



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey there everyone it's episode 38 of [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com), the only place to hear the best stories from the best martial artists like today's guest Master Tanya Panizzo. I'm your host Jeremy Lesniak and I'm also whistlekick's founder. Here at whistlekick we make the world's best sparring gear and some great apparel and accessories for traditional martial artists. I'd like to welcome a new listener something called the returning fans. If you're not familiar with our products use check out what we offer like a polyester no sweat T-shirts. They're comfortable and lightweight making the great base layer under martial arts uniform or for working on the gym or even just wearing around the house. They come in six colors including my favorite the red. You can learn more about our line of no sweatshirts and the rest of our great gear and apparel at whistlekick.com. All of our past podcast episodes, show notes for this one and a lot more are over at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com and while you're on your website what you set up for newsletter. We offer exclusive content to subscribers and it's the only place find out about the upcoming guests. And now for today's episode on episode 38, were joined by Master Tanya Panizzo, a taekwondo practitioner for Michigan. Mr. Panizzo was a passionate lifelong martial artist even leaving a lucrative job to pursue martial arts as a full-time career. As anyone who is made martial arts or career knows, it's not the easiest way to make a living but that's just a sign of Master Panizzo's passion. As a school owner, tournament promoter, coach, instructor and entrepreneur, she has a lot to talk about. So, with that, Master Panizzo, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Tanya Panizzo:

Thank you thank you for having me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's a pleasure to have you looking forward to our conversation.

Tanya Panizzo:

Me too.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, awesome. Well let's jump in the way we always do, tell us how you got in the martial arts and why?

Tanya Panizzo:

Okay let's see. Well, I'm a triplet I have two brothers the same age as myself and my dad just wanted me to be able to scrap. Wanted me to be a tough girl and he wanted us to do some form of martial arts and taekwondo is available, you now about 10 miles away or so and I did not want to do it. I was pretty



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

athletic I was doing other sports and he drove us down there, my brothers couldn't wait to do it and I did not want to do it. And he signed me up, he said I had to do it for about a month or so, after a couple weeks I was hooked, I was addicted, I wanted to go to every single class and that was about the age of eight. I had just turned eight years old and my brothers and I know where than doing to find out pretty much about three or four days a week at that time and I originally started under Grandmaster Ron Rose, he was Mr. Rose at the time. He's Grandmaster Ron Rose now and spent about 25 years in his organization being trained by him. He's a great instructor and still in the same area in which I lived, spent most my time with him competing with him, there really weren't a lot kids at that time, I'm sure you've probably heard that before. Not a lot of kids in the 80s were talking like early 80s, so it was really challenging because we were training with adults with the exception of my brothers who always has partnered up with each other so I was like the one out all of the time. And then there was just that sibling competitiveness so the car ride home were always really interesting. But I spent a lot of time there, did demonstrations, tournaments, a lot of class time really enjoyed it, loved it and like I said spent about 25 years with Grandmaster Rose, so it was well into adulthood that I ended up becoming an independent martial arts owner. But that's taekwondo, the style was chong do kwon, I'm still chong do kwon today even with my students that I teach at my school.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, what created such a dramatic change at age eight I mean, were going back a couple years if you, maybe you remember, you didn't want to do it and then it within a month your hooked what happened in there?

Tanya Panizzo:

You know what I think about that and I oftentimes talk with my students about that, I think it was the structure, I thrive on structure and I think that in particular martial arts back then in the early 80s which was much more military like, I don't want to say we certainly have structure today and discipline but you know, classes were two hours long you stayed after for another 45 minutes to fight extra matches and I really loved the structure. So, the lining up, the order, knowing what to expect but at the same time, knowing it was going to be something new every class is what I really thrive at and I think too for me, I was that kid who just wanted to do everything herself. You know like, I'm sure when I was four you know if my mom wanted to help me tie my shoe, I would swat her hand and say I do it I tie my own shoe. You now is probably one of those kids because it was such a challenge to be training with all of those adults who really didn't treat you like a kid, that I just, I wanted to do it no matter how hard it was I wanted to do it and I think, there were days when I did not want to go because I knew it would be so hard, but at the same time I wasn't going to not go. And I think that that is just how my personality is that I'm not really, really afraid to take risks and I rise to a challenge I think that's who I am even today and I think that's really what it was back then, it must've been in my genes.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Well you're certainly not the first martial artist to thrive on structure. In recent interviews, we've talked a little bit about you know almost profiling children and why do they gravitate towards martial arts and a desire for structure which is pretty common amongst most kids I'd say is certainly one of the elements that hooks them.

Tanya Panizzo:

I agree, I agree.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, you know because you listen to the show before that were all about stories here. So, I'd love for you to tell us your best martial arts story.

Tanya Panizzo:

So that is a tough question and I'm sure everybody has said that to you right. That

Jeremy Lesniak:

They have absolutely.

Tanya Panizzo:

Because, there's like your best story about competition, your best story about persevering, your best story about teaching. So that seems like it would be so difficult and when I think about that, it's really hard to pinpoint at one thing but I do recall two stories that I think really resonate with me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well give us both then.

Tanya Panizzo:

One is just related to the training. So I was probably about, maybe 13 or 14 years old and I was doing a training camp, maybe I was younger than that actually, I think I was about 12 and it was a weekend training camp at my instructors facility and they were all of these other students and instructors coming from the New England area from Connecticut and I'm sure part of them were from the Vermont and Maine areas while it was that whole group and they'd come out to Michigan for this training camp and it was a two-day workshop and as I mentioned before that just really weren't a lot of kids. You know, a lot of what like the owners kids and you know just it wasn't and certainly no girls. You know, I mean I've been fighting boys my whole life. Starting with my brothers, right? But we went to this training camp



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

and we was all open fighting. You know, like sleep in the leg, punching to the face, it was just you a lot of that was involved in the camp. Well, I remember, I was hit by this right cross to the right side of my face by 35-year-old man from Connecticut. I'll never forget cause I don't even know his name. All I know he was a 35-year-old man from Connecticut. He hit me with this right cross and I dropped you know when I got back up and I felt like between birds over my head at that time but, got back up just on trucking, well I ended up having a big shiner. I mean, literally like a black eye and remember my dad was kind of nursing at that night and he's nursing it telling me why and I have my hands up? That's kinda how my dad was right? I showed up the day two of the camp you know and I had to laugh because as we lined up and the guys were walking out there were two other people with shiners on the same from the same guy. So, there were three of us with these black eyes and I was just... I think back to that because I was like, what the heck happened? You know what I mean? The same guy gave us all a black eye and I had to show up to school that Monday, imagine explaining that. But to me that was such a funny story because clearly, we were all vulnerable to whatever it was he was doing in that match and I guess it felt kinda good not to be alone. But that was one, that was one that I felt that was a great story because it was such a tough camp and I guess I, I guess I have a really good memory about it someone that sticks out the most.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Certainly, vivid for you and its vivid for me to I can certainly see that. I'm wondering what was any Justice dealt out to this gentleman?

Tanya Panizzo:

Well you know what was funny is because as we were fighting the next day, you know I never held back, I was never afraid, I think you now I was just to go for it and I tried, I tried to do some retribution but you know. I do remember him kinda laughing and put his arms up as I was kinda tearing after him but it was all in fun you know what I mean. It was certainly nothing, bad about that but it was a really good camp we learned a lot. If nothing else, I know what it's like to have a black eye at this point at the age of 12. I think my other story is something that I use all the time in my gym because I'm sure, as you know lot of kids in the gym these days which was different back then you know kids are coming going at a rate that is so much faster pace than we did and sometimes they forget their gear, they forget their belts and I remember somebody forgetting their belt years ago when I was training and I remember a visiting instructor had said to him, walked over to him and took off his wedding ring and I gave it to the kid who was like a teenager and he said I want you to hold this and he said why? And he said like I just want to ask you, because I took that off does that mean I'm not married anymore? This kid forgot his belt so he's freak out cause he's probably gonna do like hundred push-ups or something right? And he said no and he said does this mean that because I'm not wearing at that I shouldn't respect and honor my wife? And he asked him a few questions about that and he said no. And he said it's the same thing with your belts it just represents the work you've put in but I'd rather you show up with a good attitude and not have your belt then to show up with your belt and have the wrong attitude. And I remember that because with kids today, forgetting things and freaking out about getting push-ups, I don't have my belt and the focus is often times with the kids about their belt right like that something that they do sometimes



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

obsess on and we have to remind them and I use that story sometimes to, that it really is just a symbol or a representation of everything that they've learned and even when they're not wearing it they need to really walk that walk. So, that was a really meaningful story that I remembered that I actually still use as I teach today.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's a great story and a wonderful anecdote and one that I think a lot of younger kids can understand in a way that you know sometimes the way a lot of us explain, the significance of rank, they may not grasp that so that's a good story thank you for sharing that. So obviously you spent a lot of time in the martial arts, it's pretty much molded you into who you are. But if you could imagine your life now without having gone through the martial arts, what do you think that might look like?

Tanya Panizzo:

Gosh. I actually thought about that the other day. I really don't know I think I have a lot of, like I have an attraction or an affinity to order. So, I think perhaps you know I might have found my way towards some other activity that has a lot of structure and order. I did go to college, I didn't go into the military, who knows maybe I would've pursued the military something that gave me that same feeling. I really can't even imagine it because it has been such a fulfilling part of my life and I left my you know, my engineering job to do this full-time as far as teaching and owning a school and I don't think I could even imagine ever going back to that because while I was good at my job and I did enjoy it, wasn't as emotionally fulfilling as this is. So, it's very hard to imagine my life without tae kwon do in it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That certainly sounds like a little bit of a sacrifice of looking to ask you to reveal any numbers but one might imagine that in engineering someone is good at their job probably makes a decent income. I know there a lot of martial arts school owners listening to this right now. I think we all know, I ran a school that it is not the easiest way to make a lot of money.

Tanya Panizzo:

No.

Jeremy Lesniak:

In fact, it might be one of the hardest.

Tanya Panizzo:



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

That's very true and that was a sacrifice but I think that as long as you are true to why you're doing the martial arts, you know not to make a buck or if you really want to help others, kids, adults teenagers know enjoy something that you enjoy and reap the benefits that you reaped out of the martial arts then I think that if you employ patience which is part of martial arts, then at the end of the day, you'll be where you want to be working through those struggles and the sacrifices for sure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I agree so why don't you think know about point in your life that maybe wasn't as great not quite as rosy as I'm going to assume the majority of your time in the martial arts has been and think about that rough patch how your martial arts training and experience helps you move through it.

Tanya Panizzo:

I think that the most difficult. For me was when I was going through my divorce I had I just had my daughter, she was only one years old, I was going through divorce, the gym had only been open nine months, the gym in my town that is and you know, it was a startup we were struggling is as I mentioned I left my high-paying job to do it. So, I had a lot of challenges and to me, the gym was like my sanctuary you know. Home was stressful you know it was, I had a small child and try to pay the bills and you think that that would be like your resting spot but it really wasn't, the dojang was. It gave me something to dive into, something to work towards, to build up, to put a lot of my emotional energy in and to cultivate and I would literally go to the gym for peace at that time. So, I think you know when you can kick a bag or fight a couple of matches and exert some of that emotional energy and then at the same time dive into the business and that's when I really did realize that that gym, my gym was my sanctuary. Really got me through some really rough times and I tell my students that as well you know, like had a rough day at work in all put it all out on the mat. Let it all go let this be your time and that's how they usually end up going home feeling better.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Talk about a life reboot. Those are three huge things, things that would be stressful on their own. And then you stack them all up within a year, that's heavy.

Tanya Panizzo:

It is pretty heavy. But you know, and people asked me know what was the secret to the success and honestly, I feel you know the one Batman movie where he's trying to climb out of that big pit or whatever he keeps putting the rope on and keep falling, keeps falling, and the one guy said if you want to get out, you gotta cut the rope. You gotta climb up there without the rope. Like there is no option, there's nothing there to save you. You know and I feel like, I just really didn't have an option. You know, it was one of those moments where you apply your tenets, right? You persevere, you maintain a strong spirit, there's no one to catch you, I didn't have my engineering paycheck to rely on, I didn't have no a



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

partner to help me babysit, so it was, I cut the rope and I think that that's really was one of the key ingredients you know, to the success of the gym.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I would agree. As, it certainly not a secret whistlekick is a small company, we're a startup company and so I'm spending a lot of time listening to the advice, reading books and listening to podcasts from experts on business growth and motivation and things like that, and one of the things they said is exactly what you've said and how critical that is, that if you're really looking to succeed, that trying to increment in baby steps and you know, get everything lined up so it's not as difficult, It's not as painful for most people the majority of time it doesn't work that way. You've got to jump.

Tanya Panizzo:

That's right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You gotta show the world and show yourself that you believe in what you're doing and jump in with both feet. Awesome well clearly, it's worked out cause you're here talking to me now you don't have that engineering job, schools going well and your daughter?

Tanya Panizzo:

She's nine. She's awesome but you know, I'm her mom's I think she's the best kid in the planet, so.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You do kinda have to say that. It's always nice when things work out that way and certainly with martial arts experience tends to be that perseverance that attitude that does lend itself to the rest of the world pretty well.

Tanya Panizzo:

I agree.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, I'd like to tell us a little bit about the people that influenced you in the martial arts. Who might you say is been the most influential?

Tanya Panizzo:



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

You know I think when I was young, you now considering I was dragged into the first dojang, I have to give my dad some credit because you know, my dad ended up being my rock, the one that I could rely on. You know, the one who shielded me from any taekwondo politics that were going on at the time which I didn't learn about until I was older, but just allowed me to train. He was also my, how do I say, he would check me right? Check the ego. So, I was winning tournaments and stuff and you know, he made it very clear that you know it's not about being the best. You know what I mean, it's about you doing your best. So, he was very clear to make that happen so he was very influential, he always made sure that I was mentally prepared and physically prepared. He was I guess what you might call you know like what a coach would be today because back then we didn't have coaches you know you just went out and fought but he was, he was always looking out for me. He is very influential in my training, I think of course you know as I got into the martial arts and I'd like watch every Bruce Lee movie on the plant so I was like you know, was definitely influenced by a big poster Bruce Lee on my bedroom wall and saw my friend has had some teen throb and I had like Bruce Lee up in the wall. But I think the two of them have been you know, really influential as I was you know, going through the ranks. I think today, it's the friendships that I've made. You know, Russ Gale who's my business partner here at the gym has kind of taken that roll over as mentor, friend, Master White, you know they are very I don't wanna say even influential but supportive of what I do and are good sounding boards for me.

Tanya Panizzo:

I think having a sounding board in your life is really important especially the more successful someone gets. You listen to any really high-level people you listen to Richard Branson. I mean he's got people he bounces things off of and who wouldn't want to bounce things off Richard Branson? We think of him as you know, or Bill Gates or these other tremendously successful, very intelligent people and it's critical I think to have that in your life so it's great that you've identified who those folks are. So, you've just mention competition a little bit, tell us about that how did competition factor into your life? So, well I think I grew up with some underlying form of competition just being a triplet, right? Like, and I got out first, so I feel like I won that first competition, I was the first born I am the oldest. But you know as far as taekwondo competition, you know it started at a time where again, there really were not a lot of kids like I said. School owners' kids and that you know, there certainly were no girls. I'd literally spent the first five years in tournaments fighting boys and then you had the two things to deal with. One is that the boys they didn't want to fight you because your girl and then the ones that didn't want to lose to a girl you know what I mean? So, like would go out like crazy all to make sure they won you know. I'll say I was good and I don't even say so much as I was good as I was tough and I think often times for me, when I think back, it almost wasn't always about even my technical ability is much as it was my will. You know what I mean like I just had a stronger will like I was not going to lose or I was not going to you know, not advance through the bracket. So, you know, I really did enjoy the competition and it started out with point fighting and then it moved into what's now called the Olympic style obviously as taekwondo moved into the Olympics still did quite a lot national competitions know to try to compete nationally and really enjoyed it I have to say.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

What was your favorite part about competition?

Tanya Panizzo:

Well one, I think when I was younger, it was just about surviving because like I said you know 15-year-old boys and 15-year-old girls are different. It was just about you know, I didn't even really have clear goals back then other than to I just did the tournament. I think when I was older I think the best part was pursuing the goal which was to win a national championship or a team spot. As you get older you understand the process a little bit better, so I think that was something that I enjoy because again, being structured and driven with structure, I liked the process towards you know, try to make a national team I could see it clearly and I work toward that goal, I responded to those goals, so I think that is what I like best about it. It wasn't like just recreation sparring in the dojang without a clear goal you now so I think that's what I like best about competition.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And how did the quest for a team spot go?

Tanya Panizzo:

Well, I never made the national team, won some state championships, when that was back when see championships were pretty massive events. I even tore off the cast in a doctor's office to be able to fight in the national championships, I took it off four weeks early. Was supposed to have it on for eight weeks. I broke two bones in my hand, and I got into an argument with him because I was going to that national championship and like I said, I think that I was a contender for a lot of the really good players on that did make national team. Like the one that everybody just always had on their radar because I could be that one that kept them in pursuit of what their goal was, but never made a national team but still just love the competition. Loved it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Good, good you have you mentioned earlier stories out of competition is there one that you might want to share with us?

Tanya Panizzo:

Well I remember clearly in competition the first time I broke somebody's nose and it bled everywhere. So, I always tell parents who are always afraid of, and I was like a teenager but I was a little older but when parents are upset about their kids getting hit in the head or hit in the face, and I value that concern but I always tell them too, you have to remember your kids going to be affected also the first time they like wreck somebody's face. And I mean I've been like knocked round and hit in the head so many times so it was like yeah whatever. But the first time in a competition that I dropped an axe kick



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

on somebody's face and that knows just bled everywhere. I mean I'd seen blood had seen it on the dojang, but the first time to someone else. It stunned me in the middle of the match you know I mean? And I just remember you having to kinda like reset myself and not let that nurturing side of me, oh my god I'm so sorry did I do that? And be happy that I did it you know let's try to do that again right? Like the coach say. But to me that was probably memorable because it was like I tell these parents like it's one thing to get wrecked, it's another thing to wreck someone else right. So

Jeremy Lesniak:

Almost harder sometimes, inflict that pain on others.

Tanya Panizzo:

But at the end of the day right it's always a how is better when yours is you know, the nose that isn't broken.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Ultimately yes for sure.

Tanya Panizzo:

So, I do remember that the competition.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Great. You've had a chance to train with some pretty great people and you mentioned some names that you know, certainly mean a lot to you, but if you could train was someone else that you have it be they alive or not, who would that be?

Tanya Panizzo:

I think for me, I would like to of course I would if Bruce Lee were still alive it would just be cool to see what he's really like. You know what I mean? You just have this perception of him but it would be cool to see what he's really like and I know sometimes people will make fun oh, Bruce lee or this or that, you know come on come on. Meaning like he's just thinking more like the movies but I think that he had so much innovation for the time and I would love to have seen like what he actually did training wise without a camera around you know it be fantastic. Certainly, to I mean, on the boxing and like Muhammed Ali I would love to. Because I like all striking arts and I have a blue belt in jujitsu as well so I love all martial arts, I value all of them and outside of even just the kicking arts I think it would be great to just be in their presence maybe even just watch them train you know, if you couldn't train with them.



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

I think that I would really be able to gain a lot of knowledge and appreciation just by observing let alone training with them.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool that would be fun. I mean, it's amazing how many great people have come through I mean even if you just look now the number of people in the landscape, they're amazing martial artists that are so far beyond anything that I will ever attain that I would love to train with. I could spend 24 hours a day seven days a week you know train a day with one person never even finish off that list. So, you mentioned Bruce Lee and Bruce Lee poster. So, I'm gonna guess that.

Tanya Panizzo:

You brought that back up again.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I did bring it back up, I had to.

Tanya Panizzo:

And he was in the yellow jumpsuit, of course.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Have you seen the video the little kid? The nunchaku doing the reenactment from that scene in enter the dragon?

Tanya Panizzo:

No.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'll have to send that to you and I'll put that in the show notes. It's this he's gotta be three, and there's a big screen TV behind him playing that scene and I'm pretty sure its enter he Dragon with the yellow and he's doing it.

Tanya Panizzo:

Oh my gosh.



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

And his timing is spot on this kid must have done this a thousand times. Yeah me this clearly was staged and there was a lot of practice it that went into it but it's utterly amazing. So, I'll send you the link when were done.

Tanya Panizzo:

Okay that's pretty awesome.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So other than that, which I'm sure you're gonna love when you see it, how about martial arts movies? Do you have some favorites?

Tanya Panizzo:

You know I grew up so this is another way my dad and I bonded to the martial arts. So, every Saturday night at 11 o'clock was the martial arts theater and it had all those movies you couldn't even name today. You know where they were all dubbed over, everyone once in a while they'd have Bruce Lee one and it was like the one to stay up and watch but every Saturday night we'd watch martial arts theater and then at midnight would be like the horror movies right? Just like regular television so I literally for probably four years out of my life every Saturday was watching kung fu theater whatever. But I think now that I've gotten older, you know to enter the Dragon for sure, crouching Tiger hidden Dragon is awesome some strong females in there which I really love especially now that I get older I can have appreciation for that. So, I think probably those two, but I mean, I love any martial arts movie come on. Anything with Jackie Chan in it cause he makes me laugh you know that has the entertainment value.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Is Jackie your favorite actor?

Tanya Panizzo:

He is my favorite actor because when he smiles, you smile. Really, he's got great comedic timing plus you know some fight skills to pick it up for sure, so I think for sure he is my favorite martial arts actor. He's a great actor in general you and I don't want to stereotype him as martial arts guy, you know martial arts actor he's a good actor in general.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah and he's a singer too. A lot of people don't know that.



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Tanya Panizzo:

I did not know that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I don't know if he's a better singer than I'm assuming you've probably seen the rush-hour movies, it has some singing in there which is absolutely terrible. So, I'm assuming that when he's actually trying to sing he's far better. Can't say that I've seen it.

Tanya Panizzo:

Well I mean, well hey Bruce Lee was a dancer, right? So, wasn't he like a ballroom dancing champion or something? He was

Jeremy Lesniak:

I had yeah, I've heard that actually. I'll see if I can find something to back that up.

Tanya Panizzo:

I think he like won a bunch of competitions or something and like before he ever got started in the martial arts.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Certainly there's, there's a lot of great footwork in there. Maybe we should all be taking some ballroom dance classes to improve our sparring who knows. I think it's like one of those little-known facts about him. I don't know he was like a you know of some kind of a dancing champion or something. How about books? Are you a reader?

Tanya Panizzo:

I am oh gosh I very big reader. I'm not big on media so I don't watch a lot of television or movies even too much today but I do read a lot martial arts wise, you know living the Martial way is a great book. You know, I like that book a lot and Hagakuri, the book of the samurai is very good as well. It's an easy read short read actually I shouldn't say it's an easy read but a short read. You know I do a lot of self-defense and safety training through another company that I run and Gavin debecker has two great books that I think are related to self-defense and safety that not only martial artists can appreciate but those that don't do martial arts. That protecting the gift is one and the gift of fear is another one. I would highly recommend those books.



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay and of course will have links to those in everything else we talk about over the website whistlekickmartialartsradio.com for those of you that might be new. So, you're a structured person and most structured people tend to be goal oriented. Is that a fair assessment for you?

Tanya Panizzo:

Definitely probably an understatement to some degree.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I don't like to be too heavy-handed with my assessment of the guest.

Tanya Panizzo:

You don't want to be presumptuous I understand.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Absolutely. So, I'm sure you've got a bunch of goals. Are there any martial art schools you'd be willing to share with us?

Tanya Panizzo:

Well here at Midwest which is where my Midwest taekwondo is the gym here and in the Plymouth, Michigan area we are now getting involved in a lot of afterschool enrichment programming here it's, it's not really afterschool latchkey so I it's more community service minded trying to take a group of kids after school and apply these five tenets of tae kwon do you know, courtesy, integrity, perseverance self-control, strong spirit and help guide them in applying these things to daily life through community service. So, we have about eight kids right now, were in the first year of that particular program and really giving them, some meaning to the afterschool hours. They're actually wrapping up their first community service project this week and really just trying to take what is great about martial arts, which outside of the physical realm right. Outside of all the physical fitness benefits and self-defense benefits and apply it to kids in the community so were employing that right now in our community were hoping to grow that as well. Ultimately, trying to get into the education space in a way that we have never really done before, its taking those same five pillars and five tenants into the schools and that's really where were headed for the next five years.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

That sounds great make sure you keep us up-to-date on that you know, we're happy to assure that information is that's going on because it sounds like something that as it grows, others might be interested in replicating if you offer some kind of option for that. What else cause I'm sure that's not it.

Tanya Panizzo:

There has to be more, well I mean as I mentioned I also run a safety company, it's called fighting spirit safety. And I'll tell you the reason why I did that was you love martial arts, I love martial arts, got a lot of students that love martial arts, but I always go back to there are so many benefits of the martial arts that we can really reach another group of individuals if we just remove it from the martial arts arena. I say that with the enrichment program for the schools involved kids are not doing martial arts but they are learning these five pillars these five tenets of taekwon do, right? So those are things that they would be getting our dojang with kicking and punching, but these kids don't want to do taekwondo, they do soccer, they do, this they do that, but were still in some way impacting them without the foundational elements of taekwondo. So, the company is really the same way, you know my mom doesn't want to take on a three days a week but she does need and want some self-defense and safety skills. So, the company was really created to remove what a lot of people perceive as a long-term committed avenue towards obtaining self-defense skills. So, my next goal the companies that are running since 2007 and it's been very successful but my next goal is to take that to the next level. We've been going to universities, sororities we obviously run programs here. I mean I speak for corporations, large corporations, but my goal is to really tried to bring back to the community in such a way that we no longer have to think about where to go for self-defense. I think if you asked any female on the street where would you go to get a self-defense class, nobody really has a good answer to that. I guess, I don't know maybe the police department or maybe a karate school like that there's really no clear answer to that. And I really don't want that valuable knowledge that comes from the martial arts those martial skills to be only for those that sign up for taekwondo. So, my next goal is to really take that avenue like that particular part of taekwondo and martial skills in all that, the ground fighting I learned in jiu-jitsu as well as, people who don't necessarily want to sign up at my school.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's wonderful and I don't remember a lot of the specifics I believe it came out of Canada, there was a study that was completed and they found that the number one way to reduce violent assaults on women at universities so that age group right there was to give them some self-defense training. And it was pretty cut and dry, you know it's something we've always known. But now there's some data at least according to the study, that backs that up.

Tanya Panizzo:

Yes, there's quite a bit of data that that does show that and I think that as long as we take a proactive approach to it and I go back to not everybody wants to take taekwondo or another martial art there four days a week, but you know they do need some of the things that we teach in taekwondo are or the



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

other martial arts you know in a condensed and comprehensive program so that's that is my next goal and working towards that right now.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If someone was to learn more about these programs that you got going on or they want to reach out to you, email whatever, how can people find out more about you?

Tanya Panizzo:

The two best ways would be to go to the websites, Midwesttaekwondo.com is my dojang website and then fightingspiritsafety.com is the safety company website for those that are not enrolled in martial arts programs but want adrenal based self-defense training. Those are the two best ways you can email me through either of those websites or call me at the gym.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Great and will post links to those thinking of course.

Tanya Panizzo:

Thank you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You're welcome thank you. Any parting advice for those listening?

Tanya Panizzo:

Well I think if I could just offer up a couple of comments and tell my students often times to just live their lives intentionally. You know I mean with some intent and even if that means you're just relaxing right that that you are living with some purpose and to be grateful for the things that they have. I think that something, that gratitude is something that people say but don't truly practice and appreciate. I oftentimes tell my students you know instead of wearing on the belts or worrying about your promoting and your ranking, be present in the moment what do your feet feel like when they step onto the mat? Like have you really thought about how that how that feels and be present in the moment and I think that that is when they're really going to enjoy their journey and reach their goals and in a much, in a much more productive way than if they were just checking things off of the list. And I came from checking things off the list, right? I'm obviously very goal oriented but it wasn't until I really learned how to live in the present. To be present on the mat that I began to really appreciate everything that I have already done and you know what I mean? And sometimes people just look too far ahead all the time can't really be grateful for all of things, the hard work that they've already put in and all that's given to



Episode 38 – Master Tanya Panizzo | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

them. So, I think that that's really it is to just live intentionally, enjoy the moments, be present and realize everybody's path is different. You know and that's what's so great about being a unique individual on the planet, right?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Without it though really appreciate your time and thanks so much for being here.

Tanya Panizzo:

Thank you so much.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thanks for listening to episode 38 of [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com) and thank you to Master Panizzo. Head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com for the show notes with links to everything we talked about including fighting spirit safety, Master Panizzo's women's and children's self-defense program. While you're there if you want to be a guest on the show or you know someone that would be a great interview, please fill out the guest form and don't forget to subscribe to our exclusive newsletter. If you want to follow us on social media were on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram all with the username [whistlekick](https://www.instagram.com/whistlekick). If you like the show please subscribe to never miss out the future, and if we control you to help us out briefly, please leave us a five-star review wherever you download your podcasts. If we read your review on the air just contact us and we'll get you a free pack of [whistlekick](http://whistlekick.com) stuff. And don't forget to spread the word about our show to anyone that you think might like it. Remember the great stuff we make it [whistlekick](http://whistlekick.com), like our great lightweight no sweat line of T-shirts, available at whistlekick.com. So, until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.