

Chris Hung
Taekwondo Instructor/Business Owner
3/2/25

00;00;00;07 - 00;00;21;27

Chris:

PhDs and grad students, and I'm thinking., "So I finished my undergrad. And then if I get my PhD. So I'm going to be doing the same thing as all of them did. So I said, hey, maybe I'll do it for like one year just to see. And after one year it just kind of felt redundant. So I felt maybe at least change it up a little bit.

00;00;21;29 - 00;00;46;05

Chris:

Right. So. So then I went into finances. So I took my series six, my insurance, certification. And then so, you know, you could sell insurance, you could, you could, advise people to start. But then, but then I was afraid of losing money for my clients. So I was too afraid to do that.

00;00;46;05 - 00;01;16;09

Chris:

But I'm not so good at advising. So then I, then I, and then I changed momentum again and I went and then at this point I'm, I was thinking, you know, **everything that I do kind of brings me back to martial arts**. So, you know, after when, whenever I was stressed or whenever I have to work, I would always go back to training, martial arts and in every, every situation in my life, I would kind of, my double, my safety net, I always go back to it for some reason.

00;01;16;12 - 00;01;41;02

Chris:

That kind of brought me back for some reason. So and I thought, okay, maybe, maybe I should think about looking to enter martial arts a little bit more. So I started studying the industry. And I would go to a martial arts school. And count how many students were going? To the instructor and kind of see what they could carry out because of my martial background.

00;01;41;04 - 00;02;06;26

Chris:

And then in college, because I was involved with the martial arts club, I knew how to teach the classes and I knew how to order all the equipment. So my background was I set and I was writing my curriculum the entire time. So I was almost doing my grad work in college already with the martial arts.

00;02;06;26 - 00;02;30;07

Chris:

So, whenever I was in my room writing down, say, this is going to be the curriculum, this is how it's going to be. This is what my class is going to look like. So, so that's that's how I started that,

that, that those ideas. Right. And then from those ideas, when I, when I came back to, to the Bay area, I thought maybe let's take a risk.

00;02;30;07 - 00;02;48;23

Chris:

Just, take a chance, let me open a school and then see how it goes. If it doesn't go well the first year, then then, you know, we'll go back to, you know, whatever I wanted to go back to. So I started I started in 2004 and then and then we have been open ever since almost 20, 20 years.

00;02;48;23 - 00;03;15;05

Chris:

At this exact look at this exact location. So, we actually grew 2 to 3 locations. So this was our first one. And then we had the second one down the building, and then we had another one in Mountain View. But because of the pandemic, we couldn't open for about a year. So we basically shut down the, the third and the second, and we brought everything back to the headquarters.

00;03;15;08 - 00;03;35;15

Chris:

So we just condensed it to one location. So but yeah, but yeah, the pandemic was tough, tough for everybody. So we, we taught, we taught classes through zoom. It was it's it's kind of hard because you have to be very creative. You have to see how everybody's okay. Right. So that was the toughest point.

00;03;35;22 - 00;03;56;12

Chris:

But then yeah, right now we're still still kind of catching up to it. And I think we're doing okay. So so I mean yeah, like I said everything kind of goes back into my passion. I didn't expect it to be, my career, but, it just kind of falls back into for some reason. And I wanted to take a risk and just just go into it.

00;03;56;12 - 00;04;14;16

Chris:

Right. So you never know what's going to happen. But if you study well and if you have the skill for it, I think actually is, is something, it you can do that. I think it's something that you can say is worthwhile. Yeah.

Maile:

Were you interested in taekwondo all the way back?

Chris:

So I was interested in martial arts in general.

00;04;14;18 - 00;04;33;20

Chris:

I watched a lot of martial art movies, kung fu movies. I love studying soccer, which is very funny. But then when I, when I first came to this country, I didn't really speak English very well. So when I, when I was, whenever I say the word, everybody would laugh around me. So I was, I was like, okay, but I like, I like, I like to study people.

00;04;33;20 - 00;04;48;11

Chris:

I like to see what they do. Right. It's like why are they laughing? In the back of my head was like, well, what else is it? Because I can't speak very well or all right. And so it's on the back of my mind. So okay. So maybe they're making fun of stuff, which is fine.

00;04;48;18 - 00;05;07;24

Chris:

But I was kind of studying people and how they behave, right. And that kind of really helped me. Later on, you know, teaching martial arts because you have to kind of see what the needs are. So everybody has their needs, everybody has their, their, their focus. They're afraid of something. Right.

00;05;08;01 - 00;05;26;29

Chris:

So we want to fill that in so that they become more confident. All right. So that's kind of how I teach my kids. They come in unsure about things. And I try to I try to give them lots of opportunities to have some ideas for themselves. And then from there, that's how I start. They can grow to the more skill they have, the more comfortable they will be.

00;05;27;01 - 00;05;50;05

Chris:

So, so so it's kind of it's kind of a good starting position for them. And, and then if you whenever it gets tough then they can fall back into the fundamentals. And have that confidence to to move forward. So I try to teach them to tackle every obstacle and break it into pieces first, do the easy part first and then then.

00;06;00;18 - 00;06;22;03

Maile:

Oh, yeah. I feel like you already told me about, like, the other jobs that you had. Right. So you were..

Chris:

So I was in finance and I was in water science or science

Maile:

And then do you think that, like, passion is important for jobs, or do you think people can like, work jobs without passion?

Chris:

They can, but it's really hard.

00;06;22;10 - 00;06;44;21

Chris:

They can. They can work in a job where, it's not meaningful for them. Then it's it's I mean, it's okay, but then you're gonna fall back into your passion eventually. Right. So whatever you love to do. Right. So I think I think it's, it's if you have a passion for something, find a way to get paid for that passion.

00;06;44;25 - 00;07;04;12

Chris:

So find an industry that, that, that, that would actually pay for your living for that passion. I was actually looking, besides martial art, my other hobby was, drinking boba tea. I was looking at a boba tea place, so. So I would do my research. I would go and sit down and order Boba tea.

00;07;04;12 - 00;07;34;09

Chris:

And try the different drinks and see which one, which shop tastes the best? Or maybe the healthiest, I don't know. But I would count how many people will come in in an hour. Just to really learn a little bit more about the industry. And then then I will ask the cashier that also. So who owns the boba shop, is it a franchise, is it and then they would let me know and surprised actually talk to me about personal stuff.

00;07;34;09 - 00;07;55;02

Chris:

I'm surprised they told me that stuff. So I was like, I'm thinking, okay, that's that's interesting. So the, they are willing to divulge all the information. And I think if you're passionate about something, you have to study the industry. And if you're passionate about that industry, then you go to a place just because there's always competition.

00;07;55;04 - 00;08;18;19

Chris:

So no matter what I think study, study the industry very well. And then if that's your passion then you can make it into a career. I counted how many cups they sell. How much do they cost per cup? Right. And it's okay. So one day they sold 300 cups, that's this amount of money then.

00;08;18;19 - 00;08;40;21

Chris:

Yeah, they can, they can, they can pay for rent plus importance. Yeah, yeah. And then the leftover will be the profit. And then I say okay in one week, how many, how many cups they can sell. So I average it out okay. Well so they make maybe, maybe they make, 3000 a week. Right. And and this four weeks in a month, then 3000 multiplied by four.

00;08;40;24 - 00;09;03;03

Chris:

And so then then get to pay employees. Right. So you take part of it out and insurance and everything. So then you start with maybe \$5 in a month times 12, which is a year, right? 60,000 on the first year. Yeah. But I say we can get more. So then maybe eventually in a month, they can get more studies.

00;09;03;04 - 00;09;25;01

Chris:

How did all of that. And you know, you feel okay. Is this is that feasible to open a business. So study your interest very well. I think and have really good skill. Okay. And then follow your passion if that's your passion because you if you have the passion for that career, you're willing to put all the amount of time.

00;09;25;04 - 00;09;44;11

Chris:

Yeah. So for myself, for the martial arts school, I mean I work almost seven days a week. Yeah. So on Sunday I will be teaching, on Saturday they'll go to the city and I work with different groups. But I guess I'm, I'm more I like to study people still. I like to see what they do. It's interesting.

00;09;44;11 - 00;10;03;23

Chris:

Yeah. So. So now I like to whenever the high school or the monthly, the high school come and I'll do the program so fast enough I'll see like, okay, what's the latest slang words they use. What do they like to do. Right. So it's kind of interesting to see all the different generations and how they grew up. So I did that too when I was younger.

00;10;03;25 - 00;10;19;12

Chris:

Oh, this is different from when I was younger. I see so, so interesting. Right. It's just, I like to see what the difference is in people. Right. And then you see it, then you need to kind of help them. This, skill does not help them with the skill. And that's. I think that's kind of my passion.

00;10;19;15 - 00;10;39;19

Chris:

I wanted to help people. Yeah. Because I feel maybe when I was younger, I guess maybe I was a little bit alone because I didn't speak the language very well. So everybody kind of own stuff. So maybe that's why as, as an adult now, I like gather people around more.

00;10;39;22 - 00;11;02;17

Chris:

That way I can help them more. And maybe in a way I'm helping myself. When I was younger, before I kind of came back to somebody for that kind of help. But yeah, so so it's like that and I think sometimes that sometimes passion comes from other people. That's possible. So I'm not sure. But I feel, I feel yeah, I feel like I like to, I like to work with people.

00;11;02;20 - 00;11;20;20

Chris:

And that's how I feel.

Maile:

It's funny because my dad's got something really similar. When I asked him like the same question, he was like, oh, you know, he because he's in it, you know? And he said one time he was like asking for help on his computers. And he didn't know anything. And then the person would be like, why don't you know this stuff?

00;11;20;27 - 00;11;40;08

Maile:

And it made him feel dumb. So he was like, he didn't want to make people feel that way. Right? So now in his job, he's helping people the same way financially thing because it's like very parallel, I think.

Chris:

Yeah, I think so. I feel like you have to experience adversity. Right. And you have to take a risk and experience adversity.

00;11;40;10 - 00;12;04;01

Chris:

And then and then from there you I think that's the moment that you grow the most. Right. So when, when the obstacle is so big that it's so overwhelming, try to step back a little bit and you know, okay. And let's see how we can make it better. And then if that's your passion then I think it'll increase your skill a little bit.

00;12;04;03 - 00;12;26;00

Chris:

So I feel passion and skill is both of them important and studying for it.

Maile:

So do you feel like satisfied with your career choices now or do you think there's something that you would have changed in the past?

Chris:

I, you know, I think if I were, if I knew I was going to be doing this, I would have started earlier.

00;12;26;02 - 00;12;42;22

Chris:

Right. Because there's so much fun to see, to meet everybody. So all the new students are coming. I love to meet them, because they're all different, right? Yeah. Some of them are ready to go. Some of them are very shy. Some of them will even come through the front door. So I have to entice them to come in and I just.

00;12;42;22 - 00;13;00;14

Chris:

Okay. This is called a paddle. This is how we punch it. Try it first. Right. Or some of the younger ones. They're so shy. They don't want to leave their parents. I will bring different cones of different color points that we have. And I'll ask him very simple questions like what color is this? And is it, orange.

00;13;00;14 - 00;13;19;08

Chris:

What color is this yellow. And I'll try to put the colors and get them for simplicity. And that's where they, where they start writing the cards, put them together. I've got that one. And they all of a sudden they're on the mat. But now they have no choice. But they have to start this part. Right. So something to kind of entice them to be confident.

00;13;19;10 - 00;13;38;10

Chris:

Right. And I think in the martial arts, I think people a lot of people think, oh, it's all about the fighting, but it's really about, cultivating yourself and making yourself stronger and having this sort of leadership in the sense that you have to kind of depend on yourself, and you have the full control of what you want to do.

00;13;38;13 - 00;14;06;27

Chris:

Right? And of course, there's an instructor telling you what needs to be done to make sure you have full control. You can punch as hard as you want, you can punch as light as you want. It can be very smooth. It can be very loud. Very quiet. And the instructor just basically they're there to fix the techniques. So I feel I feel I feel it's very beneficial for, for the younger students to come in and even adults, but adults, it's more for the exercise and more physical health.

00;14;06;29 - 00;14;29;08

Chris:

So the more they move, the more or the blood pumps throughout the body, you better get rid of waste, right? So with the exercise, more you get right back. Yeah, I think I think if you have a passion and you feel like that's meaningful and helping other people, it's alright, if it's if this is your passion and you only serving yourself, I think it's okay.

00;14;29;08 - 00;14;49;03

Chris:

You'll get a lot of money, right?. But again, long term is not meaningful. It's it's more fun to share something. It's it more fun to share with some one. I think that will last longer. Right. Because I know of Grandmasters who would go that way.

00;14;49;06 - 00;15;09;13

Chris:

They would do it from when they leave college. Right. And then when even they're 80 years old they're still teaching, you know, I feel like that's, that's really that that passion is still there. So I

feel I feel that I think the reason why is because they feel like they're helping people. Okay. So, so yeah, I think I think I think passion has to be meaningful.

00;15;09;16 - 00;15;29;01

Maile:

What kind of advice would you give for someone who doesn't really know what their passion is like trying to find it?

Chris:

I think, study like, study everything. Even I mean, if you don't know, it's good to have, just go to a center like this and see. Yes. Like, okay, just grabbing 2 or 3 bags.

00;15;29;03 - 00;15;51;05

Chris:

You study people, I like to you like to talk on the phone and then see how you can help people, right? Maybe. Maybe your career and maybe a industry could be making sure that all the frequencies are in place. Right? Or maybe. Maybe he's talking to phone, starting to connect, maybe going to communicate. There's a lot of things that you can actually do.

00;15;51;07 - 00;16;08;08

Chris:

Like if you study people, you just going to sit down, just look around. Yeah. Right. And then and then if you're good at it, get the skill for into the passion for it and go into that. And so I think that's my advice. If you're someone is not sure about what you want to do, but I think study right.

00;16;08;08 - 00;16;32;01

Chris:

But then you have to take a risk. A lot of people, what they do is, they kind of sit back. Yeah. And they don't see the risk. They don't really try to capture, like, put themselves out. Yeah. And stuff out there, or maybe study a little bit more. I mean, I'm surprised at myself. I didn't think I would go to a boba tea shop and sit there for hours and just study people and count everybody, right?

00;16;32;02 - 00;16;46;05

Chris:

I didn't know I would, I would be doing that. I mean, that's kind of bored, and I didn't know that. I always actually talked to the question as to how many cell phones is, who does this right. Maybe in the martial arts school, I never thought I would go to a martial arts school and ask the instructor, okay?

00;16;46;09 - 00;17;02;18

Chris:

I mean, since he has, how much do you charge? Right? And, you know, so so I think you have to take a risk, right? Yes. You can try to find it for yourself. No one's going to do it for you. Yeah, right. You have to go out there and and and financials and, and have fun with it. Right.

00;17;02;20 - 00;17;21;05

Chris

Talk to people. Right. And maybe you're not you maybe you're a shy person. It's okay to sit down and then look around and look at all the people. That's that's around that area and see what needs to be had. Everybody has needs. Yeah. Right. How do I how do I kind of connect what you're doing what my skill set and then and what's my passion.

00;17;21;08 - 00;17;40;27

Chris

Right. What what I like to do. Right. So maybe a person like bubble tea. That's it. Maybe a bubble tea shop. You're industry. Right. Well, maybe you can sell the individual boba. Right. And you find a find a more healthier way to put those tapioca balls into that drink, right? Instead of, it's more too much of advice, right?

00;17;40;29 - 00;18;00;03

Chris

So maybe find a different ingredient and then and all the containers will change to, oh, we want that, that healthy tapioca. Yeah. The healthy and so the healthy. So then then you should avoid this and try to sort of way that useful people need and that's meaningful for you. And I just feel that you have that skill set to help.

00;18;00;06 - 00;18;20;23

Chris

Right. So that's how I feel. Yeah. It's nice. I mean, like your dad, he's he's always he's always doing something that is good as I remember. Right. Yeah. And if I'm not seeing something that's on the computer, he would be playing video games all the other right side. So I wasn't into video games because I would get all very good.

00;18;20;23 - 00;18;37;26

Chris

And I, I played it down when I was a kid, and it wasn't that right. But then but then one thing I noticed that he also like to play more. I think, wow, people are interested in my son, right? So I was like, but then maybe they may not want to train for it, but they always are actually.

00;18;37;28 - 00;18;56;23

Chris

But yeah, it's not. So even video games, I was, I was always sitting back and looking at my room is delight to do this kind of stuff. So must be interesting. So that's kind of how I also thought okay, maybe that's something I can fill that void. Maybe you formed him a little bit more. Yeah. Think so.

00;18;56;27 - 00;19;14;26

Chris

It's, it's really interesting to study people. I think the more people you talk to, the more ideas you have. Right. And then if there and you can actually buy their passion and so forth, like what you're doing, I really try everything. People buy that passion and and from there you can take the kind of most like a wisdom or take their ideas.

00;19;15;00 - 00;19;40;20

Chris

Right. And you kind of put it for yourself. You kind of collect all those ideas and, and see they don't what was fits your best. Yeah. Okay. Well really. Right, right. But you know, it has to start somewhere. Yeah. So that's that's another.