

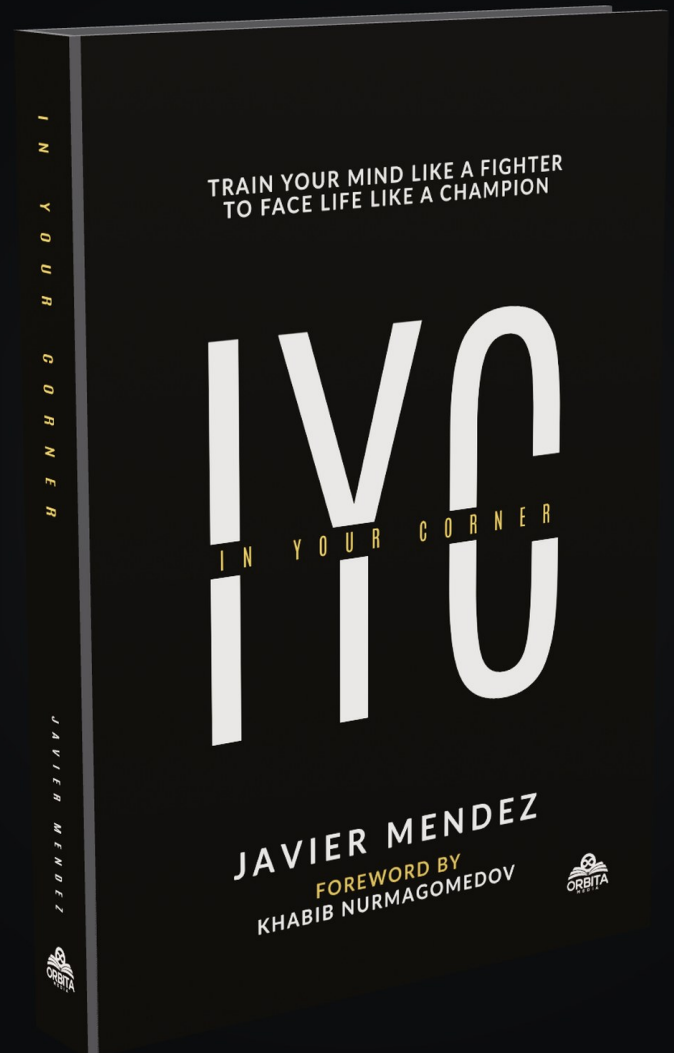
FOREWORD BY KHABIB NURMAGOMEDOV

In Your Corner

Train your mind like a fighter.
Face life like a champion.

Javier Mendez

Founder and head coach, American Kickboxing Academy



PUBLICATION

October 22, 2026

EDITION

Hardcover, English
6 × 9 in (US) · A5 (Europe)

PRICE

Hardcover \$34.99
E-book \$14.99



PRESS RELEASE · HAMBURG, SEPTEMBER 2026

The coach behind Khabib Nurmagomedov shows how champions are built.

On October 22, 2026, Orbita Media publishes *In Your Corner* by Javier Mendez, founder and head coach of the American Kickboxing Academy (AKA) in San Jose, California. The foreword is written by Khabib Nurmagomedov, who came to Mendez as a young fighter from Dagestan in 2012 and left the UFC undefeated at 29-0.

For more than four decades, Mendez has stood in his fighters' corner. Alongside Khabib, he has guided Islam Makhachev, Daniel Cormier, Cain Velasquez and Luke Rockhold through their title fights; in 2015, three of his fighters held UFC titles in three weight classes.

The book's message reaches far beyond the cage: champions aren't born, they're built. What carries a fighter through the weeks before a title fight helps just as much for everyone who will never fight – through setbacks, illness or a fresh start. *In Your Corner* shows where that mindset comes from and how to train it.

The English edition is published on October 22, 2026 in hardcover (\$34.99), 6 × 9 in for the US and A5 for Europe, and as an E-book (\$14.99 during the presale, \$19.99 afterwards), available at inyourcornerbook.com. A German edition is in preparation. Javier Mendez is available for interviews in English: by video at any time, in person by arrangement.

AT A GLANCE

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Orbita Media GmbH, Hamburg

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AVAILABLE AT

inyourcornerbook.com

INTERVIEWS

in English, by video or in person

“As hard as it hits, life is not your enemy. It's a special, sacred opportunity to be brave enough to face what's in front of you.”

JAVIER MENDEZ, IN YOUR CORNER

THE BOOK

A training plan for the toughest fight: life.

In Your Corner is about the toughest fight of all, life – and about the mindset it takes to get through it. The promise is simple: the discipline that carries a fighter through a title camp carries anyone through self-doubt, failure, loss or a fresh start.

The book is built like a fight camp: 18 chapters, called rounds, in three parts. Each one starts from a true story and turns it into a lesson for everyday life: how to commit to a decision, how to work with fear instead of against it, how to build habits that hold when motivation is gone, and how to tell confidence from ego.

WHAT READERS CAN EXPECT

- › A book that tells rather than lectures – and ends every chapter with a takeaway for everyday life.
- › Chapters on discipline, purpose, fear, habits and resilience.
- › The raw story of an immigrant kid from Mexico who became coach to world champions.

WHO IT'S FOR

Dreamers, doers and anyone facing their own fight – an illness, a setback, a goal or a fresh start. No combat sports experience required.

FROM THE BACK COVER

**OUTFIGHT.
OUTLAST.
OVERCOME.**

FROM THE FOREWORD

“Many understand technique well. Many know how to prepare an athlete physically. But not many are capable of preparing a person mentally. Javier could do both.”

**KHABIB NURMAGOMEDOV, FOREWORD TO IN
YOUR CORNER**

“If I had to name one reason to read this book, I’d put it this way: it shows what a true mentor should be. In today’s world, many people want to lead others. Few are willing to serve others. Javier has always been exactly that kind of man.”

**KHABIB NURMAGOMEDOV, FOREWORD TO IN
YOUR CORNER**



THE AUTHOR

Javier Mendez

Founder and head coach of AKA

Javier Mendez comes from Tangancícuaro in the Mexican state of Michoacán and moved to the United States with his family as a child, growing up in San Jose, California. He started martial arts in 1978 and kickboxing in 1985, and became a two-time ISKA world champion (1992 and 1995).

Also in 1985 he founded the American Kickboxing Academy in San Jose and built it into one of the most successful gyms in combat sports: MMA Junkie named AKA Gym of the Year in 2015, Combat Press in 2018. The MMA press calls it the “House of Champions”.

He worked closely with Khabib’s father and longtime coach Abdulmanap Nurmagomedov. MMA Junkie named him, together with Khabib, 2022 Coach of the Year. In *In Your Corner* he tells his own story and what more than four decades in the corner have taught him.

ORIGIN	Tangancícuaro, Michoacán (Mexico)
AS A FIGHTER	two-time ISKA kickboxing world champion (1992, 1995)
FOUNDED	American Kickboxing Academy, San Jose, 1985
AWARD	2022 Coach of the Year (MMA Junkie, shared with Khabib Nurmagomedov)
REACH	around 900,000 followers on Instagram (@akajav)
BASED IN	San Jose, California

“Not from above. From your corner.”

IN YOUR CORNER, ABOUT THE AUTHOR

IN HIS CORNER

Fighters he has shaped and who appear in the book.

Khabib Nurmagomedov

LIGHTWEIGHT

Undefeated at 29-0. UFC lightweight champion, UFC Hall of Fame since 2022.

Daniel Cormier

TWO DIVISIONS

UFC champion at light heavyweight and heavyweight, UFC Hall of Fame since 2022.

Luke Rockhold

MIDDLEWEIGHT

UFC middleweight champion, previously Strikeforce middleweight champion.

Cung Le

STRIKEFORCE

Strikeforce middleweight champion.

Islam Makhachev

WELTERWEIGHT

UFC welterweight champion, previously lightweight champion.

Cain Velasquez

HEAVYWEIGHT

Two-time UFC heavyweight champion.

Frank Shamrock

UFC

First champion of the UFC's original middleweight division, with four title defenses.

Josh Thomson

STRIKEFORCE

Strikeforce lightweight champion.

Two of them wrote about their coach for the back cover of the book. Khabib Nurmagomedov speaks for himself in the foreword.

"There are many great coaches in the world, but I don't know that many of them compare to Javier Mendez. He gave me the confidence and calmness to go and become a world champion. I could not have picked a better person to walk to war with me every single time."

DANIEL CORMIER · UFC HALL OF FAMER

"Behind every champion is someone who believes in them when no one else does. Javier has been that person for me and my brothers in the gym. I'm proud to call him my coach, my mentor."

ISLAM MAKHACHEV · TWO-DIVISION UFC
WORLD CHAMPION

INSIDE THE BOOK

18 rounds in three parts.

The book is structured like a fight camp: its 18 chapters are called rounds. Each one is grounded in a true story and sharpens one part of the champion mindset.

PART 1 · FIGHTER

01 **Climb the Willow**
The courage to take the step and commit.

03 **More Than Water**
The champion's path is the path of most resistance.

05 **Glassworks**
Discovering all the things that aren't you.

07 **The Belt & the Bar**
Bridging external rewards and internal motivation.

02 **Why We Fight**
Rooting yourself in what keeps you standing.

04 **Opportunity Knocks**
Listening for opportunity. All it does is whisper.

06 **Mentally Undefeated**
We never fail. We try again. We keep fighting.

PART 2 · COACH

08 **The Ultimate Fighter**
Facing the ultimate fighter: fear.

10 **Achilles' Heel**
We weigh victory against the person in the mirror.

12 **Fighter Foresight**
Habits see the future. Good ones beget themselves.

09 **Game Plan**
Crafting a game plan from the original expert.

11 **Sharpen Your Queen**
Find your strongest weapon – then sharpen it.

13 **Team Is the Habit**
The greatest habit for success is a team beside you.

PART 3 · LEGACY

14 **Father's Plan**
Give credit where it's due. Own your setbacks.

16 **Noise, Nerves, Nada**
It's you vs. you. Stay clear. Never fight angry.

18 **Live, Don't Exist**
The best we do in life is what we inspire in others.

15 **Ultra-Athlete Breakdown**
The difference between confidence and ego.

17 **The Only Warden**
There is a time limit on everything.

EXCERPT

Round 1

Climb the Willow

“Relax. This is your fight. You set the pace.”

I said it quietly, but loud enough for Islam to hear over the roar of the crowd. He stood a couple of feet ahead of me in the walkout tunnel. His shoulders squared, gloves tapping together, eyes fixed on the bright lights spilling in from the arena. The floor shook from the crowd above us – feet stomping so loud and fast that you could feel it in your ribs.

It was September 2019, UFC 242: Khabib vs. Poirier.

[...]

THE WILLOW TREE

When I was five years old, the willow tree towered over me. It felt like a skyscraper. This mess of hanging branches blocking the sun. I stood beneath it, barefoot in the schoolyard, my toes digging in the dirt. Sweat rolled down my back as I craned my neck to try and take it all in. I was nervous as hell. Scared. Because behind me, my teacher stood – arms crossed, angry – waiting for me to make a move.

“Go ahead, Javier,” she said in Spanish. “Climb.”

This was 1965, in Tangancícuaro, my hometown in Michoacán, Mexico.

[...]

Find a good, solid branch ... so she could whip me with it.

[...]

This is my earliest memory. And, to this day, it's what I remember as my first fight.

I lost.

FIGHT CONTROL

The willow tree was the very first ring I ever stepped into, and the crowd watched as I climbed, knowing that what came next would hurt me. I knew pain was coming, but I had to find it in myself to face it anyway.

From the opening chapter. Omissions are marked [...].

STORY ANGLES AND INTERVIEWS

What Javier Mendez can talk about.

01

Khabib writes the foreword

The most private star of modern MMA puts his name behind the book of the coach he came to as a young fighter from Dagestan in 2012.

02

Champions aren't born, they're built

Mendez on talent and preparation – and why fights are often lost before anyone steps into the cage.

03

The toughest opponent is life

How fight-camp discipline carries over to self-doubt, setbacks, loss and fresh starts – for everyone who will never stand in a cage.

04

From immigrant kid to coach of world champions

A childhood in Michoacán and San Jose, a road through a kickboxing world title to his own academy – and what shaped him along the way.

INTERVIEWS

LANGUAGE	English
BY VIDEO	any time, by arrangement
IN PERSON	by arrangement
FORMATS	interviews, podcasts, guest contributions

ENQUIRIES

Interviews, images and questions:

press@inyourcornerbook.com

Cover, portraits and logos to download.

All files in original resolution, one click away. Free of charge for editorial coverage of the book.

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Both press kits, front and back cover, four portraits and two logos. ZIP · 7.7 MB

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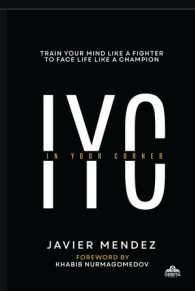
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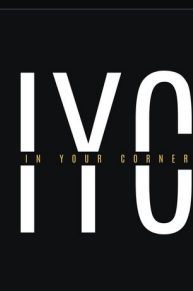
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OVERVIEW

The book at a glance.

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GERMAN EDITION	in preparation
CATEGORY	Self-help · Mindset · Combat sports

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IVC
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