicking or anything like that. And if you get put in a, in a submission or a choke hold or whatever, And it gets really uncomfortable. All you have to do is tap. Yeah. And if you don't tap, that's when you get injured, that becomes your own problems.

**Charlie:** So what you're telling me is you're not going to beat my ass next time.

I see you then no?

**Ali:** Uh I'll I would hope not.[00:07:00]

**Charlie:** yeah, the problem is neither of us can runaway. So.

**Ali:** It's going to be a big problem.

**Charlie:** Just have a flat out scrap. So, um, yeah, I mean, uh, now you've knocked me off track in terms of what my next question was!

What's like, what do you want, what you want to, what's your main goal with, uh, BJJ? Cause I know we've had discussions of, so you're looking into competing.

You've mentioned that. You know of someone with our condition that, um, has, has, has made in the event. So I'm guessing that would be your, your aspiration really?

**Ali:** Um, yeah. Uh, I want to make it quite, um, quite big in the sport. Like. Um, I want to be quite well known within the sport. And then once I get to that point, you know, I want to, I want to hopefully be able to use my platform to, uh, encourage [00:08:00] people with all sorts of disabilities.

To get into the sport. Um, and you know, also use it as an avenue to show that, you know, just because your you've got disability doesn't mean you you're fragile. Cause a lot of people seem to think that, um, so you know, that, that's the kind of thing that I want to, I want to combat, um, and like bear in mind, I'm going to be, I'm going to be taking part in.

Both, uh, para jujitsu and able-bodied competitions. Um, so I'm, I'm going to be taking anyone on, uh, basically

fair enough. Next thing you know you're taking on Connor McGregor. And it just doesn't go well.

Yeah. Well, well, I wont win at the trash talk..

**Charlie:** Uh, well no, I'm not very good at the trash [00:09:00] talking either, you always feel a bit awkward, cause it always feels like it really forced to me..

**Ali:** Um, yeah, I would end up just laughing. It was me. Yeah. Yeah.

**Charlie:** Try to trash talk someone and just burst into tears laughing.. Yeah.

So like, what was it like growing up for you? Um, cause I I've, I've, I've watched interviews with you, um, with other people because I know you've, you've teamed up with them. Um, some of my friends over open book, I've watched your interview there, so I know you're going into it over there.

Tell tell the viewers like what it was like growing up. Um, cause I think there you're slightly older than me. I think I might be wrong

**Ali:** by a couple of years now, How old are you?

**Charlie:** I'm 23..

**Ali:** Uh, okay. So just, just one year then

**Charlie:** Is it just the one? You're an experienced individual, for just a year older than me. Every time I'm like nah he's got more experience than [00:10:00] me.

**Ali:** uh, do you know what is. And, uh, I'm going to go off track a bit here, but like when I kind of stumbled across your, your YouTube channel in it, and this was, this was like a couple of years ago now I think, well, I year and a half ago, Like I've, I've learned a lot of stuff from you as well.

Like, so, uh, so, you know, age doesn't necessarily mean you might be more experienced in some areas, but then you can always learn from, from other people, like, even if they're younger than you. Yeah, definitely.

**Charlie:** Definitely. Um, no, I mean, uh, that's, I'm really humbled by the fact that you've got some stuff from my content.

It's, it's the, it's the bit that really like. Uh, myself and my partner, cause my partner is a massive part of what we do, um, makes us tick really. So that's that. Thanks for that. It means a lot, but no, um, yeah, growing up. Cause I, interestingly, I listened to your story about growing up and actually. [00:11:00] Mine's slightly different.

So you have say I was very interested to sort of go have a conversation between the two differences. So yeah, Ali I'll leave the floor with you to sort of explain your experiences growing up. And, um, we'll go from there.

**Ali:** Yeah. I mean, in terms of growing up, like I'm not gonna lie. It was quite hard for me.

Um, like, uh, don't get me wrong. I always had a really good group of friends. Like the core group, especially like from, from secondary school. I'm still friends with like all of them now, but growing up was hard in terms of like, I felt very out of place. I didn't feel, I kind of. Fit in it anyway. Um, and I didn't really have any role models to look up to and be like, Hey, yo, this guy is like me.

Um, you know, because social media wasn't as big back then. [00:12:00] Um, so yeah, I found it quite hard and um, like during my early teenage years and. And kind of early to mid I'd say I actually, um, battled like depression and I was quite, um, suicidal and stuff, but like now, now a point where. I can openly talk about it now because, um, I'm like I'm over it and I'm, I'm past it kind of, and I think it's, it's, it's important to talk about these things because people think still think that mental health is like, uh, a bit of a taboo, so always make sure to, to, you know, let people know that there's no issues with it.

Um, but yeah, no, it was quite hard for me and it took me. A while to get over, like all my, um, all my baggage, if you like. Um, but yeah, [00:13:00]

**Charlie:** just on the point of like depression, do you mind diving into that a little bit more?

**Ali:** Um, I think, I think, you know, what it was, um, and hindsight is a wonderful thing as I always say to everyone, but, but, so I used to think that like, society.

It looks at me like differently. Um, and as I bought into my like, mid to late teenage years, um, when, you know, like your, your hormones are like all over the place and like girls come into the picture and all that, like, oh, well, and then basically what happened was especially cause I used to be bullied by girls in primary schools.

Really very, very badly. So it affected my confidence with girls for a very, very long time. Um, and [00:14:00] I used to think, especially when it came to goals and obviously I saw my mates like being successful and like go started to go out and. Um, and I had zero confidence, um, because of what happened in the past.

But also every time I wanted to interact with a girl a million thoughts would race through my head. But then, but then what I realized as I grew older is that half the battle is in your own head because a lot of the time, the stuff that you're thinking isn't necessarily what they're thinking, but because you're thinking that it stops you from doing anything.

**Charlie:** You're almost like, I always think it's you much projecting it. It's like my whole mentality of like, if, if your, if you want something positive to happen, it will. And obviously that's easier said than done. That's not saying that that's the way life [00:15:00] works because it's not, but I always felt like it was that whole thing of.

If you're projecting that you're a nervous, nervous wreck. Like I was then that, that then, the energy goes on to the other individual, which then puts them off of you. Plus obviously you got the disability as well, but yeah, that was just what was going through my head. As you were saying that I could see that that was how I viewed.

I don't know whether you've viewed it the same.

**Ali:** Yeah, exactly. I think with. Um, I always told myself, I always tell myself, I don't, I don't want them to see the chair and all this, like now I don't care. I'm like, I'm like, yeah, I've got a chair, so great. You know, but back then I was like, oh, I don't want him to see the chair.

But then what I also realize is that if, if you think so in a way it amplified. What you don't want them to see yet? So I think that's [00:16:00] where all my depression stemmed from, to be honest, because I had, I had all these negative views that, that would then. Um, affect my ability to, you know, interact with, uh, with, uh, certain people

and then it just kind of went into this whole cycle of like, I'm not good enough. I noticed, um, and don't get me wrong. Like I always tell this, I always say this to my friends as well. You're always going to get some dickheads out there, but yeah. It's a two way. It's a two way thing. Like, um, you've gotta be confident in your, in your own skin and look at the things that you can, you can then control.

And if, if people are still. Like, you know, idiots then that's their problem. Not yours.

**Charlie:** Yeah. I mean, uh, one, one [00:17:00] thing that I always mentioned to, um, a lot of people when they asked what my story is, I, so going into it, like going back a bit in terms of my school story. So I found that in primary school, I had a good group of friends because in my experience, it was almost like they were too young to know what was going on.

So they just included me in most stuff. Because that was just the way they were. And then I found once I went into secondary school As a lot of people, do you try and go into, you want to be in with the popular crew, you want to have loads of friends. And what I found with that is it just didn't work. That wasn't who I was.

Um, and that wasn't who I wanted to be around, but it took me a long time. So wrap my head around that and then sort of like. Year, 10, 11 rolled around and I found a different group of friends cause weirdly. So my school, the way it worked was you were split into different, uh, different houses, but those were your houses....

Um, [00:18:00] so if you imagined in my school, there was like blocks. So you'd have Brunell block, which was all of the red color. Then you'd have a Darwin, which was green and then Chaucer , which was blue, but you, you you'd stay within that block. Um, so all of your lessons would be there and then you sort of got to year nine.

And that was when you started mixing with the other, the other colleges and the other, the other houses, if you like. Um, because of that, I sort of found a different crew. Um, and, and like you said, you sort of, I fell into that. Okay. And it just worked like I'm still friends with them now. We are the strangest bunch of friends

I mean, yeah, if you, if you saw us all out together, you'd think a bunch of misfits, but that's just the way we are. Um,

**Ali:** but that's very similar to my friend group, to the honest where we're all very different, but we just like really get on.

**Charlie:** Yeah, same here. Same here. We've all got really [00:19:00] dark sense of humor.

Um, yeah, I think that would probably be my biggest piece of advice for early on growing up would be step away from trying to like, be stop trying to impress people because then you're you, you're just setting yourself up to fail. Whereas if you found, find people that you actually aligned with, you're going to be a lot happier in the long term.

But that's yeah, that's just my view. Um, I don't know, wherever you feel the same.

**Ali:** No, you're right. I mean, like with me in secondary school, I never, I never really fit in with like the cool, the cool kids, if you like, and I was never one to get like, invited to house parties and gatherings and like all this stuff that was going on,

**Charlie:** actually, do you want to know a funny story?

Right. So, um, around about year 11, - uh mm how old- year Eleven's uh, how old was I knew, so I don't encourage underage drinking. However, um, [00:20:00] I was, uh, I got invited to a friend's party. Um, this friend was very popular all around the school, so there was a load of people there. So went to this party and my mum went to me before I went.

Like you can have one or two drinks. But don't have too many drinks for one reason. And you would think, wouldn't think this would be the reason, just remember the toilets upstairs and there is not one at the bottom. Okay, cool. So obviously it rolls round. I'm being very cautious at the beginning. It's all fine so, I have one or two of them and I'm lik actually.

Shit. I need to wee. I really need a wee. So I'm going to my mates I don't know what to do now. I've really need the toilet. But I can't get up the stairs. Anyways, look the host's brother-in-law put me on his back. Takes me up the stairs, obviously lets me go to the toilet, brings me back down. This is the bit where I'm like, okay, this something definitely wrong with you.

He then brings me back down and [00:21:00] says, he goes right. Do you want to shot ? You've just had to carry me up the stairs and you're trying to put more fluids into me. Is there something wrong with you?

I suppose that just show's you I think as well. One thing that I've realized more recently is the more comfortable you are, with you're condition and like just accepting the things that you need, support that more random shit that you can do because you just accepted - "okay. I need to ask someone to help me with this" as opposed to.

The feeling really like, anxious about, about doing the task because you're like, oh no, I must find a way of doing it myself. As much as I am. I am as really independent. I think finding that balance is really important.

**Ali:** Yeah, no, you're right. I mean, I'm like, even with my group of friends, I'm at the point where.

If I need help with something, back in the day, like I used to find out [00:22:00] really awkward, but if I'm needed to help with anything I'd, just kind of sit there and be like, uhhhh what do i do? ,

yeah, yeah,

**Charlie:** yeah, yeah. That was me. That was literally me as well. So I, then I got to a point where I was like, fuck this. Like, if they're going to be my friends, they're going to be my friends.

And now it's a running joke like they banter about who wants to put Charlie shoes on? And I'm like, when did this turn into to fucking shit hosery. When did this happen?

But on the note, Cause I know you mentioned that when you, you talked about your depression, it's what was dating like for you growing up and what is it like for you now?

Have you got a special lady that you got your eye on or, or a. Oh, you play in the field a little bit.

**Ali:** Um, I mean, like in terms of dating, um, when, uh, when I first started trying to get into the dating game, like it was my datin life was [00:23:00] basically non-existent. Um, and too a certain extent. It still is now, but I think I'd say.

The difference is that now, like, um, I'm more actively like trying to put myself out there. Um, you know, and I'm also like one of the biggest mistakes I used to make was I used to really like chase if I like the girl I would chase after her

**Charlie:** yeah. Yeahand also, it's fucking knackering, like haa

**Ali:** yeah. Um, but now, now I'm just. A couple of years ago, I just decided, you know what, I'm going to, I'm just going to work on myself and, um, and do what I enjoy doing, and then hopefully through that, uh, the right girl will, um, fall into my circle or, um,

**Charlie:** Yeah, [00:24:00] no, I agree.

I mean, um, I mean obviously Ali knows, cause she's bloody everywhere. Um, and I think a lot of people that found this pod cast, if you follow me on social media, you'll know my partner, Gina. Um, so my partner, Gina came into my life at such a like random time and the story of how we met. It's just so convoluted and shouldn't have happened.

Like it wasn't me going. Like, oh, no, I need to find a girlfriend, need to find a girlfriend. It was just litteraly like, okay, this, this happened, but of course, trust me to full, like trust me to start dating a girl. That was like 250 miles away. What, w w w why, why do I, I always have to make it complicated for myself. Don't I Like, hands down.

It was best decision I ever made before my other half shoots me. It best decision I ever made. Uh, in hindsight, looking at it for my parents lens. Why the fuck would you date a guy - uh a girl, that's 250 miles away, [00:25:00] but, um, I think it is, it's that whole thing of like, as much as it's a cliche. It will, it will happen when it happens, like it happened.

So when you least expect it, um, I just think as well, it's really hard. Um, like you say your mental health, the constant, like obviously every, no one likes being told. No, no one likes being, uh, not being ah - well - to date if you like, but I think like with a disability, there's that added layer. I don't know if you agree with

me again.

**Ali:** I know I always told my friends. I always try and emphasize this to my mates. Um, and, uh, that's why, like, I don't really, like, I don't really like dating apps too much, especially like Tinder and things like that, because I feel like you can't, you can't really because put it this way, right. Tinder is primarily based on your, your picture.

No, [00:26:00] I've got nothing to hide. So I'll put my chair in there, whatever

**Charlie:** Just on a side note - his chair is sick! I if he is including that in photos, well, I don't know why you're not getting dates because that's, that chair is absolutely beautiful. It's a magnificent chair.. So, um, but yeah, like, um, carry on. Sorry. I had to get that in. Cause that chair is, is, is immactulate

no, it's a, it's a dopeits a dope chair. Um, it's sort of, it's a really nice one. Um, but yeah, what was going to say was that like, obviously when. When girls see certain things in photos obviously like they're gonna, they're gonna judge on the photos and because, because they judge on a purely photos, you can't really, unless they match with you, you can't change their, you have no [00:27:00] opportunity to kind of.

Um, really put yourself across and there's only, there's only so much you can do in photos. That's why, like, I'm not really a big fan of like dating apps and stuff. I prefer. Old school. I meet someone face to face it.

Yeah meet them in a bar,. crack on.. Yeah. I'm with you there. I mean, I, I was on them . I never had any success on any dating sites, so, um, no, I completely agree.

Like one interesting question. It'd be interesting to get your point of view on, obviously I've done a lot of content around mine and Gina's relationship, how we met things like that. And one question I get asked. Is if you are writing like a Tinder bio, or plenty fish bio or a dating, just a genuine dating profile bio, do you include, what's your view on, do you include your disability or no?

**Ali:** Um, it's funny. It's funny you ask this because like, one of my friends, [00:28:00] um, very recently was like, oh, why don't you try basically. Not - not putting your wheelchair in photos. So basically trying to hide it pretty much. Um, and I said, well, if, if I do hide it and get matches, say if I match with a girl, and then she realizes that I've got a disability and she.

You know, she's got a problem, then she's not worth it anyway. So why, why should I hide anything? Because it's, it's part of who I am like it's, um, my disability, like as, as much as you know, it's got challenges is also, um, given them. The opportunities that I never would have had if I was ablebodied. Yeah.

**Charlie:** Yeah. I completely agree. I think that the curve ball I had with when I sat there and thought about it was there's two, two [00:29:00] scenarios. Obviously you've got this scenario where they, they find out about disability and they're like, well, hell no, I ain't going near you, no chance. But then on the flip side, there is the thing of like, some people will.

You'll explain the disability and they'll go like, oh, fair enough. And then that's where their ability to learn. Like they will then allow themselves to learn. I think the har-, the toss up is where obviously one, you shouldn't have to hide yourself anyway, but then again, there is that whole, you could find that someone gets someone finds out and is absolutely fine.

It just so happe- because they've had that chance to get to know you before, before you've released that information. But then it's also then on the flip side, you could get the scenario where they're like, oh, well, why did you hide it from me? I'm such a really hard question to answer because I can see from like loads of different angles where potentially work.

Because it's that whole thing of people are already scared of what they don't [00:30:00] know. And they might be scared of it because they're looking at it from a photo and going, shit that guy's in a wheelchair. I don't know what I do, but then actually, because you didn't know initially, and now you've got a chance to know me.

You're not actually as bothered by. But it's already, it's a really weird one. I mean, for example, like me and Gina, when we first started dating, um, we spent the first two weeks. Well, I say first started dating - first started talking, we spent the first, like two weeks just firing questions at each other and it'd be. She had asked me maybe one about my condition, but the she'd ask me .

oh like, what films am I into what music am I into. Um, and then we'd just go backwards and forward. So it was a really good way of like, getting to know each other, but it's a really hard question to answer. And when I was getting my question, I was like, I don't really know what advice to give because there's pros and cons to both sides and I can see why people would or wouldn't want.

Um, but yes, it's a, it's a weird place to be in such as I swear, being, being disabled [00:31:00] just makes you have to view the world on 15 different ways to get to one answer.

**Ali:** Yeah. I know me being disabled is such a minefield in so many different areas. I swear to God, like, wherever it be. Dating or things being bloody expensive.

That bank account is like rinsed every time.

**Charlie:** Yeah. And everyone's like, oh, disabled people get everything free. Fuck. No, go educate yourself before you say anything like that.

**Ali:** Yeah. But basically we get, we get all the shit things for free. Yeah. That's what they don't realize.

**Charlie:** You get like a base level for free.

But if you want somehing that you actually could make use of properly. Now you gotta pay for that shit.

it's this, uh, we, I could sit here for hours talking about like, talking about that and it's just - it is. It's such a [00:32:00] minefield, like all the medical, like there are so many surgeries that I'd found out about later in life that I'd looked at and gone. If I found out about that when I was 6. I could've made great use of that.

However, now it's not really going to help me and things. That would be a really interesting question. Have you had any surgeries? Cause I've had three. Have you had

any yourself?

**Ali:** Uh, I've had, I've had two actually. I've had two surgeries.

**Charlie:** Alright. Do you mind, do you mind letting us know what they were?

**Ali:** Um, so one of them was on my hamstrings and.

The other one was on my archillies

I think it is a fucking write a passage for people with cerebral palsy. It's two of mine with the same, say lengthening my hamstrings. And then for my achillies tendon to flatten my foot against the floor. Uh that's right. It's a Rite of passage. It's an absolute Rite of passage.

[00:33:00] So

basically like the moral of the story is. We're just Guinea pigs. Yeah.

**Charlie:** Yeah. Actually, is there anything you want to ask me? Is there, is there a question that you, is there a question that you really want to ask me?

**Ali:** Um, no, not particularly, but I mean, I mean, my, I just, uh, you know, like, I love your love, your content, man.

I love what you do. And, and, uh, like I always be like, um, supporting it,, you know, because I think like, um, it's a, and every time I see you post a video or someting like, I'm always, I'm always really happy, man. Like, cause that's what I love to see at the end of the day. I love to see like people, people doing well.

Um, like even, even Gina with her handstands, I'm always like picking her up because I know, I know she really wants to, she really wants to get [00:34:00] those. So it's just nice to see, bro.

**Charlie:** Thank you. I mean, first of all, I did not ask that question for an ego stroke until, but thank you. Um, no Gina,, Gina has been working on those handstands for quite a while now.

She's getting there. The worst thing is she's one of those people where she can't actually. She needs to take a step back and realize like how much she's actually achieved. Um, because when she first started, she was terrible. She was not great. Um, and now obviously she's come, she's come a great, uh, great distance.

I think she's just putting too much pressure on her self. Would you say that that's, that's, that's a trait of anyone's will picking up a new sport really?

**Ali:** Um, yeah, I mean, I mean, I'd say. Um, it's weird. Cause it's a double-edged sword. I'd say that is the fact that I'm really harsh on myself is one of our biggest strengths because that's where like my, my [00:35:00] desire to improve comes from.

But then, but then at the same time, like you're right, you're so harsh on yourself. You don't really like, see how, how much you've actually improved. And so until we take a pause or, or like, you're looking at a video from like, I dunno, two or three months ago, um, and you realize like, wow, I look at a difference, especially, especially within BJJ, because it's a very technical martial art mentally.

As well as physically, like, um, we like to say that it's basically a human human version of chess, because, because, because if you think about the, so your opponent's trying to submit you. You trying to stop them while also planning your own attacks, but then he's doing the same thing. So it's like a human game of checkers.

So [00:36:00] you're on the mental pressure as well as physical pressure

**Charlie:** it's almost like they always say in Chess,, you got to be four steps ahead. So you. You got to know what he's going to do a four times before you then decide?

Well, what

you're going to do. Exactly, exactly.

Um, last question. I'm going to ask you. Um, before I wrap up the podcast is a question that we're going to actually ask every guest on the show, um, uh, which is what is one sort of politically correct.

thing, like one sort of politically correct thing that you really agree with or really don't agree with because obviously my brand focuses on not quite politically correct being quite tongue in cheek. Um, I just wanted to know if there was anything that you really, really strongly agree with or really strong ly disagree with that. The the, the, the disabled community is pushing for, obviously the one thing I will say before Ali answers is it's, everyone has got their own opportunity to say whatever they need to say. Um, this isn't us condoning or, or any of that, it's [00:37:00] just people's own opinions, but it's just going to help us gain a picture and possibly change some people's views on different things.

**Ali:** Um, I just think, well, um, there's really two things that I would say they're more like, it's not necessarily that I agree or disagree with anything. It's just more like my point of view. So what. One of them is on, um, the word disabled, which is a big, uh, divider. Anyway. Um, as you know, um, now when it, when it comes to that, like, I don't have an issue with the actual word.

Like the actual word is fine. There's nothing wrong with the actual word, but, but what I think needs to change and what, why. People have such an issue with the word is the negative, like views that surround the word, if you like. So if, if [00:38:00] we, if we change the views around the words, then people wouldn't have as much of an issue with the word that's.

That's what I think that's, that's my personal opinion. Um, on that, on that. Um, I think it's like the surrounding shit rather than the actual word itself that causes the problem.

**Charlie:** I think it's really difficult. Cause there's obviously people in the disabled community that ha uh, have very strong views against that word and theres others that aren't really bothered, I, myself, I'm one of those that, um, I'm not overly bothered, um, because I, I.

It's just something that's always been used. And I know that that feeds into the thing of, yeah, exactly. That's why we need to change it, but I don't, it's not something that if someone says it to me, I don't, I don't feel any kind of way. I just, that, that, yeah, I am disabled bonus points to you. You are absolutely correct.

Um, but I think that's just, that's just [00:39:00] my view. Cause my, I often think of scenarios like this and think realistically. Is that where we sh the, the disabled community, they should be focusing. So for me personally, I want to get your view on this Ali,, cause I always wonder whether I'm, maybe I'm an outsider, but I always think is that what we should be picking up on or should we be focusing on why can't disabled people to get into work?

Why can't disabled people get on train successfully, things like that bigger topics that really need tackling. Um, so yeah. What's your, what's your take on that? I mean,

**Ali:** I think, I think you're right in terms of, I think if we had all this stuff that you talk and then the, the word disabled wouldn't have such bad stigmas anyway.

So people you end up giving the word less power. Do you know what I mean? More people would get [00:40:00] would wouldn't get offended by it. But, but right now, because, because we don't have these things in place, um, and there's so many like negative associations with the word thus gives the word power in some people's eyes.

Like, um, I'm like you in terms of. I don't care. Like, you know, I'm, I'm disabled guy, but, but I can see where it comes from. And it's, it's much more of a deep rooted issue than the word itself. Yeah, completely.

**Charlie:** I think you hit the nail on the head. You probably explained it better than I did. Um, uh, before we finish up Ali, is there any last minute advice you would give to people?

Um, that want to get into any martial arts with a disability or any sort of general, any, any advice that you want to give?

**Ali:** I think, I think, well, the biggest piece of advice I'd give to 'em and this doesn't just apply to, [00:41:00] uh, disabled people, by the way, this can apply to everyone, but be comfortable in your own skin because, because that's where that gives you a foundation.

To build confidence. Um, and, and that's arguably. I'd say the most important thing when it comes to building confidence is feeling comfortable in your own skin. Um, and then in terms of martial arts or any sports, to be honest, As a disabled individual, you've just got to, like, I was lucky that my, my teacher was just on board straight away.

Like we've never looked back since, and I've, I've developed a really close bond with them as well, because we're very similar. So he he's, I see him as like an older brother as well. Um, now we've got a very, very close bond, but I'd say for the most part, like just [00:42:00] be, be persistent pester people reach. Like, and, and make sure you get your points across, like, keep, keep asking.

Cause if you don't ask, you won't know. So just be persistent and I have thick skin and, um, hopefully you'll, you'll find something, but if you don't do anything, nothing will happen. So.

**Charlie:** Yeah, that's some strong advice. That's the real strong advice, um, I, Ive not got anything to asdd that to that. Um, or anything I will say, where can, where can, the guys listening to the podcast find you? If they want to follow your journey or get in touch with you.

**Ali:** So my Instagram handle is at spec. So that's S P E C S underscore fitness BJJ. So you can, you can find me on there on Instagram. Um, and yeah, that's, uh, that's my main thing really is, uh, is [00:43:00] Instagram and, um, yeah, like, don't worry. Give me a few years and I'll be, uh, one, uh, one of the first disabled people to, uh, uh, gain a black belt, which is what I want to do so.

**Charlie:** Uh, I would definitely be following, following on from that. Cause I, I want to see this. I do what is is, but thank you for coming on. Um, you actually one of my. First guests. So thanks for spending the time with us. I'm sorry for the technical difficulties at the beginning. Um, we will catch up with you soon. I hope you enjoy this.

This was the not quite podcast. If you do have any questions, feel free to drop us a message. Thank you so much for tuning into this week's episode of the not quite podcast. Please make sure you follow us on Tik TOK and Instagram to get regular updates about the podcast.