



Episode 217 – Top 5 Wrong with Martial Artists | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hello and welcome this [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio) episode 217. Today I'm going to give you my feelings on the topic 5 things we do wrong as martial artists it's not top 10 because there's not that much we're doing wrong, but they're kind of big things, talk about them in a minute. If you're new to the show you might want to check out [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) you can sign up for the newsletter there you can check out everything else that we've got the other 216 episodes man it is really cool to be able to talk about this show in this way. Sometimes I'll meet people and they'll say "hey what do you do?" and I tell them and they say "oh who long have you been doing that?" "how many episodes are you on?" when I tell them their eyes get kind of big because you know what most podcasts don't even make it to episode 10 and we've made it all the way into the 200s that's because of you. Yeah, I make the show and I've got some help on the back end now but if it wasn't for you folks? I would be a crazy guy talking to a microphone. That's not really that fun. If you want to check out the rest of the stuff that we're doing, the best place for that is [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com), that's got our store it's got links to all the other projects that we're involved in, cool stuff coming out all the time we are constantly looking at how to make your life better as a martial artist and there we are.

Did I tell you who I was? I don't think I did, I'm Jeremy, Jeremy Lesniak, I'm the founder of [whistlekick](http://whistlekick), [whistlekickmartialarts](http://whistlekickmartialarts) sparring gear and apparel and I'm doing this one really off the



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cuff. I've got some very short notes here and I kind like doing that. Those of you that have been around for a while now know that I used to write out every episode and I read it and that was not as fun. I like going off the cuff I like giving you guys the raw version of my thoughts and the feedback has been better, people seem to like that. But enough rambling here it is the top 5 things that we do wrong as martial artists.

Number 5, we do a bad job of marketing ourselves accurately. Ooh what does that mean? It means that we focus on the benefits for kids. Which also means we don't get nearly as many adults. I would love to see a survey of how many adults in the martial arts started as children. Many of them probably took a break, we just did an episode on taking breaks, didn't we? But, how many do we have starting as adults, not too many. And I really feel strongly that's because all of the marketing that we're doing targets children. Be better at school, learn discipline, learn to respect your elders. That's not the marketing message an adult wants to hear, we keep beating that same drum over and over and over again. What do adults want to hear? Adults want to hear that martial arts training is going to make them a better parent, or a better boss, a better employee. It'll help them in their career, it'll make them better in their other sports their other athletic pursuits, it'll keep them healthier. That's the stuff that they want to hear, when was the last time you saw a martial arts advertising that talked about that. I'm sure it's out there, I'm sure somebody's out there with it. If you have ads like that please send them in, I want to share them, I've never seen it. There are lots of things about martial artist that resonate with adults, making new friends, that's really hard as an adult especially if you don't have kids, I'm raising my hand. Most of my friends come from my martial artist classes that I attend. I love meeting new people. I love not sitting at home by myself. Training martial arts can help you do that, we should talk about that we should put that in our advertising.

Number 4, the infighting the division, my art is better than your art stuff, ugh I'm sick of that. You all know how sick of that I am, this tearing each other down this constant need to make a new style of martial artist a substyle well, that weakens the parent style and it confuses the rest of the world. It confuses martial artists, it confuses non-martial artists. You know if we look way back, maybe not way back, if we look back the founders of what are generally accepted as the pioneering styles of modern karate they didn't care about the names of their style in fact we've got some writing indicating that they didn't even want their name associated with it. They don't even want it, the style [05:25](#) but that's not what we do today. All they were trying to do was [05:34](#), because if you don't have stuff structured in some way it's really hard to teach it's easy to miss content and not pass on the full extent. Well now we've got all these divisions and quite often the divisions aren't really that different, they're different in single digit percentages maybe 1 or 2% quite often, because someone sees something that they have to do a little bit differently so now it necessitates a new style. That may seem trivial to you but, that is not trivial to the way martial arts is organized



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perceived in the world and perceived to ourselves. How about those armchair black belts, those folks that say that would never work. Don't all those start with their credentials? I have black belt in this, I've been training in this long and blah bidi blah bidi blah makes us look bad. It's the same thing, where's the sport, where's the lifting up of each other? If you see a thread on Facebook on some social media site, tearing that stuff down, there's a good chance that you'll see me jumping in to counter that. Not because I believe necessarily what the person is saying is wrong, not that that technique may actually be effective, it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter to me. What matters is the way we conduct ourselves among ourselves.

Number 3, we don't know how to teach, martial artists are generally, generally I'm not saying every bun, don't get bad. Martial artists are generally terrible at teaching martial arts. Knowing how to do something and how to teach something are so completely different. I've known people that are great at doing things and terrible at teaching it and I've known the opposite. I've known people that are very poor at doing certain things, but they're wonderful instructors, that extends to martial arts and non-martial arts. We spend a lot more time on how to do something rather than how to teach it. There are some schools that have some tracks, separate classes here's how you teach things, that's great, that should happen. The reason most martial arts instructors are able to keep students around? Is because of their passion, it's not their teaching [08:34](#). People will overlook certain things for other certain things and if you're a passionate instructor you can get away with teaching poorly. The best way to become a better teacher is to remain a student, to train under others. It doesn't have to be martial arts, but everyone should be looking to learn how do you get better at life? How do you learn new things? Well you can attend martial arts classes but you can also attend any other kind of classes. Learning how to make pottery in a class is going to make you a better martial arts instructor if you keep your eyes open to the way that the pottery teacher is teaching the class. Teaching is teaching, I could teach just about anything if I have a rudimentary knowledge of the subject because I have spent a lot of time learning how to teach. I've been blessed, I've had some people really take me under their wing and show me how to teach things. And I've been blessed to train in a lot of different martial arts schools, and learn a lot of different things from a lot of different people. I'm sure returning listeners have picked up the fact that I love to learn. It's kind of hard to love to learn and not at some point pick up things to do when you're teaching and things not to do when you're teaching. Have you ever had a review? Have you ever had someone come in from another school and say here's what you could do differently and maybe offer back to them feedback is important and if we let go our ego enough to say I want to get better, well then there you go. You could video yourself and watch it uhh that would be the worst, wouldn't it? Why? Because we don't want to see the mistakes that we're making.

Number 2, resistance to change. The world is changing, and martial artists don't seem to want to accept that. The content of the martial arts doesn't have to change but the way we relate to it does,



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the way we teach it has to. People are different now than they were 5, 10, 20 years ago, we need to accept that. If you refuse to accept that, I'm going to say you are not the best martial artist you could be. Martial artists, we generally consider ourselves observant, don't we? Self-defense requires being observant, get to keeping yourself out of bad situations, seeing what's going on in the midst of a bad situation, we pride ourselves on that. So, self-defense requires seeing what is going on. We have to see the world for what it is, not the way it used to be, not what we want it to be. Beating that drum this is what should be rather than what is, is just foolish. It's counter to being a martial artist, at the end of the day we just sound like grumpy old man sitting on the porch complaining about the best days having gone by. How does that help anyone? That doesn't encourage people to come train with you, that doesn't encourage people to seek out your knowledge. When I look at martial arts and I look at all of the great stuff going on today new science, new evidence I'm excited. There are things that I see coming from my education with biomechanics and the things that I learn out of gymnastics and cross fit that make my martial arts better. I actually see things in martial arts that I think may have always been there and maybe they skip some generations or maybe my instructors didn't have them but to me it's new. And that's really cool, that's fun for me to adapt to adjust my martial arts training my curriculum my personal style and get better with it. This doesn't mean abandoning the old, but sometimes just reframing it. We have new knowledge of the way brain injuries happen now, it changes the way we keep our students safe in terms of equipment, in terms of what we allow for techniques and wear. That's a good thing, there's plenty more. I could probably do a class on, not a class, an episode are these episodes classes? I don't think so, but trying to present them in that way. But there's so much out there, so much science going on right now about the way everything happens, the way nutrition happens the way the body works. I'm overwhelmed just thinking about that, how can we not consider that new knowledge how can we not incorporate that into who we are and what we do and how we do it.

Finally, number 1, some of you may have guessed it, the number 1 thing wrong with the martial artists is too much ego. Ego within the martial arts is such a cliché that it pops up in the cheesiest of kung fu movies and it's in the jokes that we tell. We all know it, the world sees it, it's not okay. And it holds us back. It does seem to be different in different parts of the world when I talk to the international guests, they don't seem to feel that it's as big of a deal outside of the us. I hope that's true and maybe here in the us we'll catch up. I dug into this a bit on episode 207 why there was no right way because that's really what ego is, ego is saying this is the right way, this is the best way. There is no other way and that's just wrong. All of these 5 suggestions? Problems? Kind of interweave and that's why it's 5 and not 10 because it's really hard to split these up. The more we can improve all of these stuff that I've mentioned today the better we'll all be, the better we'll be as martial artists, the better the martial arts will be, the better a teacher you'll be, the more people



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coming I. All of the things that hopefully you want to see happen, the things that I want to see happen with the martial arts checks all those boxes. I'm asking you as a listener to help me, help make this change in the world. The more students we have, the better the world, receives us, it's all good stuff. Maybe we'll be more likely to get a non-comedic reference on sitcom or pop culture. I want the world to see the martial arts as something wonderful and only wonderful. Let's squash out the bad stuff. The more martial arts will grow in the world as that happens and that is my goal. I hope that's something important to you too.

We'd love to hear your thoughts, you can get to me email [jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremy@whistlekick.com). If you want to get us on social media you can find the Facebook group [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio](#) behind the scenes, you can leave a comment on the Facebook [whistlekick](#) site, twitter, YouTube, Instagram or at [whistlekick](#). I thank you for your time, I thank you being here until the next episode, train hard, smile have a great day.