



Episode 278 – 30 Days of Martial Arts Challenge | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hey everybody, thanks for tuning in whistlekick Martial Arts Radio. I'm Jeremy Lesniak and on today's episode, we're going to talk about the 30 Days of Martial Arts Challenge. If you're new to the show, you might wanna head on over to [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) and see all of the other episodes that we've got. We release twice a week. On Mondays we put out an interview episode with someone who just has a great story to tell. They could be a famous blackbelt, they could be from pretty much any martial arts discipline you could think of or they could be the exact type of person that you find in your martial arts school who has dedicated themselves to their martial arts, to making their world a better place. And then on Thursdays, we release some kind of topic episode. You know, today we're gonna talk about the 30 days of Martial Arts Challenge. Sometimes we do a profile of a famous figure from history, sometimes it's a topic that I just need to get off my chest, sometimes it's Q & A's. I like these Thursday episodes. They're a bit shorter but they're dense, they're fun. I like putting those together. Now today, we're actually joined by a guest for this topic. Sensei Rob Domaschuk was back with us on episode 245 to talk about him and to talk about what he did with his 30 days of Karate Challenge. But now, it's been expanded, there's a website and really, he's looking to get as many people to participate in this as possible. It's not for charity, it's not for anybody's benefit other than your own. And it's that selflessness that was so important to me in bringing him back on the show. I won't ramble anymore. Let's welcome him.

Sensei Rob, welcome back to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio.

**Sensei Rob:**

Oh thanks, Jeremy. It's great to be back.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It is great to have you back and listeners, if you remember Sensei Rob, we brought him on for pretty specific purpose and well, guess what, he's back for effectively the same purpose. We've got you back on for the same reason but this time, instead of looking to the past, we're looking to the future and I'm being cryptic. And I'm being cryptic intentionally cause I don't want to steal any of your thunder. Tell the listeners what was it we brought you on for before and why is that appropriate to bring you on again?

**Sensei Rob:**



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Because this time around, we are talking about 30 Days of Karate once more, Jeremy. Last time when I was on the show, we talked about how I've done this challenge, kind of a personal challenge, a few people had joined in. We talked about what the plans are for the future and I said, you know, April 1st is the perfect time to do the challenge once more. And, for those of you who are listening without the [02:57](#) I'm telling, April 1st is only gonna be a couple of days away so enough time for everybody to plan to join in on 30 Days of Karate or 30 Days of any martial arts.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah. So, let's go back, let's talk a little bit about what this was and listeners, you know, we're gonna link in the show notes to the previous episode when Sensei Rob came on so you can go back, you can hear that conversation. We're not gonna go as deep today on that because really, today is about what is coming, how you can participate, why you should be excited for this challenge, and a bunch of other stuff that we're gonna get into. But you know, for folks that are listening right now, we don't wanna make them stop listening and go listen to that episode and then come back. So give us a summary of where this came from and what you did.

**Sensei Rob:**

Alright. So about a year ago, actually, real is about year ago, I decided one night I can go out and just do some training in my backyard, this beautiful spring evening, my kids are going to bed, and it felt great. So I thought, you know, I'm gonna do it again. The next night, and the next, and thought oh you know what, this is the start of some kind of challenge. So I thought, you know, I'm gonna do 30 days of this. And I just gave myself the challenge to do one hour of Karate cause that's a push for me. I could do 10-15 minutes every day, not a problem. But one hour, was going to be the real challenge. So I decided right then and there that we're just gonna push through and it felt great. There was challenges, I learned a lot about myself and about how I can commit to a short-term program like this, my skills developed just like anything. You do some kind of practice and training every single day for 30 days, you're gonna notice an improvement and I thought, this was great. So I vowed, in the fall I would do it again. And that's exactly what I did. It was last September and that's when I started tagging you, cause that's, you know, why not?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Exactly.

**Sensei Rob:**



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I mean, hey. Wait, you made a mistake of liking one of my pictures and I thought, oh well, you know, serve you right. So I started tagging you and whistlekick, the next thing I know, shortly afterwards you said hey why don't you come on the show to talk about it? So we did that, and I think within the first 10-15 minutes of the discussion, we realized you know, this can happen again. Maybe whistlekick would be a great vehicle to help promote this idea among other ways. So I'm here to talk about the 30 Days of Karate again, coming up in April and inviting all the listeners and their friends and their friends and so forth to join in and let's make the thing a thing.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah. You know, there are a lot of months for me if you look at the calendar, if you look at you know, some official list because there is an official list. February is, you know, it's Black History Month and March is, you know, ten thousand things. You know, February is all these things. Every month is all of these things.

**Sensei Rob:**

Why April?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Why can't April be 30 Days of Martial Arts Training? You know, I would love to know why April but you know, I just kinda want the listeners to understand that this is an attempt by Sensei Rob that we at whistlekick are supporting. Cause it's great to, on a short-term basis, get everybody to step up their training and really just kinda embrace this part of who you are that we all share as martial artists. So yeah, let's go back, why April?

**Sensei Rob:**

Two reasons. Number one, random choice. Second reason, you know, I'm here in Chicagoland and March, it's still a little bit cold, I don't want to be outside too often. April is usually fairly nice, fairly predictable weather. There's 30 days in April, 30 days in Karate, makes the math a little bit easier cause I'm not a math guy. So April does seem like a good time plus I've been cooped up inside the house for so long. The chance to go outside, even if it's a bit chilly for half an hour, 45 minutes to an hour, whatever, it's just the chance to spend that much time outside after being stuck in the house all winter was a great time just to get out. So there's no deep philosophical reasons other than it's a chance to escape and why not?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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And of course, even though this challenge is starting on April 1st, this is not a joke. This isn't some bizarre April Fool's thing we're going to shove at everyone's houses or Dojos or wherever you train and take pictures of you and say, ha-ha you're silly.

**Sensei Rob:**

Or are we? No, we're not.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

We do not have that kind of budget at whistlekick yet. At the point where we did, we would probably use it on better things. But...

**Sensei Rob:**

Exactly.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You know, there's no reason that the training that you do on April 1st can't be silly. In fact, when we talk about this 30 days challenge, every day doesn't have to be the same, right? We're not talking about, you know, you doing something monotonous every day for 30 days.

**Sensei Rob:**

I can't imagine anything more boring, truth be told, as doing the exact same thing for 30 straight days. I mean Karate for 30 days and that in it covers so much. So for me, there's gonna be a focus on Kata because that's one of the things I really need to focus on. Cause it's one of the areas that I've let slip but I don't mean I'm gonna do an hour of Kata every day for 30 days. I'm gonna choose one of the Python high-end series and I'll practice that three or four times a day but that's 25-10 minutes. I'll do some form of basics. I'm a big, big proponent of meditation so every night's gonna have 5-10 minutes of meditation. Couple minutes at the end to write my journal because even though I do everything on Instagram, I'm gonna take pictures, I'm gonna tag it on Instagram, I'm gonna invite the listeners to join in, participate on Instagram. For me, if I write it, if I take a pen and I put a pen on paper and write it down, it does seem a little more official and there's more accountability that you know, I have to **08:42** my journal.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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Sure.

**Sensei Rob:**

But that thing's a whole bunch of space for kind of the other stuff, the fun stuff that I get to switch up. So there'll be some Kobudo. There will be more self-defense. I've got a friend, couple of friends here in the area who have committed to doing the 30 days, we'll get together and both, we'll do some sparring, we'll do some you know, one-on-one flow drills. It's almost endless cause there's so much we can do and you know, to be honest too, there's gonna be days where doing a full hour for me is going to be a struggle. I may end up quitting after 30 minutes but the rule for me is going to be push - push myself, push those boundaries just a little bit. And that's what I'm inviting everybody else to do. And if I get to an hour, fantastic. There'll be days where it's gonna be more than two hours. The days that I'm in a Dojo, that's a 2 or 3 hour a day, great. But it's gotta be fluid, you can't rigid. And it's just got to be something that is a challenge but something is attainable, achievable, and at the end, not only is there that sense of accomplishment, you've had to have fun. So yeah, 30 days of the exact same thing, no thanks.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Alright. So, let's unpack that couple of things that you're setting out as a framework and the first one that I wanna pull out of this is fun.

**Sensei Rob:**

Yeah.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

If this is self-designed training, if you're setting out to do... no, for you it's an hour but it doesn't have to be an hour for everybody.

**Sensei Rob:**

No, no, no. It's -

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It could be... if you're used to training an hour a day on your own or you've already accomplished it, there's no challenge there. You're looking to step it up, if the idea of doing an hour because of



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your attention span or logistics just doesn't work, you know, people could do 15, 20, 30 minutes, right?

**Sensei Rob:**

Yes. Yeah. The only rule that I'm going to ask people to follow is that whoever participates, let's just be supportive of each other, right? Whether you're doing Karate or Kung Fu, Taekwondo, Krav Maga, whatever you're doing, let's just support each other. That's kind of the rule. Beyond there, it's just some guidelines. And the guideline is take what you're doing now and just challenge and push yourself a little bit. Make the challenge but make it attainable.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

And of course -

**Sensei Rob:**

**10:50**

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah. And if it's fun, you're more likely to do it.

**Sensei Rob:**

Yeah.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You know what I -

**Sensei Rob:**

- challenge it. It's, there are gummy days are normal. Couple of times last time, I did, you know, 100 hammer fists, I did 100 blocks, I did 100 of this, as just part of some basics and it's tough. Your muscles hurt, you're kind of grin and bear but when you're done, it's so, again, that fun, it's part of the achievement.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**





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Right. And the beauty of this, the thing that I like about it the most is how individualized it is. And that's something that as martial artists, we don't have a lot of opportunity. When we go to class, most of us in a traditional martial arts class, are asked to do the same things or at least similar things as everyone else in the class. If you were to raise your hand and ask your instructor, you know, I wanna go spend 20 minutes doing this thing, it's completely different from what you're doing in class, the responses will range likely from contempt to disciplinary. Or at least that's every school I've been in would be somewhere along that spectrum. So here's an opportunity for you to work on the things that you want to. Whether it's the things that you struggle with the most and you don't get the time to train them the way that you want to in class or just things that are enjoyable to you that you wanna do more of or anything in between in any combination thereof.

**Sensei Rob:**

Right. And this is an opportunity, again I'm gonna do all my stuff through Instagram, but it's an opportunity for us to share and learn from each other as well. So one of my goals in the 30 days, something I hate doing but I'm promising myself to do is that's gonna take more video of myself. Stills are fine, right? Cause I can go as I can take, you know, 30 stills and choose the best one and that presents one part of the story but not the whole thing. So if we get enough people in participating this, I'm promising that I'm gonna post some videos, that I'm gonna look for honest, you know, polite but honest critique. And even if something might be really well done, if there's someone who does, say, Wing Chun, and says hey in my martial arts, we adjusted a little bit this way, try that. So that's another option we never hear at the Dojo because we don't have this mixture of different martial arts, different styles, different schools, all communicating and in one place.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Exactly. When you went into this the first time, was there anything that you were afraid of? Anything that others listening might be concerned about?

**Sensei Rob:**

Part of whether or not I can do it. You know, that's the real challenge the first you do anything is, you know, self-doubt starts to creep in a little bit and am I gonna be able to finish 30 days? At the beginning it seems 30 days is not that bad, when you hit the middle, it's hard. But really, other than that, the biggest concern I had was just making sure that I would come up with the time commitment and just stick to it. Well, they were a little bit of concerned when I was throwing



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some of my weapons around in the backyard that neighbors might get a little suspicious but you know, my neighbors all know me now. I think they just roll their eyes and look the other way. They go oh yeah, there's Rob again doing this crazy stuff in the backyard. If you're in an apartment complex, why not just go into the back alley and looking out some Nunchaku or a bow but you know, beyond that.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

So if we have people listening that are, I guess I will be pointed and kind of specific, are saying I can't do this. I can't do this because I don't have the space, I can't do this because I don't have the time. What would you tell them?

**Sensei Rob:**

I'm forgetting who said the quote but whether you think can or whether you think you can't, you'll prove yourself right. If you're looking for the reasons why you can do it, you'll be successful. So ask yourself why you'd say you can't. If it's you don't have space, well how much space you need? I have a small kitchen and I love to cook. And in my small kitchen, if I've got something on the stove, I've got couple of minutes, you know, I'll get into the stance and I'll throw some punches, do some blocks. I'll practice some of the movements from Kata, just some of the turns and spins in this tight space because A, if I fall or trip, I'm gonna put my hands out to recover and I may put my hand on a hot stove so there's some, you know, real concern there. You can find a space. As for time, frankly, we make time for the things we want. And if you're really telling yourself that you don't have time, just be up for an extra 10 minutes, then that's fine. That's your choice but that's a choice. It's not really a can't. And if you were saying I want to half an hour but really, with my schedule, I can only do 10 minutes. If you can carve out that 10 minutes, then carve out 10 minutes and call it a success instead of trying carve out a 30 and calling it a failure.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right.

**Sensei Rob:**

So like, whether you can or you can't, you'll prove yourself right.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**





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And our priorities are reflected in the way that we spend our time. Even 10 minutes a day will amount to five extra hours of training over the course of that month. And as you said at the beginning, you're going to get better from this. There is a tangible benefit. If you're attending martial arts classes to get better, at least if that's somewhere on your list of things that you're hoping for, this supports that. And I found very few people who can't find 10 minutes in their day to do something.

**Sensei Rob:**

Exactly. And you know, to put it into perspective, right, choose one Kata from your school if you're, you know, a Karate guy like me, how many times can you run through a Kata in 10 minutes? Well with taking a break and thinking, okay, what can I do better next time around, you'll probably do it four or five times. If you do same Kata four or five times a day even for just one week, try it for the first seven days, how much is that one Kata going to improve?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right.

**Sensei Rob:**

So there's... it's amazing how incremental the improvements are but it doesn't take much to begin.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Great point. And I think the one thing that I want to add, because 10 minutes is a... can be a long period of time or a short period of time depending on how you're using it. But I want people to keep in mind, staying present. If you're going to make the time for this, if you're going to make this a priority, then you deserve to be present in that time. And for a lot of us, and I'm absolutely putting myself in this category, that's going to be the hardest part. I don't know that I'm gonna find an hour every day. I'm not going to sit out for an hour every day because I know my lifestyle and I know how I feel when I don't accomplish goals. That's one of the reasons that whistlekick has gone where it has because if I say I'm going to do something, I do it. So my goals aren't going to be quite that high the first time. Maybe next year, if this comes back around. Hopefully it comes back around. You know, I'll bump it up. But my main focus is going to be staying present and letting go, a bit meditative, as you alluded to the meditation part and its importance for you. That's my focus. To let everything else go and, you know, I'm punching doorframes or whatever I'm doing.



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**Sensei Rob:**

Yeah. And I really appreciate what you just said about being present, Jeremy. Because how easy would be to say okay, well you know what, I've got 10 minutes while my family finishes off their dinner so I'm gonna run outside. Well, you're not really thinking about what you're doing. You're just spending 10 minutes wondering if they're getting upset with you inside the house cause you just scampered up away from the dinner table. It's gotta be purposeful, it has to be intentional. It has to be your time. I mean, one of the greatest pleasures for me every week is I try to get to the Dojo anywhere from half an hour to 45 minutes before my students arrive. And that's me time. Sometimes I'm just writing my journal, sometimes I'm just setting everything out, getting it ready but what that lets me do is kind of mentally deal with the day - with whether it's issues at work or at home or whatever, traffic just getting there. That's my time. Then once that practice starts, mentally, I'm there. And the difference it makes is the quality of that training time where I can be focused on the task as opposed to having 20 different things playing through my head. So if you can do 10 minutes of that a day, do 10 minutes. If you can do 20, great. If you can do more, go for it. That's fantastic. But you're right. You have to be present and I think that's a perfect way to say it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Well I think we've covered everything that you and I talked about wanting to cover. Do you have anything else that you wanna share with our listeners before we get into some of the logistical stuff about tagging and all that?

**Sensei Rob:**

Yeah. I've got one and it's actually a whole-over from the first show. Cause I was taking a look over the list of questions that you typically ask guests and I had all these answers and there's one question that I didn't get asked that I was really disappointed.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I'm sorry.

**Sensei Rob:**

Well there's two of them, really. So first of all, your favorite martial arts movie. Because nobody has mentioned Kurosawa and Seven Samurai on your show. At least going back all the episodes I



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can remember. I just wanna point out, if you haven't watched Seven Samurai, you're doing yourself a disservice.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah, it's a classic.

**Sensei Rob:**

Classic. Forget about the Magnificent Seven or whatever it is that they keep doing cowboy remakes of here in the US but you gotta go for the original.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right.

**Sensei Rob:**

The second one was the, again, looking at all the martial artists on film, all the movie stars that the guy was into the martial arts at some point. People thought who are a little bit older than I am, how Chuck Norris is really the kind of guy or Bruce Lee, John Clark [20:48](#). For me, it was Sho Kosugi. Those cheesy, cheesy, 1980s ninja's movies - Enter the Ninja, Revenge of the Ninja. Man I would have [20:58](#) those things.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

We have talked about him on the show and I'm going to admit, you know, I don't know those movies. I'm a little bit younger than you, I didn't have the opportunity to watch them but, you know. One of the things we're looking at doing is you know, really trying to put some weight into letting everyone know about all the amazing movies on Netflix cause I don't think everyone grasps how many martial arts movies are on Netflix. It's ridiculous.

**Sensei Rob:**

Oh, you know, that's a rabbit-hole I'd go down on a weekend.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah, you can get lost. You could do 30 Days of Bad Martial Arts Movies on Netflix.



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**Sensei Rob:**

Oh man, yeah. Each day could be of some theme, too.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah. There's a lot we could spider off from this, isn't there?

**Sensei Rob:**

Yes. I mean, I think the worse cause, really, there's two types of martial arts movies, right? There's the best of the martial arts and then there's the best of the worst martial arts movies. Like Bloodsport. That's a bad movie but c'mon, it's Bloodsport.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

But it's so good.

**Sensei Rob:**

Right?

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah, yeah. Without a doubt. Awesome. Alright. Now hopefully, everyone's excited, they're amped-up on this and they're saying yeah, you know, I'm gonna participate even if it's, you know, a shorter period of time or whatever is going to work for you in your life in such a way that you can make martial arts a little bit more important for 30 days. How are they gonna connect with the rest of the folks doing that?

**Sensei Rob:**

Alright, so fortunately, since the last time we spoke, Jeremy, Instagram did something or they added a feature which is great for this. And that you can now follow hashtags. Which back in September, I don't think they had introduced that yet. So what I'm gonna suggest, it's been 30 days in Karate and I'm still gonna tag all my stuff as 30 days of Karate for my own reasons. It's going to be easier for me to follow. I got Karate students who want to do the same thing and that's kinda like a little subgroup but I'm gonna use the hashtag of 30 Days of Martial Arts. In that



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way, I don't want anyone to feel like they shouldn't participate cause they're doing Taekwondo or Aikido or anything else. So I'll tag it 30 Days of Martial Arts on Instagram.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Awesome.

**Sensei Rob:**

Follow the hashtag and if you want to put up a video, put a video. Put up pictures of you doing stuff, put up questions and that's... the other thing too that I would love and... A couple of your listeners, Jeremy, reached out to me after the last show and I...

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Oh, cool!

**Sensei Rob:**

I can't express how much I appreciate that and how thrilled I was. So I'm looking forward to those people participating cause I captured their contact information on that so I'll be reaching out to them directly just to remind them April 1st. But yeah, if you're not on Instagram, join. It's 30 Days of Martial Arts is the hashtag, follow it, just comment. Let's help each other out and let's see what happens on April 30th and you know, I mentioned one other idea to you. At the end of April and that is, maybe we can find a couple of people who found the challenge somewhat transformative and might wonder writing an article for [martialjournal.com](http://martialjournal.com).

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hey, that would be a lot of fun. And listeners, I don't want anyone that is hearing this to think that you have to do this publicly.

**Sensei Rob:**

Oh, yeah.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**



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If you're willing to take this challenge yourself, you don't need to tell a single person about it. We would love to hear about it, you know if you want to email me directly, you know, [jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremy@whistlekick.com), we talk about that stuff. I'm always happy to hear feedback but I don't want people to think that that's a requirement. And we're not gonna, you know, if you're not comfortable putting up photos or video, maybe you just want to comment on what other people are doing. You know, any level of participation is great and welcomed. Because we're trying to start, I don't know if we want to call it a movement, do we want to call it a movement?

**Sensei Rob:**

Let's call it a movement.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Okay. We're trying to start a movement and a movement requires participation. Any degree of participation is greater than none. And that's how a movement happens.

**Sensei Rob:**

That is true. And if your participation at this first-time around, especially if you're just new to the martial arts and, you know, you're a little... you're lacking some self-confidence and you're thinking man, this is gonna be full of all these people doing great martial arts and here I am as a white or yellow belt, no way. If all you wanna do is just follow on, you can check it out, just follow the hashtag. That's fine too. And that's... we all start somewhere so whatever you're comfortable with, start there.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Cool. There we go. Sensei Rob, thanks for coming back on, thanks for talking about this and you know, I'll see ya on the digital waves as we tackle this challenge together.

**Sensei Rob:**

Absolutely. And oh, one of these days Jeremy, you and I will find ourselves in the same room and we'll be able to do some training together. But in the meantime, thanks so much for putting this vehicle. I never thought when I first did the challenge last year that it's gonna even grow into this kind of thing. So the support of whistlekick and you in promoting this is just fantastic. And I'm really excited to see what happens in April.





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**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Thank you Sensei Rob for coming back on the show, for inviting the world to participate in this really unique thing that you've undertaken. And I hope listeners out there, I hope you will give it a shot. Remember, it doesn't have to be anything monumental. It doesn't have to be an hour a day. If 5 minutes a day is what you have time and a space for then do it. You will be a better person, a better martial artist simply for the discipline of undertaking this challenge. I'll be participating right alongside with you and I'll admit, this is not going to be an hour a day for me. If you wanna check out the show notes, you can find them at [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). If you haven't yet checked out the wonderful products that we have at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) from shirts and hoodies to sparring gear to kicking paddles and a whole bunch of other stuff, head on over there. Check that out, we would love to count you as one of our customers. That's all I've got. Until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.