



Episode 287 – The Next Generation and Martial Arts | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



### Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey thanks for coming by this is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 287, today were talking about the upcoming generation martial artists and how the martial arts may change with them "in charge." my name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host for the show, I'm the founder at whistlekick and I'm the lucky guy who gets to talk about martial arts as part of his job. I get to email and social media with so many of you and it's actually from an email that we got today's topic. You can check out the show notes [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) you can check out our [products@whistlekick.com](mailto:products@whistlekick.com) or on Amazon and you can feel free to get a hold of us. We are @whistlekick, I am [jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremy@whistlekick.com) and you can comment on the episode show notes page, there's a lot of ways to interact with us, were trying to make it easy, we want to hear from you, were working to build something with you was part of it. It's a lot stronger when were all involved.

Now this question comes in from a long-time listener and probably the most frequent commenter. Get a lot of emails from this individual questions, comments and quite often I'll just write back directly, but this question seemed powerful enough that I thought I would turn my answer into an episode. They've asked that they stay anonymous and in fact under paraphrase some of what they've written just because it'll make this flow a little bit better for my voice. So, when you and your colleagues are shooting the breeze about the generation coming up behind, do you, do they see things positively? It's a great question. He goes on to talk about previous episode about participation awards and questioning are we creating a generation of soft people and how is that going to impact the martial arts? Goes on



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ask where you see martial arts going in five years, will ego still get in the way? It's a great question and there are a lot of elements to that there.

First off let's talk about the generational stuff. How martial arts has changed as we look at different areas? When we talk about the martial arts in the 50s, in the 60s, we're talking about the blood and guts era. We heard that term on the show it's thrown around a lot of writing old movies and if you watch competition, if you watch the way people train or if you talk to people that started in that time, you know why martial arts was rough, it was rugged. There were no kid's classes. If you couldn't hang, you didn't go back to class, there was no accommodation for someone who didn't want to get banged up. Broken bones were common it was part of the ethos of the martial arts then. But obviously that needed to change if martial arts were going to become anything more than a fringe activity. So, we look through the 70s the 80s as that next-generation became the instructors of the martial art schools they made it a bit more approachable. They softened a bit, children's classes started and we start to see martial arts become a lot more approachable that's something that nearly everyone can do. And we look at martial arts over the 90s, the 2000s, the 20 teens, we see that martial arts become even more approachable. There are martial arts classes for every demographic for older people, for younger people, for people with special needs. Martial arts have become something that everyone can do and I absolutely love that. At the same time, we've had a lot of cultural changes. Now, I can't speak to the way things are going internationally, I'm an American group here in America and while I've traveled internationally, I'm not going to pretend to understand what the culture of other countries is like and how it's changed but I know that here in America, we have become I guess I will use the word that, no it wasn't in this gentleman's email, but it was the word I believe a paraphrase at beginning about softer, no it is in there. People are becoming softer. We've removed a lot of the challenge from life. Without challenge without the need to overcome struggle obstacles, life starts to become little less meaningful. That's one of my arguments against participation awards, that's one of the things that I see wrong with the way that we conduct so many things in society today, we want everything to be easy and simple and perfect and all the while we're doing that we're having the opposite outcome. People are creating challenge in their lives because we need it, we need that struggle. This is why things like obstacle course racings, Spartans etc. Have become more popular. This is why you see people that are stepping into rings and cages and having Full Contact fights because the rest of their life is simple and easy. Now not saying that everyone's reasoning, but if we look back 20 years ago, very few people wanted to participate in Full Contact fights. Life was a lot more of a fight. As human beings, we tend to value the things that we've worked for the most, it's a lesson that any parent with a small child has probably seen. You give you can allowance, maybe you're making them work for that allowance and then they save up they buy something and they are so proud of that thing that they've worked for. The value has something tangible to it now rather than giving to them as a gift. So, if we look at that path that personal growth or unfortunately lack thereof, my fears that were going to see fewer people that want to tackle martial arts as school owners, as instructors. Now, I actually saw predict I guess that after that dip we will see a massive increase because we look at society, we look at anything that we do, the pendulum swings and



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it is swinging. I feel we are nearing the edge of the softer side. I think we're finally starting to grasp that people need to have some difficulty in their lives. So, as we reach that edge were going to come back of course there is a gap in any action versus the outcome on people, excuse me, we could suddenly start making everyone live on cheese and were not going to see the full ramifications of that for an entire generation. Generations about 20 years, I would say that in the next 10 to 15 years were probably going to see martial arts participation rise but the number of instructors are going to shrink. I don't know what that's gonna look like I haven't really thought about it that deeply, most of what I'm talking about now is off-the-cuff. But I do believe that martial arts, traditional martial arts, is one of the places that people are going to look to for growth and development as we become more conscious as a society of the lack of challenge, the lack of tempering that life gives us. As we realize that we need to be conditioned to grow as human beings, martial arts is one of the places I believe people will look to for that. If I look a little bit shorter, five years where do I see martial arts? We do seem to be on a bit of an upswing and there are a lot of reasons that that could be, there could be some attention paid to traditional martial arts because of mixed martial arts. Populations growing and so were recruiting more people because of that and I think also because there are more business systems in place for martial art schools, there are more options for people to step in do the thing that they love as their profession and make a living at it. When I was a kid it almost seems like a bad thing if someone said that they were a martial arts instructor as their job, there was there is almost his guilt to say that they made a living doing that. Most martial arts school owners did other things to make money at least growing up in Maine. I was a kid and get around much. I don't know what was going on in California but I know that in Maine just my quiet observations as a child were that people worn out there, breaking it in. Society shifted, it's okay to make money doing the things that you love I think most of us in the martial arts have accepted, though certainly not all based on the comments I read, most of us have accepted that it is okay to make a living sharing the knowledge that you have as a martial artist and with individuals out there like Prof. Brandon Beliso, and Kiyoshi Dave Kovar both of whom have been on the show they have made a name for themselves by helping others see success in their martial arts school by bringing in, retaining more students, making more money, these are all good things. Martial arts school it doesn't stick around doesn't help anybody.

So where are we going? I believe were going up but it's not going to be a steady upward swing. We are to have some dips and some bobbles but I think if we look out 20-30-40 years, I think traditional martial arts is really strong and I hope I'm around to see it. I plan to be when you think what you think about the way the generational differences are going to impact martial arts and how it's taught? Who's teaching it? How many people are around the teacher? I want to hear your feedback. If you're comfortable please posted over the show notes this is episode 287. If you're not comfortable posting publicly shoot me an email [jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremy@whistlekick.com). The more I hear from you, the more I better know how to serve all of you. That's really what it's all about. I appreciate you giving me that opportunity, thanks for listening. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day.