



Episode 306 – Master Danny Dring | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hey there this is [whistlekickmartialartsradio](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) episode 306 today I'm joined by Master Danny Dring. If you're new to show, you may not know my voice. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, I'm the founder of whistlekick sparring gear and apparel. I have an amazing job because I get to talk to martial artists about martial arts and then share it with all of you. I'm also blessed because we have a wonderful team producing amazing martial arts apparel and accessories all under the general umbrella of martial arts because you know what, martial artists we have much more in common than we do that separates us and I think it's important that we remember that. If you want to check out some of those products you can find them @ [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) or some of them are even over on Amazon, you can find the show notes to this and other episodes the other 305 episodes that we've done, man its crazy to say that, [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) because I am the least creative person in the world when it comes to naming things but that's okay because it makes it easier for you. Let's talk about today's guest. Master Danny Dring comes to us from the South, from Arkansas where he has achieved multiple lifetimes worth of martial arts accomplishments from black belts in a number of styles and high ranks as well. And despite all of that the thing that is always struck me about Mr. Dring is his humility, his willingness to just support others in what is important to them. As you'll hear in today's conversation, almost everything he talks about regarding himself relates to others, it almost defines himself by his relationships to other people and to me that's just a testament to his humility to his dedication to others. Living life of service whether that's law enforcement, whether that's martial arts,



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whatever it is and that's why was so honored to have him on the show today. I think you'll enjoy this and if nothing more, I'm sure you're going to come away inspired. I was actually kicking while we are talking, true story.

Master Dring, welcome to [whistlekickmartialartsradio](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com).

**Danny Dring:**

Well, thank you having me.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Thanks for coming on the show as I said you and I'll say publicly it's long-overdue, anyone who can inflict that much pain on me deserves to have some air time for sure and and listeners well, I'll explain more later when it seems more appropriate contextually but for now you know, just know that this man is is the real deal and can hurt you in ways you never even knew were physically possible.

**Danny Dring:**

Not only in martial arts is a complement is that a complement, right? So that's just absolutely awesome.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It is a weird world that we occupy where you know, some of our best friends are the folks that would hurt us the most.

**Danny Dring:**

Yeah yeah you know simulated murderers [00:03:51.10] you know is just good martial arts training and it endears, it endears people to it.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It does, cause really, I mean, if somebody hits you in the face you kinda have two responses you can enjoy it, you can complement them and recognize hey, maybe I should've done something differently so you don't hit me in the face or you can get mad. And if you get mad you don't last long in martial arts because either nobody wants to work with you or people who are much better than you want to work with you and the teach you a lesson. And the outcome of either of those angry options, it's not sustainable.



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**Danny Dring:**

No, it really isn't. And it's amazing that we, [00:04:36.09] and can take blunt trauma kinda becomes our life. We twist on people and we strike on people and yet there's a certain attitude that is expected to go along with that. You know it's a don't get mad, get even and learn from it. Because once you get mad and kinda lose that cool and you're right people will work with you anymore or they want to adjust that attitude and help you see the error of your ways in no uncertain terms and it's an interesting theme that runs all the way, all the way through you know, martial arts and pretty much as a matter what school or styles or whatever that's just a universal.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

I've heard some great stories from from some of the older folks about adjusting attitudes within their schools, someone would transfer in from a different school or maybe they were in his as kind as friendly and the mutual benefit of blunt force trauma to each other as you called. And you know, okay it's sparring night and king of the hill sort of thing whatever it was, those folks either had that adjustment or didn't come back.

**Danny Dring:**

True and it doesn't take long. I don't think there's anybody to turn a martial arts studio that doesn't have some, somewhat fond recollections of that guy you know, that suddenly came in and we all get little too ambitious or people get a little carried away, they need to be toned down you know the ethos of the school and the way they conduct their sparring session, that attitude adjustment is a theme that the transcends.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Obviously that the attitude of any individual, part of any group is really part of the kind of overall culture. People come in and they either adapts to it or they don't last long. You know I have been part of letter groups and you can always spot that person comes in and their not gonna last, you know you can usually pick them out. As someone who owns a school, how thoughtful are you of creating that culture or is it something that just seems to happen?

**Danny Dring:**

You know there's a, I believe it's it's two-pronged. Most schools reflect that attitude and the culture of the instructor. It just sort of happens but it also just sort happens because of the way the leadership in the gym chooses to nurture and develop the students. You know I mean discipline gyms, there's there's, I mean I've boxed, I've kickboxed, do MMA but I'm still so very well grounded in the traditional, in the traditional arts and so, there's a certain discipline that and



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yet having cross trained and worked out tons and tons of different, different people in different environments and it's always interesting to me to have the environment that your training in be the boxing team or kickboxing gym and MMA gym or BJJ gym or a traditional martial art type setting, tae kwon do or karate or you know whatever, name your flavor. Ultimately, it's going to reflect the value of the leadership. Is there a disciplined approach? Is it a trash talking approach? You know, been in gyms for then you came in and it's game on it was a war. It was about building people up it was more about beating people down and then there's other gyms were there certainly that but it was more about building people up and there was the occasional beat down but it was it was just a different attitude. So how an instructor chooses to run the gym, how leadership chooses to run the gym is is reflected throughout students. You know still saying there's no such things bad students, only bad instructors and well that may not be 100% true it's kind of been the guide for me personally inside my gym. I've come across a few bad students of martial arts, I think you gotta be really careful because [00:10:16.23] hide behind so if you kinda keep that as like there's no such thing as bad students only bad instructor's then that makes you work to be the best instructor you can be.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

How have you changed as an instructor over the years?

### **Danny Dring:**

Awesome question, you know the biggest change was in the beginning the only person that I was truly passionate about teaching was myself. It got into the as a young man, I got in the martial arts and then just prior to going to college, well I trained a little bit when I was seven years old with my father but at that time the only schools across town. So his hours changed at his job in and we we were unable to continue, but I got a taste I got to train for I don't know maybe six, eight months I don't even think we trained a full year but it sparked an interest in and it was something that will come back to me and then grown-up, I mean, you know you used to know what season it was by the sports play, you know what I mean, it was football in the fall and basketball in the winter, track in the spring and baseball in the summer then you knew pretty much what season it was about the sport you are playing. But eventually found my way back into the martial arts and then finished up my college career I was teaching, I mean I was teaching the way to school and then I bought the school that I was teaching at and I've been in business ever since. In the beginning it was to be able to train as much as I felt like I need, always felt like I've got potential I just have to work really., really hard to develop it and I wouldn't say I was, I mean didn't come from the deep end of the gene pool in terms of the fast twitch muscle fiber you know, I wasn't, I wasn't that big and wasn't necessarily that strong, wasn't necessarily that fast, but I had the potential and I had a good work ethic you know what I mean. My deal was my success in competition and training various arts was I'll train when you sleep. You know I'll get up early and I'll be at the gym first, I'll get up early the morning to train, I'll be there at noon, I'll be there in the evening and you know when everybody else has left, I'll





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be over there get some extra squat kicks and I'm gonna be knocking out some extra work, extra rounds on the bag or you know, doing whatever. So my motivation when I first started teaching was, that was how that was the only way I figured I could get enough mat time in was to be teaching and I'm a big believer that when you're teaching others you probably teaching yourself more than you'll ever teach anybody else cause going over the fundamentals, you're picking out the details you're working on. You now I tell everybody and I still maintain this as a testament that I want my instructors to do this and that's every class that I teach. Whether I'm teaching a seminar in Manchester, New Hampshire or whether I'm teaching a private lesson in Little Rock, Arkansas wherever I'm at, every time I teach at least one person should get better and that's me. Because if I'm not teaching, if I don't believe in what I'm teaching strongly enough that I want to get better at it then how my going get anybody else better? You know if you're not passionate about what you're, the material you're presenting, if you don't believe that to be important and if that's not motivation enough to want to get better at it how you can motivate anybody else? You know so, I tell my instructors at it is kind of a, kind of a selfish thing but it is also very true. If you're not motivated to get better at the material you're presenting and you're not gonna get anybody else better either. Just not gonna be that strong. As far as the biggest change is that after you know, a lot more years at the instruction that I almost want to admit out loud over the air, you get to see how to guide and how important it is to be able to guide people's careers and being able you know, to have the benefit of vision of being able to take somebody from point A to point B, Point be to point C, the overview and after a while it's not that I still don't want to continue to improve [00:15:37.13] its fundamentally you know when you're through improving, your through. So I still want to continue to grow in my personal martial arts journey but now I think that's taken a little bit of the back seat to guiding, guiding others in their martial art journey. It kinda realize you can beat a lot of things but you can't beat father time. So use it to your advantage and I'm working to be the instructor's instructor, the black belts' black belt, not just inside my gym but with other people that I work with and help out in various organizations I belong to, the different the different people that I work with. So I hope that kinda covered those bases for you. [00:16:38.12]

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

It does. So here we are, we can clearly see your passion for teaching. You very quickly talked about how you got into it that you were training somewhere you bought the gym. So I wanna go back, I wanna unpack that because we don't really talk about how you got started in martial arts, I mean we talked about your your first foray but at some point, something happened you started training again and you gain that passion that led you to buy a gym. So can we go back to that point in time and how that happened?

**Danny Dring:**

Sure. That they started in taekwondo, there's that my first gym, the very first school that I trained at was a taekwondo school, and I had a little bit of an interest you know, I've always had an



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interest in boxing. Boxing gyms weren't as prevalent, I mean you know there's a, it's a lot easier to find a taekwondo school than it was a, even back then there wasn't like a neighborhood boxing gym on every corner [00:18:01.14] date myself back in the late 70s when necessarily like there was a martial arts school in the gym but there were few and there was a school that wasn't too far that far from me that I went and started training at. Because proxemics I mean that's what it was, I didn't and I never, you know I didn't join the martial arts to be a stylist, joined the martial arts to get in better shape and learn how to defend myself but it's funny that journey, you know you get in and get involved in that led me the competition, point tournaments and then kickboxing and you know, it is been a crazy ride and then all these years later on I'm kinda back to where I started from, I want to be in better shape and I want be able to defend myself, you know it's kinda funny it kinda goes a full circle. But yeah you know I didn't know you know when you first gotta know, looking back and I didn't know tae kwon do from you know, Shotokan, shorin ryu from goju ryu, from kempo, you know you have no idea at least I did at the beginning, I had no idea that some different kind [00:19:23.01] there's tons and tons and tons of martial arts out there and so it wasn't about to me it wasn't about style, it was about self-defense. And not be in better shape than learning how to defend myself in and you know just training. And then after I got into it and then, I lived at Waco, Texas went to school Baylor University then in Waco for a couple years and while I was there, trained in Shotokan and did a little bit of tae kwon do when I came back to Arkansas like you know between semesters or in summer break and then were training Shotokan when I was in Texas. So, when I came back to finish my college career at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and [00:20:16.10] went my way to school, teaching tae kwon do and earned my black belt and started teaching at the gym, and [00:20:36.09] to school it is funny because when I first came back I was at the gym so much of his like a novelist, you know it was a fitness center, had a novelist one side [00:20:51.04] taekwondo school on the other and I started just at the gym so much as start as a novelist and a fitness instructor, weightlifting and working on that side of it just cause I'm at the gym so much training all the time is like you know, I ended up getting a job that we need to put this get the work and then as I've got hired and also start taking some classes as he stands there all the time and became an assistant instructor and became the full-time instructor. And then I was worked up late one semester off, I was going school school year round pretty much as working full time at the gym, I was going to school carrying a full school student load and then I was competing you know, I was traveling around, I was fighting in the tournament circuit in the state and regionally right off on summer school session just I took a kick boxing match and fought a real PKA series is my debut, my debut kick boxing match which I don't really recommend fighting on national TV for the first time to step in the ring, looking back at it. You know, young and dumb but it was, it was an event that got me motivated to learn more about kickboxing and about fighting general so more than just you know, the point stuff. So that was yes, that was how I pretty much got going and at that foray into kickboxing, it is interesting first met Joe Lewis, I'm now currently eight degree in taekwondo and I had pretty good run. I mean, I was five-time open circuit state champion here in Arkansas in a forms or fighting, I was a four-time national champion in the United States taekwondo Federation. There was two years [00:23:08.19] one based out of Colorado, [00:23:13.13] Chuck Sariff's group and then there was



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another one based here in Arkansas, that was starred by guy named Jimbo [00:23:21.03] Scott McNealy [00:23:29.07] we had tournament circuit you know I mean, these were when you said you we're champion and wouldn't just go on and fighting and winning in one tournament it was you know you competed in tournaments all year long and you get begot points for second and third whoever had the most points at the end of the year was the, was the crowned champion for that year. And in the men's third and fourth degree black belt I was a fourth degree blackbelt for five years, I was national champion four years and missed it by two points one year and it still [00:24:07.20] me but had a pretty good run in the USTF. Same thing with the open circuit you know you competed tournaments all year long and then you know crowned champion at the end. I kick box in there, I competed at internationally and was on IPF USA team, I fought in Athens, Greece in 1987 which is pretty good. I was team captain of a global tae kwon do Federation USA team, that fought in Moscow, Russia in '93 which was pretty neat. So internationally I've got six gold medals and two silver medals and we hosted some teams rush over here in United States as well so that was interesting. Had a pretty good did a lot of that, my two big mentors as far as kickboxing was Joe Lewis, I first met Joe, I guess still was a blue belt, I mean I was still a kid in college first time I met Joe and then he would come to town to do seminars, I'd go to his seminars. I remember the first time he was coming to town he knew me from some of the seminars, called me up, wanna do seminar at my school and had him in. Really fortunate to get to be influenced by, he is a huge influence in my career. And also Bill Wallace, so I gotta currently eight-degree black belt with bill in the super foot systems and then a 7th degree black belt with Joe, Joe Lewis fighting system. Joe actually you came at a hospice, I tested for the 7th degree, him at hospice right before he passed on brain cancer and I got my 7th degree with him. Also hold the rank of 7th<sup>o</sup> in a Japanese style of jujitsu known as weeping style, it's kind of a family system [00:26:22.20] trained with [00:26:26.14] and got rank from him and then also I have a 4th degree black belt in Brazilian jujitsu and I have a bronze medal, I went to the international Masters and seniors. When I first started training in BJJ I did my first seminar and it was either the end of 90 are beginning and 91, it was right around New Year's I just can't really remember which side a New Year's was, I did a seminar with Royce Gracie and it was almost 3 years first UFC was in 93 so, it was before the first UFC by far and it was difficult to find grappling [00:27:11.03]. You know it was bill, it was joe and Bill cause they both wrestled, you know Bill was the wrestling coach at [00:27:20.19] State University and was a judo player, that's how he blew out his knee. But those guys and Joe was the first person to go Danny what are you gonna do if a big wrestler shoot at your feet? I was like well, I really don't know if know that they yeah them both to have very well-rounded, you know those guys are just incredibly well rounded martial artist to so many levels but got involved with the Brazilian jujitsu from there, just lucky I was just little bit ahead of the curve before they really went as mainstream and got my black belt in Rio de Janeiro in 2001. [00:28:06.07] Tony Manuel and he was [00:28:11.25] black belt and then I was Sigma, was actually representative of Tony at that time wasn't high enough in rank to present the black belts so it was presented to me by [00:28:20.23] pretty cool. And then I also have a black belt by a guy named John Crabb in Shorin Ryu but it's actually an honorary kind a black belt but I'm proud of. John was one of the guys that Joe credited with teaching him how to fight. So describes pretty humble about and doesn't talk too much about it



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but, I know what Joe told me about John and always bragged up on him and I've had the opportunity to train with Mr. Crabb at various camps and clinics. Had been some of the seminars that I've taught and I think it's really a neat thing and an honor just for keeping the Joe's stuff alive so it's more of a black belt for Mr. Crabb that it is a black belt in shorin ryu the way I look at it but he's a fighter. So that's little bit about some of my ranks, and a little bit of my kind of martial art history. I have been blessed to train with some really you know I mean, Joe Louis and Bill Wallace, those guys were my heroes growing up. I mean, you know when I started in the martial arts they were on the cover of all the magazines and they were in the movies and I remember watching you know Bill in the force along with the Chuck Norris and watching, you know Joe and some of his movies and watching those guys fight on TV and then to have them bring me in to teach their black belts is you know, have been truly an honor of mine. I think that's a really a cool thing and it's been great right [00:30:26.17] the styles that I've trained in, it's kinda like Bruce Lee said, out fighting, in fighting, trap and grappling it on the mat, in this mix of styles that have ultimately worked out in the martial arts and martial artists that I've been exposed to it given me the ability to kind of flow through the range of the distance and and you know gut out fighting styles and in fighting styles and grappling styles. Well you came to really get intimate, you tend to learn a lot about a lot of different things. You know and from being fortunate enough to be asked him to teach various camps and clinics in and the seminars and then jump out there training with just some really fantastic martial artists. You cross trained a ton and you end up picking up a lot from a lot of different people that it tends to flesh out your education and good information just transcend style.

#### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

Nice. Now here we are we talking about a list of achievements that would take most people multiple lifetimes and I think if we go back we can we can hear from what you describe during college, working, full school load, training you know whether you are in Arkansas or in Texas obviously, there's a pretty solid work ethic in there so where did that come from?

#### **Danny Dring:**

You know, I've gotta pretty much credit my parents with that, that idea of of you want something you work hard for it. You know, I just kind of that was ethos grown up and being motivated to go get and I am a voracious reader. I always staying motivated and I just believe that if you want something bad enough you go out there and have to get it and so that is a passion. You know, you gotta have a little bit of a a passion for something but the passion without a work ethic is just kind of a pipedream. You know, you got to yeah put it in action and so always felt like, you want it bad enough you get out there and you work for it. So [00:33:11.01] know people tend to, I enjoyed it you now. That's really important too, I enjoy challenging myself, I enjoyed pushing myself and it is funny I've told people that now is my time to kinda trade on that because when I was younger when everybody else was working their business and certainly I work on my business or I still wouldn't be in business you know, all these years later of the teaching





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continuously in the same gym here in central Arkansas for a long time now and that doesn't happen by accident. You don't stay in business if you're not taking care of the students and you're not minding your business but my passion was less about business and more about training and in teaching and getting after it so, now is my time I think to trade on my gym ratness you know what I mean, because I was a constant gym rat, I was training and get after it, working out, pushing in that training volume is pretty much I had find myself in and I got after, and got after it and the try to motivate others to follow along. You know that and in still do to this day, I mean I just had a yeah had a big women's camp, I host every event, I was trying to figure out I guess it's 13-14 years running now that I've had ladies coming in from around and come in and train, come in and work out with me I have the various all schools are affiliated with me and I know like this coming Sunday we've got guys coming in from around the state, and people getting ready that want to go, couple people from out of state that are getting ready to go to BJJ world so will come in and run a yeah do a little bit of the training session till people get ready and so still trying to push people in and train hard. But now as far as the business goes it's my time to cut a trade on that knowledge that gained over a lifetime of of pushing it hard you know, as I said as you get older you kinda, I tell people there's an evolution. You go from player to player coach to coach you know to AD, you become more like the athletic director there's a, I guess in certain progression through that martial art career that you follow and I can tell that I'm still following it but the mean time I'm still trying to maintain some physicality, maintain some fitness and in fact I even wrote a book on dealing with you know, injury you know, along the way of earning eighth degree and this eight degree that seventh degree and that seventh and that fourth. You know, you pushed me say it fast but then the you know, that I had years where I competed every weekend and you know, I fought a lot and competed internationally and like any professional athletes, you know my body is taking its fair share of abuse. And so I, you start saying the things you know, blown, ruptured two discs in my lower back, blew out L4 L5, I've had four hip surgeries including two resurfacing so I've had two knee surgeries I've had, you know, shoulder surgery detached a bicep and I had to go in and reattach bicep and yes clean up my rotator cuff. So, like anything else try to turn make lemonade out of the lemon and I wrote a book that was published by Black belt Magazine called stay in the fight; Martial athletes guide to preventing and overcoming injury, you know with having had both hips resurfaced on a good day I can still hit a full center split. You know I'm still kicking, can still Thai pads, still taking a group of guys to Brazil in June, you know, going down there and do it again doing doing a training camp in Marcio, Brazil which is a city at the north east going and see my coach and taken some people down there to train so with some injuries and surgeries that would've probably taken some people totally off the mats have been able to overcome. And so the book was kind of like you know the formula that I that followed and being able to stay active because you know, it's just part of human conditioning you can get injured, you know I mean. I notice any time I've ever been in doctor's office there were a whole bunch of people in the same waiting room as I was that were nonathletes that were there for the same reason I was in there so and so I didn't do all that stuff you might not have torn down your body. And I'm like well, you know maybe but maybe not. You know lots of people are in there for the same things [00:39:08.01] truly enjoy but then, being able to overcome and get back on the mat I think is that is huge and



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you have to have a holistic approach to being able to do that, I kinda share that formula in the book that I wrote.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

You know, we'll drop that link. We'll get a link for the book and will drop that in the show notes, and for anybody that might be new to the show, [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com).

**Danny Dring:**

Well and I noticed too that kinda neat, century martial arts are they're selling the book I guess a cheap unabashed plug for century but they have the book. It's available on Amazon and it's also available to century.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Yeah, we'll make sure we'll link to that. We've heard a bunch of stories, a bunch of of wanderings and I mean that in a positive way as we talk about your journey through the martial arts from from start to where you are now. And I love the stories. If I asked you what was your favorite story from your time training, what with that story be?

**Danny Dring:**

Oh heavens. You know, so it's a great question but one is not really usually answered. That just because there's just been too many over the years. You know, I've got I said I've been blessed of training with so many, I mean, from I guess sparring Joe Louis to training with Bill to going down to Brazil training down there. It's and I don't have one that just supersedes all others I guess that's a, I think that's a good thing. Because you know, I don't have that one I don't have that just that one just because I've been blessed with so many that I think they all kinda shine on the on the same on the same level. You know, I have laughed and cried and bled, you know. It's amazing to me how the martial arts, I mean you know, it's life. You know there's good times, there's bad times, there's [00:41:57.03] there's a lot of unique characters in the martial arts. The best people I've ever have been in the martial art, some of the craziest people I've ever met in to the martial arts. And I've been blessed with some really really really good times and great training. But it's funny when you asked that question, I don't have just that one particular story that you know, moment that comes to mind and I think it goes to just having done so much training over the years. You know I mean, I can remember prior to going Athens, Greece, [00:42:41.18] Shreveport Louisiana sleeping on a martial arts school floors were getting ready to go, you know having those priceless moments with Joe when he's came to town and we were trying one on one and he would be sharing information. Or flying to Brazil and getting off the plane after being up for 24 hours of traveling and having my instructor go, Danny come one, we're going to the gym and take me straight to the school and proceeding to maul me after you



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know, I'm like delirious and he's all excited to see me so immediately start training. And just have, there so many of those it's like a kaleidoscope of images, but none of them I think there all up there just cause I love them all.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Nice. Now you keep coming back to some of these people in your life that you love, that you respect that have been so influential. But if there was one name you would love to add to that list so when you have a trained with, who would you want to train with?

**Danny Dring:**

You know, I would like to train with Dan Inosanto. I've been real fortunate to have had an opportunity to train with students of his and there's been, I've been real fortunate to have an opportunity to hit tons and tons of seminars, really really good people. But I think you know, Dan Inosanto's one person that I am hoping to get to work out with. I mean that's kind of the the thing that I intend to make happen just so that I can say I got to train with Dan Inosanto. So he's he's one person that immediately comes to mind that I haven't had the opportunity, our paths have not crossed yet. And I hope to rectify that real soon.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

He is absolutely incredible man. I've spoken with some people who have trained with him at length and they just, you know. He's just on a different level than the nearly everyone else that's ever done this.

**Danny Dring:**

Yeah. You know his legacy have been able... What a wonderful legacy in the martial arts and to have accomplish what he's accomplished over the years, the cross training that he's done then and I've been fortunate to have trained with lots of people that have trained with him. I just not yet had that pleasure so that's he's definitely on my list of people that I would like to, that I would like to train with. That's for sure.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

We've heard a lot today about the good the positive things the things that you know, keep you motivated. But if we were to flip it if we were to talk about something on the other end of the spectrum, a low point in your life and how we were able to move through it, because you're a martial artist. What would that story be?

**Danny Dring:**



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I think it's my, dealing with some hip issues. Going through and having my hips replaced, that resurfaced that those were definitely a difficult difficult times because I, just in a lot of pain. You know what I mean, there is especially when you love to train and love to work out and then all of a sudden can't do some of the things that you want to do, you can see the gains that you've kinda get stripped away and dealing with the hip injury, just painful. It's hard to explain. And I let my first hip go, I had a surgery avascular necrosis of the hip in my left hip and that's what cause that one. And so I had according compression surgery were they went in the hollowed out the femoral head and but where necrotic lesion was on the top of the femoral head kinda acted like a cheese grater I mean, it just grated away at the Cartilage and so it ended up bone-on-bone and, while the core decompression surgery probably bought me some, it didn't stop me from having to have it redone, replaced and I was actually part of the clinical trial for [00:48:07.06] medical and I was part of the right medical's clinical trial for the conserved plus metal on metal hip resurfacing procedure. And I flew out to Salem, Oregon and had that surgery done. And then in my right hip, I had femoral acetabular impingement and I end up, like 12 years after my first hip, I had to have my other hip done. So but the first one was I think the scariest. The second one was tough just because I knew how bad it was going to suck. [00:48:54.22] I had better handle, I knew what was can happen, I had a better idea of what was everything that is going on it's kinda the... With the first one it was the great unknown and you not sure what you're gonna be able to do and what you get to be able to... You know, I just didn't know if it was gonna affect my career so that was tough. But I do feel like the martial arts help me with that quite a bit you know and defining the challenge, redefining the fight. You know the fight now but the opponent was the pain and the disease being able to overcome it understanding and learning, educating myself about the body. That's how I you know, trained for the fight got myself in as good a shape as I could be in, you know, going into surgery and then being able to do what I needed to do to give my body the best chance to recover and rehab and continue on. And so that was, but that was a tough time. It's tough when all of a sudden, you're not able to do everything that you wanna do and you don't know if you are gonna be able to get back to it. And I was fortunate, fortunate that I have been able to continue to punch and kick and grapple and I was able to you know get past, get past that not once, but twice. That's where Bill again, my mentors, you know, Bill's has had his hips done one of them he said done twice. Being able to, he was able to give me a lot of positive, a lot of positive support and watching him you know what he's able to do I mean, guys in his 70s and still move remarkably well. You know, just kicks, looking fantastic and it's a true testament to what you can what you can overcome and come through. So he was a big, he was a big supporter in that. You know, it isn't just really in to your martial arts that you're going to draw strength from that sometimes we have to remind ourselves to draw strength, some the things we been able to do, but it's help me out in a lot circumstances besides just physical injury, you know business decisions, interpersonal relationships. There's just a lot of ways that martial arts can give you some quite confidence, give you confidence in yourself and little bit of perseverance and the ability to face yourself, face your fears, face you're challenges and you know grow as an individual and take life's life's obstacles and turn them into challenges and work hard to overcome this. And it's a bitter pill you know, it's funny cause I was writing the book, I wrote the book after my first hip was done on but





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before my second hip, something going back and actually you know me and it's always practicing what you preach and you know you kinda go through those stages of denial and depression and then acceptance and then overcoming and you... It's easy to give out advice and sometimes little more bitter when you have to follow your own advice but being able to recognize that you need to follow your own advice is really important. You know I've failed many times, you stopped because martial arts instructors wore a lot of different hats. And a lot of times you're asked for your opinion and you're asked for your advice and sometimes you just kinda have to stop and go what would I tell somebody else do in these situation you know, and then I probably need to do what I would tell somebody else to do and being able to identify and recognize that is important. Being quick to go see seek help from those that know way more about something than you do, that's another important important thing. There are a lot of little life lessons that we learn as martial artists that e can apply to our everyday affairs and certainly trying to do that throughout my life.

#### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

For sure. What are your goals? What are you looking out, looking forward to? Maybe it's around legacy, maybe it's you know around particular people you talked a lot today about others. We heard a lot about you but in almost everything you said, you were talking about yourself as you related to other people whether they be people you looked up to or people you were teaching. What do you consider, what you think about when you look out over the next however many years of your time training?

#### **Danny Dring:**

You know one of my, to continue to train. My, I've got two weightlifting buddies that we lift couple three times a week, two, three times a week. One is 25 and the other one's 80. Mr. Perry at 80 years of age, I so greatly admire him. You know, I had him do a pull ups wearing a 20-pound weight vest last Thursday. I mean this isn't something that you know sometimes happens, this is this happens like on a regular basis. And we have a rocksteady boxing program that I recently started here, one got certified then we do the rocksteady boxing for Parkinson's in one of the programs that we're running on my gym and Mr. Perry's one of our assistants in the rocksteady program he's a 2nd degree black belt in tae kwon do and he is also a training buddy. You know, I mean comes in and lifts and works out but just. You know so I look at that people like Bill Wallace, I look at Mr. Perry 80 years old, Mr. Perry is 80 and Bill's in his 70s and these guys are still working out. Well that's what I want to continue to do. You know, is to continue to, continue to train, continue work out, you know, anybody that ever follows me you know the thing on like on Facebook you know. I am Danny Dring LBMA I'm be listed on Facebook. But I am a lot it's kinda like groundhog's day because its, you know seminars, camps, clinics, workouts and but a lot of time I sign off with train all. I think all of the... Constantly speak to the benefits of martial arts. You can even talk about it, you can read about it, even watch it on YouTube, but if you want to experience benefits for yourself, you gotta get out there and do I. You know, you



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gotta be able to train on and so helping people I mean, you know, physical fitness is use it or lose it. It's a scary, you know 72 hours after the last workout you're reversed, it's going away, sometimes I think it's about 12 hours after my last work out for me personally but you know, suffice to say if you're not actively engaged. And when it comes to your health I mean, I do a lot of self-defense speeches on the defensive tactics instructor for our Sheriff's Department, I'm a reserve deputy with the Sheriff's Department here. I mean it's kind of my community service. I'm engaged with our Sheriff's Department and I do a lot of speaking for the Sheriff's Department to self-defense and you know, a lot of Martial arts instructors get asked to go around talk about that aspect, but always tell everybody, every time I do a self-defense and assault, you know crime prevention, assault awareness, assault avoidance kind of speech. I tell everybody if you're really interested in self-defense, truly interested in self-defense, in most people in the martial arts arts I tell them you gotta work out. You know what I mean? You're a thousand times more likely to die from a health or stress-related disease than you are somebody jumping on top of you attacking you. I mean, you know it's it's a more scary to think about somebody assaulting you, but having somebody, but the truth is is that you're less likely to be attacked than having some kind health or stress-related disease getting you. So maintaining a sense of health is really important. Then now my legacy getting back to question is gonna be in trying to be that guy not just talking about it but being about it and I wanna continue to be able to work out and continue to teach and you know as I continue to hopefully grow older, that you know, being able to be a coach and the cheerleader for the martial arts, being able to encourage people to train. For me now it's you know, my young guys that are you know, new guys that are just getting into starting their martial art careers, young school owners. I find myself doing more consulting and helping people with their schools and helping to keep guys motivated in that. Now my students become my legacy, you know the guys that I got that out there and they're the ones doing the competing. Right now I have a student, of one of my students is in the ultimate fighter house, young man named Bryce Mitchell is currently on the tough show that's being aired that's on TV right now. I mean, he won his fight last Wednesday night on the tough show. So I think that's pretty cool that I've got, got a student that actually, you know produced a student that's fighting on TV. Another lady that I've had opportunity to train is making her UFC debut, Andrea KGB Lee. Andrea Lee is gonna be fighting in the UFC in Chile this Saturday. Which I think is pretty neat, I've had opportunity to, Andrea came to my women's camp a few years ago, was there when she made her pro debut. I've gone down to Louisiana, she's at Shreveport. And I have had an opportunity to work with her several times, helped trainer and it's really her husband, Donnie is friend of mine that is really neat to see her get to make her UFC debut and looking forward to seeing her fight this Saturday. I've had guys fight all over and so the schools that are you know... And I tell my people all the time, I'm as happy personally, I get just as much enjoyment, I love working with my fighters, but I also like working with people that are just wanted to get going in martial arts that are you know excited about about training, that are just starting the, about starting the journey. I think it's all about helping, helping others and so whether I'm doing that for a new student in my gym or whether the somebody with their journey in getting the school going, that's I think that's just awesome. So that building, building my team,



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building the organization and providing opportunity for others, that's pretty much where I'm at right now my career.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Nice, awesome. Clearly, you're so passionate. I mean, just talking to you, I'm feeling itchy and feeling like I want to go through some kicks. You know, go do some super foot drills. You know, it's just. There are people we have on the show who seem to go through these phases with their relation to martial arts. And as you said full-circle with some of the things going on in your life, with some of the things in martial arts but the thing that that you haven't said at any point is that you've lost your passion or your dedication to your training and that's motivating, that's inspiring and that brings us back to the very beginning that if you're not passionate about what you're teaching you're not passionate about how you're going to benefit from it, nobody else is gonna resonate with that, there not gonna be engaged enough to stick around and learn what you have to offer.

**Danny Dring:**

True. Very true and it's going to be you know, it's simple but it's not necessarily easy. Were all gonna have, we're all gonna get challenged. Leveling, lovingly refer to the secret vitamin that I have to take quite often at this stage of my life. You know, I take a lot of vitamin S. A lot of people asked me what the hell is vitamin S? And I tell them, suck it up. You know. [01:04:41.18] how do you do it? I said I take vitamin S. And they look at me quizzically and I'm like yeah, suck it up. They start laughing but it's not always simple, but that doesn't mean it's easy. Been challenged to recently, I had a heel spurs, I had no idea to stop the pain for when you got a heel spur you walk with a limp and then you walk with a limp and then your back kinda get [01:05:14.13] stop [01:05:17.16] and then your knee hurts. And you know it's amazing how the body doesn't work in isolation. So then it means well, you know spending extra time stretching and you know doing your physical you know again having to practice what you preach and that's a meeting it head on and listening to the body and there's a fine line between you know, I don't think you train with injury you have to learn how to train around them. If I quit training every time I had an injury had never gotten anything done. So being able to and redefining sometimes, my training is more focused than dealing with whatever you know an ache, pain or hurt that I'm suffering at the time you know getting in. And okay I can either whine about my back and I you know, serve a lot of cheese and crackers because I like to serve cheese and crackers when I whine. You know, my back hurts so you know but I don't want to just whine, I also wanted to do something about it. So I try to you know, [01:06:29.22] my gym at 6 o'clock this morning you know just stretching. I have active recovery work out where it's you know just gentle, I think is kind of the yin and yang of life. Sometimes you have to train easily so you can train hard and I was walking around the gym, you know we walked for 20 minutes. we come me and we get on the physio ball, we got on foam roller we stretch, we do hip mobility drills, maybe some for count kicks. You know, some general calisthenics and it's not my most hard-core work



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out of the day but it's one that allows me to do things the rest of the day. You know so that as the day goes on you know, train with little more, little more intensity but I'm a big believer in that concept of active recovery where you're taking care, taking care of the body and which allows me to be able to go after little bit more hard-core later on you know, so that's a discipline in of itself. You know and get out of bed and you feel like you've just been hit across your kidneys with the two by fours, you're walking with a limp or you got this hurt or that hurt. I just talk about anybody that's been involved for any length of time and is just you know, sure my guys never been injured in the martial arts also recently been training real hard you know what I mean? I think, Bill said you know, if you don't limp you aint... It's funny there's tons and tons of people that have done this at any length of time but, kind of like life you know there's a very few people that come out unscathed and nobody makes it out alive so, that's just part of it yeah.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

For sure. If anybody listening wants to find you online, maybe they want to reach out. You talked about how you offer seminars you know maybe so many out there hopefully, more than a few somebodies have been really engaged with what you're saying and they want to know more about you, your book, all that. How would they find you online? Website, social media, what should we put in the show notes.

**Danny Dring:**

Yeah, living defense, [livingdefense.com](http://livingdefense.com) is my school website. Living defense martial arts on Facebook, or Danny Dring LBMA on Facebook. And you know, it's funny, I'm blessed that I do get to travel around the country and do seminars. I guess I'll be in the camps and clinic, I take people, bringing a group of guys to Brazil to train last week of June. It's just up at Terry Dow's martial arts symposium in Manchester. I'll be in St. Pete teaching at Bill Wallace's camp. The first weekend in June, I'll be running a Joe Lewis fighting systems camp that I'm doing in July for kickboxing. We do that prior to the IK International kickboxing federation's world amateur championship generally run a [01:10:09.15] camp. You know, get people get some kickboxing in. From the self-defense like law enforcement defensive tactics to BJJ to you know kickboxing, Thai boxing to you know you name it, all things Martial. Sticks, knives and 45s. I teach civilian carry, concealed, firearms into my martial arts quite frequently. So I try to, that's the benefit of being a gym rat is that at this stage of my career I have a little, little bit to offer in a lot of different subjects. So if anybody's interested, definitely they can reach out and catch me on Facebook Danny Dring LBMA, message me your go to my website there are contact forms there, [livingdefense.com](http://livingdefense.com). Both of those pretty good ways to catch hold of me.

**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Right on. And we always ask I guess for one final thing, as we send you out. What parting words would you give to the folks listening?





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### **Danny Dring:**

You know. Pretty simple I think I've already stated it but I think it's worth saying again. Just train, that engagement martial arts and everybody, I truly believe in the benefits of working out. You know, I've got from Mr. Perry that's 80 years old to kids that are three years old. I've got a guy that is a cardiologist, got his whole family in here working out. I mean, the benefits of the martial arts and they all come from coming to class. You know, I tell everybody their job is to show up, my job is to teach them. I can do a lot of things for them; the martial arts can do a lot of things for everybody out there but it always depended on you showing up. So you know don't just talk about it be about it. You know, get out there and we're not gonna be world champions, we're not all gonna be world beaters and everything else but everybody can enjoy the benefits that you know, going to class can offer. You know, raising that heart rate up, getting your heart rate elevated, getting some deep breaths and and stretching those muscles and barking out a little bit. I just encourage everybody to you now, go to class. Just show up. That's a such a part of martial arts. Again, it's simple but it ain't easy you know I mean. There's so many things in life that can compete for your, for your time and you really have to focus to be able to make it in that I encourage everybody, be consistent. Get out there and work out.

### **Jeremy Lesniak:**

We've spoken a lot over the last few months about the mentality of remaining a student and here with master drink I think we see that exemplified. What happens when you maintain that student, that white belt attitude? Your entire training career, your entire life, you see some pretty amazing accomplishments. You see people grow into wonderful human beings who can share what they've learned with others and honestly, I think that's why I clicked with him so quickly the first time we met. Thank you Master Dring for coming on the show. If you want to check the show notes with links, photos, all kinds of stuff that we talked about today, you can find those over [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). You can check out the products [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com), you can jump on the newsletter list at either site. You can get us on social media we are @whistlekick on Facebook, twitter, Instagram, and a bunch other places. You find these episodes on YouTube, just were all over the place. And if you want to email me directly that's [jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremy@whistlekick.com). I want to thank you for listening today, thanks for everyone who is supporting whistlekick in various ways whether that's sharing these episodes or making a purchase, I appreciate it, we all appreciate it. Because without you we wouldn't be here. That's all I have for today. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day.