



Episode 453 – Martial Arts Infighting | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello, everyone! Welcome, this is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 453 in snazzy 60-frame per second video. That's right. if you're listening to this one, there's a video version. It's me in a chair. Super excited! Who am I? My name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host for the show, founder of whistlekick and I love the martial arts. If you want to see all the ways that we at whistlekick are sharing our love for the martial arts, go to whistlekick.com, there's a bunch of stuff over there. links to everything that we're working on, all of our projects and our store. You pop in the store, make a purchase, use the code PODCAST15, PODCAST-1-5, that's going to save you 15% off every single thing that we have for sale there. If you want to know more about this show, we have a separate site, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. Go over there and check out every single one of our episodes. It's available for free, transcripts, videos, links, all kinds of stuff there. Our social media is @whistlekick and oh yeah, what's the last thing? See this is the challenge of doing videos. I can't have my notes right here. The last thing that I'd like to tell you guys is why. Why do we do this? At whistlekick, we share our love for the traditional martial arts. Our goal here is to inspire, to educate, to entertain all of you and hopefully some of that comes through.

Today, we're talking about infighting in the martial arts. A subject that drives me insane. Why? Because I've long believed that the infighting that we have in martial arts communities is holding us back. That we're spending so much time dragging each other down that that energy isn't being used for more positive things that would help grow and spread the martial arts. I used the analogy before of a bucket



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full of crabs. You don't have to put a top on a bucket of crabs because the moment one of them is about to get out, the others will pull it back in and we see a lot of that in the martial arts.

The moment someone starts gaining some success, some fame, some students, others will disparage them. Sometimes it's private, sometimes it's very, very public. It really stinks because the majority of the time, the people that I see disparaging, those that are rising up, are people who, let's face it, they're bitter. They've done very little in their own lives and they're trying to frame their reality such that they haven't messed up, they haven't failed. Really don't like that word but we'll use it here. They want to believe that everything they've done has been good and right and maybe it was good and right for them but that doesn't mean that their path and the path of someone else need to be compared. Just as comparing martial arts can become incredibly unhealthy. Comparing yourself to others can become incredibly unhealthy and the majority of what I see online, yeah, it's online and people get brave behind their keyboards. It's just negative. It's a waste of time. It's cliché but as kids, we were taught if you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all. There's some truth in that because why bother?

If I have someone over here, I figured they're over here, there's no one there, there's a tree. If someone's over there and they're running a martial arts school and they've got 500 students and they're driving a Ferrari and they live in a big house and they're happy and their students are happy, who am I to say that they're wrong? I'm probably jealous. I probably look at what they've done and say either I could've done that and I chose not to or wasn't smart enough to or didn't capitalize on the opportunity or I can. Both of those make me feel kind of bad because I want what this person has. I want what they have and I don't have it. I wish I had.

Now, there's another response to that situation. It's called working hard and finding your own way to get there. I don't see anybody out there investing the time to belittle people who have done nothing. Think about that for a moment. No one's investing the time to unsuccessful martial arts schools and say what you teach and how you teach it is poor. It's terrible, stop. They're only addressing people who have seen some sort of success whether that's professional success or financial success or whatever it is and why is that? Because it's bullying. The very thing that we spend so much time telling the world we're great at stopping, we are some of the worst at fostering. We're bullied and I hate to include myself in that group but I'm a martial artist and if I'm going to be part of this group, I have to accept that fact that there are large number of bullies in this world.

If I could snap my fingers and make everybody stop pulling this crap, I would but I can't. So, what do I do? I tell you because we all have the ability to make the change and what is that change? The change is not supporting it. If you're not comfortable telling someone hey, stop this, stop being a bully, stop tearing other people down; when you claim that you stand for the exact opposite, then don't engage. Don't support it. Don't tell them they're doing the right thing. Just ignore it. If that's what you're comfortable doing, it helps because what does a bully want? They want a reaction. They want others to say hey, yeah, that was funny or you're right or whatever it is and there may be some people watching



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this saying oh, I know what you're talking about or I know who you're talking about, you don't because this is not about one situation or one person or one group or one anything. It's about all of it.

I've talked about this before. I will continue to talk about it. I will continue to find ways to bring this subject up in slightly different episodes until it stops. This is one of my missions because I love the martial arts, because it's done so many great things for me, for others. It's done a lot of good and it deserves better. We owe it more than to use it as a platform to make ourselves feel better about our fragile egos and to tear other people apart. It's gross. It makes me sick.

I wish we could all just stay in our own lane and this is usually where some will say yeah but Jeremy, when someone claims this and that's not true, others need to know about it. If it really matters, they'll figure it out. They'll find out about it. How about this? how about this scenario for a moment. Let's imagine that somebody trains in Kung Fu for 6 months and then, they open their own school. They shouldn't do that. No, they shouldn't do that. They don't know enough to do that but let's say that school becomes successful and thrives and there are a large number of students that come through and their martial arts is terrible but everyone is happy and they're safe and they feel better about their lives and they get some good exercise. How would they harm the world? They haven't. is what they're teaching great quality martial arts? Probably not but here's the thing. Here's the thing everyone refuses to acknowledge.

Most of us have seen what's a bell curve, right? And in a bell curve, you've got two extremes. You've got the really high-end, really low-end. Let's apply this to martial arts. The really good martial artists, well, this should be backwards, the really good martial artists over here, the really bad martial artists over here. By definition, everyone can't be right here. Statistically speaking, most of you watching this right now are average martial artists. Yeah, it's true. It can't not be true because if everyone gets better, that bell curve redistributes. There have to be people over here who are terrible at martial arts and who are poor instructors. If we want to standardize things which I don't think we should but if we did, that's how we solve that problem and guess what? The majority of people out there, I would say 99% of you out there, someone would take issue with the way you teach or your rank or something from your past. It's a can of worms. It's a Pandora's box that's not worth opening. So, what's the alternative? The alternative is we accept it and we worry about ourselves. We worry about our students, we worry about our friends, our family and getting better at what we do. The more we shift that average in this direction, the more the stuff over here becomes exposed as less than. If you know nothing about martial arts, if you walk off out in the streets and you have never seen a movie and you say I want to learn Taekwondo. You walk in and there's someone and their kicks are all to the knee. They can't kick any higher, their students can't kick any higher and you don't know better, ok, so maybe you join that school and maybe you learn to kick to the knee but because there is exposure, because there are more people over here, some of them going to the movies, someone keeps competing, someone's been posting things on social media; because the world has some sense of what martial arts is and can be, the majority of people walk in the next school and say, only a kick to the knee? That doesn't sound right. I'm going to go elsewhere.



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The martial arts will benefit more, the world will benefit more, by focusing on what we do. I'm going to focus on what I do. You go focus on what you do. If you're a school owner or instructor, focus on what your students do. By making them better, by moving this average line, the top of the bell curve to the right, by moving everything to the right, the stuff over here falls away. It falls off. It becomes such an outlier that everyone sees it. Everyone knows the outliers in any spectrum. They know the really, really good martial arts movies and they know the really, really bad ones because they're so bad, they attract attention. You're not going to find the list of most average cars but you'll find the list of the worst cars because it attracts attention.

No one's out there campaigning at a General Motors plant saying this particular car is so bad that the CEO of GM needs to retire and move on. They don't worry about it because it just won't sell, though, because it will get reviewed poorly. Those reviewers don't turn it into a crusade against a single car. There are things we do in the martial arts in the name of helping the martial arts and exposing the fakes and all of these stuff that is some combination of bullying and posturing are a waste of time. I would love to say that this is the last recording, the last video that I will be doing online on a subject but it won't because I'm going to keep finding new ways to talk about it and hope that it inspires more and more people to worry about their own training to worry about what the martial arts is and does and gives us.

It makes us better people. It gives us physical skills and emotional and mental tools to use to get through everyday life. I have too much going on in my life to spend that time commenting on other people's YouTube videos and trashing them. It's ridiculous and who knows? Maybe this video will attract a whole bunch of hate because of that. I'm just going to delete the people and ban them from the account because I don't have time and here's the secret: if you do, if you're probably not going anywhere, you've probably wasted your time. You probably have a lot of things that you wanted to accomplish in life and you're fearful that you'll never get to where you want to be. Spending your time drilling holes in somebody else's boat doesn't help you get anywhere. I hope that's a real analogy. I think I just made that up, maybe not.

I don't know what else to say on this. I will continue to call people out quietly and in person when I see this happening. I hate it. It's my least favorite thing in the martial arts is that I'm associated with these fools. I only ever want whistlekick to be positive, to be a beacon of positivity that I'm hoping that that comes through. Every time that I do a subject like this, I get a little bit afraid that people think that I'm going negative and hopefully, by not speaking too specifically on this subject, hopefully by avoiding anything that anyone could connect to a person or an occurrence, you understand why I have to say it. I guess I don't have to say it. I want to say it. I feel it's important to say and as this show grows, as weird as it is for me, my opinion, my voice has an influence so I'm going to try to use that for good so that's it.

I hope good things are happening in your world, in your training and I hope that the next time you're around someone who starts badmouthing another martial artist, they'll speak up. You'll let them know hey, that doesn't get anybody anywhere. I have a personal rule. I work very, very hard and once in a



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while I slip but for the most part, I do not say anything about anyone that I would not say if they were in the room. I'd stop myself mid-conversation and you know what? I got to change the way I'm saying this or I'm sorry, I don't want to start this subject. It's been a good rule for me. Maybe it will help you.

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