



Episode 269 – Why You Need Non-Martial Arts Friends | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello and welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio episode 269. Today we're going to talk about why I feel you should have non-martial arts friends.

If you're new to the show, check out whistlekickmartialartsradio.com and all the other 268 episodes. Check out whistlekick.com for sparring gear, apparel, and links to all of the projects that we have going. There's a lot of them. We're doing everything we can for you, the traditional martial artist and hopefully, you enjoy this show, hopefully you've shared it with your martial arts friends because I know you have some of those, and hopefully you're around for reasons other than the whistlekick Martial Arts Radio Drinking Game where you make fun of me and take shots. That's not a thing but now that I think about it, I'm guessing someone's going to make that a thing. If you do, send me the rules cause I'll play too.

Here on the show, I'm no stranger to stirring the pot. I like making you think, I like making myself think. and quite often it's from conversations with guests either on the show or off the show that I come up with topics for these Thursday releases, these topic-driven shows and I don't remember when I came up with this topic but I thought of it over the weekend and thought, you know, I have a lot of friends that are martial artists but I also have a lot of friends who aren't. But some of my martial arts friends are only friends with martial



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artists. And I see a difference in them and they got me thinking, what is the difference? Why is that difference there? So I thought I would go on and talk about it because that's the beauty of having a podcast. You get an outlet to discuss these things with the world.

Martial arts for so many people becomes this passionate all-encompassing pursuit - you wake-up, we eat, we go to work, we go to train, we come home, we eat, we go to bed, lather and rinse, repeat. For some people, the weekends are reserved for seminars or competitions or social events with martial arts friends even if they're non-martial arts events. And I've been in that space before and I love hanging out with martial artists. I believe martial artists are the best people in the world. But the world is not full of martial artists as sad as that is. As much as I would like to see that the case, one of my personal goals is that whistlekick can help influence the world such that everyone spends at least six months of their lives training in the martial arts. I think the world would be a much better place if that happened. But part of that goal requires that we spend time with people who aren't martial artists. And of course, the reasons for doing so are much greater and my personal mission to make the world a... and call the world a Dojo. What happens when you only hangout with martial artists? You know, the world becomes very small, very safe and that can be great. It's easy. When you have that connection with someone, whether with someone you trained with or someone that you've just met, there's a bond. I suppose a number of you have experienced something similar that I have in listening to these shows, obviously I'm recording them, but when I talk to someone new, it doesn't take more than 5 or 10 minutes, sometimes before I feel like I've known them, like we're friends already. And you've probably felt a connection to some of the guests where you feel hey you know what, I bet if I was hanging out with that person, we'd be great friends and you're probably right. Because martial arts tends to attract a certain kind of person. It tends to mold that person into a slightly different person. We're all on our own path, we're all growing but we all are similar in that way and that's great. People that are interested in personal growth rarely lasts in the martial arts. But as martial artist, if we value growth, if we value the overcoming of challenges, then opening up our world to people that aren't martial artists, just spending time with people who have different perspectives, different pursuits, people that wake-up, go to work, and then go hiking or go to the bowling alley or go home and watch TV, these are people that we need to include in our lives at least in a cursory manner. Because they all have different perspectives on the world. They view things differently. They view what we do differently. They view themselves differently than we view them. Whether it's politics or economics or entertainment, they're going to see things differently than you. Now that's not to say that every martial artist is the same and looks at the world in the same way. But I've said on the show, a diverse martial artist is a better martial artist. The more diverse you are in your training, in what you are capable of, the better the martial artist you are. Of course that doesn't necessarily mean that you're training in multiple styles but your ability to handle punches and kicks and talk yourself, your way, out of a fight and help inspire



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others, I mean just the list goes on if we think about the benefits of martial arts. So to be able to interact with people that aren't martial artists, that's an element of that diversity. And that diversity should be a goal. SO the ability to conduct yourself in the world with people who are not martial artist, who don't have the same pursuits, whether they're someone who used to train or never trained, maybe wants to train or has no desire. Maybe someone who is even completely opposed to training. And if you think that that can't happen, there are plenty of people out there who are pro certain things, certain hot button political issues that I won't even mention, and those who are completely opposed and they can find ways to be friends. And so should you find ways to be friends with people who aren't martial artists? When you spend time, especially in public, with someone who is not a martial artist, you get the ability to observe the way they conduct themselves in the world - the way they interact with other people, the way they view potential threats or ignore potential threats or don't even realize that there are potential threats. And here's a great example. I'm sure that many of you listening, when you go into a restaurant or a public place, you like to sit with your back to the wall, facing the most used entrance; I do. And if you are out with a group of martial artists, there may be some discussion as to who sits in that seat. But when you go out with your non-martial arts friends, the majority of them don't even give that a thought. They'll be looking for not wanting to sit next to the trash can if that's a fast-food place or sitting in the sun or out of the sun, it's more of a... it's a different sort of logistical concern that they have. When I go out with my non-martial arts friends, most of them don't even know why I want to take the seat with my back to the wall, facing the door. Some of them do, some of them ask, but they don't seem to care. There's a perspective that we have as martial artists that non-martial artists don't have. They have a different perspective. And every person's perspective is different so to spend time with these different people who have different perspectives helps us see the world. Because when we get right down to it, if we talk about self-defense, self-defense involves people. The better you know people, the better your self-defense skills are. One of the things I believe I've expressed on the show, I'm very proud at my ability to not win a fight but to not have it in the first place. And that comes from my ability to understand people. From spending time with people from all over the world, all walks of life, in all kinds of situations. You want another reason to spend time with people who aren't martial artists? You can be helpful. I used to have a friend and some of you that know me personally know who this person is, they weren't a martial artist. They never trained and somehow, they got in fights all the time but never when I was around. Because I was able to defuse situations, I was able to just avoid and help him learn to avoid. And I was really proud of that. A martial artist, if you get right down to it, if we're being honest in the way we conduct ourselves, if we're reasonably trained and we're open and we're willing to be a bit selfless at times, we're low-grade superheroes. I don't want to use the term hero cause that evokes some different imagery but if we think about what a superhero is, in the realm of comic books and movies, someone who exists, helps, still has a human experience, you have an opportunity to share who you are with the world and whether



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they realize it or not, the people around you benefit from that. The people who need it the most are the people who are not martial artists. We have an opportunity to show people that martial artists are good people. I've said on the show that one of the things that makes me really sad, one of the reasons that I started martialjournal.com, was because so much of the news about martial arts is negative. If you look through google news or something similar, you'll see that a lot of the news is martial arts instructors or school owners doing bad stuff. It drives me nuts cause it's such a minority. So to get out there and show the world, hey we are good people that pro-actively, preemptively, defends that. And of course, when you hang out with people who aren't martial artists, you don't want to talk about martial arts all the time. Well you want to but you shouldn't but maybe you can find opportunities once in a while to talk about it in such a way that others might be inspired to try it. I love martial arts and I'd be willing to bet that I spend more time involved in the martial arts than nearly anyone listening but I still have parts of my life that aren't martial arts. And I think that that's important and I hope that you realize and I hope that you have parts of your life that are not martial arts. And I'd like you to take stock of the friendships that you have. And if you have only martial arts friends, I want to challenge you to find some activities, some way of meeting other people that you can get along with. Yeah, it's harder to meet people when you don't share an activity with them, when you don't share a passion. But if you look hard enough, you'll find people that you share other non-martial arts passions with, other interests.

I'd love to know your feedback, what do you think? Do you completely disagree? Do you agree? Have you woken up one day and realized, hey all of my friends are the people that I train with and when I don't go to class because I'm sick or want a break, they text me and give me a hard time or some other experience. I want to know about it. I want you to email me. Please, email me on this one. And I always say that but I really want you to email me on this one, jeremy@whistlekick.com. Follow us on social media, @whistlekick Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. Find show notes, other episodes, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, and our products, whistlekick.com. That's all for today. Until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.