

Transcription

Episode 03 from "Staying in the Game", A Plum Dragon Herbs Podcast Series



WALKING THROUGH FIRE TO MAKE THE STRONGEST DIT DA JOW: FOUNDER'S STORY

The Full Interview with Josh Walker



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Janelle: You're listening to "Staying in the Game, A Plum Dragon Herbs Podcast," where we have conversations about mindset and techniques for staying at the top of your game. I'm your host, Janelle Leatherwood. Joining us today is Josh Walker, whose passion for Chinese medicine and martial arts led him to become the original founder of Plum Dragon Herbs in 2005. He currently works as a software engineer and runs the central U.S. chapter for the Tabimina Balintawak Group, a combative style of martial arts that originated in the Philippines. We're thrilled that he could join us today. Welcome to the show, Josh Walker. How are you today?

Josh: I'm great. How are you doing?

Janelle: Good. I'm hoping that you can give us a little introduction for our listeners.

Josh: Yeah, absolutely. So my name is Josh, I founded Plum Dragon back in...I think our first official year of business was January 2006, was the first like, where the business license was all official and everything. My background is primarily in...academically, I did...my collegiate work, I did undergraduate and graduate work in engineering, but then Plum Dragon became a thing due to my passion in martial arts and Chinese medicine. And so that's kind of where this all started from. At this point, with Lisa running Plum Dragon, I actually spend a lot of my time doing engineering, but I still teach martial arts quite a bit. And I have a number of groups in the central U.S., which is the chapter that I run for my particular lineage.

Janelle: Wow, that's so great. So how did you start Plum Dragon? What was it that led you to the steps to forming that business? Where did it begin?

Josh: Well, so there's a couple of specific things. And one of them is kind of something that is part of my personality. And that is the sense that I was... So I was training with a group of guys and we were doing a bunch of sparring and we were getting injured and whatnot. And I had had some, you know, training in, some various training in Chinese medicine prior to that, and we needed some Jow and I was going out and I was just going to buy some. And then I thought, "Well, why am I going to buy it? I know how to make it. So I might as well make it."

And so I started making it and some of the guys wanted to buy it. And so it kind of just grew. In the beginning it was to really basic formulas and I was making them by the half gallon and the gallon, and they were buying half gallons of it. And then sometime in 2005, I said, "Well, you know, they're buying it, maybe I should, you know, make more of it and see if I can, you know, sell it and make

this turn into something." And so part of it was, you know, that interest in martial arts and herbalism and also the, kind of the necessity of needing that type of thing around.

But then the other part of it, that personality-based thing is, is that here and then one of the other businesses that I actually have started is based a lot on going back one step from where you're at and producing something that people use as opposed to, you know, purchasing it. So there's kind of this how much more rudimentary can we get with an item? The next step back might be like, growing the herbs myself or something. So that's where it all kind of started.

Janelle: So had you had any interest in herbal medicine in general before this point?

Josh: I did. In college, I trained at a northern Shaolin martial arts school. And the guy who ran that place was a...he had a doctorate in Oriental Medicine, he had a doctorate in naturopathy. I think he had like, three or four doctorate degrees. And so that was kind of where it all started. It was all very esoteric, and, you know, it was a lot of like, you know, old school, kind of Chinese martial arts, like, kind of philosophy and training paradigms. But then the other piece of that is, is that, you know, I got my first recipe from there and I made my first liniment from there, and even things that I didn't even know what they were, like I think back and there were patent medications that they sold, like, you know, Four Gentleman's, or I don't even know what it was. You know, I just remember walking into the room and seeing the herbs and the patent formulas and thinking like, "Wow, this is crazy." And that would have been probably two to four years prior to actually getting to the point where I was like, "Well, maybe this is worth a business idea."

Janelle: Right. And now there are some available products that you could have used at that time, like Zheng Gu Shui. Am I saying that right?

Josh: Yes, Zheng Gu Shui.

Janelle: Or Tiger Balm or Tom Bisio's formulas.

Josh: Right. So there was Tiger Balm, there was, I think, Biofreeze was coming out around that time. Zheng Gu Shui and Biofreeze are, you know, like the kind of the Eastern and Western counterparts almost of each other. And the Zheng Gu Shui was something that, you know, people use, because even though it's like, not really that effective of a formula for sports and martial artists' use, it's been around forever and it's a kind of a cheap product, and it's almost just rooted in the Chinese culture, the way that, you know, you might think about

like hamburgers be rooted into American culture. So it's kind of hard to break that stigma and get people to realize, "Well, hey, like, what's this other stuff? Why are these Jows so much more effective?"

Janelle: And why are these formulas better do you think, than some of these existing formulas that there were at the time?

Josh: Yeah, one of the biggest things is, and this is just going to be true even with formulas that don't have as, you know, powerful of herbs in them, is the concentration of the liniment. So Zheng Gu Shui is kind of this, you know, basically it translates as bone setting water, and it really kind of is water. You know, I mean, it's just this kind of this liquidity substance. And so, that's one of the biggest things is, it's just not that strong, it's just not that concentrated, and so you end up having to use a lot of it to get anything done. But then the other piece of that is that the formula itself is very basic and not that a basic formula can't work really well, but it's just kind of this little formula, you know, that got popular.

And the formulas that are used at Plum Dragon, you know, the Ho Family, our Ancestors Advanced brews, just like, these are formulas that have really, really strong herbs in them. And that's kind of the other, you know, piece of this in terms of a variation as well, even the formulas that, you know, some people, maybe they don't want a formula that strong and then there's, you know, other things like the basic Jow or the White Dragon Iron Palm which isn't as strong as the Ancestors, that kind of still fill that purpose with, you know, the added concentration and the added synergy that still make them a lot more effective than something like Zheng Gu Shui without being overly potent for some people.

Janelle: Yeah. And like what I hear a lot of people using is Tiger Balm. That's a huge ointment that is used in martial arts. So how does Plum Dagon Dit Da Jow compare to something like Tiger Balm?

Josh: So Tiger Balm...you know, I mentioned earlier that Zheng Gu Shui and Biofreeze are kind of like the East, West counterparts. And in some ways that's true with Biofreeze and Tiger Balm. Biofreeze is just like, it's just menthol, basically. And it's real popular with, you know, some Western doctors there, "Oh, check this out." But it's the same idea in the sense that Tiger Balm provides this sensation. It provides this sensation to the user of this heat, and you feel it and you think, "Oh, man, that's really doing something because I really feel that heat." But a lot of what you're getting out of that is, you know, Tiger Balm has got some cinnamon oil in it and it's got some camphor and it's got some...you know, I think Tiger Balm red has some pepper in it. And it's got

a couple other things that, you know, they produce this heat and it does probably have a little bit of pain relieving properties, the Tiger Balm itself, but it's not the sort of thing that's...it's not a therapeutic thing. It's really not helping the body take care of that healing process. You know, there's nothing there that really, really amps the body up for that. It's just this kind of feeling that you feel on your skin.

Janelle: Right. Yeah. And that makes sense. And, you know, really, I feel like the concept of Dit Da Jow is just...goes so well with traditional Chinese medicine in general, about healing the body, helping it to facilitate its own healing. And whereas these other products are just more about masking the pain or treating the symptoms.

Josh: Exactly. Feeling this warmth on your skin. And, you know, it's interesting because Ho Family can...it has some really strong stuff and it can provide that same type of warmth to it. But that's not the part that helps your body heal. And so, like, as an example, like the Ancestors Advance is just crazy, crazy, powerful stuff, especially for Iron Palm training and similar things, but related to like the bones and joints and whatnot. And when you put that on, you feel almost nothing. Like there's almost no sensation at all in Ancestors Advanced but it's also, you know, widely accepted by, I don't know, dozens, hundreds of people as like, the strongest liniment that they've used for that type of thing. So it's really like breaking that stigma of, "I feel it so it must be doing something." That, I think that's the hard part.

Janelle: Right. Yeah, I totally see what you're saying, because that's just what people are used to like, you know, the old Ben Gay cooling sensation or the warming sensation. Yeah. So now how do you see trying to get other people to use the Dit Da Jow? Or do you see benefits for other athletes in using Dit Da Jow beyond martial artists?

Josh: Absolutely. I think in martial artists, there's...you know, I used to get so many questions from people. "Well, I do Wing Chun what type of Jow do you recommend?" "I do, you know, Bhagwan. What type of Jow?" You know, "I do this. I do X martial art, what type of Jow?" And my response to that is always kind of along the lines of, "Well, it doesn't really matter what kind of martial art you do, it matters what kind of injuries you're getting," right. And, you know, you can have two people do the same martial art and get wildly different injuries, or you could have two people doing different martial arts and getting the same injuries. It's based on so many little factors, right, how you train, what your body's constitution is, and all these other things.

And so ultimately, what I find is, is that it actually doesn't matter at all, whether we're talking about soccer, or a barefoot running club, or, you know, climbers or martial artists or football players or weightlifters. And I mentioned some of those like barefoot running clubs kind of specific, right, because I've talked to a lot of people over the years that, you know, have found incredible use for it for all of these different things. Like if you're in a sport, if you're in any kind of like physical activity, then there's gonna be some kind of toll on your body. And there's some Dit Da Jow that is useful for, you know, helping you move forward with whatever you're doing,

Janelle: Right. So how do you recommend someone goes about picking the right formula, since there's so many?

Josh: Yeah. So that definitely can be something. They can be a little daunting, especially, you know, with Plum Dragon, we've got, like, hundreds of formulas, not that we sell all of them, but that's why I think there's five or six formulas on the website that, you know, are geared to covering all of those different things. And I think for somebody to really know what's going on, first of all, I think it's important to try stuff. And so, you know, there's like, the buy two get one free. And I think that, you know, once people have an idea of what they wanna try, trying a few of them is a good idea. Now, how do they get an idea of what they want to try? Well, it's gonna depend.

Like if they want to hit like a very specific type of injury that's taken place, then all I need to know is, you know, is how superficial is it? Are we talking about something on the skin? In the muscles? Is it deep in the bone? Is it warm? Is it swollen or inflamed? And some of these different kinds of basic, you know, kind of measurements, I guess, you could say that you can take about the situation will gear you towards what you wanna look at. So, like if you have a really, really bad bruise, you're not gonna be using an Iron Palm Jow because Iron Palm Jow is the White Dragon, the Ancestors Advanced, you know, the Ku Yu Cheong, stuff like that, that's more towards conditioning and it hits more the bones and the tendons.

If you've got, you know, arthritis that you're trying to deal with, or you've got...or you have like a bone bruise or you've pulled something, a tendon, right. Like you have tendinitis. I'm actually dealing with tendinitis in my elbow at the moment. And even for me, I've had to kind of experiment a little bit just to figure out what it was that really works. You know, I've tried, like, hot soaks. I've tried cooling, you know liniments. I've tried some patches, just to try to make some measurements, like some real world measurements and see what's going on here.

And so, you know, that's definitely gonna be necessary aside from, you know, knowing these simple things like how deep is it in the body? Is it muscle, bone, or tendon? You know, is it chronic? And some of these basic questions can help answer it. But then, like I said, people really should do a little bit of experimentation with, and have, you know, a couple few formulas on hand to really decide what's working best for that particular injury.

Janelle: Right. And so let's talk about some of the top sellers like Ho Family, for example. What kind of injuries do you think that is best suited for?

Josh: So a lot of people will shy away from Ho Family on brand new injuries because it's really, really warming. And the tendency is, well, if it's a new injury, then there's probably swelling and inflammation. If the swelling and inflammation is really, really bad, then maybe best to start with something else like Bruise Juice, which is more cooling, and then give it a day or two and then switch over to Ho Family once maybe some of the inflammation's gone away. But Ho Family is really interesting in the sense that it's one of the few formulas that seems to really be effective on fresh injuries that do have some swelling and inflammation.

It's very, very useful for that type of thing. It helps so much with the body's healing process with new inflamed injuries, but it's also really useful for tendon issues. I've been using it actually for the tendinitis in my elbow and it's incredibly useful for that as well. I don't wanna say that there's like a one shot wonder, you know, but if there's anything that's close, it's Ho Family. It's just so good at a myriad of things with a couple...those two items kind of, you know, standing out.

Janelle: Right. Okay. And then you mentioned Ancestors. So the Ancestors Advanced conditioning formula. And I know a lot of people use that for arthritis complaints and what else do you recommend it for?

Josh: So traditionally, it was an Iron Palm conditioning formula. From the traditional TCM perspective, it's a strong blood mover, but it also is useful from the TCM perspective at hitting the liver and the kidneys, which the Chinese say that helps strengthen the bones and sinews. And also it's very dispersing. And so they talk about blocking stagnation in Chinese medicine. Stagnation is the cause of pain and it's the cause of things like arthritis, like...they call it wind damp in the joints. And so Ancestors, aside from being really good for the conditioning, is really, really good for any kind of joint issue. If it's tendon or ligament related, if it's bone related, if it's at the joint, people that have weak bones, people that have bone injuries, people that have kind of more chronic conditions, like you'd mentioned, like arthritis rheumatism, it's really, really

good for that. And it's also slightly cooling, which means that it will tend to not exacerbate inflammation that's very, very bad.

Janelle: Oh, that's interesting. So it has kind of a mix between the warming and the cooling herbs. Is that what you're saying?

Josh: It has some warming herbs in it, but overall, it's slightly cooling in nature. It's actually kind of hard to, you know, achieve that. I would say that two thirds of the herbs that are used in external liniments are warm or hot, and then less than one third are actually cooling, I would say. I mean, I don't have them right in front of me but that would be my guess off the top of my head. And so it's hard to achieve a cooling formula like that. But yeah, in this particular case, the overall temperature kind of of that energetic nature of that formula is to be slightly on the cooling side.

Janelle: Okay. Yeah, and I wanna go back to how these formulas came about in a minute. But, so why don't we talk about maybe Iron Palm formulas that you like?

Josh: So of course I love the Ancestors. It's such an interesting mixture. And like I was saying earlier, like, you don't really experience a lot of sensation from it. There's kind of this, you know, almost out of body experience that you just pound on the bag, you just pound and pound and pound and you walk away and you don't feel it, and you walk away and you're not injured, and you get better and better and better. And it's such a strange feeling. So that one by itself, you know, stands aside, of course. The White Dragon isn't as strong, but what I really like about the White Dragon is it's got this really thick consistency and this incredible smell. The aromas that comes from it is just awesome. And part of that White Dragon, part of the reason it smells like that is because of these traditional herbal combinations that are kind of ground together that create these aromas.

Now an example of that is the Ku Yu Cheong, which is another formula that I really, really like. The Ku Yu Cheong and Hung Gar actually that we have up on the website are very...almost identical formulas and they kind of have this interesting maple syrup aroma to them. And the White Dragon takes that a step further and there's not... I can't even think of what you'd call it but it's kind of just that it's like sweet savory, you know, aroma that comes out of this milky liniment and that for a lot of people is enough to...you know, it's such an interesting kind of like tactile sensation to play with that liniment, that I really like it because of that reason. And so those three liniments, the Ku Yu Chung or Hung Gar or the White Dragon and the Ancestors are really up there for me.

Janelle: That's so great for you to share that with everyone. And I just am so fascinated by how these formulas were passed down through generations and are now, you know, being available, widespread through Plum Dragon. And like how did you come across some of these formulas?

Josh: Wow. Man, there's so many different kinds of avenues. I'll mention really quickly that, you know, there were a number of years where we were receiving formulas from people and we had a translator that...in China that was translating them. And, you know, we were filling. Once we gained like a lot of trust from the community, people were sending formulas, and they were, "Hey, can you fill this?" And a lot of those we needed to have translated. But then at a whole different level, I've worked with a three...over the years I'd worked with pretty closely with three acupuncturists, one in Destin, one in Huntsville, and then also one back here in Denver. And actually have a student also who's doing his doctorate in Chinese medicine.

And I used to go in. You know, I'd spend hours in there every week. And, you know, it was a combination of us working on, you know, kind of theorizing new things and trying to stretch the boundary. And sometimes, you know, we were talking about herbs and other times they would sit me down and they would have me try these different acupuncture treatments. And, you know, it was this really kind of like research and development, this heavy-based, you know, interaction that I had with these acupuncturists and I think, even though I had already had all of the knowledge and understanding, I think it was working with them that gave me a lot of the confidence to go out and start really like digging deep into modifying and creating new formulas, in addition to, you know, all of the kind of the authentic formulas from the past.

Janelle: And we might need to take a step back and just define what Dit Da Jow is for some of our listeners who maybe don't even know what we're talking about.

Josh: Yeah. So Dit Da Jow is hit fall wine or fall hit wine or, you know, however, depending on, you know, which way you wanna say it. But essentially what it is, is it's an alcohol-based liniment that is produced with the purpose of helping to remedy injury to the body. So classically, you know, they say like the hit and the fall as well. If you get hit or if you fall and you injure yourself then you'd use this liniment to heal it. But of course, now it's grown. It's a little bit more widely accepted that it's really just any liniment that you're using for injury. And even though a lot of people will get up in arms, if you call an Iron Palm Liniment a Dit Da Jow, to me, even the Iron Palm Liniments and the training liniments, they all kind of fall under the same umbrella in the sense that

we're actually using the liniment to make sure that the body is just operating as it should be.

Janelle: And how do you recommend a person apply it for, you know, the best benefit that they can get from it?

Josh: So there's a couple different recommendations there. It's, generally, it's massaged into the skin, right? And so you take the dropper or you spray it on or you pour some in or however it comes out of the bottle and you rub it into the skin over the side of the injury. And I always recommend people use a decent massage and you don't wanna be rubbing it so hard that it's, you know, very painful, but you do wanna like really kind of work it into the skin. When I'm doing it I like to rub it hard enough that, you know, the skin kind of pulls apart a little bit and it's able to seep between those pores and that's the main way that it's used. The other way which is really effective is to actually, you know, soak like a gauze pad or something like that with the liniment and then put it over the injury and tape it down so that it's well covered.

And they've done some studies that the ability...like the pores open up and the ability for a liquid to enter the dermal layers of the body increases strongly when it's well covered and the air's kept off of it. And so it can be really, really...you can really deliver a lot of liniment into an injury by covering it and letting it sit for a while.

Janelle: Yeah. I've taken like a little gauze, you know, and put that over an application of it and just kind of soaked the gauze with it and just let that rest on the skin and it does seem to really help get it to penetrate.

Josh: I'll apply three or four droppers, maybe more. I tend to like to be liberal about it. Ultimately, it's so much less money than go, you know, a doctor's visit or something that I like to be a little bit more liberal about it. And I may apply it for dropper after dropper for 10 or 15 minutes.

Janelle: Okay. I know a lot of people have grown up hearing the RICE method of recovery, rest, ice, compression, elevation. And I want you to discuss what is the proper method for athletes who wanna recover from, you know, some kind of swelling or other type of inflammation that you would typically think to ice.

Josh: Yeah. So, man, the whole RICE thing. I mean, the rest is no big deal. The ice part of that and really the compression and elevation, I can't say I agree with either. The rest is great. But the problem with the ice is...you know, and it's funny you mentioned Tom Bisio at the beginning of this and he highlighted an old saying in his book and it's saying is ice is for dead people. And I think that's

great. I love that he said that. The problem with ice is it reduces the blood flow to the area. It congeals fluids. It totally, completely halts the healing process and the reason that some people do it in the West is because they figure, "Well, we can sacrifice that if we reduce some of the inflammation." But the idea is you don't have to sacrifice anything. And so for something that's really strongly inflamed, a more cooling liniment is certainly, you know, germane.

And so whether that be Bruise Juice which is strongly cooling and incredibly moving to the blood is, you know, a great thing to use. There's also like the Three Yellows and the Three Yellows is just three herbs that have been ground up and it's almost like, it has the same action of ice, that cooling action to reduce inflammation, but it doesn't hinder the body's ability to heal. It doesn't hinder the blood flow. It doesn't hinder the fluids moving out. And so those two things are really popular and really good for people to use. Once they've been using one of those two things for a couple of days, then they can move on to a more warming liniment, you know, like for example Ho Family or if it's hitting the bone, you know, White Dragon or something along those lines.

Janelle: Yeah. And the Three Yellows formula, we have that in our formula that's called Herbal Ice. Is that right?

Josh: Yes, basically. Exactly, that's it.

Janelle: In fact, I have to just tell you. So I have four kids, ages 7 to 16, and I've started carrying with me Herbal Ice or Bruise juice, something like that. Whenever we go camping or to the beach or something, I'm always ready, you know, to expect somebody is gonna get hurt. And I have to say I am almost a little bit excited. I know that sounds terrible. But I whip out my Herbal Ice, and I'm like, "Just wait. Just wait." And it works. It's so incredible. My kids have benefited greatly from those for the immediate impact type bruising and stuff like that.

Josh: Right. Yeah. I totally get the excitement there. I've injured myself and been like, "Oh, my god that hurts. Oh, but I'm so excited to use this other thing." So I totally, totally get it.

Janelle: Yeah. And then, you know, I mean, just reading the reviews from other people who are using formulas for, you know, true recovery, it is really incredible how these formulas can get people away from taking the over-the-counter pain pills or even worse, prescription drugs and stuff that have so many side effects.

Josh: Yeah. You know, it's crazy because even things like, you know, ibuprofen or aspirin, I don't like having to take that stuff unless absolutely necessary. And when we start talking about things like, you know, the Herbal Ice formula, Bruise Juice, Ho Family, Ancestors, these sorts of formulas, you rub them in and the pain that makes you wanna take that stuff, the over-the-counter medications goes away. And it's not the same type of thing. Like we were talking earlier with, you know, the Tiger Balm and Zheng Gu Shui and all that, that it's not masking anything. The pain is going away because it's reducing the inflammation or it's returning blood flow. It's helping the body get back to that homeostasis. And so it is. It's really amazing to feel that stuff working.

Janelle: Yeah. Well, Josh, tell us a little bit more about your training and your martial arts practice right now.

Josh: Yeah. So as far as the martial arts is concerned, so I trained in this art called Tabimina Balintawak. And my teachers live in the Philippines. In fact, there's also some blogs that I produced up on YouTube if people wanna watch them. And so what I do is I run the central U.S. chapter for the Tabimina Balintawak group. And I spend a couple, few weeks in the Philippines every year. And then I spend an extra couple weeks training with, you know, some of my peers and my other instructors. And then I have a number of students who trained on a, you know, daily or weekly basis. But that particular art, while being what I would consider the unique art of its kind, comes with its own, you know, sets of bruises and scrapes and whatever.

And so, it's funny, you know, thinking back. I used to think that, you know, doing Iron Palm for, you know, years and years meant that your hands just kind of became impervious, and anybody who thinks that hasn't really trained hard, you know, like, with a stick or another kind of weapon in their hand. And so there was a time in my training where I think everybody kind of goes through this at a certain point early on, but there was a time in my training, where when I was trying to understand the movements and do them quickly and rapidly and under a lot of pressure, I would hit my hands. You know, I'd hit my own, you know, wrist or I'd hit my knuckles or arm or something. And I got a whole bunch of bruises and stuff from that and there was a good learning experience, but it was actually the Jow that kind of kept me...was able to keep me training, you know, on a daily basis like when I'm in the Philippines training three, four, five, six hours a day for two weeks straight. So yeah,

Janelle: Yeah. So what is your daily routine like for training or just for keeping fit?

Josh: Well, so I lift a lot. I lift a lot of weights. I actually took a year and a half off from it. Like I'd actually kind of gotten burned out on it and I kind of, you know, stepped a little bit away from things. In the last six months, I've started getting back into that. And my daily routine is primarily weightlifting. And that's actually where this tendinitis came from. When I'm lifting really, really heavy, the...and actually to back up a second, the reason I lift heavy, I find that actually, it's an incredible way to maintain my waistline actually. But the other piece of it is, is that the same muscles that you use for heavy lifting are the same type of muscle fibers that tend to be used for plyometric movements where, you know, these springing like, fast explosive springing movements. And so my feeling is that lifting can be useful as a supplement to my martial arts because I'm using those same types of muscles.

But yeah, right now, my daily routine is, you know, a lot of different types of lifting, both in the kind of in the power lifting spectrum, which is heavy, heavy weight, low, low reps, as well as the more the hypertrophy type of lifting, which is lower weight than, you know, a little bit lower weight and quite a few more reps. So, that's a daily routine that I spend...you know, with my students, I'm probably spending, I don't know, five, six, seven hours a week doing like very specific Balintawak training with them.

Janelle: Now, have you written any books on the...I'm gonna say it wrong, Balintawak training? I know you've done Iron Palm.

Josh: Yeah. So I don't have any books specifically on Balintawak. However, it's interesting you would ask that. Sir Bob, the GM that lives in the Philippines, he's the founder of the art. His last name is Tabimina and it's Tabimina Balintawak. He's kind of asked me to help put together a book. And so I have actually some interviews that I've done with him and his eldest son, Flint, and I'm writing some material in there about the philosophies and con...kind of like the metaphysics of the art. And there's not a lot in there specifically about the training because the training itself, there's a conditioning element, of course, that comes along with the training, but we always, always train one on one in private sessions. And the reason for that is because I'm trying to provide a stimulus for my students that they can't get from either by training, you know, by themselves or by training with another student.

And so the book does kind of encompass or it will encompass some of the ideas behind training. It won't go into specific training routines, not because they're all secret or anything like that, just that it doesn't make...some of that stuff won't make sense in a book because it has to be expressed directly from, you know, teacher to student. But, yes, the book will have all kinds of different, you know,

philosophies and, you know, cover lots of different concepts and ideas about the art.

Janelle: That's great. Yeah, let us know when that's available. And when I post the show notes for this podcast, I can give links to the videos that you were talking about and some of the books that you've already published on Iron Palm training.

Josh: Okay. Yeah.

Janelle: Do you subscribe to like, any type of philosophy from, I don't know, different mentors that you've experienced in your life? Like how would you describe your life philosophy?

Josh: Well, so there's a couple things that come to mind. One of my philosophies is that I really always just enjoy things that are intense and, kind of, I tend to be intense and passionate about things. And I actually have a friend who's a student of mine, but he said...once he said that he just wanted to be around people who were good at what they did. And so I thought that was so interesting because, you know, I mean, I'm not a fisher, right? I mentioned it, my dad is very into fishing. I don't like fishing at all. But when I see somebody who's good at fishing, if you're good at something, then it's fascinating to watch how you do it. And so there's kind of that passion and intensity there.

There's a few things that I really think are important. And one of those came from my Chinese martial arts training and that is balance. And I love the idea of balance. And, you know, not to throw out silly little quotes out there but, you know, I always hear people say everything in moderation. And my kind of my jab there is, well, but everything isn't moderate, right? So actually a moderate number of things in moderation. And, you know, I think the balance there is really important, the balance between, you know, play and growth and development, of balance between, you know, eating well and not eating well, to a degree, you know, it's like, you've got to, like, let go sometimes. The balance between how hard you do certain things, and how soft you do them and all these different things. And I think that's important.

But I also think with that said, the philosophy that I tend to adopt a lot these days that came a lot from the Balintawak training, is just walking through the fire. And we always say until you've experienced a stimulus, it's totally novel to you and your nervous system does not know how to respond to it. And so I feel like every single thing we do in life, it's like walking through a fire. And once you've walked through that fire, you know what it's like. And I think, you know, whether it's learning the herbs and.. In fact, in a lot of ways, for me, even

getting Plum Dragon up and running was walking through the fire, because I had these people, you know, around that actually didn't really want it to happen.

And I had to just say to myself, "You know what? I don't really care what you think. I'm gonna do this." And so there was actually a lot of strife way back when in doing that. And it was important to do that. You know, I think it was important to have gone through it and understand what that stimulus was and what that experience meant. And I think that that's, you know, kind of makes people into incredibly strong, effective and, you know, useful people to the world.

Janelle: Yeah, that's so great. And how do you coach somebody who's struggling to have that type of mindset of walking into the fire?

Josh: So it's hard because it's one of those sorts of things where you can make...and I'm sure you may have experienced this with your kids, right? I know have that. You can tell somebody all day long, right? You can talk to them all day long but you can't make them do something, right? You can't make them do it. And so when I'm working with my students and I try to keep that idea in mind that, you know, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make them drink type of deal, you know, for me, and the guys in the Philippines, they talk about it, they talk about this idea that I'm about to mention being the blessing.

And so I have some students that come in and they don't want to, you know, do that or they don't...you know, they kind of look at things a little differently. And I push. I push, I apply a lot of pressure. And sometimes in this particular case, it means making them, you know, making sure that they walk away from a session being so frustrated. They just have no idea what happened. And it's like, you've got to get to, you've got to build like this critical mass and then when it explodes, you're either left with somebody who says, "Wow, I, I don't know what happened. I have to get to the bottom of this. I have to figure it out." And then they start walking the fire themselves, or they quit and, and if they quit, then it's better off for both of us because, you know, they're not wasting my time and I'm not wasting their time.

But until I can get them to hit, at least if they're being resistant to walking....some people come in, and they wanna walk through the fire anyway, you know, it doesn't matter. They're ready to go. But for the people who are really resistant to it, it's almost like you need to find that like ground zero, right, that rock bottom. And, you know, kind of like... I know I keep going on with this. But there's this idea, right, that if you're addicted to, say, gambling, I knew somebody who had a daughter who was addicted to gambling and he didn't know what to do. And, you know, she would ask for money. And he didn't want

her to starve or anything but he also didn't want to like, support the gambling habit. And so I had a really kind of conversation with him.

And he basically told me, you know, they have to hit rock bottom, no matter what. You know, things could get bad, but then they get a little bit better and then it can get worse and they get a little bit better. And it will never, ever end. They will never realize that they really, really need help, and really believe it and follow that until they hit what for them is really rock bottom. And once they hit that rock bottom, it's like something snaps in their head and they go, whatever it is, you know, "Oh, I'm on a path to, you know, ending up dead in a gutter one day, or I'm, you know, gonna drink myself to death or somebody is gonna, you know, come," whatever it is. They feel that rock bottom. And then it makes an actual change, right, there's some kind of reaction in their brain.

That means that they end up committing themselves to really, really getting rid of that addiction. And even though, you know, we're talking about an addiction as opposed to just some martial arts training, I think the same principle applies. And that is that if somebody is really resistant to walking that fire, either you have to show them that, hey, that this really isn't what they wanna do and let's go our separate ways. Or you have to push and you have to keep pushing and pushing and pushing until you hit that critical mass. And then they realize, "Oh, I really, really want to like, I want to do this and I want it more than I'm resisting walking through that fire." So, yeah.

Janelle: Right. You know, it's just kind of interesting how people really do have to kind of go through intense moments and pressure to have something better come of themselves through it or, you know, like you said, they might hit rock bottom for a while until they're ready to make that walk.

Josh: Right. Right. I saw a saying once, it was actually like a meme on the internet. And I don't remember exactly how it went. I think it was something like...it was something like, "Hard times create strong men and then strong men create good times, and then good times create weak men. And then weak men create hard times." And so it's like this cycle, you know, this back and forth cycle. And when life is good, we tend to kind of get weak and things kind of fall apart. And then when things fall apart, we have to walk through these, you know, society...like these fires of society, right?

And once we've walked through them, then we kind of start building things, putting everything back together in society and then life is good. And then when it's good...you know, and it's kind of this this funny, kind of this cruel joke from the universe, right, that we've got to kind of go through this cycle. But I think it's, I think that it's really telling, you know, I think that walking through that

fire creates somebody that really can, you know, knows how to be an effective human being in so many different types of ways.

Janelle: Yeah. And then, hopefully, like with each cycle, we're a little bit better than we were, you know, with the first cycle and...

Josh: Yeah, hopefully.

Janelle: Thank you so much for talking with us today.

Josh: I know it's been a long time coming getting to this. So it's exciting to start moving forward with it.

Janelle: Yeah. Well, I know your time is very valuable and you're busy with your career as well as your family and your training. And so we really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us and to talk in depth about the formulas that I've come to love at Plum Dragon. And I'm hoping more and more people will try and see the benefits of them and their own health. And so it's been great talking to you. I really appreciate it.

Josh: Well, thanks. I appreciate it as well. It's always nice to be involved with everything. So it's great.

Janelle: Thank you so much. And thanks to all our listeners for joining us today. For more great tips from Josh Walker, be sure to visit us at plumdragonherbs.com. We will post show notes and ways to connect with Josh. And if you like the show, be sure to leave a comment on our YouTube channel. Until next time.