



Episode 207 – Why There Is No Other Way | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey what's going on everybody, this is episode 207 of [whistlekickMartialArtsradio](http://whistlekickMartialArtsradio.com). My name is Jeremy Lesniak, I want to thank you for stopping by I've got to be honest, sometimes it's a little surprising to me when I say the episode number two hundred and seven I've done these two hundred and seven times and there's no sign of stopping because you all keep listening in fact more people listen. Every week then the week before the show continues to grow and that blows me away and I'm completely humbled and thankful so thanks for being here. On today's episode, I'm going to talk about well how do I phrase this simply, people's belief that there is only one right way. It drives me crazy. If you want to find any of the other episodes that we've done you can find those at whistlekickMartialArtsradio.com. If you want to find the great products we make and ties, links to other stuff that we do martial arts memes and the calendar and all that that's at whistlekick.com. No punctuation, no spaces and if you look closely we never even capitalize whistlekick because there is humility even in our company name.

Alright, today's episode this is one that I've been struggling to find a way to express [01:28](#). I have been trying to find the right form to convey this and I might get a little heated, I am going to try not to swear if I do you'll hear that I cut it out because we don't swear on this show at least not usually. I would if I could because it makes me angry it makes me really angry when I see this stuff. If you haven't noticed before if you've been listening to the show for a little while, I absolutely love



Episode 207 – Why There Is No Other Way | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

martial arts. I love what martial arts has done for me and for so many others. And one of the things that whistlekick's founded on is the belief that martial arts should play a bigger role in the world that martial arts does so much wonderful stuff for people as individuals that the world would be a better place if everyone was training. Even if people train just for 6-12 months of their lives if everyone trained I believe the world would be a better place and that's belief that most of our guest when I've asked them that question has agreed yes, the world would be better if were all training or at least trained for a little while. And yet the biggest issues, the things that hold us back from growing as a martial arts realm because I don't quite like the word community for this. It's us, we're holding it back, we're the culprits, and we've talked about this on other episodes, for example how to help people choose the right martial arts school and things like that.

I'm part of a number of Facebook groups and I get tagged in things and people shoot me stuff and I have conversations with people at competitions at seminars and one of the things that is just driving me nuts lately and continues to drive me crazier and crazier are these keyboard warriors, these individuals who sit there and say that what other people are doing is wrong and that there's only one right way and it's their way. How arrogant can you be? These people actually believe that, there is now right way and I'm not going to stop the episode there because you deserve an explanation, maybe you're not quite on board with what I'm saying. When I say there is no right way, here's what I mean. If I value self-defense skills, if that's the reason that I come to martial arts it's the most important aspect of my training then yes, there is some training styles there are some methodologies that are better at supporting that value if I value self-defense and I am training in a soft tai chi style as the way tai chi is traditionally taught in the United States, that's probably not the best choice. But by the same token if I value say physical conditioning, personal development, getting out of the house, spend some time with my friends then that tai chi might be the best option for me. Especially when I consider the options of my geographical area the way it fits into my life the financial implications. For someone to say that what this person is doing is not martial arts or what this person is doing excuse me is wrong that's such utter BS it's so selfish. And what I think a lot of people forget is that these conversations are not within boundaries they leak out, they create this my martial art is better than your martial art which has become such a cliché that it is in martial arts movies it's kind of, it's one of the cliché plots to old kung fu movies, my master is better than your master. That crap I hate it, and now here we are it's 2017 and we still do this stuff, why? How many people out there would love to be full time martial arts instructors but look around and complain that there aren't enough people that are interested in martial arts. This is one of the repercussions, this is the consequence of all of our in fighting, all of our commentary that you just did that wrong, this isn't right. Right and wrong can only be applied when we talk about values. Values are not the same for everyone. I live out in the woods, because I value privacy and quiet and nature and animals, you might live in the middle of New York City, does that mean you're right for living there and I'm wrong for living here? Or vice versa, no. I've made the decision that is right for me, you've made the decision that is right for you, martial arts is the same damn thing. I train in a way that works for me, you train in the way that works for you, hopefully somebody else, hopefully



Episode 207 – Why There Is No Other Way | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

is training in the way that works best for them, every martial arts argument I see online, the majority I hear in person it comes down to people having a difference in value and they don't discuss it. Let's start giving people the benefit of the doubt. Let's assume, people are training for the right reasons, the reasons that work for them, the reasons that make them better at something. Stop assuming that the things you were taught were taught to everyone. Guess what, if you do a form one way, and another school does the same form differently even if it's the same style, even if both instructors learn that form from the same teacher. One of them is not wrong, the right and the wrong when it comes to the application of technique or the presentation of forms it's a myth it does not exist. Now maybe within your school, your instructor says this is the correct way to do something, because that is the value that they've ascribed to it. They have decided this is the version of the form that we do in this school and if you value training there, then you should do that. But that does not mean, that the school the next town over, even if they are in the same martial arts system if they're doing it a little bit differently, that doesn't make it wrong, it makes it different and our difference need to stop being held up as falsehoods and with criticism and instead celebrated, because it's the differences that allow us to grow as martial artists and compare notes and become better. If you've attended a martial arts seminar where you know a bunch of different people from different styles are training these kinds of mixed events which frankly are my favorite events. That's where so much growth happens, I love seeing instructors admittedly not all of them do this you know 2 or 3 of them go off in a corner and they are comparing notes, well this is how we do this well this is how we do this. You know it doesn't turn into an argument but one of them may come back and say, I like that, I'm going to adjust to what I'm doing in this way because that seems to work better for me. Does that mean what they were doing all this time was wrong, no, because right and wrong are the absolute ends of a spectrum where nothing in martial arts really exists. We have this grey area and that's where we all are, we're trying to move as close to that right end for us as possible. But you can only do that once you've decided on what is valuable to you so it can guide your training. Martial arts has always evolved, it's going to continue to evolve, it will grow and change and morph because it's alive. This thing that we do that we love so much, this is not something that just exist on paper, this is why learning martial arts from a book is so hard because it can't be contained in that way. There's a lot more to it in the punches and the kicks and the blocks and set patterns of repetition and how we spar and weapons. There's a spirit to it and in many styles many schools that's discussed, whether that's budo or bushido I apologize I don't know the names for the things outside of Japanese and karate but those spiritual aspects not spiritual as in religion but spiritual as in the concepts the things we do as martial arts have spirit, there is an element in there and if you've been training a long time you know what I'm talking about. It's bigger than you and me and honestly everyone that is currently doing martial arts and ever has, because it exists outside of that and it will continue to grow and evolve for that reason. If you refuse to accept that if you feel like what you've learned is the pinnacle of martial arts well then, you're done training, what's the point, why go ahead put your black belt in the closet because I'm sure you're a blackbelt, I'm sure you're a 9th or 10th degree maybe you started your own style and you're a 12th degree black belt and you know everything okay cool. I have no desire to even have a conversation



Episode 207 – Why There Is No Other Way | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

with you. If you're the type that's going to referee at a tournament and you're going to score a forms competitor lower because they did the form differently than you were taught which used to happen to me and I, had I not been a teenager I would have gone off because I had people tell me this. You're part of the problem, assuming that your way is the only way, is one of the most arrogant things I can imagine, I hate it. It makes me angry, it makes me livid, if you already know everything, then you know why would you be listening to this show. Go away, no you will never be a guest, I will not give attention to the arrogant fools that hold back this thing that I love so much. I owe my life to the martial arts and so do many, many others in various ways, whether that is their biological life or what has guided them through their life, I'm the latter. You don't deserve to be called a martial artist, because the martial artist loves the martial arts, they don't just do it. And someone that loves something will help foster its growth, to say that your way is the only way, that doesn't foster any growth for you or for anyone else. Martial arts is alive yes it really is and it is our responsibility as martial artists to nurture it, to care for it and for all the people that are training and to preserve the integrity of it for the people that will train in the future. That doesn't mean that it can't evolve it can't grow, I think a lot of us engaged in Asian martial arts can take a really hard lesson from the historical European martial arts stuff going on right now. It died out, because weaponry changed, but now there's a whole community digging back into it, they're enjoying that exploration, that training. Well the same will happen to some of the things that we do now it is entirely possible that in 200 years that karate or taekwondo has fallen away and it's practiced by a small group and maybe it'll expand out again and then will contract because all arts do. If we look at any artistic pursuit, whether it's painting or styles of music, they have their heyday and then they fade and then sometimes they come back. It doesn't matter, worry about how you can make yourself better if you have students or peers, how can you make them better because by extension, you're helping the martial arts get better and you're setting up this thing that we love, cause I'm going to assume now that about 15mins in you love this stuff otherwise you wouldn't hear me complaining about it this long. If you love this stuff, let's help it survive for the next generation. And if you have that much time to tear down other people then you have time to go back and train more and wouldn't that be time better spent. If you can't contain your judgement keep it private, worry about you. [15:53](#)

I want to thank you for listening today, I want to thank you for indulging me as I got this out. There have been a couple of days lately where I have just been fuming at my keyboard as I see people tearing other people down and some of you may see me in those groups because I am the first person to stand up and say, there is no right way. We have to assume the best of each other, we have to assume that if someone does something differently something that seems offensive to you, assume that they were taught that that's wrong. Maybe instead of judging them, condemning them for their actions, you can have a conversation with them. Maybe you'll learn something.

Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day.



Episode 207 – Why There Is No Other Way | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com