



Episode 463 – Living a Martial Arts Lifestyle | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello and welcome! This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 463. Today, we're going to unpack what it means to live a martial arts lifestyle. I'm Jeremy Lesniak, your host on this show, founder at whistlekick, the guy who loves to kick stuff and punch stuff and, let's face it, most of my best friends punch me in the face and if you can relate, you've probably been to whistlekick.com and you've probably checked out all the things that we have going on there. One of the things that we have there is a store. Yeah, we make stuff. Not just stuff for you to listen to or watch but stuff for you to put on or use and if you use the code `PODCAST15` for any of that stuff, you'll save 15%, you'll let us know our marketing efforts work and that the time that goes into what we do here is worthwhile.

Another way you can let us know that what we do is worthwhile is support our Patreon account. This is where you can make a small monthly contribution and in exchange, you either send us some love via dollars or depending on how much you contribute, you get access to original programming; stuff that you're not going to see for free. We're never going to put anything that we have been doing historically behind that paywall but we're making new stuff and if you want to check out that new stuff, go to patreon.com/whistlekick. You can contribute as little as 2 dollars a month or if you just want to make a donation one time, sign up, once that money comes out, cancel.

If you want to know more about this show, go to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. There you will find every single episode we've ever done along with show notes, with links and photos and videos and



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we're always looking at how to improve that site so if you've got some feedback, let us know as well as guests. There's forms and things over there. Let us know who we should be talking to or what we should be talking about and it all goes under the heading of connecting, educating and inspiring traditional martial artists the world over.

It kind of blew my mind that here we are, knocking on Episode 500 and we haven't done an episode yet on what it means to live a martial arts lifestyle and then, I sat down to start doing some notes on what that episode would look like and I realized it's a lot harder to define than I would've thought. Sure, it falls under the heading of you know it when you see it but that doesn't make for a very good episode or conversation so I spent some time unpacking the concept and I'm going to give you my thoughts. As with everything that happens on this show, I want your feedback. I want to know what you think. Whether that's in the whistlekick martial arts radio behind the scenes group on Facebook or a comment at the website or an email or social media, anything, just I like to know what people think because my opinion is the be all, end all and I'll be honest. My opinion changes constantly and in part, because of the contributions and the feedback from this community.

Now, we're going to start this conversation in, honestly, the worst and lamest way possible because I don't know how else to do this. What is a lifestyle? We know what martial arts is. We've done that subject to death but what's a lifestyle? So, we look at the dictionary and we got 2 definitions. I don't like the first one but here it is: the typical way of life of an individual, group or culture. Yeah, how about this 2nd one though? Associated with reflecting or promoting an enhanced or more desirable life and that's the one I like. Promoting an enhanced or more desirable life through martial arts training. Yes, that's where we're going to go to today.

In order to do that, in order to live a martial arts lifestyle and not simply show up to a class and train and go home and never consider it again other than this is something I do within 4 walls at a certain time, you have to live it. you have to live it outwardly. You have to take it outside the dojo, the dojang, whatever you call where you train. You have to take your training and the lessons from that training into the world.

When you live a martial arts lifestyle, it's in your food. It's in your clothing. It's in your leisure activities. How does it show up in your food? You make choices about what you eat because they impact your training. Your clothing, if you buy shoes or pants, and you look at the way you can move in them in case you need to defend yourself. If the things that you do when you're not training or working, your leisure activities, if they enhance your martial arts training, say, lifting weights or running or hiking because at least in some part, you know that that benefits your martial arts training or perhaps self-defense. We've said it on the show, stronger people are harder to kill, right?

So, if any of your attitude towards those things relate back to martial arts, that's living the martial arts lifestyle. It's in your words and your thoughts and the way you hear others. It's about taking those lessons that you learned through yourself or understand through the instruction of others and how they



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enhance your understanding of what you say and how you say it, the ways you think and the way you communicate with other people. It's in your action, in your inactions and your plans.

Living a martial arts lifestyle means that the way you engage with others in a potentially difficult situation that could become physical is impacted. You're not so quick to anger as maybe you once were or maybe you have the confidence to simply walk away. A martial arts lifestyle doesn't mean that you get angry and prove to the people around you that you can beat them. It means that you realize that's not the point.

Truly living a martial arts lifestyle benefits the practitioner. It benefits you as well as everyone around you. When you live a martial arts lifestyle, you take the methodology of training. Learning, practice, understanding, revision, self-critique, a suspension of ego as much as possible and you bring that into the other things that you do. Your personal relationships, your professional work, your family, your friends. Living a martial arts lifestyle, the better you get at martial arts, the better the other things in your life get because you understand more. You develop dedication and you're better able to handle the challenges that come up whether they're internal or external.

Now, there are many people who don't live this way. Many martial artists do not live a martial arts lifestyle. If you train and your training ends at the door, it's not a lifestyle. If your training doesn't create recognizable changes in how you treat others or yourself or the world, it's not a lifestyle. Remember our definition: associated with, reflecting or promoting an enhanced or more desirable lifestyle so in the context of martial arts, promoting an enhanced or more desirable life through martial arts training.

In order to live a martial arts lifestyle, you have to first be a martial artist and then you have to change your life using those tools that you developed through your training. How many times on this show have we talked about ego and the idea that there are plenty of people who are very skilled martial artists but are absolute jerks to be around and they have no desire to become less jerk? There are plenty of ways that many martial artists live that martial arts lifestyle that we all see and understand. Without tooting my own horn, I would say that taking martial arts and turning it into a business like whistlekick, that's a martial arts lifestyle but it wouldn't have to be. What if whistlekick is simply engaged in making and selling things and we didn't do any of this content and what if the products we made were just generic stuff that we put a logo on and sold for the cheapest price we could and it was all about volume and not connecting with our community? That wouldn't necessarily be a martial arts lifestyle. That would just be having a martial arts business.

If you go back to the episodes where we talk about what is a martial art and who is, by extension, a martial artist? You know that I'm pretty open about that. In fact, I've said very definitely, it is not right for me to judge who and who is not a martial artist but I think it's a little bit easier to judge whether someone is living a martial arts lifestyle because whatever martial arts means to them, you'll see it.



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You'll see it in the way that they live their lives. It's in the way that they engage with other people and when you think of that dichotomy, martial artists who do and do not live a martial arts lifestyle, you've likely met people who are on both sides of that line. I would suggest that most martial artists live a martial arts lifestyle because a lifestyle can be very shallow or can be very deep with respect to any single thing but unfortunately, I've known many people for whom their training stops at the door and their personality sometimes even gets worse. On some kind of objective level, you see that they start to train but they become even more of a jerk. That's not a martial arts lifestyle.

It's incredibly subjective and I'm not going to suggest that my definition and opinion on who is and who is not living a martial arts lifestyle is the be all, end all but you do know it when you see it and like everything else, there are levels and I think, just as with our training, we should aspire to live a deeper martial arts lifestyle. Why? Because if you're doing it and you're doing it well, it makes your life better. It makes the lives of those around you better. Why should you not make things better? Why wouldn't you want to live a better life?

If martial arts is that important to you, living that martial arts lifestyle's probably important to you whether you realize it or not. If you take a step back and look at how you live and look at all the specific things, the things you do, the things that are important to you. If you walk into a restaurant and make sure that your back is not to the door, you probably got that from martial arts. If you put on a suit and say man, I hope nobody attacks me today; I can't move to defend myself. You probably live a martial arts lifestyle. Even more so, if you've elected not to wear a suit when maybe you should so that you can defend yourself if need be.

I'll be honest, as I've talked about this, I'm still not convinced that I've done a good job explaining it but I've spent a lot of time thinking on it and researching it and I can't come up with anything better so I'm hoping someone out there has a better way of expressing it better than I do and if so, maybe we'll bring you on the show or maybe I'll read your comments because I believe, a martial arts lifestyle is something for everyone to aspire to and the way that a good and just martial artist lives their life is something that everyone will benefit from looking to for inspiration.

Thank you for indulging me as I rambled a bit and unpacked these thoughts. They've been brewing for a few weeks now. Remember, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com for everything that we do on this show. Whistlekick.com for everything we do everywhere and the code `PODCAST15` gets you 15% off in the store. If you want to help us out, if you want to support everything that we're doing, you got a few ways. You can make a purchase, you can share this episode, leave a review on Google or Facebook or Amazon or anywhere or even make a small monthly contribution through Patreon in patreon.com/whistlekick. You got a suggestion for a guest, we want to hear it and we hope you'll follow us on social media, @whistlekick anywhere you can think of. My email address, my personal email, jeremy@whistlekick.com and I love hearing from all of you. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day!



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