

Podcast Transcript

In the Loop – Episode 19

“Connecting to Something Greater Than Myself.”

Interview with Dustin Brown

Dustin: [00:00:00] Me and Nova opened Brighton studio that we're in now thinking that we weren't going to make any money. We did the business plan and yeah, the numbers weren't good. And we're like let's just do it anyway. And that was that. Well you know it's probably just gonna be a really expensive hobby for three years. So, we signed a three-year lease and we did it anyways.

Kareena: [00:00:20] That's Dustin Brown. Pro Surfer, Brazilian Jiu-jitsu Champion, Yogi and owner of Warrior One Yoga studios sharing the risk and reward of starting his own Yoga studio. Find out just what happened in between. In the latest episode of In the Loop.

Kareena: [00:00:47] Hey there Loopers and welcome to another episode of In the Loop. I'm your host Kareena and today we're chatting with Yoga master Dustin Brown. Dustin is a passionate Yoga teacher that spends a lot of his time sharing his love of the practice with the community that both he and his partner Nova have fostered and grown throughout their studios Warrior One Yoga. Originally hailing from the sandy beaches of Kuai Hawaii. Dustin was travelling around the world as a professional surfer until he met and fell in love with his wonderful wife Nova. After settling into life in Melbourne, Dustin soon took to competing in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and acquired his black belt. On advice from Nova, Dustin tried Yoga on a whim and ended up falling in love with the practice. Dustin joins us in sharing his journey from riding the waves in Hawaii to creating a yogic sanctuary with his two beautiful Melbourne studios. Tune in to hit Dustin's story.

Kareena: [00:01:46] Welcome to the show Dustin. It's very nice to have you.

Dustin: [00:01:48] Thank you very much, it's great to be here.

Kareena: [00:01:50] I'm very excited to talk to you about everything to do with Yoga. That is your specialty.

Dustin: [00:01:55] All the Yoga, yes.

Kareena: [00:01:55] All the Yoga, especially your Yoga studios. And we know you got a bit of jiu-jitsu in your background as well. So, talking about that and how you've come to the practice and to your training. So, we're gonna cover it all.

Dustin: [00:02:09] Okay, sounds good. Let's start from the beginning.

Kareena: [00:02:11] Right from the beginning. So, tell me, how did you get into

any form of fitness, how did you find fitness?

Dustin: [00:02:17] I grew up in Kauai Hawaii and so I kind of grew up. My dad was a surfer at the beach. Kauai is a very tropical jungle like island. So, I grew up playing at the beach, in the trees and climbing and doing all the kid stuff. But surfing and water sports were always part of our lives when we were kids. And I remember waiting like very long hours. My dad was a marathon surfer meaning he would surf all day while we'd be on the beach. So, we got really good at occupying ourselves and playing games and learning to surf the shore break. So, surfing was how I started and was really my fitness inception and with that skateboarding and all other kind of board sports. I always wanted to be a pro surfer and that didn't happen until I moved away to L.A. fast forward the story. But I moved to L.A. when I was around 19, worked for a few years and got a sponsorship and that was what originally brought me to Australia. I was a pro surfer and I had a sponsorship as a free surfer meaning good sponsors that just paid well and allowed me to kind of do what I wanted. It was very much a good deal for me. And through that process I ran into Nova and it was kind of one of those rare chance meetings and everything in the universe aligned because we really chat about like the conditions of us even ever crossing paths, it's very strange.

Kareena: [00:03:37] Tell me a bit more about that.

Dustin: [00:03:39] It was just a random night where we both ended up in some bar in Melbourne and I was not from Melbourne, I was visiting, it was one of my last nights in town and she was at this bar that she would never ever go to but she was waiting for her friend who was chatting up with this dude and my friend was like chatting up this chick. Different people not the same. And me and Nova just started talking to each other and we hit it off and the rest is really history. We never separated. We started seeing each other and I had travel commitments, so did she. And we just started hanging out and we have been married for 13 years this year and we've been together for 14. So yeah, it's pretty special. That brought me to Melbourne meeting Nova because she was gonna finish school.

Kareena: [00:04:24] Having followed his heart to Melbourne, Dustin soon changes his career and begins building his life with Nova. His career, however, isn't the only thing to change. His body undergoes some adjustments during that time that lead him to the path of jiu-jitsu.

Dustin: [00:04:40] I moved to Melbourne and from being really fit and always surfing and I moved to Melbourne it was cold, it was winter. I didn't have a car to drive to the coast. And so in like six months I put on a lot of weight. And from like how I look now probably like 20 kilos heavier.

Kareena: [00:04:57] Oh wow, quite a different.

Dustin: [00:04:58] Yeah. Quite a bit heavier, like 100 kilos plus. And my friend came and visited me, one of my good friends from Hawaii and he's like "Dude you're so fat. We need to take you to training." So, he took me into jiu-jitsu, and I was very humbled by a

young boy and a little girl like this young woman, they beat me up. But it was really fun and really playful, and it really proved to me that technique overcomes strength and that's what martial arts is always kind of about. And they definitely proved that to me. So, after that I was a little bit obsessive. I was like, you know what, if they can do that to me, one it's fun, two it'll make me fit and I should know this stuff. It's really useful. So, I got fully obsessed with jiu-jitsu.

Kareena: [00:05:43] Now when you say obsessed, what does that mean?

Dustin: [00:05:44] That means going from like a casual practitioner. Think like a casual Yoga practitioner, they go two-three times a week, they like it, they do it. But they don't really go beyond that. I mean from doing that to going like every single day, twice a day. And when I go home, I'll watch videos on how to do it better. Read books, DVDs, go travel the world and find the best practitioners and learn from them and things like that.

Kareena: [00:06:06] Complete immersion basically.

Dustin: [00:06:06] Full immersion. And so, my learning curve was quite steep. I learned through trial and error and really good trainers, I learned quite quickly. And so, usually in jiu-jitsu takes between a decade plus to get a black belt. There's age requirements and things like that. Karate is a little bit different like there's five-year olds that are black belts. So, not to take away from that in any way, they're still awesome, but this kind of has a little more clout when you really have to put in the time and effort to get it. I got my black belt in about six and a half years just because I was training so much and competing around the world. And I really, really loved it. And I still do but at the same time. I was getting really broken in my body really sore.

Kareena: [00:06:55] Having put his body under an incredible amount of strain during his competitive jiu-jitsu reign, it came time for Dustin to find a new way to heal his body.

Dustin: [00:07:05] And my wife at this time when I'm talking about, she started doing a hot Yoga challenge and every day she'd come back and she's like I feel so good you need to try this. It's really good. And I was like Yeah, Yoga is weird. Yoga is for hippies and chicks like it's not for me, I'm good. I just had this impression because growing up in Hawaii the only people I ever saw doing Yoga were hippies and chicks. Not anyone that had kind of like my personality or constitution.

Kareena: [00:07:30] I feel like that was the perception for a long time for a lot of people. I think only now it's starting to evolve from that.

Dustin: [00:07:36] Yeah and even now they come to Yoga classes and you see like people that are quite fit and they come in then they walk out and are like "That was really hard. That was like maybe the hardest thing I've ever done." I'm like, yeah, Yoga will challenge you because you're not lifting weights, you're not trying to get over some measure or goal. It's all you. Can you be present with your breath and be able to do

these movements and not freak yourself out and stay calm and right here and right now. So, after much coercion from Nova I went to my first Yoga class and it actually made me feel amazing, I was very surprised. Jiu-jitsu, you know, there's a lot of gripping and pulling with your hands. I was waking up in the morning and my hands were like little t-rex claws, like Spock, just from being so tight and gripping. And the first class, downward dog in a hot room opened up my hands and forearms. I was like if that's the only benefit I feel I'm going to come back tomorrow and the next day and I'm gonna do this every day because it was that drastic. Like I have not stretched in this way ever. And that just progressed. I kept going every day. And at that time, I had like a strength and conditioning coach because I was still competing jiu-jitsu, that was my full obsession. But the Yoga thing, I was like this makes me feel good and I can train more jiu-jitsu. So, I stopped strength and conditioning. I started doing Yoga instead every morning and then training throughout the day and jiu-jitsu. And I could train more, I was feeling better and my body was not breaking like a lot of my friends around me. And I think that's one of the reasons I was able to stay consistent and train so hard. I know it's the only reason that I'm a blackbelt and some of my friends have had to quit because they had shoulder reconstructions and knee injuries and having to stop training for a long time it's hard to come back. So, I'm really thankful for Yoga and the way that it's healed and transformed my physical body.

Kareena: [00:09:27] In addition to the physical benefits of Yoga, Dustin became attuned to the more intangible elements of the practice.

Dustin: [00:09:35] But something else happened through the process and I wouldn't say that I had a spiritual background but something about Yoga really opened me up to, I don't want to call it spirituality, but a connection to something that's greater than myself. And that's the universe around me, my relationships with others. Yoga makes you responsible. That's how I like to think about it. I heard this breakdown of the word responsibility: it's the ability to choose your response. And Yoga gives you space, not only in your day but in your mind to choose a response, to be responsible. You know, Tony Robbins really brought this out and did a seminar and he's really saying is what's the one thing you can control in this life. There's only one thing. It's your choices. It's how you choose to see the world, how you react. Even happiness is a choice. If you choose to be happy all the time and you choose that unwavering choice like, I'm going to be happy. It's just going to happen. So, that's what I love about the practice. It's starting to give me this space and this time. And I started noticing a shift. It wasn't just changing my physical body, it was changing the way I reacted. And even in jiu-jitsu as more calm and controlled and concise with my movements and decisions. So, Yoga started just as something physical to heal myself and through that I found meditation and other aspects of this path.

Kareena: [00:11:08] There are a number of paths in Yoga. So, we asked Dustin to explain what differentiates them from each other and which one is right for any one person.

Dustin: [00:11:19] I think a lot of us are brought for Asana which is just one of the eight limbs of Yoga. It is talked about quite a bit but if you're newer you might not have

heard about it. But the eight-limb path in Yoga is a clear way for you to live your life and to have a clear destination. So, it's like a path and all of the different Yoga styles adhere to this path. They all have this kind of, it's like a giant mountain with lots of paths off it and they all lead to the peak at the top. But you just got to choose the path that you like.

Kareena: [00:11:53] Because I was going to ask about the different types. What does differentiate them why would someone pick one over another.

Dustin: [00:11:59] I would say that they would pick one over the other with what would resonate with you and what you're currently really like, what draws you in and what makes sense and what serves you. And traditionally there's not that many. There're the four main types of Yoga and all of their type's kind of branch from those and most things that involve movement come from Hatha Yoga. And so most of us are doing a form of Hatha Yoga. And it really depends what you like and what draws you in. But like I said as long as you're on a path that's kind of following those eight limbs it's going to lead you somewhere special.

Kareena: [00:12:35] What attracted you to the path that you're on at the moment?

Dustin: [00:12:38] It was very physical and the more I just stick with the physical practice it evolves the way I think and the way I negotiate my way through the world and with people and with everything. And, you know, you'll go to a lot of classes and I'm very you know open your heart and like be grateful and all these things. And, it's a bunch of fluff until you start having these felt experiences. That are undeniable. And they're like you know think about this, do you connect to that, does this make you feel something you're like, I know you're a crazy hippy, but it actually does. You're like these crazy hippies are actually right. I still think you're a bit out there, but I am feeling what you're saying and what you're speaking about. And, you know they're like, close your eyes and look upwards, do you feel a presence or something that grounds you a light or whatever you want to feel or label it as. It's like, I do, and I connect to these things.

Kareena: [00:13:38] Dustin explains why it's important to connect with everything around us and why maintaining a positive outlook on life is so important to living more harmoniously.

Dustin: [00:13:50] I'll put this way, the ancient texts says that the root of all mankind suffering, the reason we are all suffering, so we all suffer a little bit, and it's because we believe that we're separate. Humans believe that they're separate from one another and from nature. And they start to put themselves in little boxes and hide themselves away and separate themselves more, when what we need to thrive is, we need to connect to all these things around us. And so, when we do that, we eliminate suffering and we eliminate suffering suddenly we connect to everything around us and we realize that we're not so different. That's how I try and live my life and try and see the world and when I have that positive view and that filter on everything is good. Because it's so easy to go the opposite way.

Dustin: [00:14:37] I think I look at it as, I had a conversation with my friend and he really put it in a nice way, he calls it the gate. It's like your gate is open and your gate is closed. And it's like you opening into the world and we all have triggers and things that close us like all the time right. You're driving, someone cuts you off in traffic, you close because that was dangerous and you didn't want to get hurt, if you get hurt da da da da da da da. So, it's a fear and you've got to come back to that why am I feeling this. It's not really that person. You don't care if they didn't give that, that wouldn't matter to you. But coming back to the why and so that's what I try and do to keep that filter on. And so, if something stirs me or makes me trigger and makes my gate want to close I kind of sit there with it and think why am I closing, what am I actually feeling. What is it? Is it fear, is a little bit of my ego or what is it? What is making me close and whether it's the situation or the person. If I can just try and be open and not change them or change anything, I can just try and be open and sit with it, everything shifts. And sometimes it takes a long time. You're just sitting there like this is eh. Trying to open and trying to be with it and it's a process. I listen to a lot of Tony Robbins stuff and he has a similar process and he says he's got it down to 90 seconds. Like if something triggers him, like he talked about this thing where he lost like a billion dollars, 90 seconds to get over it.

Kareena: [00:16:16] That's amazing. I don't think I could get over it in 90 seconds.

Dustin: [00:16:18] He Said that the billion dollars took him a whole day.

Kareena: [00:16:21] Yeah, yeah, fair.

Dustin: [00:16:23] Fair enough. Fair enough. But he says like for little things with his wife and his family and things like that, he's like he'll let himself feel stirred up for 90 seconds and he has a little process takes a couple breaths and chooses a different perspective.

Kareena: [00:16:36] That's great.

Dustin: [00:16:37] And so how powerful is that. And I think you know, Tony Robbins doesn't call what he does Yoga, but it correlates with the same eight limb path. And the same levels of consciousness that we talk about in Yoga practice. And he's just doing it on a mass scale of thousands of people at a time. And I'm a really big fan. He's doing awesome work. But these same principles are in the Yoga texts. It's not anything new. He's just making accessible to everyone. The practice, like I said, it gives you space and people are like oh I don't have time to meditate or I don't have time for Yoga. If you actually take this time, not only like I said for your headspace, but it will give you more efficiency in what you're doing to actually get things done. So, you have more time. It actually works like that.

Kareena: [00:17:26] With a strong understanding and appreciation of Yoga. Dustin shares how he transitioned from being a solo practitioner to sharing his love of the craft with others through teaching.

Dustin: [00:17:38] I did my first teacher training because I just wanted to know I was doing things right.

Kareena: [00:17:43] Okay, so it's to actually educate yourself?

Dustin: [00:17:45] Yeah. I didn't want to teach per say. I just knew that I had a feeling I was doing things wrong and like I said I was doing it every day. And jiu-jitsu is very technical, it's all about having correct technique. Whereas if you do something with incorrect technique it might kind of work but then people that are a high level will always escape. Say if I was trying to choke someone, if my grips are wrong or the technique isn't perfect like a couple of millimetres make the difference, if that's not right, that's the difference between me winning or losing or them tapping out or not. And so, in Yoga I was like, you know what, I know this is such a technical thing and the teachers are always talking about these techniques. I want to know that I'm doing it right so that I can improve my practice and be on the path. And so that's why I went did it. And after the first training I was like yeah, I need to share this with others. It was just a very powerful pull. And we just lead our first 200 Hour Teacher Training this year and graduated 20 new teachers.

Kareena: [00:18:46] Congrats. That's great!

Dustin: [00:18:47] Thank you. It's such a cool feeling. So many of them started for the same reason. They're like I just want to learn more about the practice and I'm like that's beautiful and all bar one was like I'm going to teach. I can't not teach, I have to teach. There's like this pole. So, it's one of those things when you feel that transformation in your life and not everybody wants to be a teacher, but they become raving fans. They just like you froth about Yoga. Maybe they're not teaching it but they're getting all their friends to do it and bringing them the classes. So, that's what it is. It's just these felt experiences that can't be denied, that are inherently human.

Kareena: [00:19:32] What makes a good teacher?

Dustin: [00:19:34] What makes a good teacher. I think there's a couple hallmarks but how they make you feel. How they look after the space, how they hold space, the environment in which they teach in. Like a good teacher is an extremely talented multitasker. They've got to be D.J., choreographer, lighting, sound and heating. All the things and then lead you through semi spiritual physical practice.

Kareena: [00:20:07] It is a lot.

Dustin: [00:20:08] So it's a little bit going on. And when people do teacher training one of the things that blows them away, they're like I had no idea there's this much thought process in between this sequence and what goes behind it. So, the way that we look for teachers is we like their classes. We do them and they resonate. Because there are so many different types of trainings out there and people have so many different backgrounds, it just really depends on them, their personality and what they're

bringing. So, all of the people that teach at Warrior One we feel we're on the same page. We have a similar ethos and we have a similar kind of idea of where and how we think that practice should be led and taught. And there are a few things that we just kind of ask them to do in studio. So that is, there's a few kinds of markers that are always hit and those markers are just really to look after people, to make sure the practice is safe, to make sure that's intelligent and that there's options for everyone so no one ever feels like they're left behind. We really look for teachers that know their, know their craft and embody it. I think that's what truly makes a good teacher. Like there's no rocket science to it. Its time spent on your mat practicing and practicing your teaching like teaching it's a skill.

Kareena: [00:21:22] It is. It Is a different skill.

Dustin: [00:21:25] That's something I am constantly working on like every class I have a performance marker for myself. Like I'm going to try and make this happen each and every time. Maybe that's assist each person or I'm gonna make sure that every person feels connected to or that I've looked after each person. Yeah, and that's my process but then there's Nova too. She's a little bit strict. She has a great eye and great taste. And it's the same thing. Just being on the same page. Usually the people that teach here they've practice here, and we have a relationship and then it just kind of naturally evolves.

Kareena: [00:22:00] That's always a nice way to do it too.

Dustin: [00:22:01] It's so nice. Yeah, we get a lot of emails and things like that and the first thing we say is we want to meet you. Come and experience our community, our studio, and see if it's a fit because like working at any place it might not be a fit.

Kareena: [00:22:14] Absolutely. Just because you do Yoga doesn't mean it's the right place for you.

Dustin: [00:22:17] Yeah, that's it. And so that's really it. We want to create a relationship and it to be like yes, you're awesome. We want to hang out with you and do your classes and our community will too. So that's just it.

Kareena: [00:22:30] Dustin shared with me that he often takes inspiration from his experiences in life and seeks to teach and share some of these lessons with those that attend his classes. We learned just how he applies his lessons and uses them to inspire others.

Dustin: [00:22:46] I read a lot of online content and you know there's inspiring posts on Instagram there's a couple of sites that I'm always looking at. Like one is called optimize.me and it's this philosopher who collects information and quotes and just has an awesome way of looking at the world and he always has these things called philosopher's notes and plus ones and they're just genius. And its excerpts from awesome books and amazing people and just to give you a perspective for each day and the whole perspective behind a plus one is each and every day you're one little

step in your knowledge and your understanding and what you're doing you're taking a step forward each and every day. So, I really get a lot from that and then I'm a Yoga book nerd anatomy nerd. I have all the books and I'm always going home and flicking through them and trying things and it's like a rabbit hole, it never ends. I've done a lot of training, read a lot of stuff, and I do not feel like I know much at all. I know a tiny bit. And I just scratched the surface because like with any one of the subjects in Yoga or anatomy or other things it's just like you could go so deep you could spend a lifetime on just one of the little aspects. So, that's another reason why it excites me. Just because there's so much depth to it there's always something to explore.

Kareena: [00:24:09] Absolutely. And how do you bring those lessons back into the class?

Dustin: [00:24:11] So, to weave those in I always try and make it fun but just bring it back to daily principles. Like gratitude is something I practice in my everyday life. Every morning I've a little gratitude journal that I do before I meditate and it's super simple it takes like 30 seconds if you wanted it to or if you wanted it to be 5 minutes it could take 5 minutes. I started my class today and you know I get people to do a little bit of movement, take a few breaths and sit and be still and I ask them to think about three things that they're grateful for and that's powerful. I think it's proven if you do that once a week your happiness goes up by 25%. If you think of 5 things, you're grateful for one time a week your happiness for the week goes up 25%. So, if you do that every single day, you're just boosting your happiness levels. The mind is so readily defaulted to a negative state. It's our instinct to look and look for what's wrong and I have to train myself when I get out of bed not to be like I ache, I feel this and start with that story because if I am honest, I'm sore and achy every day. Every time I get out of bed. So instead I start thinking what am I happy for. What do I have to look forward to today? What do I feel grateful for? And you start with these good feelings and the aches are still there. They're not disappearing but your mindset around them is very different and that's a catalyst for an awesome day and you just keep it going and it's like a snowball. It just keeps going and you start having these weeks where you have all these plus ones and you have all these things that you're appreciative of. And I think we all kind of know when we're in that state and that appreciation of state. It just keeps coming so more awesome stuff keeps coming. I think everyone wants to be around people like that, even if they're a little bit jealous that they're doing all this awesome stuff. If they're so grateful for it and just so lovely like you can't be mad at them or can't really be a hater right because you're just like I kind of want to but they're so nice. So, I think that's it. That's one way that I weave these things into the practice. That's one thing that I talk about a lot. But all of the things like I was saying before if I posted it on Instagram it's probably on my mind or something I'm currently working with my mindset, I'm working with myself. And, I don't post the negative stuff even if I have a bad day. I try and flip that story around and make it a positive thing and what can I learn from this experience to make it a good thing. And, that's been really helpful. You start having great weeks and great days.

Kareena: [00:26:46] Having developed a passion for teaching, we were curious as to what led Dustin & Nova down the more entrepreneurial path of opening

their own studio instead of simply teaching at another.

Dustin: [00:26:59] I was so into the jiu-jitsu part of the process, I was teaching jiu-jitsu. And, before I taught jiu-jitsu full time, I was a P.T. So, I've always been kind of coaching and teaching and in Hawaii I was a surf instructor and a kayaking guide and did like tours around the island and stuff like that. So yeah, teaching and conveying information and leading people is something that I've always kind of done and I've been in the service industry. In L.A. and in Hawaii and so working in a bar and waiting tables and that's all about customer service and you know just being you in front of people, pretty much, which teaching is. And so, that transition to teaching Yoga and opening the studio is just a natural evolution. I was teaching jiu-jitsu, I was teaching Yoga and me and Nova wanted to open and jiu-jitsu and Yoga studio. We're like we're going to call it Warrior One and it's gonna have jiu-jitsu in one room and Yoga in the other. And we went and chatted to some business advisors and they're like yeah do not do that. Whatever you do, don't do it. That's going to fail. Your business won't work. We're like okay.

Kareena: [00:28:16] Even the novelty of it.

Dustin: [00:28:18] I know I was like, but I love these things and it's gonna work. I'll teach everything and it's going to be great. They're like, yeah no, it'll confuse your market. Choose one and go all into that. And to be honest I was already teaching jiu-jitsu full time and I didn't. There's a lot of politics that go into jiu-jitsu like egos and you know there's just different things and although I love the sport, I saw opening a gym as a real labour of love that probably wouldn't have as many rewards as I would like. But then I looked at opening a Yoga studio with Nova and it's just like you're promoting nothing but positivity. You're making people feel good and that's the whole intention. It's like promote love and abundance. And we're like let's do that. And it's been so rewarding I cannot even tell you. It's been the best decision ever. Opening the studios, we've created a community where there was nothing. And a Yoga community here in Brighton and in Mordialloc and even though Mordialloc's new, it's growing so strong and it's so amazing to see these people coming every day and now they're friends with each other and everyone there is so inclusive and welcoming. They bring new people in there and they start chatting and they're like you gotta try these balls and do this, have you done this class, and it's just epic vibes. Me and Nova opened Brighton's studio that we're in now thinking that we weren't going to make any money.

Kareena: [00:29:53] Really?

Dustin: [00:29:55] We did the business plan and yeah, the numbers weren't good. And we're like let's just do it anyway. And Nova's dad was like well you know it's probably gonna be a really expensive hobby for three years. So, we signed a three-year lease and we did it anyways. We broke even within the first week. The first week we were in profit.

Kareena: [00:30:19] The first week, that's crazy! But that's incredible. What do you think was the reason behind that? What were some of the contributing

factors to that success.

Dustin: [00:30:31] My wife being on it. Nova's very into business and marketing and she's very intelligent. So, nothing to do with me. All Nova, 100%. I have the ability to teach and I love to practice and to kind of like convey my journey. So that works really well, and she loves business. And so, I'm so lucky that I have a partner that literally we are side by side in every sense of the word.

Kareena: [00:31:00] Sounds like a perfect partnership.

Dustin: [00:31:01] It is a really good partnership. I'm so lucky that she is my wife.

Kareena: [00:31:06] Dustin and Nova's partnership is definitely a reason for their incredible success but so is the amazing community that they've built behind their brand, business and beliefs. We wanted to find out how this dynamic duo has fostered and nurtured a community to be as strong as the one that we've witnessed at the Warrior One studios.

Dustin: [00:31:27] Such a great question. I don't know. No, you know what it is, it's just being in the studio and spending time and forming relationships with each person that comes in. Taking time to connect with them and actually ask them how they're doing and going above and beyond when it comes to looking after the client. When it comes to classes being missed and people's packs and stuff like that. I never thought there would be as much admin behind a Yoga studio. People are like all you do is just teach the classes and then like who is going to e-mail you. What do they need? You should see our email box, like Nova and our manager Alyssa also work all day doing emails and it's insane because the level of care they put in makes the difference and that helps the community as well because everyone walks in and walks out feeling looked after. We have an epic community of teachers that then bring their magic and put into each and every person in that same way. So yeah, that's why. You know, if you go to a place and it feels like home, you're looked after, you're nurtured and you can feel a shift and change in your body and you always feel this experience, you're going to want to be a part of that, it's pretty special.

Kareena: [00:32:34] Absolutely and share it with other people.

Dustin: [00:32:36] Yeah, and that's really it. Like we don't really. We need to do more marketing actually, we actually do. But word of mouth has been amazing, and it just spread really well, and I think because we are in business you know we make decisions. The filter is: are we coming from a place of love and abundance. When the decision is it's like someone's competing or we're doing a similar thing, are we competing each other. No, abundance, there's enough for everyone. And I think that's another reason why we've been successful and can't go wrong right if that's your filter. That's my thought process. Like that's a perfect filter, you can't go wrong as long as that's there.

Kareena: [00:33:18] Having successfully built a strong community in real life, Dustin also took to Instagram and began sharing his passion for Yoga with

others online. We found out how he started building his following on Instagram.

Dustin: [00:33:33] I had a jiu-jitsu Instagram and I was kind of anti for a while. I had Facebook when it first came out and then Instagram came out and I was like Instagram seems weird. And I resisted for a long time and then a bunch of my friends, we're at a jiu-jitsu competition in Abu Dhabi, and a lot of my international friends were like "oh I gotta get on this Instagram, we're all on there." That's how they were chatting. So, that's how I started Instagram. And I think in 2015, we're on a Yoga retreat in Thailand and my wife's like you need to switch it up and you need to start a Yoga one because your jiu-jitsu one is confusing people. And I had a lot of people in the jiu-jitsu one, but I started posting Yoga stuff and I started losing fans and I was just like, alright, I'll switch, and I made a Yoga one and started posting all my other stuff on that and then I made them separate. So, I still have the two. The jiu-jitsu one I don't post as much. I try to be a little bit active but it's more to chat with my jiu-jitsu friends. And then the Yoga one I post most days and that's where I put my stories and stuff like that because honestly that's where my life is, the direction I'm really headed and I'm always at the studios and always hanging out.

Kareena: [00:34:39] So, why Instagram?

Dustin: [00:34:40] Instagram just seemed like a creative outlet. You're always doing these poses and things like that and I started the Yoga one before I had much to promote. It's more just like oh this is fun and it's kind of cool and like I hadn't taken many photos of myself doing Yoga and you start to notice all that could be better, and it actually makes you a better practitioner and makes you more aware of how your body is in certain places. Things you think might have been happening and you see a photo you're like, hmm, yes that's way off, so I'll work on that. I'm part of a movement called Boys of Yoga. I'm one of the boys of Yoga. My friend Michael James Wong started it and they have a big Instagram following. But what it is, is just this intention to get more guys to try to practice and to understand that it's not just for women and that it's extremely beneficial and their tagline is: some people think that Yoga makes you less of a man and the truth is it makes you a better one.

Kareena: [00:35:38] I love that.

Dustin: [00:35:39] It's awesome. It truly does. And I know so many female practitioners that have husbands or fathers or male friends and they would get so much out of this but there's this misconception just like I had, that yeah that's not for me. And so yeah, it's a stigma I'm trying to kill. I want to kill that idea that you know it's not for me, it's for anyone and for everyone. And that beautiful part, there truly is a style that will benefit every single person. There's Yin Yoga for people that may have disabilities or injuries that's just a beautiful practice and even for people that aren't injured, that are just tight, it's so meditative and grounding. Movement is medicine and when we can move it allows us to tap into what's going on inside and this conversation with self is what I think we need to cultivate on a deeper level. You can't truly love other people if you don't love yourself and haven't connected inwards.

Kareena: [00:36:41] So what other messages are you trying to communicate through the platform?

Dustin: [00:36:44] So I use it to promote Yoga. It's connecting me with international people. It's connecting me with people even in Melbourne that might have known about me and they're like "Oh, I came to your class because I saw you on Instagram. You do jiu-jitsu and I do jiu-jitsu and Yoga sounds great. I'm gonna try it." And so that's really awesome. I use it to promote my offerings and the studio offerings and the things that we're doing. And just positivity and mindset is something I'm trying to promote on there. In the future I'd like to do more educational stuff. As far as the practice cause I'm reading lots and I'm constantly having these inspirations and I want to share those in a more visual way. I think more videos and educational stuff would be a really strong way to step it up. And I find when I do video content it does extremely well. It's just that I'm not as comfortable with that. It's just like with a camera just practice but yeah not as comfortable so I need to practice that.

Kareena: [00:37:45] Dustin leaves us with a few final pieces of advice when it comes to starting Yoga or even launching your own Yoga business.

Dustin: [00:37:53] Okay, to start Yoga, just start. Just go to any class. Don't be scared. Look into the teacher who's teaching it. Go to someone that resonates with you that you think you know, if you're a dude go to a guy's class that looks like he might have similar interests. Or try any class and if it isn't for you try a different one and try a different one. Don't go to one class ever and be like that was horrible, that was super weird and never go back because that is a possibility. Knowing that there's so many different personalities, there's so many different teachers, and levels of teaching and experiences. Don't judge off the first one because I'm lucky I had someone I resonated with, but they weren't my favourite teacher, I just did what they said, and I felt really good. So, I think that makes a difference. Find a teacher that you resonate with and they'll just make the experience awesome. Someone that looks after you.

Kareena: [00:38:44] And how about starting their own business?

Dustin: [00:38:44] Starting your own business. Same. Pick one thing that you're passionate about. Don't do these multiple offerings. And even in the studio like as a business owner, make your offering clear of what it is. You look on the menu of some places and they offer like 20 styles of Yoga. What am I going to pick? I don't know. There are so many options you know. So, there's so many awesome business incubators and programs out there to educate before business. Yoga business is a business. And although you need to come from this heartfelt space and stay connected to that, it is a business and you have to be intelligent with what you do, otherwise it won't work. And that's just it. So be intelligent. Go for it.

Kareena: [00:39:31] Yeah, brilliant.

Dustin: [00:39:31] That's my advice. Go for it!

Kareena: [00:39:35] And that brings us to the end of our interview Loopers. Thank you for joining us and a big thank you to Dustin for taking the time to chat with us and share his story. If you want to continue learning more about Dustin's journey all the links to Dustin's social pages and studios will be included in our show descriptions. So be sure to check them out. We would love to know what you thought of this latest episode. So be sure to give us a shout out on Instagram by tagging us @loop.app in your story and we'll even re-share it to our page. As always, we'd love to hear your feedback so let us know what you thought of this latest episode by leaving us a star rating or review. And remember we don't want you to miss out, so be sure to subscribe to our podcast so you can get notified every time we release a new episode. Tune in again next week when we share a new episode of In the Loop and chat about the business end of being an influencer. Catch you then!