

The Road to Becoming a Grand Master

Hi. I would like to introduce myself. I'm a new Grand Master, an 8th Degree Black Belt in American GoJu-Ryu. I've been promoted by such great Grand Masters as John Pachivas, Carl Stone, Ulysses "Pop" Winn, Roy Williams, John Gabriel, and Richie Alford just to name a few. I have co-written 3 books, am the Co-Host of the "Danny & Theresa Zaino's Martial Arts Radio Hour" and the "Martial Arts Success Show" on the Martial Arts Entertainment Radio which I started in 2009 and has become the most popular and listened to radio network of its kind along with the Martial Arts Entertainment Magazine and I am now producing two documentary films "Born to Compete" and the "Warriors Quest".

I know this probably means nothing to you, but the point I am trying to make is I am involved in the Martial Arts community. Shaping and molding it. Taking from it, but mostly giving back. If I were to ask some of my Martial Arts friends what they think about Martial Arts today, they would say that their studios are struggling and hurting financially. That is because somehow the tradition has been lost. Now one wants to put on a silly suit we call gi's and study martial arts history, philosophy, and train for 20 to 30 years just to learn the proper way of performing kicks, punches, and to fall the right way with Judo and Jujitsu techniques. Karate is now becoming a forgotten art. People feel that Kata (Forms), bowing for respect, and learning the history of the style they are studying is a waste of time. Professional Mixed Martial Artists is what everyone is craving. It seems to be what everyone is talking about. Yes, it is impressive to watch on T.V. and the average Joe knows their names and titles. It's as rough as it comes and plenty of people are making a lot of money.

So I say to you, what about the old Grand Master? What is going on with the Martial Arts society today? I know I am just speaking for myself, but frankly I'm a little confused why my young students want to do the MMA and not train with me. I am 49 years old, in decent shape, and have studied all kinds of Martial Arts for the past 35 years. I have studied and trained with a lot of great masters. Personally, I think that Grand Masters should capitalize on this and continue teaching the old style, which I think is called stand up. That is exactly what I intend to do. Spread the word about old school martial arts. It's funny. How did I get the rank that I am at right now? I'll tell you how, and it is the same story for most Grand Masters. I had 30 students as a brown belt at the age of 22. For 10 years straight I had no senior belts at my school. Just me fighting everyone that walked through the door wanting to test my skills. To be truthful, it was a real pain in the backside! Every Tom, Dick, and Harry wanted a piece of me. I got my ass kicked but I kicked a lot of butts as well. I've had both of my biceps (right and left arms) ripped out and rebuilt and my nose has been broken 11 times as well as toes, ribs and teeth. Besides fighting, by being a professional martial arts teacher you had to produce martial arts students teaching little kids, women, and even crazy people turning them into great martial artists. Then you took some of those students to martial arts competitions, kick boxing matches, and to learn all about the politics at the events. For the first 20 years most of my students lost in competition due to lack of competition skills and event politics, but as the years went on I began to figure it all out. Eventually we got better and better which resulted in me producing numerous state, national, and world champions. 45 Black Belts later it is amazing how the different generations of students over the years are different from the ones from the past. Now 35 years later I have my 10 or so Black Belts that love me and out of 10, 5 that still respect me as their teacher. The bottom line is this. Can I fight? That is the whole reason why you study martial arts.

I remember at a karate tournament about 4 or 5 years ago a Grand Master asked me why I write to perfect strangers and talk about martial arts over the internet. He asked me if I knew

who he was. I did. The bottom line was he was thinking of fighting me, but the real reason was he wanted respect for his past accomplishments running one of the top teams in the 80's. The moral is that Grand Masters just want their little bit of respect.

Recently I finally did something I have wanted to do for the past 30 years. I opened up my Karate System to the general public. It is a great martial arts system which has run its course for the past 35 years. If anyone out there wants to learn a traditional old school style of Karate, my organization is one for you.

God Bless you in your Martial Arts Career,

Grand Master Danny T. Zaino