



Episode 261 – Diversity vs Mastery in Martial Arts | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello and good day to you. Welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio episode 261. Today we're going to tackle the topic, the deliberation between training in multiple styles versus mastering a single style. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host for the show, I'm the founder of a whistlekick sparring gear apparel and all the other things you can find at whistlekick.com. You check out the show notes for this, the other 260 episodes, sign up for newsletter and do a bunch of other cool stuff at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. That is our online home, it's where we post photos and videos related to the episodes, links, transcripts and a whole bunch of other stuff. For our guest shows our Monday releases, it's where we have links to their social media, their websites and all the other things that you might be interested in as a listener to the show and I want to thank you for being a listener to the show, thanks for stopping by and checking out the things that we do here, the ramblings that come out of my face every Thursday. It's not always ramblings, sometimes we have roundtable, sometimes we do some other stuff and sometimes listeners write in and say, hey, I was thinking about this, what do you think? Often times, I will write back with an email but sometimes those suggestions those questions make wonderful topics for these Thursday shows and that's what we have today the title of today's episode is diversity versus mastery in training and of course we mean in martial arts training.

So, let's talk about what I mean by those two words, diversity versus mastery. Diversity is training in a bunch of different things. I don't mean training in forms and sparring and weapons and basics, I mean



Episode 261 – Diversity vs Mastery in Martial Arts | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

training in shorin ryu karate and wtf tae kwon do and Brazilian jujitsu. Different styles, completely different ways of looking at the martial paradox. Mastery, on the other hand is remaining in the same style not necessarily but possibly the same school under the same teacher or teachers for a long period of time. And for those of you that don't like the word mastery in this context, competency is probably the best substitution. But, competency didn't really make for great show title, did it? Now, I would say these are two ends of the spectrum, the idea of training in a bunch of different things, in different places under different people, versus staying in one school, one instructor, one style for your entire martial arts path career. Very few of us are on those endpoints of the spectrum and I would say, none of us unless we train for short period of time, really are on any on either end of that spectrum because if your training diversely, you're probably trying to become at least competent in some of the things that you're doing and if you are seeking mastery of a single style, you're probably gonna learn some things from somebody else in some external place from your homeschool at some time along the way. Now training in both of these ways diversely and for mastery are important, novice students aren't going to do their best, aren't gonna receive the best education if there being exposed to a bunch of different things from day one. Very few schools are going to bring in a new student and teach them 30 different techniques in their first day. Silly. Teach them a few. Most schools are going to teach them a handful of techniques enough to keep them interested yet not so many that they are able to apply some focus to each. The fewer things that have our attention, the more effort and energy each one receives and that's good, that's important especially when you're adding something new to your life whether that's martial arts or something else. But as we progress diversity in our training helps us better relate to some of the concepts that are so important in martial arts. When we can look at those concepts in multiple ways even if, you know, from multiple styles, multiple instructors, it helps us to understand anyone that's ever been an instructor knows different people learn in different ways. So, when we can learn similar things in different ways it helps us put those puzzle pieces together. It helps us become a more complete martial artist. That's not to say you can become a complete martial artist in a single system, you know, at the mastery end of that spectrum but very few people are going to reach their full potential in that way. Diversity, doing things differently doing different things can help us stay interested and engaged and we've talked about this on the show before. The idea that when you've been training a long time, putting on a white belt doing something different can help reinvigorate the passion for training at the same time though, the further you progress the more time you spend in a single style, the more of the minutia more of the nuance you're going to pick up and there's a lot of nuance in martial arts especially within each system. Your instructor might have a whole body of nuance that they picked up from their training, that they teach to you and let's assume for a moment that they share with you everything. Well, there's nuance that you're going to discover for yourself as you look at the concept of those styles or the style that your training and how it applies to you and your place in the world and the way you train and your body etc. Those are things that can't always be taught, sometimes they have to be discovered and anyone that's been training for a long time knows, sometimes you rediscover or newly discover things on your own and that can be some of the excitement of training in a single style developing some mastery.



Episode 261 – Diversity vs Mastery in Martial Arts | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Ultimately, where you fall on this diversity mastery spectrum is going to depend on your goals I'd say that for self-defense. If your goal is to become someone who is the least harmable, the least attackable, [00:06:48.45] it makes me attack, the least injured in a confrontation, you're looking at training in diverse ways. Understanding stand up arts and grappling arts and punching and kicking and energy work and all of it, the more you know the more you have some basic competency in or even, moderate competency in, the more it's going to round you out into a better self-defense person. Not that we talk a lot about mixed martial arts on the show but I think this is a good corollary. The best fighters, when we look at mixed martial arts, tend to be diverse. They tend to have good grappling and good punching and good kicking and they have trained in a number of different martial arts styles.

On the other hand, if your goal is personal growth and growing the most as a person, assuming of course that you have a good instructor and you're training in a healthy environment and some of these variables that don't really, we don't talk about a whole lot, I would say having, you know, some constraint staying within one style is most likely to yield the strongest results. There are plateaus, there are challenges, there are, there's boredom that pops up when you train at the same place with the same people, time and time again and to break through those, to find what's on the other side of those challenges is personal growth and it's important and it's beneficial within and outside of martial arts. As I've already said in the end, this is a spectrum and we're all somewhere on this spectrum and it depends on your goals and your values. If you've never taken a moment to consider what your goals for martial arts are, your big goal is not I want to learn this technique or this form or enter this competition or achieve this rank, but your bigger goals, your why not the what, the why. Why are you training? Ask yourself, be honest with yourself what is important to you? If you answer that honestly, you'll be able to understand where on this spectrum you should be and if you need to make some adjustments to where, how often and what you train, you can do that. You can't answer the question until you've asked it and this is me encouraging you to ask yourself the question. I'm not saying you're doing anything wrong, I'm also not saying or doing anything right, only you know. I know that for me, I value training diversely but not in so many things that I can't achieve competency in them. Have there been times in my life where I've been biting off too much in terms of martial arts, in terms of training in different places, absolutely. Have there been times in my life where maybe I should've had more. Been training in more than one school because of what my goals were at that time, yes. As I've aged as I've been exposed to more and more schools, more and more people in no small part because of the show which I'm so blessed to be part of. It's given me opportunities and I take some of the and because of time constraints and other reasons, I turned some of them down. I hear from a number of you all the time that you would love for me to come teach at your school or work with you at a seminar and there's a part of me that would love to say yes to all of those but I can't. And it's not just because of time, it's not just because of finances, but sometimes it's because my plate is full my. Martial arts plate is full with the meal that I have cooked that I now need to eat. I don't know if that's a good analogy or not. It seems to work I need to finish eating that meal before I can prepare another one. I need to get the nourishment as the situation that I've created and run with it. Doesn't mean sometimes your song botch your food and burn it, sometimes



Episode 261 – Diversity vs Mastery in Martial Arts | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

get a toss it out and start over. But for the most part trust your gut, if you ended up somewhere see what you can get out of it.

I wanna thank you again for listening, thank you to the listener for submitting this topic idea I had fun talking about it. Looking at my notes here, yeah, this one got me thinking in a way that I hadn't before so I appreciate that. I love the mental side of what we do as martial artist. The why so important to me. So, thanks for doing that. If you want to check out the other episodes we've got whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, you check in all of our products like our sparring gear, our apparel, we've rolled out some new apparel you should check it out. Whistlekick.com you can find us on social media @whistlekick, you can email me directly jeremy@whistlekick.com and if you haven't left us a review on iTunes, why don't you go do that? That's be really helpful. I don't ask for those too often but for those of you have done it, please... No not please, those of you that have done it thank you, those who haven't please. There we go. Can you tell I'm recording this earlier than I normally do? All right I'm done. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day.