



Episode 461 – Everyone Has The Right To Feel Safe | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hello everyone, welcome! This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 461, today's episode is titled Everyone Has the Right to Feel Safe. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, your host on the show founder of whistlekick and I love martial arts. I love traditional martial arts, that's why we do what we do and you can see everything we do at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com). One of the things you'll find over there is our store where you can buy stuff and if you do buy stuff use the code `PODCAST15` that gets you 15% off every single thing we have there from uniforms, to equipment, to shirts, to hats, some other stuff we're adding more all the time, go check it out if you haven't recently. Our digital home for the show however is a different website [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) that's where you can find every single episode we've ever done all for free. We bring you two a week and the goal of the show is to connect, to educate, to inspire, the global martial arts community and if you want to support that effort you go to [Patreon.com/whistlekick](https://Patreon.com/whistlekick) and make a monthly contribution and if you're contributing at least five dollars month, we're bringing you even more stuff, more audio, more video, more, more, more. And of course we have links to that support system from both [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) and [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com).

The inspiration for today's show came from a Facebook post that someone shared. I don't know how many times it was shared before it made it to me. Last I looked it was shared 145,000 times but there are some great conversation that popped up in the comments on the share that I saw and I wanted to respond to it because there were two very distinct opinions on how this should go. Now, first because it's not too long I'm going to read this post. Now some of you may have seen this pop up on Facebook



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and if you've already seen it you can skip forward a minute or two but if not I want you to listen to this because without hearing this you're not really gonna understand what's going on. I don't usually read things on the show but this is kind of important. This was shared originally on Facebook 10 days ago and the post is set to public so we can have a link to that in the show notes and it's from someone named Allison Davis.

Five days of out of school suspension for beating up the kid that has been tormenting and bullying him since middle school and there's a there's a photo of a young man. I know as a parent I'm supposed to be upset with him for resorting to violence or getting suspended but I'm not not even a little bit. For years, the school has failed Drew. When this kid has constantly threatened to beat you up along with several of his friends the school did nothing. When this could follow Drew down the hall threatening him and making fun of him and it was all captured on video, the school did nothing. When other kids told teachers and administrators that this kid was threatening drew the school did nothing. When this kid took to social media, voicemails, and texting threats the school did nothing. When this kid threatened you over and over in every class they have together, the school did nothing. Not once has the school ever punish the kid that has threatened and bullied Drew over and over. In middle school Drew was afraid to walk down the halls because a swarm of this kid and his minions would make fun of and threaten Drew. He quit talking to the adults about it because they never discipline the bully and it just made the situation worse. I sent the school a lengthy email to beginning of the year begging them to do something because Drew refused to talk to adults at school about it and because he knew it would do him no good. Drew had four classes with this kid and he would not leave you alone dissolution and response was to have him and his bully sign a no contact contract. Seriously? I'm pretty sure I rolled my eyes and like Drew, I gave up on trying to get the school to actually do something that would stop the skin from bullying drew. So when this gets written true while on the bus and then moved on to making fun of his dad and then threatening Jackson his 11-year-old brother, Drew decided that he would quit relying on the school and the adults who are supposed to protect him and he would do something. Three punches and his bully screams like a baby, his minion friend shut up and this morning the bully wouldn't even look at him. Problem solved. End of me reading okay.

I don't know where this took place, looking at the photo of the boy and then the reference to an 11-year-old brother, he looks like he's 13 to 15 hard to say exactly and you know not some big kid doesn't look intimidating or scary or anything, this is a story that we've heard time and again. But I want to talk about what's interesting to me about this post. So a friend of mine who trains martial arts shared this on Facebook and what you saw was the majority of people saying yeah it sounds like he didn't have a choice, it sounds like he was pushed to the edge and he responded appropriately. But there was one person who was very firm in their belief that violence is never the action, it's never an appropriate response and I spent some time contemplating and what was, what I really appreciate about this conversation this back-and-forth was that no one was disrespectful no one was accusatory there was a genuine attempt on both sides of the discussion to not just understand what other people were saying but convey what the individual's posting or thinking. I spent some time, I contributed a few post to the



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conversation, and it was really interesting to read and I'm not going to read my comment or the comments from others because I don't want anyone to track it down and I don't want anyone to you don't necessarily find people who disagreed with me because that's not the point. And I found this really interesting because this was very similar to some stuff that I had endured as a child. It was not this bad because I never let it get this bad. I was lucky I never had to resort to this because I have the confidence of martial arts I knew that if it came down to it I could stand up for myself but I was not confrontational and it sounds like in this case, the reason that this young man stood up to his bully was because his brother was being brought into the conversation, into the mix. And when I think back to high school, there was one time that I stood up to someone and it's because they were aggressing on someone else. And I wasn't gonna have that it wasn't okay. It was a friend of mine and I don't remember exactly what happened, I just remember walking up to him and saying you know, you're done, this isn't happening and it shocked him and he walked away heading to my knowledge he never messed with that kid again. And I think it's easier for those of us who endured bullying who endured failures of authority figures in protecting us to understand the circumstances. Now the people who disagree with the way this young man handled this and I'm sure that they're not all from the exact same place in life and I really hate generalizing but I'm going to guess that the majority of people did not grow up being bullied, did not have to fear for physical harm time and again, day after day. And what this brought up for me when I realized in reading it is of course the title of the episode, everyone has the right to feel safe. And if you look at that across humanity across species, this is a core instinct that we all feel when will animal attack when it feels threatened? The nicest animal in the world if it's backed into a corner and feels threatened will attack. The smallest animal attack the largest animal if it feels it has no choice. And human beings while we have the ability to think and rationalize, we still have that instinct and we can choose to not act on it of course but that feeling of safety is our primary driver. And if you don't believe me if you are hungry and being kicked in the shins, which one are you going to deal with first? We have to remain safe in order to eat, to seek shelter, to procreate, all the other instincts that we have as human beings, safety is first. And this is an example of what happens when that right to feeling safe is violated.

Now, during this back and forth between myself and and some mutual friends of this individual who shared the post, I came up with an analogy it was one that I feel pretty good about bringing into this conversation here, because I think it's the best correlation, the best analogy, there's a better word, for those of us that are adults who maybe haven't experienced this and here it is. Imagine that you're sitting at home you're watching television and you see a stranger tapping on the windows. Maybe they make some threatening faces and maybe they they hold their fist up in a violent or again threatening manner. Now what do you do? The first thing you're going to do is you you're gonna have some kind of reaction, for some of us, we may go to the person but let's say there are three or four people, let's say you're there alone, some of us who own firearms may choose to use that as a force equalizer, but let's imagine for the scenario's sake that you don't on firearms. You're there with your family there are three or four of you couple young children in the mix and there are three or four larger people outside, what are you going to do? You're going to probably call the police you're, probably going to hide, maybe you grab a



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knife from the kitchen, you know you're going to be fearful. And then let's imagine that the police say well they haven't done anything so we we can't come out, you're going to be frustrated and then you know the people go away. But a couple days later they come back and they continue to threaten, they continue to make you feel scared in your own home. Fearful. Unsafe. And you call the police again and they say well they haven't done anything. And maybe this continues and every time they show up they continue to menace you and your family and the police do nothing or maybe they come out and say they move along. They don't arrest them, there are no charges, eventually you're going to do something. The equivalent to what a lot of people would ask a child to do and in the other situation, in the youthful situation that happens in school, the adult version is well, you should move or you should ignore them, draw the blinds. That doesn't make sense does it? What are most people going to do? They're going to react, at some point they're going to react because you deserve to feel safe in your own home. And when we look at the scenarios that happen daily and I'm going to suspect every single school, how do you resolve it? The instinct to bully and the instinct to feel safe are innate in humanity. And the only way you temper the instinct to bully is by leveraging social pressure and ultimately, if that's not enough, the use of force. There has to be some kind of corrective action to teach that bullying is not appropriate. Where does that instinct for bullying come from? Its social structure, human beings are social in nature and that bullying is an instinct it helps to sort out hierarchy. But just because that is instinct does not mean that we ignore it. In fact we do the exact opposite, we find ways to support the opposite and balancing instinct of defense. And this is what a lot of school administrators don't understand is that these two instincts are natural and they balance things out.

I'm 40 and while it didn't happen often when I was a child, there were fights. But when I talk to people who are 20-30 years older, it sounds like there were quite a few more fights and bullying wasn't as big of a deal. It would happen, but if the bully was wrong a group of kids would generally get together and kicked their butt. Again I know how much, how often it happened but it would make sense right? It fits with my understanding of the social structure. And so what this child in his post that I read has done is followed all the rules but he eventually succumbed to his instinct of self-preservation, his need to feel safe. I'm guessing I'm preaching to the choir here I suspect that there are very few, if any people listening to this episode were going to say: Jeremy you're wrong, there's never a time for violence. So there's selection bias and who I'm talking to so why am I doing this? I'm sharing this because I want everyone to understand why we have problems with bullies and it's because we have removed the balancing instinct from the equation. Now, I'll confess it wasn't until I read this post that I fully understood this. I knew that there was something wrong, and I think we all understand there's something wrong when someone bullies and the response is, sign a no contact contract or just ignore him and walk away. We know that's not right but I don't think most of us can articulate why and I feel this is why. So I'm sharing information that is new to me. Now, some of you much out there might have and hopefully have much more understanding of the subject and if so I want to hear from you. Maybe we can have you on the show, maybe we can have you on the show, maybe we can talk about this more because the psychology in the sociology of this are very important. And the more people who





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understand this the better we can implement policies that punish bullies in an appropriate way so people can feel safe. If we're going to force children to go to school they deserve to feel safe there and anyone who is unwilling to protect that right, has no business making decisions that affect children. Safety is more important in education, safety is more important than anything. Those of you who teach martial arts, it safety first.

As I look through the comments on the original post, there are overwhelming, I would say 90% supportive comments. Why? Because we get it, because it instinct and it's time that we showed public schools that this is not how the world works. If you have the opportunity to have an impact on this subject, I hope that you will. Again I want to hear from you, if you have commentary, if you have insight if you're an expert in this field or know someone who is, I want to have them on the show, I want to talk about this. Because one of the things that martial arts, and martial artists claim is that we can have an impact on this epidemic of bullying. So let's utilize some of the resources that we have here whistlekick to affect that impact. I want to thank you for listening and if you want to comment, the best place is at [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). You can email me [Jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:Jeremy@whistlekick.com), and there are number of ways you can help us out from supporting us via Patreon and getting some cool stuff for adding new things, there's a lot coming. You can make a purchase at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) use the code PODCAST15 you can share this episode or another episode or leave us a review anywhere that seems appropriate, Facebook, or the Apple podcast, spot, Google. If you have a suggestion for guests related to this topic or another topic or maybe a Monday show, there's a guest form at [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) or you can email us. Our social media we are @whistlekick everywhere you can imagine and I thank you for tuning in. Until next time, train hard, smile, and have a great day!