



Episode 19: An Interview with Tamara Gonzalez

Christine Goodner: Well today, I'm excited to be talking to Tamara Gonzales and Tamara, thank you so much for coming and speaking with us. And I wondered if you could start by telling listeners a bit about who you are and what you do

Tamara Gonzalez: Christine thanks so much for having this conversation with me today. So my name is Tamara Gonzales and I'm a Suzuki violin and Viola instructor now based in Minneapolis. And I'm also an orchestra conductor. I've realized over the past year I'm an education advocate also.

Christine Goodner : I love that. We need that right now for sure. I've been asking people we're recording this late summer 2021. What has music, practice, performing . . . However you want to go with this, looked in your household for the past year, year and a half.

Tamara Gonzalez: It's been an interesting journey with it because I think my instinct actually at the onset of the pandemic was to suddenly start practicing a lot more than I had been previously, even though I had nothing to prepare for. It was really soothing and comforting to know that I could always go back to my instrument. And so I found myself being really intentional about creating long chunks of time during the day, for me to just like groove on some Bach, like I just desperately needed to play some unaccompanied Bach on either my Viola or my violin. And that was really, really comforting. And then for my kids, we started getting into this groove of like playing family twinkles or having like a family jam at the end of the day. And that was, I think also really helpful because especially for the first couple of months of the pandemic, we were very, very tightly bubbled

and not seeing any family members, even though all of my husband's family lives within a couple of miles from our house.

And we're usually very communal. So it felt like really, it was just such a . . . as I'm sure everyone experienced this sort of bizarre solitude all of a sudden. And so like creating that social vibe within our own household was really helpful at the end of the day. And then as the pandemic went on and continues to go on, we've all kind of found other (pauses) other ways for music making and we've kind of tried to establish some different routines with practice and with everything. It's just been figuring out what works works for a little bit, and then it stops working and then figuring out what works. It works for a little bit and stops working and then copy paste, repeat. So it's, it's definitely not been a single thing. It's been all of the things from very, very intense to not, not nearly as intense with practice.

Christine Goodner: I can relate to so much of that and it seemed at first it would be short-lived so like a lot of intensity from my side on various things. And then I was like, oh, this is not sustainable.

Tamara Gonzalez: No. And same here. I remember spending hours recording, just practice resources for my students, because I just wanted to make sure that they made it through the spring semester and that they were still motivated and you know, feeling joy in their practice. So I just made all of these recordings of harmony parts to their pieces and play along videos for tonalization ones. And it was like , I hit it really hard and I was sprinting, not marathoning.

Christine Goodner: Same. Yes. And then the summer came and there wasn't the usual breaks because nobody was going on vacation and

Tamara Gonzalez: I just Plugged through the summer and then by the time it came to the fall and you're like, whoa,

Christine Goodner: Yeah and here we come to the next fall again. So it's been an interesting couple of years for sure. Well, thanks. Thanks for talking about that. I just think it's interesting. I'm sure from the various people who come on and share different families can relate to the experience. It's good to hear it. Hear that from various perspectives. I wonder if we could go back in time a bit and just talk about when you started learning music. I don't know if you started on violin or Viola, but maybe you could share what got you into music in the first place

Tamara Gonzalez: So we were a Suzuki family growing up, but I like to call us an accidental Suzuki family because my sister who's two years older than me is a

violinist. And she started at, I think about age six and she became interested in the violin when a string quartet came to visit our school and she ...My parents were kind of casual, classical music listeners. So it wasn't completely foreign to us, but it never occurred to them that their tiny children could learn how to play an instrument. And then when my sister started begging to learn violin, my parents were like, that's ridiculous. We don't have the money for that. I don't know that doesn't make any sense. You're a kindergartener. And then after she continued to insist, then they started looking into it and they realized that the magnet school that we were enrolling in had a string program.

And not only that, the string teacher was this Suzuki teacher and offered lessons before school and group classes after school. And it was all at school and we could rent the instrument from school and it was extremely affordable. So many of those barriers to access were just immediately lifted because it was so convenient that my parents were like, yes, let's try this. So my sister started and then of course I knew I had to do everything my sister did so that a couple of months later I started nagging them about wanting to start the violin. So then I started the next semester and then my younger brother would follow later on the violin and then later switched to cello. So yeah, we were a Suzuki family from a start. And my parents, my mom was really committed to that. She realized how good it was for us.

Like she just saw so many positive side effects, not just the music-making, but we were engaged in something that was challenging and it was teaching us discipline something that was also social. Like we made so many friends through group class, like all of our best friends for like since forever have always been our music friends. And so it was easy for her and for my parents to both kind of commit to that and make the sacrifices they needed to make, to find us better. Teachers get us better instruments and roll us and more competitive, higher caliber programming. As we progressed pretty quickly through repertoire when I was nine years old, my whole family moved to Puerto Rico. I actually was born in suburban DC Calida Jones. And I went to the same school. It's really funny. Calida Jones and my oldest sister were group class.

Christine Goodner: Oh, that's fun. She was just on an episode of the podcast talking about her school experience. So what a cool connection.

Tamara Gonzalez: We were - fun connections. My family went back to Puerto Rico and they didn't really have any, at that time robust Suzuki community. It was a single Suzuki violin teacher whose program was not integrated at all into the

music conservatory there. And so my parents decided to just transition to the music conservatory, which ended up being a great experience for us as well. And I would later come back to Suzuki after I graduated from my under my undergrad, I was a broke musician in Chicago. I needed to figure out how to pay rent. And I had been teaching really awfully - I didn't know what I was doing type teaching and thinking :gosh, I am the worst teacher ever. I need to figure out what I'm doing. And then after graduating from my bachelor's degree, I started my teacher training journey and yeah, it all kind of started from there.

Christine Goodner : I love that. I think it's so important. The impact of the school program can have, and really giving access to families that maybe wouldn't know how to seek out those resources or even have exposure to classical music or string instruments.

Tamara Gonzalez: Oh my gosh. Totally. I don't think we would have started if it hadn't been for the fact that our school had just had so many of those resources like right there. And then once you get into it, then you can seek out better resources or different resources for yourself, but everyone needs a starting point. So the easier we can make that starting point, the more families can get involved. For sure.

Christine Goodner: Exactly. I love hearing stories like that. So it sounded like maybe teaching came for you out of desperation or like, I need to make money (laughs) , but I wonder maybe at that point or later as you got into it, what did you love about teaching or what got you hooked on enjoying teaching? Because I assume from knowing you that you really do.

Tamara Gonzalez: Yeah, no, I love it. It's, it's, I'm so glad. And like I'm actually grateful every day for my career choices, because not everybody is fortunate enough or blessed enough to love what they do every single day. And I love what I do every single day. So I'm fully acknowledging that, that awesome position I find myself in, but I was able to connect to something that I could be passionate about and also build skill at and get better at. But yeah, I was, I, my track was definitely performance. You know, I was one of those kids that was practicing six hours a day in my bachelor's degree, I wasn't getting much done, but I was practicing the requisite four to six hours a day dutifully. I tried a few auditions at 22 and didn't get anything. And I was like, oh no, what do I do now?

So I started my, my Suzuki teacher training, at age 22, 23, and my first unit, wasn't an amazing experience, but I, I had lots of colleagues that were Suzuki

teachers that I could observe. And Michelle George, you know, rest in peace. She was such an invaluable, resource and mentor at that time that I was able to observe her lessons and kind of seek a path for myself and getting going. And then a few years later with some encouragement, I went back to teacher training and then had a really, really positive experience when my book with my book Two training.

And that's when things started to click for me. And then I was . . . I became hooked. And then I just started doing short-term teacher training consistently. And within two years after that, I had completed all 10 units. I just gobbled them up doing multiple units every summer, doing SPA and practicum courses during the school year, getting some Viola training units as well, just like gobbling it up and really embracing the whole Suzuki training journey and really, really enjoying it because I realized that one of the things I loved about practice is the skill development and teaching is a skill that can be developed.

And once you build the confidence of feeling like you're getting better at it, you of course want to do it more. And you know, it's this really positive cycle.

Christine Goodner: I'm glad you found a training program that connected with you more and went back. Because I think it's easy to think (that) one experience is the whole, the whole thing. And often we just need to find a better fit for ourselves.

Tamara Gonzalez: Yes. And I think that connects to with students, sometimes you were working with a teacher and it's not quite clicking. Sometimes it just means that you have to reevaluate that relationship and find someone that that's a better fit.

Christine Goodner: You talked a bit about practice as an undergrad students. I wonder when you were a young child, what do you remember about practice? Was it hard for you? Did you love it? I love hearing everybody's experience with that.

Tamara Gonzalez: I did not love practice when I was a kid, which I have to remind myself when practicing with my own children, that I did not love practice when I was a child, I came to love it much, much farther down the line. But as a child, I did not like it because it's hard. It just is. You're, you're very vulnerable. You're trying things that you can't do yet. You have to break it down, you have to repeat

it. It's frustrating. And if you're a perfectionist, like I, I tend to be, it's just a nightmare because you're constantly imperfect.

So one of the things that I've tried to do with my own children in practice is we've created several mantras. You know, like mistakes are how we learn or I'm on the verge of a breakthrough. Like I'm about to get it - the breakthroughs coming.

You know, because those are things we experience ourselves and practice that right at that moment, when you're getting the most frustrated with not being able to figure it out, that's when your brain is just really digging in and trying to decode what, what needs to happen. And if you just take a deep breath and try a few more times, chances are it's going to click. And then you can build in that muscle memory and that oral memory and that tactile memory for being able to hit that spot again and, and build that confidence. But it's, it's not something I enjoy doing at all as a child. It's something I did disciplined in the sense that I would do it often, but it also did not practice well.

So I had no confidence that practice worked because I was one of those kids that thought I was following my teacher's instructions, but I wasn't really understanding the nuance of how to practice the way they were telling me to do it. And so I didn't see results. So unfortunately, some practice methods are very specific and if you're not listening for, or watching for a particular thing the right way, you're just building an incorrect repetitions. And that was something I did not understand at all. I was creating bad habits through bad practice that would then take years to reverse and retrain.

Christine Goodner: Yeah, I can relate to that. And I think I talk a lot with my own students and, you know, try to with my children too, about really specifically: okay Tell me in your own words, what you just heard me say, or like, let's practice that with your parent right in front of me, because I just realized how much that got in my own way as well.

Tamara Gonzalez: It's it can be so frustrating because you begin to doubt your ability or doubt your potential. And it's not that it's just that if you're doing something incorrectly, you're just building in that incorrect habit. I do that as well with my students.

You know, I think when that happens quite early on in the process is when a student is trying to play through a piece at the beginning of book one and they stop because there's, they made a mistake. And then so they go back to the

beginning and then they stop at the same thought again, and then go back to the beginning and they stop at the same spot again.

And parents under the belief that, oh, but you have to start over again so that you can fix the mistake. Well, sure. But if you don't address the actual challenge at the mistake point, all you're doing is training into the child that they need to stop. They're not ever going to get over the hump of the mistake unless you sit there and dissect the actual issue. You know, you have to kind of work through that and then you can go back to the beginning and play it through again, that creates tons of frustration because then they believe that they could just can't play through the piece. I can't play through the piece. Well, you can, we just have to break it down and practice it the right way.

Christine Goodner: Those little chunks of practice versus playing through is so important.

Tamara Gonzalez: We'll do it. We want to play through the piece. We don't want to take the tiny chunk and dissect it. That's not fun. And I think it wasn't until graduate school that I finally learned how to practice I had was very fortunate to have a fantastic violin teacher, Olga Kaler. Who's now at CIM at Cleveland Institute of music. Who's just this masterful practicer. And she has all of this wealth of knowledge on how to break things down, but she really helped me understand how to practice. And instead of practicing for six hours a day, I started practicing for an hour and a half a day. And the progress I made in those two years was just exponentially more than all the progress I had made in my four years as a undergraduate student, because I was doing things the smart way, not the more is more way. So sometimes less is more. Smart practice is definitely the way to go.

Christine Goodner: And I think probably comes with maturity and age, but I, something clicked for me later on where it was more fun to do those little chunks because then I could play through successfully. And I think, you know, preschoolers or young children. They don't have that ability to see that.

Tamara Gonzalez: Then that's where it's, the onus is on the, on the adult, in the room to bring some, some interest, some joy to that process. Whether it's finding a different practice game, whether it's pulling out a board game and moving a little figure along the board game. And that's something I have constantly having to do with my five-year-old. I had like a half hour conversation with his cello teacher last night about, okay, here's some ideas for the fall let's, let's both jot

down like 20 different practice strategies for how to get them to repeat something a bunch of times, without it being a total, a total drag, you know.

Things like he's really into baseball. So, okay, well make a little baseball field in the room and then we can move the stuffed animal to all the bases and it can go around, you got to make it in fun and engaging for them. Otherwise it's just so much resistance.

Christine Goodner: Right. Right. And I think it's helpful to know as a parent that that's going to come later with age, and that it's really normal to have to, you know, we're just bending over backwards or pulling all sorts of ideas out of hats to figure out . . . okay, how do I get this child to do this five times or however many times? And that's very typical.

Tamara Gonzalez: It's a wasted waste of energy and frustration to expect a kid to want to repeat something 10 times correctly. They're not going to want to do it 10 times correctly, intrinsically out of the love of their heart. Even if they love their instrument, it's just, it's just not going to happen at that.

Christine Goodner: Right - I've been teaching for 20 plus years. I think I've had one or two students that like magically love to repeat things, but I've taught a lot of students on that. It's just very rare,

Tamara Gonzalez: Very, very rare

Christine Goodner: I think that's a great conversation. And I hope listeners who might be, you know, worried about how much work they're putting into the games or the practice strategies to know that it's not going to be forever, but it's really important

Tamara Gonzalez: When we start to transfer that ownership onto the student, as they get older, they have to have such a strong a roadmap for how to practice themselves. I've seen it so many times as a teacher and it's really, that's my that's when I think my favorite part of the teaching process is when you start to transfer that ownership from the parent to the student and they are really owning it and they're taking their own notes and they're excited to read back their notes to you. It's a very exciting part of that whole journey that they're on when they can understand how to practice and do it well without having the parent be the full responsible person anymore.

Christine Goodner: It is. And it's good for parents to know that is coming and they can feel like it's never coming, but it is coming. And for me, there's always, for most students, some moment where they're playing through something and they make a mistake and then suddenly they stop and they start repeating over and over, or like applying their strategies. And I always find that such an exciting moment because I'm like, oh, okay. They're getting the idea here.

Tamara Gonzalez: Totally. If you're learning a new piece and you break it down into chunks and you're like, okay, how are you going to tackle this section? What's, what's your practice strategy for this? What's your practice strategy for tackling this section? And they know that they can do it and they come back next time and it's, you know, it's it's well on its way. So yeah, it, it, it does happen. It just takes lots of patients. Yeah.

Christine Goodner: Yes. We're both parents. So parents who are listening, we feel your pain and we promise it does get better. (Tamara: For sure)

I wonder when you think about conducting (I don't think I've had a conductor on the podcast yet) so I'm excited to talk to you about that. What do you love about conducting and what do you think? Yeah. Know, what do you enjoy seeing students learn from the process of playing in an ensemble?

Tamara Gonzalez: I'm obsessed with orchestra. I have always had, for me that was like my team sports. Some people do soccer or baseball, or, you know, whatever. For me, it was orchestra. I love like being in a violin section or a Viola section and just like supporting the melody and, you know, backing off for the, for this, and then coming forward again and listening for the textures and the groups.

So I'm just obsessed with the whole orchestral experience and conducting as the coolest job ever, because my instrument is the orchestra. I get to really use my ears as, as a guide, as to what needs to happen. And it's the ultimate, it's sort of like the ultimate and envisioning a final product in your own ear. You have to hear it so strongly over. What's actually happening in the room so that you can compare what's happening in front of you versus what it is you want coming out of the ensemble.

And that's just a really fun process for me. I love connecting with lots of kids. I love the one-on-one connection of private lessons, but I've always loved working with large groups. I love the energy that I can get from the room. I should say.

One of the things I really like about orchestra is the process of programming because as Suzuki teachers to our programming has done for us for the first X amount of years as a student is working through, this is Yuki repertoire. We may select etudes or other pieces outside of the Suzuki repertoire and along the process. But the most we're mostly relying on what's in the books. As a guide for the student, I have to assess skill level or determine field level is in the room, what skills are needed and then create the programming or select the pieces for that semester or concert cycle accordingly.

And that changes from year to year. It changes from semester to semester, even if I'm conducting the same quote unquote group, it's never the same exact kids because kids either move along to the next ensemble or they're just getting better.

That process, I find really interesting and I can be really creative with it. So yesterday I sat down and figured out the programming for the youth symphony orchestra that I conduct, and we pick something from Mozart, I've got a divorce shop, but then I was able to pick something, an arrangement front by duke Ellington of a tune called caravan new piece that was written for the ensemble 20 years ago. I'm pulling out from the commissions were expired written by a female conductor. I can be much more, um, creative and I have much more freedom in that way to pick whatever pieces I think are best for the ensemble.

Christine Goodner: I love that. I do think people who haven't played in an orchestra before or are not musicians . . . You know, it might look like a conductor's just up there waving their arms and that's all there is to it. (Tamara Laughts) So I think like the programming sounds like, you know, a piece that's really important to know about. Do you have anything else you would share with people who have no idea what a conductor does about, you know, some of what you do in a rehearsal For example? I think it's really interesting if people haven't experienced that.

Tamara Gonzalez: Orchestra rehearsal is the ultimate practice session is really what it is. It is the ultimate and taking something big, breaking it down into chunks, being very strategic. And then as someone who works with student ensembles at teaching along the way I want, I want kids to be able to copy paste what they've learned from their rehearsal into their own home practice between rehearsals, not just on their orchestra music, because what's so great about learning as it's so transferable. If you can learn how to do one thing, it's easier to learn how to do another thing.

And then the whole waving of the Baton thing, which my two young kids do all the time. It's hilarious. They'll take a pencil and they'll like sing happy birthday and conduct themselves singing happy birthday. The whole waving of the Baton, you know, the purpose of the conductor to keep the ensemble together.

We're there really as a human metronome. And I love telling students about the, you know, the famous story of the conductor, who way back when you would use this huge sort of tree stump and they bang it on the floor at the front of the room to see it was like as a huge thump sort of metronome sound. And he accidentally thudded his foot and then it became infected and he died. And that was when people thought, Hmm, maybe we shouldn't be studying a big tree Trump on the floor. Maybe we shouldn't be grabbing the Baton or something more visual, less physical, at least that's the way it goes. The story goes, I don't know how accurate that story is, but yeah, that's what we wave a Baton is to, is to help keep the ensemble together.

We're telling them where the beat is visually in the air, as the ensemble is playing. And that's what we're doing. But the goal of any conductor is to be able to stop conducting walkaway and have the ensemble play together on their own. That's when you know, you've done a really good job in rehearsals when they can listen to each other and adjust to each other and be really sensitive and aware musicians, and they don't need you anymore. That's when you know, you've done it,

Christine Goodner: Right. I was thinking, by the time we get to it - you get to a concert. What you're seeing the conductor do is not, you know, they may not even need to be up there, but it's all the work on all the rehearsals of helping people hear each other's parts and see the importance of your own part or when to play softly, that kind of thing. That really makes it a good performance.

Tamara Gonzalez: Yeah. The sausage happens not on stage. The sausage making is in the rehearsals for sure.

Christine Goodner: Yeah. I think that's really interesting. I always think in my area where I live, there are not orchestras in the school. There's a few community orchestras, but it's hard. You know, students have to really seek them out. And I think I'm always trying to explain the importance of being an ensemble and orchestra because I've found in my own studio, the students who don't get into that by late middle school, high school rarely keep playing because I really think that's what keeps students engaged. So I wondered if you could just share what

you think orchestra gives students or the importance of finding an orchestra if you don't have one in your own school.

Tamara Gonzalez: Oh, definitely. I can't advocate enough for finding and a larger ensemble. I think in the absence of being able to find a full orchestra, maybe at least playing in a chamber ensemble in a quartet or a trio or a quintet might sub in for some of that group experience. But at a certain point, students need to hear how they relate to other instruments. It's not enough just to play your Suzuki repertoire with other violinists or cellists or whatever.

You really do need to experience what it's like to fit your part into a bigger whole. Nothing provides that better than the orchestra and the orchestra. You have to be independent as well. You have so much more responsibility as an orchestral musician, because as opposed to in a group class where you're looking at the teacher at the front of the room and following their body movements or their bow or their hands, you have to learn a part fairly well on your own before you show up to rehearsal so that as you make mistakes, because everybody makes mistakes, you can keep going.

That's like the first hurdle in any reading orchestra is this concept of I made a mistake, but I have to keep going, or I fall off the bus and the bus is not going to come back and get me. So one of the mantra is I teach my, my reading orchestra level Students is the right to note at the wrong time, becomes the wrong note.

If you play the right note at the wrong time in the piece, it's no longer the right note. You have to put the note in at the right time. So it sounds correct. So then there's, and there's so much comradery that's built in that process. So many deep social connections that can be built in that process. And as I said earlier, all of my friends who are musicians, I think that's what keeps kids in.

The more music they're playing with with different kids, different people. It just makes it more fun. It's not just an academic thing that they're doing anymore or a subject they're learning. It's, it's a social activity that they're really involved with. So I can't advocate enough for orchestra. If you don't have an orchestra in your area, talk to teachers in your area and see maybe you can get something going, or maybe you can get, get a chamber music program that meets in the summers or on the weekends going, maybe there's something else that you can do summer camp, you know, have your sign, your kids up for a summer camp. That's a little further away, or perhaps consider going to an Institute that provides orchestra or something along those lines. All district orchestras are also

sometimes available depending on your, um, on your school district. Things that don't meet at your school, but meet at another school. I would, I would really push for finding those resources and advocate your school district and ask them for orchestra, start being an advocate yourself, go to the principal, go to the arts coordinator at the district level, start writing letters, get other parents in your studio, jazzed about the idea and see if you can't find the funding within that district to get an orchestra for.

Christine Goodner: Yeah, thanks for talking about that. I think, you know, I think about soccer or something that my students are really into. You can know the individual skills really well, but really it's fun to play on the field with the other players.

Tamara Gonzalez: Totally it's, it's, it's sort of the equivalent of like practicing drills on your own, in your backyard, that's practicing versus getting on the field and playing a game that's orchestra.

Christine Goodner: It's a really good way to think about it for non-musician parents who might wonder, or families who might wonder is this important?

Tamara Gonzalez: It's the team sport of music. So it's worth getting on the team.

Christine Goodner: Yeah. And I think as a teenager, myself, I had periods of time where I didn't want to practice or felt unmotivated, but I wanted to see my friends in orchestra and I wasn't going to show up not knowing my part. And so I got in there and I at least practice that if I practice nothing else and that kept me going,

Tamara Gonzalez: Totally. I think every musician has gone through those phases where they're, where they're only practicing their orchestra part. Right. Because that's all that's interesting at the, at the moment or you just, you know, motivation goes up and down, but you're going to show up to rehearsal because you want to have that rehearsal break chat with your, your pal over in the bass section or the trombonist or, you know, whatever. So it definitely encourage students who are not connected to a group like that. Especially middle school, high school age to seek it out. It's worth making the time and driving and all that.

So important. It's so important because, and my parents did it almost as a preventative bad behavior. As in, if they're just always doing something with music after school, then they can't get themselves into trouble. So they were always finding other things we could do with other music groups, just because they figured this is healthy and safe and productive in some way. And so let's just keep

finding them those kinds of opportunities. And they're hanging around with other sort of geeky musicians and those are good people to be hanging out with. So if nothing else, it keeps, keeps them busy doing something good after school versus, you know, other things that can be getting them.

Christine Goodner: I always think if my kids were busy doing productive things that filled their time, that they couldn't get into unproductive or unwanted things.

Tamara Gonzalez: Unwanted behaviors (laughs)

Christine Goodner: And it's just a great peer group. I see students or parents and my studios just see the other teens on the art program and say, oh, these are the kinds of kids I hope my kids become and I'm glad they're around each other.

Tamara Gonzalez: Yeah, it's usually a good influence.

Christine Goodner: Yeah, absolutely. Well, I would love to sort of wrap up and talk about if there's a tip, a practice tip or idea, it could be a recap of something we've said that you could leave listeners with that they could keep in mind about their, either their own studio or their own children,

Tamara Gonzalez: As a teacher and even as a parent, too, I have found asynchronous learning to be incredibly helpful. And so I, I feel like one of my big things is I'm just trying to spread the word about keeping this asynchronous idea going past the pandemic. I've used asynchronous learning since way before the pandemic. I use an app called Seesaw, which is intended for classroom teachers actually, but it works just fine for how I use it, you could also use Flipgrid or Marco polo, which is a social media app, but it's a closed network app, which makes it much safer for younger kids to be on.

But basically just this idea of like, when your kid has hit that breakthrough in the lesson and learned something, ask your teacher permission to just record it again. And whether it's you recording your child, playing that thing correctly, or asking your teacher to demonstrate it one more time correctly so that when you're practicing, you're making sure that you're doing it the right way. Because again, that idea of that know bad practice makes bad habits. Good practice makes good habits. So I would say that that would be my biggest tip is to just embrace the smartphone that you have in your hand and videotape things are, you think will be good, um, supplements to your written notes so that you're making the most out of your practice time.

Christine Goodner : I think that's a really great way to think about it. Like better to do a little bit really well and carefully

Tamara Gonzalez: Yes totally. And then play, play through the stuff they can already play through easily. But the new stuff just keep those small chunks. As long as your teacher says, don't try not to go ahead on that because if you learn a mistake, then the frustration is going to set in later when they have to fix the mistake later, that's, that's what I'm constantly trying to tell me my kids in the early stages. And then once they see the value of it and they realize they move through the repertoire much faster when they are only practicing correct notes and correct rhythms and correct technique, they lose the motivation for trying to get ahead too much. And you know, they'd have to go back and correct it,

Christine Goodner : Right. That's never fun to fix bad habit. Well, thank you so much for talking to us today. I don't know if there's any way people can get in touch with you, or if you have a website you wanted to share any thing like that,

Tamara Gonzalez:I have no official web presence, which is something that I've been aware of and needing to correct here a long time. And yet here I am, I don't have a website at all. Unfortunately I don't have a website now, but yeah, but parents or teachers can find my contact information on the Suzuki association a website, if they want to reach out as well

Christine Goodner: Again for your time and for talking with us, I hope we get a chance to do this again in the future.

Tamara Gonzalez: Thanks so much for having me, Christine. This was fun.

