



Episode 476 — Coach Lina Khalifeh | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Welcome! You're tuned in to whistlekick martial arts radio episode 476. Today, I'm joined by my guest, Coach Lina Khalifeh. I'm Jeremy Lesniak, host for this show, founder of whistlekick and everything we're doing here at whistlekick is in support of traditional martial arts. If you want to know more about what we're doing for the traditional arts, go to whistlekick.com and that's where you'll find everything we've got going. One of the things that we've got going is in our store, and if you make a purchase, make sure you use the code `PODCAST15` to make sure you save 15% and show some love to martial arts radio. Our show gets its own website, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. The goal of the show is to connect, educate and entertain martial artists throughout the world. If you want to help the show beyond making a purchase, there are a number of ways you can do it. You can share an episode, follow us on social media, tell a friend, pick up one of our books on Amazon, leave a review or support us on Patreon, Patreon.com/whistlekick. Patreon's a place where we post exclusive content and if you contribute as little as \$5 a month, you're going to get access to that content. You can contribute less. We value everything that our fans do for us. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Using that word, fan, is a little bit odd for me but people keep telling me I need to use that word so I will reluctantly comply. My guest today has quite a story. A powerful story, in fact, one of adversity. We'd like to think that the traditional arts is full of nothing but kind and compassionate people who are mutually supportive and lift each other up to achieve their goals. The reality, unfortunately, is that's not true. Today's guest took that



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adversity, overcame it and now, helps others do the same thing. It's a great conversation and I hope you enjoy it. Coach Khalifeh, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Lina Khalifeh:

Thank you, thank you for having me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Of course, thank you for being here. Listeners, we're just talking about weather comparing notes from Vermont to Toronto and we're winning the cold war here. It's always colder here. It's colder here than some of the other places but that's ok because I'm inside and it's warm and hopefully, it's warm wherever you are right now. I can't think when it's cold. I don't do well. I don't do well when it's cold. Give me at least a jacket and a hat. I see videos of people doing martial arts outside and I've done some of that. I've been at classes where they made me run through the snow but that's not my preference.

Lina Khalifeh:

You did?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, yeah but I prefer inside training especially if I'm barefoot.

Lina Khalifeh:

I'm afraid to slip sometimes on the ice so I'm just very cautious when I'm outside especially running.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, is running a big part of your training?

Lina Khalifeh:

Oh yeah, definitely. Cardio is a big part of the training so I do run 3 to 4 times a week. I try to maintain running because it helps me in breathing later on and keeping my heart active.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What kind of distance are you running?

Lina Khalifeh:

I usually measure by hours so I usually run for an hour but I noticed like how you notice sometimes, improvement is sometimes you take pauses a lot while you're running and sometimes I just run for a whole hour nonstop so it depends also on the energy, how you're feeling that day.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

An hour of running is a lot of running. I don't know if I've ever ran for an hour straight.

Lina Khalifeh:

Usually, if you have a lot of things to think about, it's good to think about all the things so it's kind of like meditation running.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I once heard someone say runners are always running from something which I found to be really interesting and maybe we'll get into that later but we don't have to get into it now. Of course, we're here to talk about martial arts so let's start talking about martial arts and let's start talking about this. When did you start training?

Lina Khalifeh:

Training as in exercising martial arts or just practicing or like training other people? Practicing, right?

Jeremy Lesniak:

When did you start yourself?

Lina Khalifeh:

Oh, I started at the age of 5 years old. I was enrolled in taekwondo. That was the first martial arts and I was addicted to it. It's like an addiction. Martial arts is kind of the addiction. A lot of discipline, commitment, it just defines my values and who I am so as a kid, I was going there, I was going to the dojo 3 times a week and committing to my practices, at least during summer, not during school time but later on, I realized that, also, the coach, the master you want to follow has to be really inspiring and has to believe in you. I did change a couple of dojos until I found the best master to teach me martial art taekwondo.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You're really that hooked that young?

Lina Khalifeh:

Yeah, because I was a big troublemaker. I used to fight with the boys on the streets.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Ok, we're getting somewhere!

Lina Khalifeh:



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My parents didn't find any other sports. I think, at that time, in Jordan, I was raised in Jordan, the middle east, taekwondo was really well-known among kids. We didn't have other sports like basketball. We did have them but usually, during school times and it was just an activity with school but they didn't take it seriously but taekwondo was taken really seriously so my parents enrolled me in my cousin's dojo, the first dojo I was enrolled in and I was going with other kids but there were not enough girls. Maybe 3 or 4 girls and 50 boys in every class so I enjoyed. I was really good at it. I was good in my splits, my high kicks, my spins. I was so disciplined, I was focused. I just loved it. I kept going every training and practicing every summer because my parents said I had to study when I was at school and later on, when I was 14, I took my black belt, I just went every single day even during school time.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I want to go back to the fighting. Fighting and mixing it up with kids your own age, that's not an uncommon thing but I can't say we talked to too many people at 5, at that age. Usually, when that starts happening, it's 10, 11, 12, maybe even older but to be that young, what was going on?

Lina Khalifeh:

I would say 5 and 6 when I started to go out on the street. We were living in this poor neighborhood where kids, even 3 or 4 years old in the streets, and they just learn from their brothers and sisters how to just fight in the street but I was that young and I started fighting with my siblings and I took it to the street and I came back with so many bruises. Sometimes, kids would throw rocks at me. It was like really aggressive fights. It was when you're young, usually also, when you're a kid, boys sometimes are jealous that you're a girl and you're beating them up in maybe football and they just go crazy and they just punch you and attack you so I had to, it was good that my parents enrolled me and my other siblings in taekwondo because I learned how to fight at a very young age, at least I wasn't being bruised as much.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Was your parents' desire to enroll you in taekwondo because of the fighting?

Lina Khalifeh:

No, because I think at that time, because all kids need to have some kind of activities, they can't just stay at home after school so they enrolled me and my siblings in taekwondo because my cousin had his first taekwondo center in Jordan, taekwondo dojo so we were going there, the 3 of us, then my brother and sister did not like it so they completely stopped practicing after a month. I was more dedicated. I loved it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And when did you move?

Lina Khalifeh:



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You mean move from ...?

Jeremy Lesniak:

From Jordan. Was that as a child or did that happen...?

Lina Khalifeh:

No, later. Years ago. I was struggling along. Yeah, we'll get to that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We'll come back to that later. I wasn't sure of the timeline so let's keep following this. so, here you are, you're a young child and you're embracing taekwondo and doing well with it and you keep going and more than a decade later, you earned your black belt and what's going on then? What's going on with you as an early teenager with your training?

Lina Khalifeh:

I did not like to go to school, honestly. I used to go to all-girls' school and I didn't like the environment because, at that time, nobody was doing martial arts among women, girls. They used to look at me and they say the sport is for boys, you need to stop doing it and you know how teenagers, they can be really mean. I did not find my community in school, I found it in taekwondo. The moment I finish school at that time, I go back home, I dress up and directly go to taekwondo where I have my own environment and community and support and my master. Everybody believed in me so I felt part of it and I felt I don't need to be someone else and they don't need to prove to anybody or fake something that I'm not so I'm just used to find it as the best escape from school, all this bullying and problems that I used to have in school. I just cannot wait until I get to training because training will get all my energy out and then I cannot think about anything else. I just go back to sleep. I was very dedicated to, at first, be in the national team when I first got my black belt and everybody told me it's too early, you just got your black belt. You can't be in the national team and they said I can't do. They said no, you're 14, you just got your black belt, you need lots of years of training but then, the first fight, I got the silver medal and they did not expect it as a surprise. I was fighting against Asian gold medalist woman who won many, many gold medals internationally and they did not expect me to win that game but I lost in one point and they completely were shocked because they did not expect, you just got your black belt so I joined the national team at a very early age. At that time, I just got the black belt, joined the national team and yeah, was addicted to fighting, to competing. Later on, I get my 2nd Dan, then the 3rd Dan and I won about 20 gold medals, national and international games.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Let's go back because this idea of competition, it's something that really resonates for some people. Doesn't at all for others but this sounds like this was something that you were looking forward to for, at



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least, a little while. I can't imagine that you earned your 1st Dan and all of a sudden say, oh, this is something I think I want to try. Sounds like something you've been thinking about for a while.

Lina Khalifeh:

Oh yeah, long time. Since I joined, honestly. I would say when I was more aware like, I would say 7 years old, 8 years old. It was just the taekwondo dojo was, for me, home so I cared about every word that my master would say to me and other kids. I used to listen carefully. I wasn't forced to go there. you know what I mean? It was my complete decision to be in the training. My siblings did not go so it was the discipline but mine was just to commit and every time I would get a new belt, I would imagine myself competing at the Olympics so I would dream big so it was a journey of believing and dreaming and practicing since I was a kid all the way to competitions.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What did you find in competition? Everyone finds something different in competition. It's usually something about themselves. What did you find about yourself?

Lina Khalifeh:

At the beginning, I wanted to prove to everybody when I started competing that I can do it and I can be the person I need to be and I thought that my dream is just to stick to taekwondo and compete at the Olympics and I just wanted to be in that track but later on, after also a lot of struggles at the national team at that time because they had some kind of favoritism, they needed some kind of people to represent the country, I was not one of them because originally, I come from Palestine. I'm not completely Jordanian so they have kind of racism problem where they don't talk about it but they show it. They show it to you. I was fired many times from the national team for no reasons. One time, I won the gold medal in one of the competitions and they were planning that the girl that was competing with me, she needs to be the gold medalist so they asked to do the game again, the competition again and I said no, I won in front of all the people. Everybody was there, judges were there and it was a fair fight. I'm not going to repeat the fight and they said if you don't repeat it, we're going to just fire you from the national team and I said you know what? I'm quitting and they said oh, you made it easier for us. We're going to pick her anyway. We're going to select her anyway so it was unfair then later on, I got a lot of injuries. They didn't want me there even though I was the gold medalist but they had their own tribe and people they want to invest in them, money and time and practice and of course, there's a lot of money going into the federation so at that time, they wanted certain people to represent the country that's why, by the way, Jordan did not really progress a lot with women, in the women national team because they also had this kind of favoritism and sometimes kind of, which is really sad, the kind of the coaches would need certain girls to fly with them to certain countries to be with that woman freely so they can just assault or whatever, harass her. They had many intentions that are not toward, for the favor of the country. It was mostly for their own desires and intentions so then, I realized it was a very



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nasty environment. I shouldn't be part of this community and what am I trying?? Who am I trying to prove my strength and abilities? They don't want me anyway to be part of it. They want to follow a certain...it's all corrupted, honestly. I had to quit at some point. I had to just send an official letter and quit all the federation.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How did that feel?

Lina Khalifeh:

It was hard because you've been, until I was 22 years old, it wasn't like, I started competing at the age of 14 but all the competitions took me, I was nonstop competing until I was 22. At 22, I got injured in my knee anyway so my knee stopped me from trying to keep going to prove myself to the federation and they had a lot of corruption problems like some coaches, they realized that their certificates were kind of fake. They were not true. They had a lot of problems that they had to deal with internally other than the players. At one time, I had to test for my black belt, it was a 3rd Dan when I was 19 or 18, I can't remember, before the test, they brought me and among all the players, the men and women national team and they said Ms. Khalifeh, I said yes, and they said if I were you I wouldn't do the test tomorrow because you might fail. They told me I might fail before they even test me so I said what is this? Is he giving me a warning not to test because he want to make me fail and that was kind of the president of the whole federation. I told my master at that time, he said that to me and he said, you know what? I'll still go and test. I did go and listened to him but he made me fail miserably in front of everybody even though I had to do the test with a guy and I knocked him down in the first few minutes and they still make everybody else pass while I failed. It was a really bad, bad struggle with the federation. I had to complain to the Olympic committee in Jordan and they contacted him and they said this is unfair. She needs to re-do the test again and you cannot favor some players and I did not trust him. I said I'm going to pay again for the test but what if he make me fail because he has power to make me fail in the test but they said don't worry about it. We make sure that you are doing the test properly and you actually passed. I re-did the test again and I get the 2nd place out of 40 people but imagine, the 1st time you fail and the 2nd time you do it, you get 2nd which is, it was all unfair so I had to stop just going in this direction anyway.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How much of this attitude coming from these other people, how much of it was because of your heritage as partially Palestinian, how much of it was, I'm going to guess, you weren't, you talked about some of the assault and unfortunately, here in the US, we had some issues here with USA Taekwondo and I would imagine just based on the little bit that we've heard from you today, you wouldn't have been compliant, as probably the best word, receptive and I would imagine that there were people who



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weren't so fond of your independence so why, I guess, were you this targeted? Why were they so against you?

Lina Khalifeh:

Because the competitions in front of people, you can't really fake it because there's like 200, 200 people are watching this competition so they can't make you lose even if they try. They can't make you lose that game. They did make me lose 1 or 2 of the games. They were completely unfair where I knocked my competitor down in the 2nd round and they did not put any points for me and they asked her to stand up and they were yelling at her stand up, stand up! I'm like you should count. You shouldn't tell her stand up but because not just my heritage, I had a cousin who had previous fights with the federations because they also did not want him to be a global referee so my family also suffered. At least one person in my family did have all these kind of problems and there's this old hate against me and my family then I got introduced to taekwondo and federation. I'm a new soul, I'm excited, I have a dream to follow, I don't care about racism or heritage or which tribe I come from or which country I come from but then all these things started to happen and I realize, I have less power. I can't really do much but just to keep competing again and again and again, keep pushing and pushing and pushing but eventually, at some point, because I was fighting against the whole system that was anyway racist and corrupt, I injured my knee badly where I could not train or practice. I had to operate 2 times.

Jeremy Lesniak:

How did that happen? What caused that injury?

Lina Khalifeh:

I think my frustration caused that injury. Yeah, my frustration from everything that was happening in my life that I thought I can do it and I believe I had this belief in myself but my frustration came from the federation and the fights and constantly fight with them and trying to prove myself so one time, there was a taekwondo master who came from Korea who was so honored. He had 8th or 9th Dan degree and he wanted to train masters in taekwondo so you have to be 3-Dan and above and I was one of the older masters getting the training under his supervision and he said everybody needs to be on time and there's a lot of rules to the training. Nobody was showing all these ethics anyway. They were late all the time and they were out of shape and he was always pissed off. He kept telling them if you believe in your country, if you believe in the mission of training taekwondo, you have to commit to this practice and you have to show some discipline because if you don't show it, how can you show it to your students and anyway, I was the only one showing up all the time and I was dedicated to the training and he gave me the highest mark on the test and they went completely crazy. I think I got 3.48 or I think it was from 5 so I think it was 4.98 out of 5 and he said I want Lina to go, he talked to the president of the federation and he said I want Lina to go present Jordan in the world poomsae games and of course, they did not want to send me so that was the last time I had the big, big fight with the federation because I



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was asked by one of the biggest masters in Korea to go to present Jordan and he came all the way to Jordan anyway to select the people he wants to represent the country in the Poomsae World Championship but then they said no again and then, I had enough and I was so angry and I was doing my practices one day and I twisted my knee and that's where I injured my knee badly. I went to the hospital, the pain was crazy. The doctor said you can't play any kind of sport right now because you're technically really badly injured so the injury helped me a little bit to stay away from all these negative atmosphere where you're trying to prove yourself to a community that doesn't want to recognize you at all for your efforts. It's exactly like when people now work in a corporate or trying to prove something or accompany that doesn't see their worth. Eventually, they're going to quit so that's what happened with me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And so, what happened after? It doesn't sound like you went back to competing for Jordan?

Lina Khalifeh:

No, I did not.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Ok, so what's next?

Lina Khalifeh:

After that I was injured, so I operated my knee twice on my knee and it took 2 years to completely heal so in this 2 years, I kind of took a break from everything that was going on in my life and when I was in college at that time and my friend was abused and I said she can stand up for herself. She was assaulted actually by her, it was a domestic violence where she was attacked by her brother and her father and I said women, why women are afraid to stand up and defend themselves and I said to teach them that martial arts and self-defense can help them with self-confidence and that's how I started. I started teaching them self-defense training at the basement of my parents' house. That's how I shifted completely from taekwondo to creating my own system.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's kind of a big deal so let's talk about that. The inspiration is something I'm sure that will resonate with other people. I think many of us, maybe even most of us in the martial arts, want to help others, want to protect people. That's something that's important to us but then, to start teaching, that's something that not everyone does and then, to expand that and it sounds like to take some things from taekwondo and likely, I'm guessing, things from elsewhere and to develop your own curriculum, maybe even you call it your own style, what was the story there?

Lina Khalifeh:



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Taekwondo as a martial arts, it's so powerful. Like other martial arts, they are so powerful. It's just the people abusing those martial arts so I said I'm definitely going to start helping women stand up against violence and injustice and I'm going to help women learn to defend themselves because when I started asking them if they know even how to punch, they don't even know how to punch so imagine, they never been in a fight so of course, if they're assaulted, they're going to panic. They're not going to try to defend themselves because it's something new to them so I said, I'm going to just help them build self-confidence because martial arts, taekwondo, has helped me become the person I am today. I started in the basement. It was when I was in college and I didn't have big plans for it. I just wanted to help women at that time and then, later on, I started getting more and more girls interested in the training and few years of training at the basement and booking events in spaces, in gyms and just going around the country providing events and seminars, I decided to launch my first self-defense studio for women, She Fighter in 2012.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And what's going on since then? It's been 8 years and I think we can see the trajectory. A lot of these points are lining up but how did it continue from there? You got the name and you're moving forward with it, how is that received? Were people open to it?

Lina Khalifeh:

Anywhere you go and you're creating a new, let's say, martial arts or sport or even new business, everything takes time. A lot of people nowadays, they want fast results but everything needs time so what I did is when I started, I had small investment and I said I'm going to start with a small studio and I did. I launched She Fighter in 2012 and I started getting few women interested in the training. Later on, I started getting more and more people signing up. They bring their friends, it's word of mouth mostly. It was very powerful and later on, after 2 years working inside the business, the She Fighter system, I said I can't keep giving the same training to everybody. It has to be like martial arts. It has to be like level system then I created my own level system which is the pink is for beginners, the silver level is for the intermediate, black is for the black level and gold is for professional level and master is for the master level and then, I started certifying trainers, teaching trainers and certifying them and those trainers will start training students and those students will go into the level system but it takes them more time than trainers like any kind of different martial arts like based on a level system.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm going to guess that there's a part of this story that happened that you haven't mentioned and I'm hopeful I'm wrong but a lot of what you've talked about today is around people pushing back on you, they hold you back and I'm going to be surprised if that didn't continue.

Lina Khalifeh:



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Oh, yeah, of course, until now.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Can you tell us about that a little?

Lina Khalifeh:

If you think about it, when you grow up, you start to use your brain more and your energy less.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hopefully. Not everyone does, unfortunately.

Lina Khalifeh:

You become like this high level of martial artist like guru and then you use completely your brain and after a while, you realize, it's not their dream. It's their dream. Of course, they're not going to believe in you; of course, they're going to reject you. Of course, they're going to tell you, I mean, I was so blessed that I was rejected more than a thousand times until now because it made me believe more in what I'm doing and my message behind what I'm doing and who I am. I think if people just told me that I was qualified since I was born, I was good at it like I'm never beaten up because I'm smart, I wouldn't have pushed myself to reach this level that I reached all the way until now and until now, a lot of people still don't believe in many things I can do even though I did achieve a lot, they still don't see it. It doesn't matter. It's not their dream. It's your dream and at the end of the day, you know you're here on earth for a short period of time to do something and not to sit down and wait for everybody to approve what you're here for. Nobody can tell you what you're here for, what your mission on earth. You come to planet earth, you come to life and you live life as a dream so it's actually your dream so you either create it or if you will be part of another person's dream so it's up to you eventually.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I like that. It's either your dream or a part of someone else's. That's pretty powerful.

Lina Khalifeh:

It's from martial arts, I guess.

Jeremy Lesniak:

At some point you said, a couple years ago, you moved. I know what it's like to move across town and I know how much work that is. It's exhausting and expensive and you didn't just move across town, you moved across the world. Why?

Lina Khalifeh:



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Again, because I was looking for my own community that supports women entrepreneurs. Now, I have a team in Jordan running sessions and classes of She Fighter and I would completely rely on them. They're amazing but I give the country more than enough, I guess and I would still inspire the people in the country by doing global things, not just the local so my mission was starting local, going global by training trainers so by helping others, also making some kind of income by providing these new style and method of self-defense and martial arts for women so now we certify about 550 instructors globally but they're not all active because once you're trying to make a social change working with women, you don't expect the same results as working with men. Men, for example, they just do things. They take more risks, not all of them but I mean, they're just raised this way but women you need to build leaders, not coaches. You need to talk to them, coach them, show them how to do it step by step, have calls with them every once in a while. Just encourage them to keep doing what they're doing. So, just building, I wouldn't say I call them instructors, I call them leaders because eventually, they're leading another change in their own communities and they need the support and help coming from me or other women so I said, since I'm also Canadian, I'm also Canadian-Jordanian, I said I'm going to move to Canada and expand my system in Canada and North America like training trainers and certify them.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What's the response been?

Lina Khalifeh:

I still did not start yet. I was struggling a lot and I was working on everything else like legal, registering the business but it takes a lot of time. You know that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But that's a big deal! Absolutely.

Lina Khalifeh:

Like moving. At this moment, I build my connections in Toronto and some cities in America. Now, the next step is to start organizing events and seminars and then training with trainers.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I know there are certainly a lot of people open and positive with this movement, this idea of, the word that's coming to mind is empowering women from a martial arts, non-martial arts perspective and I love that you're using that word, leader, because it's a word that we don't use often in the martial arts world. I see it used in children's programs, the idea of we're teaching leadership but you said it in a way that really clicked for me that a leader can have so much more of an impact than simply teaching a class.

Lina Khalifeh:



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Because, exactly, even instructors. They are kind of leaders, if you think about it. they're changing people's lives everyday especially if they're passionate about teaching but why I call them leaders is they're going to start everything from scratch and starting everything from scratch is not an easy task to do. I started everything from scratch and you feel left out sometimes. You're alone, you need to talk to someone, you're rejected a lot, you need a mentor and now, that's what I'm also doing. After training those women, I don't leave them alone. We stay in touch, we have groups, we talk, we do meetings, we just talk about obstacles so just step by step forming leaders' community of all these leaders taking action in their own communities and societies.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Do you have a mentor?

Lina Khalifeh:

I used to have when I started, like one amazing mentor and then, another mentor. I'm actually blessed to have, my taekwondo master was a mentor for me for so long. He believed in me like nobody ever believed in me. He even told me one time, you see all the federation? The men teaching women trying to just use them for their sexual appearances or whatever, I don't even like those women. You're a badass and I like the personality and he always believed in me. He said you're just amazing the way you are. You don't have to change for other people or to please other people so when I was a teenager and my early 20s, it was my taekwondo master and then when I quit taekwondo, I had another mentor that was British and he kept calling me every once in a week just giving me encouragement about what I'm doing, what I'm starting and later on, it was people that I meet whether they were CEOs, women taking roles so they lead in their own communities, countries, cities and they started calling me and supporting me and they always say I'm here for you. you don't even have to pay for it so all is good to have some kind of support where you have the same language, you're heading the same direction and they understand your suffering in this life and they had been in your shoes so all is good. I call them being among your tribe because a tribe is a very powerful word that connect a certain group of people together and the tribe is like the indigenous tribe, even in Jordan, the Bedouin tribe, there's different tribes and those people, nobody can get between this tribe because they're just so loyal to each other and they share the same values and beliefs so I looked around where is women are rising now? It's mostly in America, honestly. If you look around, even in Europe, even in Africa, it's still women are trying hard to make it but women in North America, they're having voices. There's like a woman coach in the football league in the United States, she's a female coach to men's football, American football. You kind of see all these development happening in North America where women are using more their leadership, their voices there so yeah, that's why I said it's a good way to expand the movement. Good location and I do get a lot of support from women in business in Toronto and in America as well.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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It almost sounds like looking back, this is the only way your life could have gone. That sounds almost trite for me to say but if we look back, everything seems to line up for this, for where you are, for what you've been doing the last few years. Do you feel that way?

Lina Khalifeh:

Oh yes. Life is very interesting. Sometimes we think we understand it but then you reach a certain age where you have to kind of start all over again or try something else or it take you on a different direction and you freak out. You say oh no, I've been in this path for 10 years and now you want me to take another direction and then you start fighting with life but I think, from my experience, the more you fight with life, the more you say it's not your rules, it's my rules. You're going to get yourself into early, I would say, death or sickness or injuries. The way I did not listen to life whispering to me it's not my community when I was in the federation in taekwondo. It was telling me leave, leave, leave. All the signs were like leave. It's like the doors are all closing in front of your face and you just still want to push that door wide open and go in but it's locked. You know what I mean? And there's another door that's wide open, you didn't see it and then you're limited. Your brain is limited. All you see is that door while there's a door behind your back, it's wide open for you and life is telling you, directing you to just look to the other direction but you refuse to listen then life would start giving you warnings. You get sick. This is in all everything like even you go to work or when you know you don't fit there. It's not your energy. Why are you there? Just quit but you keep saying, giving excuses like no, I have kids. I can't do this. I can't just quit and you don't listen to life. It's like you're taking yourself all the way to, mostly misery, or options that life can give you with a lot of, life has a lot of good things and you have to sometimes to go through the dark side, of course, in order for you to see the light. You have to go through the tunnel and in the tunnel, you're going to learn how to be a fighter and you're going to learn how to overcome these challenges but when you see the light, it's just because you choose to see the light and you choose to listen to life and, at this moment in my life, I'm 35 years old now, and when I started everything with She Fighter, I was like 22 so it's like long time ago or 24 when I had the idea and developed the idea. It took too much time but I always try different things so, at this moment, for example, I say if I try this, because sometimes it's not clear what direction you would take but then try different directions and there's no such things called you wasted your time. Everybody has their own time and everybody has their own clock and when time is up, you're dead, technically so you can't say I'm running out of time. You can't say I wasted a lot of time just wondering around doing nothing. You can't choose these words because everybody has a different time and dimension. When you start believing in that, you know that, even if you take it slow, it will lead you to what you have to do eventually even if you think you're not doing much the way that other people are doing a lot and they hustle and they push and you think you're missing out but no, it's not your time to shine yet so I learned all of that from my experiences and these journeys and just trying to understand the universe.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow, I don't know what to respond.



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Lina Khalifeh:

We took it from martial arts.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I love when we do that. I love when it wanders around but it's really not that far off. I think it's such an important layer to martial arts that not everyone gets to experience and not what everyone thinks about so glad that you're talking about it.

Lina Khalifeh:

You just have think sometimes too much. A lot of people avoid thinking that's why they stay busy all the time but I think we have a brain to use it or else, we wouldn't have a brain but I think if you would spend more time with yourself thinking and researching and taking different path, try meeting new people, cultures and do just new things you've never done, you'll experience life as it is.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I agree. Put down the phone, after the episode's over. Let's look at the future. You've accomplished some amazing things and I can't imagine that you're done looking to accomplish things. I'm sure you have goals. You talked about some of the goals for She Fighter and growing and spreading that but talk about what those goals look like and talk about some of the other goals, maybe some personal goals that you might have.

Lina Khalifeh:

Goals for She Fighter, I'm looking to train, I wouldn't give a number by certain years but train as many trainers as I can and to expand this movement because, honestly, it's not about me anymore, it's about others. It's my duty on this earth to give it to others so by training trainers and those trainers and leaders would take it to their communities and start forming their own schools like She Fighter schools so having thousands of She Fighter schools all over the world with a new philosophy of training and you believe in building new, and believe also in kids and boys and girls and families. Just spreading love and positive vibes so that's my goal for She Fighter is also to be recognized as an Olympic sport one day so we would definitely have global competitions and it would lead to Olympic competitions where all these competitors will find a goal to train for or to be at the Olympics so that's my professional goals. Personal goal: keep growing from within and inside and outside and using also my brain frequencies and brain waves so if I keep growing in my brain, in my soul and my spirit; that's, for me, my ultimate success in life because imagine if you still have all this money in the world but you're still dumb.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think we've all thought that but I don't think anyone's been brave enough to say it that way. I love it! Please continue!



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Lina Khalifeh:

Do you really want to be in their shoes? If you write down, I do this exercise a lot everyday so I write down 5 things that I have money can't buy like health, mind, even like no stupidity or whatever. You write down 5 things money can't buy and write down 5 things you want to have that money can buy and try to replace one of the other one. Would you replace health with wealth? What would you choose? And the answer would be always health. Do you replace youth with wealth and being old, for example, or you still choose being youth? I would choose youth. Do you choose having this spiritual connection with your mind and body or you want to be 75 years old, you don't even understand anything about life. Which one would you choose? So it's all choices. We have a lot of choices to make but when you write them down, you already have everything. You have health, you have family, you have people you love and you, you have cats, maybe pets. You can just go outside, breathe. You have everything. You don't need the other things you don't have to make you complete. You already have everything and you already have everything inside of you so I still chose to look at this list where I have my health, my mind, my philosophy, even impact for all these women, I still choose my youth because I'm young. A lot of people would say oh, if I was young again, I would climb the mountain but they're old so it's all choices but people want to miss out on life and they want to work a lot, overwork and work and work and suddenly, they're like 70 years old. Can they do all the things they used to do? No, they're probably going to go out on the world, travel with this money, eat in restaurants and they're always tired and they want to go to sleep so it's all options and I choose all the time to be satisfied with what I have completely now.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, if people want to find you and She Fighter and everything that you're doing online, where would they go?

Lina Khalifeh:

SheFighter.com, my website. They're in all social media, @shefighter, so just She Fighter.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Easy, nice and easy. One more thing as we head out here. What final words would you give to anyone listening today? What advice, last words, whatever you want to call it?

Lina Khalifeh:

Advices...I would say one of the advices, learn something new you never tried like learn a new language. Learn martial arts. Learn something even if you think you're old or too late. It's never too late. Just try something new because it will help you expand your brain and for parents, I always say that advice. You have to enroll your kids in a martial arts school and make it their choice. If they love it, make them continue. If they don't love it, let them try other martial arts because we as humans, we have the



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instinct of fighting in us and we need to use it, especially boys. Either they use it for violence or they use it in a proper way that they learn how to discipline those techniques so it's always better to enroll them in martial arts.

Jeremy Lesniak:

For me, this is a pretty powerful story. I have always identified as always a bit of a rebel, as someone who likes to take the lemons that the world throws and turn them into something else and I see a lot of that in Coach Khalifeh. It doesn't surprise me that she's been so successful in spreading this message and in promoting what she's done in her home country and I have no doubt that once her feet are under her in Toronto, that she's going to be making an impact. Thank you for coming on this show, thank you for sharing your story and I look forward to updates. If you want more, go to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. We've got a lot more there. You can find videos, links, photos, every other episode we've ever done, tons of stuff. We never put any of that behind a paywall and if you're willing to support us and the work that we're doing, we have a number of options. You can use the code `PODCAST15` to save 15% off at whistlekick.com. You can also share this or any episode, maybe leave a review, tell a friend or contribute to the Patreon, Patreon.com/whistlekick. We'd love to hear your guest suggestions or just any general feedback to the show. Email me, jeremy@whistlekick.com and our social media accounts are [@whistlekick](https://twitter.com/whistlekick). Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day!