



Episode 263 – Countering the Anti-Hero Movement | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio, episode263. Today were going to do something little bit different, I'm going to comment on a recent news article that made me want to throw things at other things. I want to thank you for tuning in, my name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host for the show, I am the founder whistlekick spurring your apparel and you can check out everything we do at whistlekick.com. You find the show notes for this episode including the article I'm going to reference at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. Again, this is episode 263 and I would encourage you, at some point, to read over this article that I'm going to reference, I'm not going to read it, I'm going to summarize bits of it for you, I'm going to tell you why it makes me so angry and offer my thoughts on how it is part of a bigger growing trend and what we as martial arts can do about it.

About a week ago on great friend of the show, man who's become a friend of mine, Sensei Ron Omron, came on I think it was Facebook and he's share this article that, just as an aside in my personal life I'm prone to using colorful language and I don't do that here on the show, but this might be one of those episodes where I really, I could. So, this article is from a Canadian newspaper and here's the gist of it, there are a few kids in class, study hall or something I think and one of them is bullying is picking on this smaller kid. There are 30 who sees what's going on and then he hears what he knows to be the flick of a



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knife opening. Anybody who carries a pocketknife knows there's a pretty distinctive click when that happens, he didn't see it, but he heard it and he stands up and he shoves the bully away. Now I look at that story the way I'm gonna guess most of you look at that story and say hey, it's pretty brave this is in some 17-year-old kid this kid is 10-12? Seventh grade? Yeah seventh grade, somewhere in their 12? And he takes it upon himself to do something intimidating, to not only confront the bully but confront the bully that he knows has a weapon and what happens? The school disciplines him. Yes, they suspend the bully but they discipline the boy who stepped up to protect one of his classmates. The school the words they used in the article were in quotes "they don't condone heroics" guess what school, I do. I condone heroics. I think most human beings condone heroics. Watch the news. Watch the movies that come out. Read books watch television, every single human being values heroism. The notion that someone would step up and do something that puts themselves at risk, that is doing the right thing to help or, in this case, protect someone who didn't have the ability to do so. I have a very simple rule that I live my life by test as to whether or not I should do something. If everyone did the thing that I was doing, would the will be better or worse? If the world was full of people acting heroically, it would be a better place. I don't have any doubt of that and I'm going to guess none of you have any doubt of that either. Now I do understand the school's point, they don't want kids who, at times, may not have life experience to understand the context to know what actions are right or wrong, but in this case the kid nailed it. And rather than coming up with some sweeping generalized rule that discourages kids from doing the right thing, how about we reward the outcome? Because that's the way the world works. The world doesn't reward the effort, the world doesn't reward following the rules, the world rewards results and this is the greatest problem with our academic institutions. We have prioritized process or results, that is a whole different story. As human beings if we have the ability to help someone, we have a responsibility to do so. The more severe the need the more pressing the responsibility we have. And as martial artist we have a responsibility to help others if we can do so safely. I'm not telling you what actions to take or what ones not to take, I'm not going to give you some set of rules to live by when you're going to use your martial arts or not. First because it's not my place, that's between you and yourself, possibly you and your parents, you and your instructors. I'm not in that equation at all, I don't want to be. But I would argue, even more importantly is that is too nuanced of a conversation. We've all seen examples of people that thought they were doing the right thing, but weren't because they were missing pieces. Have you ever spoken up to someone that you thought was being rude and you realize that you misheard them? It happens. So, I'm not going to tell you what to do or when to do it, you need to figure that out for yourself. But I think this article is an example of a shift that we've had in the world, and that shift I certainly started to see it a bit when I was a kid but I remember stepping up for others having



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others step up for me when I was in junior high and high school. No one was disciplined, because the results were what they should have been. I won't go into any more detail than that.

But how do we correct this? This growing trend of observation or action. Have you ever seen cell phone video of something horrible happening and watching all of the other people with their cell phones out wondering why didn't someone step up and help? Because we've created a culture that encourages it, in fact we teach it. It's more than just the school. We teach our children and our students we model the behavior and know maybe you personally don't. But we as a society do, so we can change it. We can teach our children and our students to do the right thing, to speak up, to stand up for others but we need to be willing to do it as well. We need to do it when it's uncomfortable. The more uncomfortable it is, the more it is probably warranted and if enough people do that, the world will start to see the importance of it. We've prioritized views and likes and shares over on social media and this is what we have taught our children is important. So, people that don't have the experience, the context of life to say hey maybe instead of taking out my phone, I should go do something? They take out their phone. If we want to change this we have to become the antithesis of a bully. I don't know if that's a hero, an anti-bully whatever you want to call it. Bullying is a growing problem because we allow it to be. We've created this culture where it can thrive and it thrives in all ages, in all types of situations and it even happens martial arts.

I've been billing and martial arts, even recently and even by those who, based on their age, their rank, and their own words, should know better. And I will stand up to them and anyone else that uses their position to assert themselves over me or anyone else. I won't tolerate it because to me, that's the root of bullying is asserting yourself over someone else in a way that they're not a position to do something about it. Whether that's physical or emotional, professional, it happens all over the place every day. And this is the point where I'm really holding back my language, because I'm angry. I'm angry at the school for not getting it, I'm angry for all of the people involved that allowed that policy to get past and all I can do is hope that this example will make people stand up and take action and realize that they don't want their kids in a school where the kids are allowed two to pick on each other, to bully each other in a potentially violent life-threatening way. When the parent of this child, Brian MacLean, I don't know that I mention his name and he deserves to have his name mentioned, when Briars mother said to the school while instead of grabbing a teacher, which is what the school wanted him to do, isn't it possible that the bully could have cut the kid? Could've killed the kid in that time? The school said yes but that's not the



Episode 263 – Countering the Anti-Hero Movement | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

point, that's exactly the point. That's the only point that matters. Briar, you're a hero. I don't give two, hmm, what the school thinks or what anyone else thinks, you did the right thing. And I hope for the folks listening, we'll be more willing take a look around the world and do the right thing. Take care of yourself and those you love and beyond that watch for those folks who could use a bit help. If your child or parent or friend, somebody that matters to you was in this dramatic situation. When you want other people to help them, if you would, then you owe it to them to do the same for others because it still a way that it works. Do good because it's contagious and it builds momentum. Be the change you wish to see in the world like Gandhi quote. Again, I want you read that article over at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com this is episode 263 and I hope that you look for opportunities to put good back in the world whether that's as a martial artist or as a person. Thanks for listening today. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day.