



Episode 96 – Master Amanda Meltzer | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello, everyone! It's episode 96 of whistlekick martial arts radio, the only place to hear the best stories from the best martial artists, like today's guest, Master Amanda Meltzer. My name is Jeremy Lesniak and I founded whistlekick but I'm also your host for martial arts radio. Now, whistlekick, I'm proud to say, makes the world's best sparring gear and some awesome apparel, all for those involved in traditional martial arts. Thank you to the returning listeners and hello and welcome to those of you listening for the very first time. If you're new to the show or you're just not familiar to what we make, please check out our sparring gear like our boots. They're more comfortable, more durable, basically, we took a standard design and found every way we can make it better. If you're used to replacing your gear frequently or looking at the tears in your boots and feeling sad about it, we offer a great alternative at a very good price. You can learn more about our gear and the rest of our products at whistlekick.com and our gear is also available on Amazon. If you want the show notes, you can check those out at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. While you're over there, get on the newsletter list. We offer special content to subscribers and it's the only place to find out about upcoming guests for the show. We only email a few times a month. We will never sell your information and sometimes, we mail out a pretty generous coupon. On episode 96, we hear from Master Amanda Meltzer. A Taekwondo practitioner that I've known for a few years. She's an avid competitor and draws some great parallels between competition and aspects of life outside the ring. Master Meltzer started martial arts later in life than most of our guests, which I always find interesting as we truly get to understand what drew someone to train. Let's welcome her to the show. Master Meltzer, welcome to whistlekick martial arts radio.

Amanda Meltzer:

Hello!

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm excited to have you on and we're going to chat and I know we've got some stuff that we'll get into and I won't give out anymore and I'll see where the questions take us today so, let's start. I know you've listened to this show. Most of the people out there have listened at least once before, we always come in the same way. How did you get started in the martial arts?

Amanda Meltzer:

It was something I'd always want to try. Never got the chance to when I was younger and my sister is a hairdresser and she was working at this hair salon that was next to Lamy's Black Belt Academy and Amy and Paul Lamy started getting their hair done by my sister and she knew who they were and they did martial arts so she kept telling me I had to come down and meet this people and go to their studio and see what it was all about and, one day, me and my sister and our friend, Andy, went down there and tried classes and I was hooked.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

What was it that hooked you?

Amanda Meltzer:

It was just something I'd always wanted to try and, once I actually got in there and did it, it was just so much fun and everyone there was having so much fun then that was something I wanted to be a part of.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Do you remember it when you first kind of wanted to get started in the martial arts because we don't have a lot of people that come on this show that got started as an adult. I'm not going to ask you how old you are but maybe if you want to tell us how old you were when you started?

Amanda Meltzer:

I was about 23 or 24 when I started.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. So, not that plenty of people don't start martial arts at that age but we just haven't had a lot of those people come on the show, so it's nice to have that varied perspective. So here you are, early, mid-twenties, however you want to define it, how long had you wanted to try martial arts at that time?

Amanda Meltzer:

For a very long time. I don't really remember when I first started to but it always been something that I'd seen and was curious about and would've liked to try so it's always just kind of in the back of my mind.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. Alright. Did you have friends that did it as a kid?

Amanda Meltzer:

No, I didn't know anyone that did it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, your reason for not jumping in was more just you didn't have a place that you knew of nearby that you could try?

Amanda Meltzer:



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Yeah and I'm not sure my mom would've really liked me to do it when I was younger and I just didn't know anybody and I wasn't really an outgoing person so it's not something I probably would've said like hey, I want to do this when I was younger.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Can I pry a little bit and ask why your mom wouldn't have been down for that?

Amanda Meltzer:

I still don't really think she necessarily likes it right now. The confrontational part, the chance of getting hurt. I've always just been playing hockey too and she was never really up for that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

She's protective.

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah!

Jeremy Lesniak:

Not a bad thing as a mom to be protective. You're a mom, right? So, you know what that feeling is like?

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah, it's hard to watch our kids get hurt so...

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, that gives us an idea of kind of how you got started and as we keep going on we'll get more of a sense as to where you are now but as I know you know, it's all about stories here in martial arts radio and I know you've got some good ones. I've heard some from you before. Why don't you take a second, tell us your best martial arts story.

Amanda Meltzer:

That's a hard question to answer but I guess the one that kind of pops into my head was when I told you, about a month or so ago, about the Superfoot training. It was the weekend before my wedding and there was a tournament and I just remember one of the other competitors who was there that I knew well and I was like okay, we're going to do this tournament but whatever you do, don't hit me in the face. I'm getting married next weekend. She was all nervous about it but it turned out well.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Nice. Nice! Now, I think some people would look at that situation and say why would you even give yourself that opportunity, right?

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm not going to say it's crazy because I understand the appeal of competition and I understand the desire to try to do everything and, gosh, anybody that knows me knows, anybody that's seen my google calendar knows that there's 97 things on each day so I'm trying to cram a lot of life into a short period of time but why? Just, why?

Amanda Meltzer:

It was our home tournament so I kind of, not that I had to be there, my instructors would have understood if I didn't but I just love competing and, like you said, I don't like to miss anything. If I was just there watching, it would just tear me up inside and I couldn't just sit there and watch my division go without me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What did your fiancé think?

Amanda Meltzer:

He was fine with it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Good! A supportive man, the kind that you are, right? So, of course, I didn't know you before your martial arts time so I can't imagine, I can imagine but I can't speak to who you were before you were training, but let's go back, let's pretend your sister never meets your instructors, you never start martial arts training and we fast forward to now, how do you think your life would be different without martial arts?

Amanda Meltzer:

I definitely think I wouldn't be as confident or as strong. It's really taught me a lot about myself and the things that I'm able to do that I probably never would have and I actually met my husband through martial arts so that would be a huge thing that I probably would've missed out on.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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That's kind of a big one there so without him, no kids or at least, different kids and that's pretty big chunk of your life. How did you meet him?

Amanda Meltzer:

His stepfather and brother were at the studio so I became friends with them first and then, when his stepfather actually became ill, that's when he kind of came back home and re-focused on his family and I met him there and we became friends and then, you know, as things moved on. It just became our relationship and here we are!

Jeremy Lesniak:

Great! One of the themes that actually doesn't seem to come up a lot on this show that I find interesting is the romantic relationships inside and outside of martial arts. I think, I've certainly, I've had relationships with people inside of martial arts and outside of martial arts and maybe you can offer your perspective on this but it seems like, for a lot of people, that don't train in martial arts or don't have something that they are super passionate about like most people that train in martial arts, it can be hard for them to understand that dedication of time and energy and money and your physical body, right? I mean, we come out bruised and banged up and sometimes mentally beat down and a lot of people that don't train don't get that so it can be straining in a relationship.

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah, I think it helps that, he doesn't train right now, but he's always been into martial arts and things like that so he understands where I'm coming from and that it's kind of a part of me and who I am.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Alright, so of course, your life would be pretty darn different, lets pull it back. Let's go back to real reality, you met your husband, you train and all that and here we are now. Think about a time in your life that was rough, however you want to define that, and tell us how your martial arts training helped you with that.

Amanda Meltzer:

I think I will go back to the time when my husband's stepfather was ill. He ended up having cancer. Because our studio is such a tight-knit family, it was hard on all of us so we all kind of struggled through that together and if I wasn't doing martial arts, I wouldn't have experienced this but having been there and having that group of people to rely on, we were all going through the same things and we were able to be there for him as a family and support him and his family through the illness and eventually, he did pass away. That was really hard. It was after he passed away that my now-husband and I kind of became closer.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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unfortunately, I've been part of some martial arts schools that have seen people pass away and it's tough because I'm sure...well, I don't know if you would put it this way but I look at the people that I train with in kind of the different way than the friendships that I have outside of martial arts. You share sweat and you share hard work and sometimes, you bleed on each other and that's a really intimate relationship even if you only see these people 2, 3 hours a week. There's something pretty foundational in the connection you share with them and so, I'm sure to lose that person, even if it's someone in the school that you don't know really well, it can completely unsettle you. I'm sorry you had to go through that but it sounds like, maybe this is an example of one door closing and another opening, with your husband and you building a stronger relationship out of that pain.

Amanda Meltzer:

It definitely was. I mean, we called him Big Joe and he was one of the highest-ranking students in the school at that time like one of our leaders that everyone looked to so he just really pulled us all together and helped us become more of a family.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Good. How do you cope with something like that? I mean, are you the type to hit the heavy bag until your knuckles bleed or kind of hide and practice forms on your own? Is there a physical outlet for you?

Amanda Meltzer:

Kind of a little of both. You need to get out some of that aggression so kicking things. Just being in class, for me, is helpful. Kicking things, just kicking the paddle. Just being together as a group.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, yeah. Someone that we both know, someone within our martial arts family that's been on the show, I'm reminded of his episode, Master Forsberg talking about the loss of his father just kind of reminded me of that. That physical expression, the need to hit things, the need to release that emotion in a physical way, that catharsis and it's something that I don't think we talk about a lot in martial arts because we work so hard to control our emotions but then, sometimes there's just a whole lot of emotion and it's such a good outlet for that.

Amanda Meltzer:

It is and I just remember being at a tournament, I think, it was actually Master [00:14:44] tournament just after we found out how sick he really was and I was practicing my pattern and pattern stress me out anyway but, at this point, I was so emotionally overdone, I was in the middle of practicing my patterns and I just stopped and just burst into tears and I remember, it was Master [00:15:05], who wasn't Master [00:15:07] at the time, but she just came over and just hugged me and she didn't know what was going on, she just thought I was upset because I messed up my pattern but she just was there for me



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and just gave me that hug and was just like it's okay, you'll get through the pattern next time. She didn't know the rest of the story but, at that time, it was nice to have someone that was just right there and just came over and knew something was wrong and she didn't know me so well at the time but she was there anyway so that was really cool.

Jeremy Lesniak:

When you look back on that moment now, why do you think you stopped?

Amanda Meltzer:

What? I stopped crying?

Jeremy Lesniak:

No, why did you stop your pattern?

Amanda Meltzer:

Oh, when I get in the middle of my patterns, if I let my mind wander off the pattern on to anything, I just...I can't refocus.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Got it.

Amanda Meltzer:

It doesn't matter what it is. If I don't focus completely, some people can stop or some people know the numbers in every movement and I just...I can't do that. I have to keep moving and keep it in my head.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Got it. Got it. How did the rest of that day finish up?

Amanda Meltzer:

I don't really remember, to be honest, I probably got through my pattern but I really don't remember.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's probably okay. Probably a good thing. So, of course, I know how strong your relationship is with your instructors but I'm wondering if there's somebody else, somebody else that has been really strong in your martial arts career. Somebody that has been influential for you other than those two.

Amanda Meltzer:



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My best friend, Amy, started training with me when I started. The week after I signed up, I told her about it and she was like, oh, I'm going to do that so she came over and joined so we were able to train together and we tested for our first-degree black belt together and we've been friends since we were five so we kind of done everything together in our lives and after our testing, we got married 6 months apart. Our children are 2 months and 4 days apart so just being able to share all that with her and all the experiences of the Taekwondo family with her was important to me and it made us better friends through that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Was it ever challenging having so much history and so much context with someone and then, stepping into the dojang with them and potentially having to build a different relationship with them?

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah, at times, because I'm kind of more competitive. She's pretty competitive but I'm kind of more competitive so like she would always get mad at me and I always forget my pattern and then that morning before our tournament, I'd be like hey, can you show me how to do the pattern real quick and then, I'll go out and beat her and be like what? You didn't even know your pattern 5 minutes ago and you just beat me so it's things like that but we're basically sisters so it all evens out.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So there's some healthy rivalry in there but with a foundation of a lot of love. That's good and I think a lot of people who build those type of relationships, if they don't have that coming in, and I don't think there are a lot of people who are lucky enough to have that strong relationship coming into martial arts training, at least, I don't know a lot of people that have. I certainly did not. Any of my friends that started training didn't last very long but I've been fortunate enough to build those relationships within martial arts and take them outside of training. I think that's probably a little more common.

Amanda Meltzer:

Right, yeah. That was huge for me because we train in New Hampshire but our studio is under one of the schools of Vermont so we're out there all the time to train with everyone out there and all the Vermont tournaments and just making friendships with people at tournaments, going out through the ranks together, being at all the tournaments together. You always know you're going to see most of the same faces and there's that, again, whole new level of competition but, at the end of the day, we still hug each other and be like hey, you did a great job. Thanks for kicking my butt! So that's been huge for me because I always had a hard time connecting to people and just knowing I can just go to Vermont, there's just a group of people there waiting for me and excited to see me when I get there. It's a lot of fun.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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I may be biased but Vermont kind of has the best people.

Amanda Meltzer:

It has a lot of them.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, we just touched on competition a little bit. We now know that you're a very competitive person and that competition is important enough for you that you'll do it the week before your wedding and, I'm going to guess, didn't wear a face mask because I've never seen you wear a face mask so I'm guessing you didn't then either. What is it about competition that you enjoy?

Amanda Meltzer:

The rush, I mean, you just never know what could happen. I mean, it could go your way one minute and not the next and you're always learning something whether you win or lose and just that drive to be better next time.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Do you think about competition when you're training? Is that fuel to your training and all?

Amanda Meltzer:

I guess, probably not but it probably should. That thing with patterns, I tend to be lazy with my patterns so when it comes time for tournament season, it's always like okay, I'm going to get back on those patterns and really brush up so I should practice that more.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That sounds like it's motivating you. Sounds like if you didn't have tournaments, your patterns would always be lazy.

Amanda Meltzer:

Probably.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You'd always be lazy about your patterns, right? But sparring, sparring is kind of your thing, isn't it?

Amanda Meltzer:

Sparring is kind of my thing, yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Okay, alright, why? What is it about getting out there and mixing with people that you enjoy?

Amanda Meltzer:

I just...I don't know. I just love the clash, the contact, seeing who can get there first and when you've sparred with someone before and they know you've gotten you and the next time you get them, I don't know, it's just fun.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Would you rather spar with someone that you'd sparred before or with someone new?

Amanda Meltzer:

I like both for different reasons because someone that I've sparred before, I kind of know what they're doing so if I can find a new way to kind of trick them but if it's someone I haven't sparred, I always learn something because I never know what they're going to do so I have to be paying more attention.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So I think we're getting a pretty good sense of you and who you are but let's talk about some of the pieces that, honestly, I have no idea about you because we've had conversations because they've always been in the pretty narrow sense. Movies? You a martial arts movie person at all?

Amanda Meltzer:

Not specifically martial arts. All of the action stuff. I like those kinds of things. Not necessarily martial arts movies.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Do you have any favorites that we could at least sneak in as a martial arts movie?

Amanda Meltzer:

The Best of the Best is always good.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, we're going back for that one.

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah, I mean, it's kind of a tradition. You kind of just have to watch it but Karate Kid and I know it probably sounds silly but the new Karate Kid. I just really enjoy watching that one. It's Jackie Chan. He's just funny.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

I think Jackie Chan's performance in that movie is, not just one of the best roles in the martial arts movie, but one of the best roles in a movie that I've ever seen and maybe that's because of context for Jackie Chan. I'm used to him being not such a good actor and not having a dramatic role and just kind of beating people up but it just seemed like an honest portrayal. I mean, the car and we're not really giving away anything for someone that hasn't seen it and if you haven't, you need to, let's forgive for a moment the fact that it's called The Karate Kid and they're doing Kung Fu, let's let that go. Lot of people kind of hung up on that. They couldn't move past it but I thought Jackie Chan did an amazing job acting that role, making it his own but I felt like there was quite a bit of an homage to Pat Morita, the original Karate Kid, just the way that role was written and the way he played it.

Amanda Meltzer:

I would agree.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, you've seen the original, right? Was that something you saw as a kid before you did martial arts?

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah, I probably seen bits and pieces, I can't remember ever watching the whole thing through. I know that I have. I remember bits and pieces of it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What is it about Best of the Best that you like?

Amanda Meltzer:

I think, it was probably the first martial arts movie that I watched after starting martial arts and one of my instructors, Paul, kind of basically said I had to watch this movie and was kind of like Okay, this is what we do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, it's a classic and of course, anyone that hasn't seen it, you should watch it as soon as you're done listening to this. There's some movie that I think we all need to see and that's definitely on the list.

Amanda Meltzer:

Right, and if you haven't seen The Expendables, those are really good too. It's got all the martial arts heroes and a bunch of other action heroes in them. They're great!

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Yeah! Absolutely and especially The Expendable 2 where they brought in...we'll link to it to the IMDB page but just the cast is just ridiculous.

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah, all of them. Chuck Norris is in 1 and just the way they play off on the jokes and things like that is very funny.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, Chuck Norris and Jet Li. Just absolutely fantastic!

Amanda Meltzer:

Those are some of my favorites.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm writing that down, Expendables 2, I got to make sure we get that in there. So, you mentioned Jackie Chan as being one of your favorites but is he your favorite martial arts actor?

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah, I guess I'd have to say, as far as an actor, because I haven't really seen a lot of things that Chuck Norris has been in.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I don't think you should admit that publicly.

Amanda Meltzer:

I know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We may have to cut that part out.

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah, I mean, he's just a funny person plus he does martial arts so I just like that goofy side but also, like the martial arts side.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Anybody else that you enjoy?

Amanda Meltzer:



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Those are the main two really.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Books? Martial arts books?

Amanda Meltzer:

I haven't really read any martial arts books. I have the encyclopedia of Taekwondo I borrowed for my testing that I was studying but beyond that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's a lot of material.

Amanda Meltzer:

It's kind of heavy reading, it's not really something you sit down with.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, we've talked a little bit. You wrote some things. May not be much of a martial arts book reader, it was your master's thesis, I remember, it was on martial arts?

Amanda Meltzer:

Yes.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Could you tell us a little bit about that?

Amanda Meltzer:

I have my Master's Degree in Special Education so I wrote my paper on the use of martial arts with people with Special Needs. It was kind of an overview of all special needs because the martial arts is a great place for kids who need work with attention, ADD, ADHD. It can do a lot for them and also, people with physical disabilities. Just showing them that they can do this too. It's not just for people that are completely able-bodied that can do martial arts. I think there's a video that's going around of people with crutches or missing limbs or different things that are doing martial arts and they're making it work so it just was kind of an inspiration for me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

One of the things I've always found interesting is that martial arts has had a substantial impact on some special needs individuals where nothing else has. It doesn't take a lot of searching on the internet or on YouTube to find some tear-jerking, inspirational story about someone that goes from being, from having



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a lot of really significant challenges, physical challenges, emotional challenges and through, even just a couple years, of martial arts is a huge improvement.

Amanda Meltzer:

Right and not all of it is the physical part, working out. It's also, again, going back to the family. That support system. It's not a team sport but you have all those people around you that are doing the same thing that you're doing and encouraging you so it's just a support system for these kids that need someone next to them saying you can do this.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, we won't get in the specifics of where anything but, not only is your education in Special Ed, your career is also. Do you bring any of the principles of what you've learned in martial arts into the way you work with these children?

Amanda Meltzer:

With my class right now, it won't really help except for just the focus part. You're just refocusing back to what we're doing. It's more my training supporting me in helping them. I don't know if that makes sense.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It does. I'd like you to expound on that. it just kind of made my eyes bug out because I hadn't considered it from that perspective before.

Amanda Meltzer:

My classroom consists of 5 very active boys with autism and aggressive behaviors so just staying on top of them and knowing what to expect when they're kind of going through rough times, it's helpful for me to be able to react quickly and be kind of one step ahead of them. It's not a sparring match but it's still reading people's bodies and knowing how they're feeling and reading their face and to expect what they might be thinking or want to do next.

Jeremy Lesniak:

If you...want to make sure I'm asking this in the right way...so, I know that there are a number of people out there who teach some, who have their own schools that are listening to this show right now or may listen in the future, what would you suggest to them? You're coming from the academic side but with the substantial amount of martial arts training. you can combine these things in a way that I think a lot of people can't. You can understand both pieces. If someone wanted to take on a special needs student or start a specific program for special needs, what advice, what kind of bullet points might you offer them as suggestions on how to move forward with that or things not to forget or to remember? I don't



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know what I don't know in asking these questions so maybe you can understand where I'm going and filling the gaps.

Amanda Meltzer:

I would say just movement is important. Keeping them moving. You can't be sitting for too long and with my students now, just what a difference it's made just keeping them moving. We do everything kind of on the go. They're not sit at the desk, do this, activity type of kid. You need to be teaching as you're walking, as you're running as you're lifting and moving and they just need that sensory input on moving and the more you try to get them to sit and just listen, it's not going to work.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And, of course, in martial arts is the equivalent of sitting is standing in ready stance. Karate fuda-dachi or Taekwondo junbi or whatever you call it.

Amanda Meltzer:

Right and part of that is the discipline that they need but as you're teaching, just keeping it flowing as you're showing them what you want them to do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, so what might that look like if I could tie it on to be a little more specific?

Amanda Meltzer:

I would say just limited, we call it mat check at our studio. Limited times of that which I think, for most kids' classes, it's like that anyway. You can't keep a group of 3, 4, 5-year olds sitting for an extended period of time. We just make everything hands on and as much as possible.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, alright. Any other tips? Keep them moving.

Amanda Meltzer:

Yeah, I think that's the biggest one. I'm not an expert by any means.

Jeremy Lesniak:

No, that's fine. I mean, that's...I don't know that there are a lot of people that are with this. To be honest, I don't know a lot of martial arts schools that will take on someone that, at least, not in a standard classroom, even, personally, I had my own school for a couple of years and I did work with someone with special needs but it was one on one. We tried one class mainstream and it just didn't



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happen. They drew all the attention away so we worked one on one and that was really successful because I was able to keep them moving and keep that focus going but, for me, it was all trial and error.

Amanda Meltzer:

Right, a lot of times that one on one attention is best and group setting really doesn't work for a lot of these kids.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, you mentioned before, you got a couple kids. Of course, you are a woman. One of the things that I hear some people talk about is the challenge of balancing family, career, children, martial arts. I don't want to come off as sexist. I don't want it to sound that way but, at least, the way I understand in your family and in the way a lot of families operate, there's an element of nurturing and certainly something similar in your career and it's got to make balancing all that difficult. Do you have any thoughts on that or advice for either women that are considering starting to train or maybe starting to train and feeling overwhelmed or women that are already in martial arts and are looking out a couple years and wondering how they're going to balance?

Amanda Meltzer:

I would definitely say don't let it stop you. I was training for about 6 years before my son was born and, obviously, before that, I was able to train a lot more and even before I was married, I was training 5 to 6 days a week and after I got married, I had to slow it a little bit and then, when I was pregnant, I still attended at least 2 to 3 classes a week, was helping teaching and I was still able to balance it and then, after my son was born, I had to cut back a little bit more because I didn't like having him out and my husband has been able to take the kids whenever he can but my son's been going to classes with me since he's been 4 weeks old and my daughter since she was 6 weeks old. It's definitely doable. I had the car packed with the travel swing and the toys and the food and we'd show up and unload and we were there for the night and pack everything back up and home we went. The other parents were great too. They knew I was there helping to teach so I was there helping their kids so people are always willing to hold your baby if you're doing something. It's never hard to find someone to do that but there, I always have the parents be really great about the kids being there and interacting with the other children that might be sitting on the sidelines waiting for their brother or sister or the next class. Again, just going back to that Taekwondo family. They were always there for me whether it was playing with the kids or entertaining them with a different toy that they had brought for their kid and it works. Sometimes they're loud or distracting and I apologize to the other parents for that. They're understanding and they're there to help me so it works out.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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I've trained in multiple schools where both babies and/or dogs may wander on to the training floor at any time and it's just an added element of awareness. Don't kick the dog, don't kick the baby.

Amanda Meltzer:

My children were trained very young that you don't walk on the mat. You just stay on the side and I'll be with you in a minute.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Do your kids train now?

Amanda Meltzer:

My son just started. He's on a little break for T-Ball. That's really his thing but it's important to me that they at least try it and have the experience of it. He does enjoy it and then, my daughter very much looking forward to training. I think she'll be more the one that will be into it more than my son.

Jeremy Lesniak:

She's younger?

Amanda Meltzer:

She's youngest, yes. She's three and my son's five, or almost five.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think someone could chop out any 5 minutes of this conversation really get a sense of how important martial arts is to you. How much it influenced who you are but because you're still going, I'm guessing that you have stuff that you're looking forward to or goals that you're working towards. Could you tell us a bit about what's keeping you moving forward?

Amanda Meltzer:

Really, I guess, a lot of it is competition. I just love competition. Recently got my 4th degree which I really didn't, I never expected that when I started out and just seeing everyone else coming up behind me and being there for them and especially for my kids, hopefully, I'd love to be able to put a black belt on one of my kids someday.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I've known a few people that've been able to do that. That always looks pretty cool. So, if someone has questions about anything that we've talked about or maybe they want to pick your brain a little bit about Special Ed stuff or whatever, is there a way people can get ahold of you that you're willing to share?



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Amanda Meltzer:

I can put my email out there. I don't very often but that's amanda.meltzer24@gmail.com.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We won't put that in the show notes, that will just be right there for the people so if you want to just give it one more time.

Amanda Meltzer:

It's my full name, amanda.meltzer24@gmail.com.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, great and before we go, any parting advice for the people listening?

Amanda Meltzer:

Just keep training. Don't let anything hold you back.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thank you for listening to episode 96 of whistlekick martial arts radio and thank you to Master Meltzer. If you like the show, be sure that you're subscribing or using one of our free apps available on both Android and iOS. For those of you kind enough to leave us a review, remember, we randomly check out all the different places people use to leave podcast reviews and if we read yours on the air, go ahead, email us and we're going to send you a free box of some great whistlekick stuff because reviews help us so much. I don't think people fully understand how important those are and we actually haven't seen any new reviews in a couple weeks so please, take a couple minutes, help us out. Head on over to iTunes or Stitcher or wherever works for you. Leave us a review. If you know someone who will be a great interview for the show, please fill out the form at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com or if you want to shoot us a message with a suggestion for a Thursday show or some other feedback, there's a great place to do that as well. You can follow us on social media. We're on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube and Instagram, pretty much everywhere you can think of and our username is always, you guessed it, whistlekick. Remember the products you can find at whistlekick.com or on Amazon, like the fantastic sparring boots. If you're a school owner or team coach, you should check out wholesale.whistlekick.com for our discounted wholesale program but until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day!