



Episode 291 - Similarities Between Martial Arts and Business | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



### Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello and welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio, the podcast that comes at you twice a week interviewing guests, bringing you history, talking about topics of conversations as it relates to the martial arts and today that's what we've got. Today, we're going to talk about martial arts and business. Not martial arts as a business though there is some overlap there but martial arts and how it is similar to business. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm the founder of the show and I am the founder of the business called whistlekick where we make sparring gear and training aids and apparel and other fun stuff as well as some online products I guess you can call them because you can call this podcast and online product. We don't sell it to you but we hope you enjoy it, hopefully you receive more value from this show than you spend to get it, time. And we're gonna talk about value exchange a little bit as we go on. No, this isn't gonna be some nerdy, deep, boring, podcast on business even if you don't only business, you're still involved in value exchange and we're gonna talk about all that in just a moment. If you want to check out the show notes for this or other episodes that's [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) if you want to check our products or check out all the other things we've got going on, you can find those at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com).

Martial arts and business. There are a lot of similes between martial arts and business and the first place that I see similarities occurs within the ethics of both. Integrity, discipline, service, those are things that make both martial artists and businesses great. These same qualities that make someone a great martial artist, having integrity, being a disciplined person, serving others if they're applied correctly will make someone a great businessperson but you cannot



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necessarily say that the qualities that make someone a great business person will make them great martial artist. For example, some of the best business people in the world are really good at delegating. You can't delegate your martial arts training. If we could there would be plenty of armchair black belts. Maybe that's what happens, maybe that's what all those people on YouTube making all those horrible comments actually did, maybe they found a way to delegate their training and download their knowledge like in the matrix. But if this is true if there are attributes that make martial artist great that will also make them great business people, why are there so many great martial artist that make terrible martial arts business people, martial arts school owners? We've talked about that on the show it's almost a cliché maybe [00:03:10.09] is a cliché and I believe it's for one very simple reason, a subject, an idea, that has come up on the show quite often lately, the loss of that white belt, that novice mindset. The loss of the fire, the passion, that happens as white belts. The willingness to learn new skills and to be uncomfortable. Anyone out there that's ever started a business knows, it is uncomfortable. You have to learn new skills, you have to stretch to figure out the things that you don't know or often worse the things you didn't know that you didn't know. For those of you that do have businesses, I believe all business growth, success, comes down to that one thing learning things you didn't know, you didn't know. In the business world there are two books that come up on this show quite often, they're are often regarded as required reading for anyone trying to reach any kind of heights and business. The book of five rings and the art of war. Those books talk about a lot of things that apply equally to martial arts and to business. In martial arts, when we discussed the application of martial arts, the practical side in Japanese, the bunkai were talking about relating our bodies ourselves to other people, we're talking about relating to them physically and emotionally. When we talk about business, were talking of the same thing, we're talking about relating to someone physically, if it's a physical product, a car, box of cereal, but were also talking about relating to them emotionally. If you watch most advertising, most marketing, there is an emotional component there. Maybe there's a song playing in the background or maybe there's a family and the parents are relating to their children in a way that evokes some kind of sentiment for you watching it. That's martial arts. Successful business conveys a message that the business is offerings are more valuable than not having them. Value exchange. When we at whistlekick, when we sell you something, were trying to present our products to you in a way that you'd rather have the product than the money that you're going to give us for that product. Anytime you buy something that is exactly what's happening, there's a value exchange. We might cellular shirt and we believe that we would rather have your money than the shirt, you would rather have the shirt than the money, everybody wins. Now, someone might say well, you know there are times when I have to buy something and you know I don't want to, so it's not really value exchange. Well, it kind is, if you pay taxes you value not going to prison more than the money that you spent on the taxes, there are people that don't pay their taxes, they don't value that exchange in a way that you do, the way that I do. When you spar or, hopefully never, actually fight with someone, you are making a value exchange that the cost of not taking an action is greater and acting. That partner or that opponent has a greater chance of success of reaching their goals if they attempt to strike you than if they standstill. Let's imagine the extreme example of standing there while someone is sparring with you or trying to hurt you.



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You're going to lose right? If you stay there and do nothing you're guaranteed to lose assuming that you value getting hit as little as possible. However, there are times for example, someone who is brand-new to martial arts that might be so concerned about their movement that they believe that doing nothing is better than doing the wrong movement, throwing a punch wrong or blocking the wrong and sometimes it is. If we imagine a point sparring match to hang back and not engage is guaranteed to be safer than not engaging and we see that sometimes in point sparring matches. Of some of you may be nodding along saying yes, I've watch that where both people just kind of bounce around and they stay out of range because it's safer they're both nervous. You can say the same thing about business, I've known so many people who have brilliant ideas but they are so afraid to get started because there's a fear of failure. Fear of failure something that happens in every discipline whether it's martial arts or business or anything. People are afraid of getting started because once you start you can fail if you haven't started can't fail. We've heard on the show often that not all martial artist makes good business people in fact I argue, most martial artists do not make good business people and it's not because they're not capable. Martial art is, in fact, are more capable than the average person at becoming a successful business person but it's that loss of that student, that white belt mindset that we keep talking about, I mentioned it earlier. I'm not saying every martial arts school has to be big or make a ton of money, I've known excellent martial arts businesses that were small that even breakeven or lose money. What I mean when I say a successful martial arts business is that the goals of the owner are achieved. You can only define success based on goals. If you don't have a goal, you can't succeed. Many of the martial arts school owners I speak with lie in themselves, people in general they come to me to talk to me about martial arts or business, they're lying to themselves about what they want their business to be, they're lying about their goals because again, they have a fear of failure and it's just as many non-martial arts business owners as martial arts business owners that are doing this that are lying to themselves.

You don't to get a black belt or whatever the equivalent in your system may be by training the way you did as a white belt or when you started. You don't reach your business goals without adapting what you did when you started. With experience comes knowledge, with knowledge comes options and it's exploring these options for the different various actions that you have available that can be really scary but it's where the growth both business and personal often comes from. As we learn new movements in martial arts and we test those out, some of them work and some of them don't some of them work in combination, some of them only work in certain circumstances and understanding when they work and when they don't work is important, it's what makes a great martial artist. If you consider any athletic pursuit, think about a sport whether it's martial arts or football or soccer and you think of the greatest play you've ever seen and I'll share with you an example in a moment. When you think of the greatest play or effort you've ever seen, it wasn't because people didn't think it was possible, it's because the person who performed it applied their experience, they're knowledge in a way that most people would not. They saw an option that they exercised that most people would not have and here's mine and I'm actually going to go outside of martial arts for this because it's something that has stuck with me for let's see, 16 years nearly 16 years no, it's got to be longer than that, 26 years there we go. Sometimes I miss those decades. Alright, the year is 1992 and according to some



Episode 291 - Similarities Between Martial Arts and Business | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

the greatest basketball team of all time is assembled for the 92 Summer Olympics when for the first time the United States allowed professional basketball players to play in the Olympics. If you are around then, if you are at all a fan of basketball you know what I'm talking about it was insane. The United States dominated but there was one play that I can see as vividly now as when I saw it. Larry Bird, one of the greatest players ever was throwing the ball in. The ball would go out of bounds near the opposing teams basket, he is on the sideline and he's ready to pass the ball in and the defender makes a critical error, he decides you know what there is no way he can shoot from where he is, he has to pass the ball and it has to touch another player before he can shoot so I'm just going to go hang out and double cover, sort of, one of the other players so he turns around. Larry Bird bounces the ball off the back of the defender, catches it, shoots and scores. Something I've never seen before something that may never have been done before. But here was a man who was so good at what he did that he saw options because of his experience that others did not see. We can apply the same thing to martial arts many of us have seen people throw dramatic kicks in competition whether that's a point sparring match or some kind of Full Contact kickboxing or maybe even in your own training environment, something that made everyone say, wow and you look at it and you think. The set of circumstances that allow that to happen were so unique that I may never see it again it's impressive. And sometimes the application of that technique isn't even conscious with the person throwing it. I can think of some pretty dramatic fall away hook kicks that I've seen or just some immensely accurate techniques that managed to thread someone's guard and score or hit awesome stuff.

The most valuable brand in the world currently, Apple. 50% or so of their revenues are based around the iPhone. The iPad believe it or not was developed before the iPhone and when the employees brought it to Steve Jobs, he said no were not ready for that. He had options, he said make it smaller make it a phone, based on his experience that other people hadn't considered. Anybody else could've come out with something similar to the iPhone but they didn't. Life while not easy by any stretch is actually pretty simple and my current theory is that life is about figuring out what not to do. Business is the same, you know by putting your hand on the stove as a child that you should not do that. You know in martial arts that sparring with your hands-on top of your head and exposing your torso is a terrible idea so, you don't do that. As we grow as human beings, as martial artists maybe as business people, we make mistakes and we learn from those mistakes. We continue to have the option of doing those things but our knowledge, our experience teaches us when we should and should not do those things, when we should or should not exercise the options.

If you show me a business that hasn't stumbled, fallen, or even failed, I bet we'll be looking at a very small business that has not achieved any of its goals. Show me a martial artist who hasn't failed and I will show you someone who likely hasn't even started training. I'd love to hear your feedback on this episode are you a martial artist and a business owner? Whether that's a martial arts business or not what do you think? Did I nail this? Do you completely disagree? I love feedback. Feedback helps me grow just as feedback when I'm training for my instructors helps me grow. So, go ahead hit us up on social media @whistlekick, Facebook and Instagram



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are our primary venues of course you can join our Facebook discussion group [whistlekick martial arts radio](#) behind the scenes, you can email me directly at [jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremy@whistlekick.com). I thank you for your time. Thank you for this option that I get to exercise in speaking to you today. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day.