



Episode 548 – Professor Zahalea Anderson | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey, what's up everybody? Welcome. This is whistlekick Martial Arts Radio Episode 548 with today's guest, Professor Zahalea Anderson. I'm Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host here for Martial Arts Radio. I'm the founder of whistlekick. I love the martial arts, I love traditional martial arts. And that's why everything we do here at whistlekick is in support of the traditional martial arts and traditional martial artists all over the world. If you wanna know more about what we're doing, how we're working towards those goals, you can check out whistlekick.com, it's our online home. You're gonna find our store on there. If you make a purchase of anything, use the code `podcast15`, gets a 15% off, helps us know that this show leads to some sales and, you know, justifies the expense. If you want to check out the website for this show, whole different website, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, we bring you two episodes every week. And the show is to connect, it's to educate, it's to entertain the traditional martial arts throughout the world. Now we can get a little more specific with our goals here. We put a lot of work into it. And if you want to help the show, and the work that we're doing, you can do a whole bunch of things. You can make a purchase, like I said. You could share an episode, follow us on social media we're @whistlekick. You could tell a friend about what we're doing. You could pick up one of our books or our programs, you could leave a review somewhere, or support the Patreon, [P-A-T-R-E-O-N.com/whistlekick](https://www.patreon.com/whistlekick) it's the place to go for that. You can support us monthly with as little as \$2, \$5 gets you some exclusive audio, \$10 gets you exclusive video and it goes up from there. You know, I kind of take the easy way out in titling these episodes because when we have a guest on it's their name, it's their title, it's their name. And



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that makes it easy to find them. And it makes it easy for us to do the back end stuff. But you know what it doesn't do? It doesn't tell you the theme. It doesn't tell you what the episode is about beyond the who. And if I was to change that, suddenly, right now for this episode, today's episode would be "Wow". Because that's what it is. Professor Anderson comes on and tells a story. And we've heard a lot of stories on this show. Most of them have been good, some of them have been great. And this one is in that camp. And that's not to take anything away from the others who have come on the show. And you'll see what I mean, when you hear it. This story is different. It is unlike other stories, and yet at the same time, it's incredibly relatable. It's about choosing whether or not to follow your path. It's about being tested. It's about going through the door not knowing what's on the other side. And we get to go along for the ride. So enjoy. Professor Anderson, welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio.

Zahalea Anderson:

Greetings, thank you for having me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey, thanks for being here. Thanks for being here. We, you know, listeners we, before I get started with all almost every guest, you know, sometimes we roll like immediately into the conversation but more often than not, you know, we have a we have a chat. And you know, we're just been chatting the last few minutes and I got a good feeling. I got a good feeling here. I've got a feeling. You've got stories, don't you?

Zahalea Anderson:

Oooh, yes sir. It's the stories in there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, and you know, you know, what's really funny is that a lot of martial artists don't realize they have stories and then they have stories. So, you know when you have stories tells me you probably have tons of them, and who knows what ones we're gonna unpack. And I like to start in kind of a simple way, a way that gives us some context and we're gonna spider off from here. And it's a it's a straightforward question and that is, how do you get started as a martial artist?

Zahalea Anderson:

I got started in the martial arts due to my martial arts instructor who happens to be my father.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Uhm a family tradition.

Zahalea Anderson:



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Yes, so it's kinda like I guess you can call me a dojo baby. Being raised and and being in the environment as a child from me into just, adaptation you know, fairly swiftly and is following along being what pops and everybody else is. It was just a part of life. It was part of the lifestyle already as a young child. But when I wanted to actually do it for myself, and not just, oh, let me just go hang out with daddy you know, ta da da type of thing. When it really clicked in for myself was when puberty started. You know, like the whole vibe was different once I became a woman and life changed drastically. So was I like around, and the junior high going into high school that feel and high school hit. And I've always been a mellow mood, serious young girl I never belonged in any groups like cliques if you will during those school as I've known everyone. I've always said hello to everyone, every clique if you will, I was never a part of anything. I was everywhere, you know what I'm sayin' so you either knew me or you didn't know me. And for the ones who didn't know me, wanted to try to get to know me. So these girls try to jump me in the bathroom. And I was like, yo. What is going on?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Why?

Zahalea Anderson:

That's the number one question. I'm 40 years old now and sometimes I ask myself, you know why? You know, like...

Jeremy Lesniak:

You never found out they just, they just didn't like you.

Zahalea Anderson:

Never found out you know, and it's this you know, what do you guys think about. We're all going through puberty, I guess that's why. We're all trying to figure out what's happening with us as, and being in school, and being around the opposite sex, and things like that and how they're acting towards us as girls and then as boys and you know, the like me circle yes or no kind of just [0:06:25 - 0:06:27]. And, you know, you never know it could have I'm a tomboy as well, I'm a bias girl, you know, so maybe, you know, I don't know. So it happened and they weren't successful. And it happened so fast they get so slow you know? So it was like, he like you run it back in your head it happened, you know? And you just look on the ground and like, oh, she's out, she's holding her arm, let me get the hell out of here.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So it went okay, I guess we should say could have gone a lot worse for you.

Zahalea Anderson:



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It could have got a lot worse you know, there was another situation where where I live. I live in the east side of Long Beach, California. And I was a track athlete as well in track and field as we're known for academics and sports then at Poly, you know you run track, you play football like you know, that was a good time. And um coming home from track being on the bus. I guess I was mistaken for being a part of the gang or something but I didn't play anything, I'm from no set, I'm from nowhere, but these girls just didn't wanna listen didn't wanna you know, they're just trying to try me or just get into some trouble you know, so this was a two-day situation. The second time they came for me I was like okay, they're not coming to ask questions it's either happening or it's not. So I just hiked up my backpack and just got ready for it. You know? They are ready so you don't have to get ready. And then they came for me at the bus stop. And I had another fight there, right in front of the VIP parking lot. The timing the universe bring the city bus right along at the right time. Just want to check skills I ran right up there after I [0:08:23]. The bus driver looked at me it was like, okay, go ahead, get on. Like so you can just see them like in my eyes. You can feel my vibe, see the blood on my shirt like, okay come on. I get it up the bus there in that second. And that's when I said okay, me being in the martial arts just to be in it is already a divine majestic ancestral vibe that's within me, right? Now for me, I wanted to get into myself. That's what another portal open, and then I really, I wasn't a student, but when I knew I wanted to get myself in and please, for self-love instead of please, for parental love. You understand the difference? That's when everything started to click in and that's when my martial arts really started to take off for me as a young woman living in the east side of Long Beach.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow. It sounds like you've like you picked up something along the way you know, hanging around the dojo and and your father must have worked with you at some point.

Zahalea Anderson:

Oh, yes.

Jeremy Lesniak:

There are a whole lot of people who just stumble into these, these fights and with both of them it was it wasn't just one on one, it was multiple people in you and you coming out victorious both times. So either, you know, you you you were you know the reincarnation of a volley or you had some training.

Zahalea Anderson:

I did, my father you know, we will do things in the house. You know, it wasn't a normal house like I could be sitting and watching, you know, A Different World or The Cosby Show. He'll come out of nowhere and we're like let me show you this move [0:10:10 -0:10:18]. Good times. I remember. And I go back to watching movie and uh okay you know but that was the house, you know, and I, and those are the times that I remember. I remember the house a house call if you will. Um of course I've never been on the mat



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but it's just those one on one things that you don't get. Let's say if he wasn't my father... So growing up in a house with a martial artist is very fun and scary at the same time. Oh, my gosh. And uh yeah, oh, you know, I'm sure in your house as well. You have some nice tools as far as, you know blades, [0:11:08 - 0:11:10] oh, as this children you know, saying those things instead of playing with Barbies, and playing with, you know, swords and [0:11:18 - 0:11:20]. It's a different life, but I wouldn't changed it. If I went back in time, I would, I would want everything the same, because it made me who I am now. And I'm very appreciative and very grateful for my parents, and my siblings. I'm the youngest out of four. And I have two older brothers and a sister and they studied as well but I'm the one that actually kept with it. So me being a female, whenever we're in the dojo, I was on the mat with nothing but males, it was a house full of men, and I was the only female. So that was another journey in its own course.

Jeremy Lesniak:

For sure.

Zahalea Anderson:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

This this upbringing with, you know, bringing the dojo in home and, and having these, call them impromptu lessons. How much of that was your father let's say sharing something he was passionate about with his children and how much of it was preparing you for an environment that you've you've described as being fairly violent?

Zahalea Anderson:

It was both he he prepared, he wanted to be with us because we are his children. And he has got a lot of love and respect for us. And he wanted us to be prepared for the streets now. Yes, Long Beach, California it has its yin and yang. It has it's good and it's bad. And I believe every city in every state has a yin and yang aspect. I just happened to be, I we lived in a good neighborhood with the schools in the hood. You know what I'm saying? You know, that was my yin and yang like I live in a nice neighborhood, but my school was in the hood, you know, so yeah, you know, violence is, it's everywhere, and hopefully it'll mellow down. But as we're speaking as right now, in this current time, is actually rising up to all all time high, which is horrible. So, you know, we just all have to remember that love really conquers that love really, really Trump's hate, love, love will put respect on life more. So my father knew that he was preparing me for the future because him being a man himself, him uh we're from the east coast actually. You're in New England, right? I was born I was born in Brooklyn. So we're...

Jeremy Lesniak:

We're kinda not too far.



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Zahalea Anderson:

Yes, we're um New York natives and we've moved down to go way over here to California when I was a baby. So I guess with his upbringing, he wanted to be able to have us maybe a little easier life and what he had so he showed us love by preparing us and getting us ready for war.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Is that where he learned martial arts?

Zahalea Anderson:

Yes, he...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Was in New York?

Zahalea Anderson:

Yes. He started in New York with the founder of the system that we are put in lined into which is Sanuces Ryu Ju-jitsu under Dr. Moses Powell.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh, I know that one.

Zahalea Anderson:

Yes Dr. Moses Powell is the creator, founder of the system that I am, I love and I'm passionate and then would ride and die for Sanuces Ryu Ju-Jitsu.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You talked about your your siblings, they trained and you were the one who stuck with it. What was different? What was different for you or the way it was presented to you? or different for them? You know, it's not uncommon that in a family that grows up training that only some remain training, you know, I've known plenty of families.

Zahalea Anderson:

Oh, yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But I'm wondering why it's stuck for you.

Zahalea Anderson:



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Um I believe it stuck for me because I've, for me, like, I don't know about my siblings, because we're even though we're family, we're all our own individual. So I don't I'm not sure why they didn't stick with it. But for me, I stuck with it because again, I got battle tested, and I knew I really, you know you got battle tested, that wakes up some more senses and all. But I also, it felt good while I was doing it, this is before you know, even when I was when I was younger, because I have a background in dance. So I guess it was it just flowed it just flowed with me. Just like if I was in a dance class, I'm in a martial art class, I ran track, I was acquired, like, my parents had us everywhere doing so many things, you know, so I just I. And a part of me does want to stick with it to keep having a relationship with. And that's, that's, you know, that's, that's the key. Because that's what brought us together. That we can we can talk about that. That was our conversation. That was...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Tell us about your father.

Zahalea Anderson:

That was our last, you know, um...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah.

Zahalea Anderson:

His name is Professor Ervin. He is currently a [0:16:48 - 0:16:50]. He currently lives back in Brooklyn, New York. And yeah, he's my father.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Are you close?

Zahalea Anderson:

Um, yes, we were, we were really, really close to when he moved back to Brooklyn, it really broke my heart, though, you know, his stages of healing, you know, so, but things happen, life, life happens, changes is good or bad, but it's changed and you're just gonna have to adapt to it. Adjust and adapt. That's what I've been trying to tell myself lately, through all the the obstacles that have come in my life, these past these past few months, during the pandemic, and I'm sure you guys as well walking down the dojo and not being able to train and for 25 years, we've had our dojo open, we've never closed on holidays. I've never closed it on holidays or anything, because it's very diverse. And everybody has different walks of life. And not everybody celebrates the same holidays, or does the same thing. So I always kept it open. So the first time that we've ever closed, 25 years was March 14, 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

What did that feel like?

Zahalea Anderson:

It felt freakin' horrible! And still feels horrible because, again, we've never, you know, and so I think over the dojo in 2010 became so right. And I just had to backtrack a little bit so you could understand why.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yes.

Zahalea Anderson:

Say what I'm doing, what I'm doing now. Uhm my parents divorced in 2010. And I, I stepped up to the plate because I wanted to keep the dojo open. Oh, I tried to maintain it. Not having any background in business, not having any, no nada. You know, seeing how things were flowing while he was there, you know, but never really got taught this uh, absorbing you understand. So when it was actually time for me to sit behind the desk, I was learning as I as I went. And unfortunately, when my father left a lot of the students left, so I had to start from the top. And I still I can't tell you why they left when when he left but it is what it is. It was what it was. But I had to rebuild. I had to start from the ground up and I still had to pay rent. And to pay rent with no input coming in you understand. They'll talk about hustle mode, talk about science and make it work. And I did, I did because I never gave up, I never gave up. Even through all the times people trying to cut me down. Um, you know, stomp on my name, does not believe in me like all of that. I switched it into drive, I switched it into more efficient, I just, I just flipped the script, you know what I'm saying, to and I've been I just did it all on my own. I did it all on my own. I just never gave up. And then in due time, couple years went by, when I had no students and I had like five, and I had one, and it was just up and down like a yoyo and through all that time, I just was filled with string . I'm not gonna disconnect the yoyo, you understand I'm saying. Even though I'm busy and doesn't grow on this yoyo ride, I'm still gonna ride. And all of a sudden I look up, I got students they're paying tuition. That's a big, you know, over here, you know, and the ones who didn't, couldn't pay or didn't pay, I still allow them to come in because there's always gonna be issue you understand, we got to be able to work with each other. And I feel till now I've never made money for myself, it all went back into the dojo. You know what I'm saying so when it became a home, this became a safe house for others. I'm working with kids who was who was borderline getting ready to go on and I'm working with kids whose parents are these [0:21:32] They're telling me that they're hard head so I'm giving you some lessons. Actually the parent that you know what I'm saying. So, I work with children, you know, I don't like to label but just explain to you so you guys can understand the vibe of work with children with Down syndrome, wheelchair, you know, just anybody who everybody can learn self defense. It depends on the teacher and how they can provide it for you. And I've been blessed to have the creativity to be that instructor to provide for all. I've taught the LBGTQ community where I have private lessons because they



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didn't feel safe being in a general because some are transgender, things like that, you know, I'm open to everybody's would have been to explain. So when March 14 happened with the lockdown, it pierced my soul because some people came to the dojo to be safe. Now they now they have a home. You know, you never know what other people's houses is like. You know how people are living, you know, and I knew a couple people who are not living so well in their home and I couldn't protect them, provide for them from the times that they were at the dojo that was me trying to help them to give them a little fresh, you know, fresh breath of fresh air at a time that they was with me, you know. The lockdown brought everybody home. So I lost some students during the lockdown. And I tried to transfer everybody over to the matrix, to the Zoom. And my family and I we live off the grid. We didn't have no cable, no WiFi, like, that's not us like so when my cubs, we have two cubs. She's 12 and he's 10. And when they had to switch over to the virtual, we had to get the WiFi. So I bought like more salt lamps around my house to balance out the frequencies if you will. Okay. So that's the kind of house that my tribe and I are in. So I said, okay, well, we got we got it in here. Let's let's, let's try to bring this tendency here. Let me figure out how to press these buttons and get this dumb thing going on, you know. And so then I had us into the Zoom, the ones who could be in Zoom. Not everybody has a computer. Not everybody has a Chromebook. You know what I'm saying so the ones who were able to come into the Zoom and we had class. Then it's like okay, how am I gonna teach up in this matrix when I can't even touch you know, as us martial artists is, but it's all about the fact that I can't even teach you in this matrix but okay, so my thought is it okay if I sit down all day trying to figure out what to do. I said, we're gonna do some like martial art aerobics like old school type of Billy Blake stuff, you know what I mean? Just to get the blood flowing and get us moving around again, because that code 15 was in full effect people are gaining a lot of weight. You know, so I, I made a point to when they Zoom in with me to get to get the heart pumping and by the parents I said, Everybody better be in that room, and we better be working when you're with me. I don't care. All I'm asking is for donations. All I could ask is for donations. We I don't know everybody's story is, it's what what's this right now? October? Okay, I'm still waiting for an appointment.. Okay, just a little bit. So, I don't know that other people is go so I can't say oh, you have to pay full tuition for a half the class in the matrix, you know, but what I could say is, if you can give what you can just make a donation, because mind you, I don't know what their walks of life are. But I have tried to eat and provide for my family as well. I it's just not in my heart to ask you to ask for full price. I can't do that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And as I've heard, plenty of others say at times, I'd rather have them in the dojo not paying than not in the dojo.

Zahalea Anderson:

Exactly, exactly. When it comes down to it, martial arts brings more than just learning how to survive physically is its mental first. It's love. Second, it's passion it's drive, it builds your confidence. So I mean that as soon as we heard that, that are so surprised themselves with the moves that they're join that



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they never thought that they could ever do. This could never cross their mind. You know, see we open this other thing for them. And they and you can see that, see it in their eyes, their eyes get all bright and big and lit up and see like a whole face of, I did it you know, success. And that's the reward. That's the reward for me as an instructor, for me as a martial artist is one of the clicks when it clicks. But you know, so here we fast forward into May 31st. We've already been on COVID lockdown. Hey, already trying to make work, we're on via remote trying to make things happen. And here come a another case of writing due to police police brutality for people of hope, poeple who look like me. Right? And this has been going on since beginning of slavery. Okay. So it's not that it's anything new. This is just a continuation of hell. Right? So I guess the George Floyd incident of him being in the situation that he was in, which was, you know, nobody wants to see that, nobody wants to even be a part of that. It was it was a good what happened to that brother, and I'm very sorry for him and his family. And so that started another uprising. And that uprising was I'm assuming one of the biggest uprising uprisings yet, because I believe every state had some type of riot or uprising or protests happening. So when you have protests, there's things that come along with it. You have your protesters, some are peaceful, some little bit, you know, a little bit more energy. Right? And he had the writer. Yeah, the writers who wanted to who can't, who can't say it in a peaceful protest, they can't speak because they're just so frustrated that they have to go, go run in and just break things out of frustration and spray paint and then you have the looters, who want to have see opportunity, whether this is opportunity for me to provide for my family so let me go let me grab some groceries, let me grab some juice, let me grab some clothes that I put that I wouldn't be able to get, if I can get at this time. And then you have the knuckleheads, the ones who just see opportunity, like okay, let's, let's go riot, let's look at a six pack of beer. So, you know I'm saying just take this opportunity to do some stupid, you know, so it's not, it's not just a protest. There's things that come along with it. And unfortunately, May 31, 2020 on a Sunday, I was there earlier getting ready to reopen the dojo because we were phase three during the COVID lockdown. So I had my Milson is there, we're flipping the mat is tidying up is putting the vibe and energy in there to reopen. We had a curfew because of the protests so everybody can go home. I went home I drove through the protest, my being my 92 Wrangler Jeep is through the protest. They didn't they didn't hit my car they didn't hit me because they see me they see me and then okay. It's good. Well, weak to her, as you know, so I got to drive through the protest to get home. I'm home in my family. My husband and I, my cousin and I were sitting on the couch put these channels just having a regular Sunday night and I see my building on fire on the news. I didn't want to believe it. I rolled my eyes like whoo okay, what is that? Is that the corner? Is that is that 7th and Pine? at this that's not the dojo I'm like hey just say just say that, that's not the dojo is it? So tell me that's not, tell me and then I'm like, and now... Are you still there?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh I'm here.

Zahalea Anderson:

Oh okay. I'm sorry.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

I just don't want to stop on you on this one. This is intense stuff. I'm I I don't know. I'm having a hard time keeping it together, please. Keep going. Yeah.

Zahalea Anderson:

And I'm like, please don't tell me that's what I see on this news that this is not the dojo lit on fire and I was quiet and my voice started to get loud like if my neighbors didn't know me then they knew me now that night because I'm like what the... I just went, I went completely off. I said, I can't believe it. I can't believe it because like, I'm still feeling that because I still I'm not I'm not healed. I'm not okay, y'all gotta get me fine. Okay.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wasn't that long ago?

Zahalea Anderson:

And I wanted to get over this so bad. But I couldn't. Because there was a curfew. And it doesn't matter what I what my purpose was, if I get pulled over. It don't know what my purpose was. I look like imma fire the protest. I look like I'm a part of the riot because I am a black woman and the stand and and for me, I was gonna keep going. If I got pulled over, it was like, I was going to if it had to come to something where we were I had to resist or keep moving forward, it would have been a rolling that dunk. Officers run for their money, because I need the dojo. Like you can come with me. Let's go get this together. You don't you don't let me go. And let me get to where I'd go. You understand me? So instead of having all that happen, I had to pick my battles. And this is a martial art state of mind. Be mindful. So quote unquote I had to stay my ass home. So all those things that I just expressed to you would not happen. So I can still be here with my family and not being jail, catching a case. And my husband and children wondering where I am. And I'm saying that those are on fire. Like I couldn't do it. So I stayed home, waited till the curfew was over. My brother, he was working a graveyard shift. So he came right to the dojo once you know he was coming off. And he calls me because I stole the whole night. Talk about cleaning. I'm getting every corner of house I probably haven't you know, I couldn't sleep. Of course not, right? I'm just being optimistic. Oh maybe, this this, you know, the water damage. I mean, I'll just go to Rite Aid and get some. Maybe it's not that bad you know coz a little bit of smoke. Okay, well look the purifier and like, I'm just, I'm just thinking of the future. Okay, like oh it's not that bad you know. Brother calls me and he's like, no, it's a wrap. It's over. I'm like, what do you mean? Like it's over? Like, imma like, okay, forget the curfew. I'm just alright, I'm out. I don't care. I don't care. Baby I love you keep your phone on. Me and I shoot down all they're only live about about 10 minutes away. Get there and it's so quiet. It's it's quiet to where it was uncomfortable. There was just the fire department was only there. There was no police. It was just it felt like they just finished putting it out. It was really fresh. I just stood there it was none, nom nom, nom. Just like in disbelief. This hurt is shocked because if he knew the



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building, this is where I feel like I don't think it was protests. I don't think it was a part of the ride, I don't think was at all because if you knew Long Beach, he would know that this was all of minority owned business owners. Everybody in there was minority owned, okay. We were the only we've been the oldest tenants there for 25 years. But everybody that was on that strip was a minor minority on business. So why would you want to do that? If we're going for the purpose of police brutality and people of color you understand I'm saying? So there's a part of me goes like, oh, somebody took another opportunity. And, you know, intercepted with this fire. For what? I still don't know. There's so many theories.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You said knuckleheads.

Zahalea Anderson:

Yeah and knuckleheads came through. Another one is insurance fraud and other one is, you know, if there's a development has come it was being built behind us, you know that they said I could have been It was so so many theories. And so, so that's why I'm like and I'm talking to him and my eyes are watering and I'm like I can that moment I'm back. I'm back. I'm back to May 31st I'm back to the morning of June 1st being there right now. You know, and it just kills me because I worked so hard. I worked I worked so hard. I sacrificed so much for the community. That to have the community burn me down yo is like a slap in the face. You know, a slap in the face with a blade between the fingers slap in the face. Like y'all just cut me deep, you know? But then it couldn't have been them or maybe wasn't them like I'm still you know, and I had to stop thinking about that because I had to figure out ways to move forward. I get closer to the dojo glasses broken free like this. For me, I guess the fire department that uses foam I don't know. I'm not sure but it was it was a lot of foam going on in there. The mat, the mirror is everything 25 years just gone. The things that I couldn't that I that I hearing placeholders things from from 25 years ago, you can't get back you know, there's there's there is these items that I had from my parents broke and like, you know, there's this, you know, just little little things that you just can't go replace on Amazon, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

20, 25 years in one school there. There's life there. There are lives there.

Zahalea Anderson:

Yes. And that speaking of lives, I felt like they were with me. There's there's been a lot of brothers and sisters in the dojo that have passed on to a higher life, including the founder, Dr. Moses Powell, and I felt like at that moment, they were there with me as my ancestors trying to hold me and lift me at that moment because I was devastated. And I tried to save what I could pulling glass and moving thing, I just tried to do like what I could I got some my hands and things from time to savor passion. And then I got



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to remember, it took me a couple of days to regroup and get the smoke out off the body and out of my hair, you know, and and whatever I can save, I put in my jeep. And then my I see my students start to come in. Students start showing up. They're like, oh my gosh, I'm like, I know, right? Like I had no words that to heal them because I'm their instructor right? At this at this time, though, it was like I had I had no words. I didn't even know what to say. So we all just kind of started trying to get more things. Another student have brung a truck, you know, we just tried to save what we could. I feel like I do what we could. The wires have been like, I guess it's over, I guess, I guess this is it. And so I told her advice and like we've gone through the [0:38:33] one last time here. And I'm telling you that closing [0:38:37] that morning. The last time that we got to say it to the dojo, I have, like I felt before shake, like I felt something move, you know what I mean? I don't know, call me crazy. But something else was going on at that moment, because they were all together. The ones who showed up, we were saying it, you know, most divine power motion that that the body can do. Because we believe in it say all the time. You know, we open and we close the dojo with the [0:39:13], and have one of those that close the [0:39:17] at the dojo for the last time with the fire, crying and then giving courtesy and respect and giving thanks for allowing us to be there for so long of amount of time. And then I finally went home. I get home I try to pull myself together, take a shower, and then you know I like I go back there and my husband's like, oh, why? I don't know, I just gotta come back. I went back. And you know what? The whole community is there. Everybody for Long Beach, LA, people like people everybody's there cleaning up, clean up all of our small businesses. The community was with it. Forget about COVID like we were everything together, picking up debris, picking up this, putting in this, shifting to the side. I mean, the whole the love, the love, the love came through. And I knew we were strong. I didn't know when we were that kind of strong. I came back just to see what, I don't know why I came back. But I came back. And I see the whole community there. And then I start crying again, like oh my gosh, guys, and they gave me an opportunity to save some things that I just said goodbye to a few hours earlier. You understand what I'm saying? They gave me and they gave the community gave me another opportunity. Another opportunity to say some more things that I have once had this second bite in a few hours earlier. My phone is blowing off the hook. I mean, it's literally hot. Like it's literally hot because my phone was getting so many calls. I didn't pick it up because I wasn't in that right. I think the random times I did pick it up was my mom, the random time. The other random time for that was this lady named Marie Hosep. from Michigan. I didn't know anybody in Michigan, so I met this Marie Hosep. She started a GoFundMe for me. And it's still open, it's still still open. It it came with to like a \$130,000. And I was like say what now what huh? Because I'm like, is this another opportunity for somebody to crank call me with some BS, 'coz this is not the time. This is still not the time. You know what I'm saying? I didn't believe at first, I hung up the phone I kept moving on, eventually. It call back again, another random time I'm telling you what these random times. I'm not lying. I use some random times I picked up the phone. And it was her. And so then I said, let me let me let me breathe. I took a breath. And I'm gonna listen to myself, this is when you know you really have to be in tune with yourself 'coz this can make or break the situation. And I listen, I said okay, let me just go off into the corner somewhere and take a moment to listen to this woman. And I let her talk and said okay, she sounds she's telling it. So I provided her with information



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that she needed so to go, the GoFundMe could be transferred over to me with my name in it. And there was and that's the whole community again, helping me, giving me a second opportunity to now find a new location for us.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow. I wanna I wanna connect some dots here. You know, and bear with me as I kind of dig back out from from that emotional blanket you throw over all of us that that's that's some intense stuff. And I can only imagine if it's this intense for me hearing it what it was like to, to experience. You've talked about a few phases in your life and for me this there's this common thread of martial arts showing up in front of you and saying, here's your door. Here he was as as a young girl, you know, 12, 13 somewhere in there, and the world saying, it's time to train. And then your father moving and leaving the school to you would not mean in your words really not being ready. And martial arts saying, here's the door, or you gonna go through it. And then again, with COVID and, and you went through that door and okay, we're gonna find a way to do this online and do Zoom and bring people in and then bam, you know, here's here's the universe, seemingly shutting the door and there's another one being put right in front of you. So my question is, why do you think that keeps happening? What is it that you're you know what, I wouldn't ask it this way for very many people, but I'm gonna ask it for you because I've got a feeling it's the right language. What is it you have left to do with martial arts? There's something here. There's a path and it doesn't seem to matter what gets in the way. Someone, something, somewhere, somehow is saying you gotta keep going. And I can't imagine that you haven't thought of it.

Zahalea Anderson:

Yeah, no, I have, like, my time is now, my time is so now. And...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, can you talk about that?

Zahalea Anderson:

There's times like I was already going through transformation before, like, around my before, about a couple years ago, just just transformation. I just wanted to be a better woman, a better Mother, a better wife. You know these things that you did try to grow yourself into the bit to be at your best, you know, and I think, you know, with that with me already on the path to be divine, that these were tests in between, you know I'm saying and having the arts, watch my back, the arts has got my six, like, no other. I tell you that. You know, the arts it may it may like it may be made me feel that I can, I mean, I could never be without it. But now it's like, this is like proof, this is bonafide proof that the arts has saved my life. This is proof that the arts is providing me a path of righteousness into to help the community in another way. Maybe the universe is telling me that those are that we've been in for 25 years, it's just not big enough anymore. And maybe this was the universe saying in this weird way, it is time to get



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something a little bit bigger because I feel like they knew that I was not going to be because there's plenty of stories and passion and drive and family you know, like you know, that when we when we are where we are. The martial arts has had and will continue to have my back. Because I have its back. I feel the community has showed up for me, because I've always showed up for the community. And I didn't do it to expect anything in return. I did it because I knew was my purpose in life was to provide a safe house a safe haven and to get these young girls and boys together to get their mindset right before they do end up in jail. And so I felt like it was my duty. And it still is my duty that now my new manifestation, the manifestation my new attention is to now not just have a new dojo, but to have a new temple to provide everything in one block of space for everyone. Yes, the martial arts. Adding yes with the yoga, adding yes with the fancy, adding yes with the acting passion um you know, building everything that I feel everyone can use for long-life skill. Some things you can't learn in college, some things you can't. Some things, you just need to get your hands dirty. Somethings just you know, you don't have college money. No scholarship, it's a community-based planting food, learning how to grow, all these things since since the buyer has opened up another portal for me to want to do more for the community. And martial arts has helped me see that because it's had my back as I have it. Does that make sense?

Jeremy Lesniak:

It does. It does, I get that statement in a way that that I don't know that I would have a few years ago. You know, with with what I do with this show, with whistlekick. I have put everything I have into as you put it, having the martial arts back. And I will defend it, and advocate for it, and help to spread it in the way that I know how. Just as you are just as so many listening, and so many who have been on this show before have.

Zahalea Anderson:

Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's interesting that you you use the word temple because the some of the words that were kind of coming to mind as you've been talking today have been that I'm not the only one and I knew I wasn't the only one and I know that there are plenty of us out there who see this this evolution and this next, I almost want to call it golden age of martial arts, coming in the next 10 to 20 years. And so for you to use the word temple, just kind of makes me smile, because martial arts, you know, in a in a non-religious way becomes almost religious to so many of us. We become so passionate and so invested in a pursuit.

Zahalea Anderson:

It's not religious, but it's very spiritual. There's certain things that you can't put it on, there's certain things you can't put on the flyer for marketing. You know what I'm saying. And these are things that come along while you're in the dojo learning for us learning Sanuces Ryu Ju-jitsu, learning self-defense,



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learning self-love. So those are things that come on the fire, but your your spirit grows when you grow up. You know, and for me, I've never thought to call it a temple either. We've always always called it dojo. And in sometimes you can feel oh so where you at? Oh, I'm at this gym. Oh gym. When do you start calling it a gym? Like, huh? Oh, you know, no, I don't know, like, explain. Because where I come from, we come from the old school, you know what I'm saying and the traditional martial arts will always be around forever. Like, I believe in that truly, because it's still here now. But I'm not sure about the new things that are coming along. I don't know if it's gonna stick or it's gonna be a phase or, you know, and I respect all arts, martial arts. I respect martial science. I respect, you know, other sports. And I need everybody to understand the difference between everything. Not everything belongs in the same category. And I think once we all understand the different categories of the arts, there'll be more respect for them all as well. And so having this temple will provide the knowledge to have people understand because I feel like if I can get other instructors from all walks of life that can explain their truth as to why they do what they do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Do your children train?

Zahalea Anderson:

They do, they do. They do they're purple belts now in our system.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And how's that going? Is it giving you flashbacks to being a kid?

Zahalea Anderson:

No, because I found a lighter way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You're not just coming up behind him in the house and, and putting moves down on him?

Zahalea Anderson:

Yeah you know I give them their own surprises of course, yes. You know, but I tried to find a little lighter way as to how I was raised to it, you know, to show them something. Yeah if there are there are good times. They're they're beautiful, beautiful, beautiful creatures my husband and I created. Yeah.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And how about your husband? Does he train?

Zahalea Anderson:



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He does not train but he can go for it if he needs to. He he's, he's a bear. He's a bear. He's quiet until, until he can't be no. He's actually a behavioral specialist for the school district here in Long Beach. And so he works more with the minds of children. You know, and so that's, that's his is martial science of it, I guess you could say. That's his art, you know?

Jeremy Lesniak:

And what were his thoughts? 'Coz I'm sure if you don't mind sharing, as you've worked through these, these challenges with the universe seeming to destroy what you'd invested so much of your time and what your father invested so much time in. And as you work through that emotionally, and of course, physically, logistically, did he have any perspective on that?

Zahalea Anderson:

He did. He really just wanted to be there for me to cry on, to be held, you know, there's some things you just can't speak something sometimes. You know, I wanted to punch a hole through the wall, like he stopped me from doing that, like he was there. He was there for those things, you know. He's very supportive, you know, he he helped explain to the children you know, why you see mommy crying. You know, because this changes this changes all of our lives. You know, has I mean, I mean, it's still raw it's still raw, but um, I am getting better. I'm stages of healing, like I say, you know, because this just the truth. Right now I have this over at a park, eating. Now that they have lifted us to that we can be outside, governor lifted us that we can be outside and so I took the opportunity for us to be together again because we haven't seen each other since March. You know what I mean? So it's like you we got the COVID break and then we had arson. So it's like you know what else let me just bring it bring it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What was that first outside class?

Zahalea Anderson:

It was so majestic. It was so majestic. I loved it. Everybody came out who could because might be mindful, we're still in a COVID. We're still in the pandemic, excuse me. 'Coz some some parents did are still in the house now. Like they have not been outside. Because they know their body or they really are scary. Let me like, this is real whether y'all think of it or not, whatever is going on with what happened the other day with the president getting like, people have died. Okay, that's not people have died so we cannot dismiss this pandemic. It is happening. It's real life, whether it was created on purpose or whatever. Whatever, okay. People are dying, the best facts, and people are scared. And that's another fact. Though, the ones who came out. We all had our mask on, I had sanitizer. I still do. Every time I go out, I have facial mask, I have sanitizer. Well, I bring water like I do the best that I can to make sure we're all okay. We social distance workout, everybody spread it out. And it's such a good vibe, because we're all back together. It was like a reunion. And that first time I was crying, oh my oh my god I never



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cry so much in my life. Like what is? Because they don't understand as soon as they inspire me. They bring me, they bring me up. I why would I keep doing what I'm doing for nobody like you, I'm doing this for you guys. But you know, so just to see, you guys know, gives me the lift that I needed to keep going. You know, the little kids Professor Professor, look I drew I drew I drew what the photo should look like now. Look, you should have you should have your house. No, no, no, she should have it over here. Here we are at the beach is built a building right here. Professor. No, no, no, no. These are the little lawyers having a full-on discussion.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I love it.

Zahalea Anderson:

On how and where and how it should be made. And I, oh my god, like that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

What's better than that? Kids kids only get into discussions like that about things that really matter to them.

Zahalea Anderson:

And just to see them like, it's so... It's so, uh it's so beautiful.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Powerful.

Zahalea Anderson:

Yes and powerful because these little people are so innocent. And they tell you the truth. The kids, you wanna know something, ask the child. Because they'll tell you really what's going on. And you have to listen to the little people. Okay, and we both just do and I think that's why we put so much because I let them speak. I let them, I let them I I let them express, I let them tell me what's on their mind. You know? Yeah, this is beautiful. The adults seeing there too. You know, I teach men, women, adults, I teach everybody, you know. And they're very supportive. They like I can't wait till it happens. Let us pay it, we're gonna go weaken our tools all set up ready, you know, you know, to do the renovations into the new place, you know, like, it's, it's great. And I just hope I'm manifesting good intentions into having a new location as as soon as possible and when time permits, I don't. Again, I've never been in this position. I don't want to mess it up. You know, I really want to do good by us. And I don't want to be rushed. But I know you have to have one soon 'coz it's gonna get cold. Wasn't it gonna get Cali cold? Normally.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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I wasn't gonna say anything but I'm thinking, I'm pretty sure a warm day here right now is a cold day for you in the middle of winter, so I'm not really sure how I feel about calling that cold but all right, it's all relative, right? It's fair.

Zahalea Anderson:

We are so blessed to Cali cold, Cali cold can still be a flip flops and it's like, you know. I've done that actually. So yeah, I just want to be able to hopefully get one before it gets a little chilly over here. And if I and I'm just going to have to keep on keepin' on until we find the right place for us because once I get this place you know, hopefully me speaking it into existence, I want to be able to purchase something. And I want to be able to leave my family a legacy. So that's why it's very imperative that I really go off more logically and not emotion with these decisions. And that's helped me realize that through my martial art.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Going back to the kind of a question that I posed these doors on the other side of each of those doors, you know, their their circumstances have changed. But it's clear that you've also changed. Your mid door right now, right? You're stepping through that, you're stepping into something. On the other side...

Zahalea Anderson:

Yes man, I'm halfway in between dimension.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, yeah, exactly. Now, if we were to come back together in another year to five, something like that, and we were to talk about this, this stage, that you're entering this new dimension, for your life, your training, your school, what you hope you would be able to say about that transition and how it changed you.

Zahalea Anderson:

Change, I will be able to say that it changed me for the better, that change was supposed to happen. Everything happens in Divine Order, and by top and to accept it, and ride with it and have fun on the way. And always be in gratitude. Always be there, whether you think why would I give thanks to a fire? Why would I, this was horrible! No, no, no, no look at it in another way. Now look, what's happening, I get it, I can have the opportunity to find us new location that's actually that might be bigger, and that might actually be able to provide a lot more for us than just Sanuces Ryu Ju-jitsu. You know, like, this is a good this was a good fire. Yeah, so you think about it. I had to ask myself that. Did you hear that? You know, five years from now, I hope that you know, we are settled into a new temple of RA Life Defense, that's my, my logo. That's what have become my life defense, which is a Sanuces Ryu Ju-jitsu system. And hopefully, I'll be able to leave a legacy. You know I think that I am right now, I think, I think even



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before the fire before the pandemic, like I said, transformation and transitions are happening. That just put a little bit more oof behind the situation. And I feel like it's like, it's gonna be, it's gonna be good. It's gonna be respectful. And it's gonna be available to everyone in need. To everybody who's interested, to everyone who just wants to try something new. Who knows, you know, 'coz you never know why people take martial arts, some cast take it, oh, I just love I just love art. I just love watching it. I just love watching all the Kung Fu flicks and whatnot. Some fake it, oh, it's just a hobby just to keep myself in shape or to stay out of trouble or I;m just like kickin' and punch it. Some do it because they need the lives to be saved. Some are doing it really for the self-defense, so they don't get raped again. So they don't this doesn't happen carjacking, that, you know, things like this don't happen again. Or you have the ones who don't want those things to happen to prevent it. So they try to get in ahead of the game. You know, like everybody has their own different avenue as to why they wanna do it. And I always ask them, so what's your purpose? What you want from it? Like what's going on? You know, so oh, yeah, why not ask? I just wanna know tell me a little bit about yourself. Just wanna know what it's like to know what to provide for you. You know? Like, are we gonna be sitting in a horse stance doing punches or do I need to show you how to slice and dice real quick? You know, let me know.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh I get it. What if people wanna find you online, websites, social media, anything like that, that you're willing to share.

Zahalea Anderson:

Yes sir. I am on Instagram as Professor Zahalea or @zahalea Z-A-H-A-L-E-A. I am on Facebook as Professor Zahalea Anderson. My email is Professorzahalea7 for seventh dan. I am currently a seventh dan on the system. And that was that's the whole another story.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, gonna have to do a part two for doing that one, I got a feeling.

Zahalea Anderson:

Yeah. But by email it's Professorzahalea7@gmail.com. And I, I promote us being out in the park like I'm like starting over. So I'm doing a lot of, you know, marketing and just trying to get myself out there again and, and just do Zooms. I've been doing webinars, I've been doing a really tea seminars via Zoom. So if anybody would like to learn some information on how to use a pen that is just not for writing, then you can come in, I will show you how to use that pen.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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We've we've been all over the place today, we've talked about some great stuff. It's been a ride, for sure. So now it's time to wrap that up for the audience. So what what are your final words? What do you want to say to everybody who's listening today?

Zahalea Anderson:

I just like it, thanks to everyone who took the opportunity to listen, you know, and hopefully took the opportunity to listen with no judgment. I personally don't judge anyone because I already know what my life has done. And I and I'm a good listener, and I'm here for it. I just hope that it's given in return. And I hope you enjoyed a little truth about myself, and my family, and the dojo, and the community over here in California, Long Beach, and hopefully we'll be able to see and meet in the future. And to keep practicing, keep training, train, train, train hard.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I promised you a story. A great story and thank you to Professor Anderson for delivering an amazing story. We finished recording about a half hour ago and I'm still feeling emotional about it. I had to take some time before recording this, because of how I felt. If you're listening to the show, martial arts is important to you. It's a powerful part of many of our lives. If you're an instructor, especially a school owner, if you know what it's like to invest so much of who you are and what you have into that physical space with the goal of passing on what you've learned, what's impacted your life. I'd say there's a pretty good chance you got emotional too, as you heard the story. But I want to point out that the theme of this story today, of Professor Zahalea's life, as a martial artist was not one of difficulty or pain or anything like that. It's about remaining faithful. It's about recognizing that adversity passes if you're willing to work through it. That was my takeaway. This one meant a lot to me and I hope it did for you. So Professor, thank you for coming on. Thank you for being so open and trusting us with your story. If you want to check out photos and links to things that we've talked about today, go to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com You can find the show notes there. Every episode has a page all to itself with the links and all that eventually a transcript that comes out usually a few weeks after. But we get them up there. And if you want to support us the work that we're doing, you've got some options you can make a purchase at whistlekick.com, don't forget the code `podcast15` to save 15%, or leave a review, buy a book on Amazon, or help out with our Patreon account patreon.com/whistlekick. And if you see somebody out there wearing someone whistlekick on it, make sure you say hello, that's a fellow martial artist. Introduce yourself. We're all in this together. If you've got guest suggestions, maybe topic suggestions, or just general feedback. Let me know Jeremy@whistlekick.com. Until next time, train hard, smile, and have a great day.