



# FUNctional Communities

Super Ninja's Life Skills Community Building Program

## Abstract

Helping individuals acquire the skills necessary to be active, engaged, and thriving members of their community through experiential community building athletic activities.

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# FUNctional Communities

## Course Overview

This course is designed to give you the tools necessary to succeed as an individual and as a community member. At the end of this course you will be able to recognize your physical and mental limits and understand how to use certain tools to help you reach beyond those limits and continue to grow. You will be able to communicate effectively with yourself and those around you. You will be able to thrive in your job with basic career skills. Activities will be designed to help increase your enjoyment of life and your community.

## Goals

**Goal** – To enrich our communities by giving individuals the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need to be active and engaged participants of their community.

**Process Objective** – Develop and implement an ongoing life skills course for about 1-2 hrs twice a month to teach young adults the skills necessary to be active and engaged participants in their local community.

**Outcome Objective** – To help improve young adults' lives and their engagement in society in a way that is significant for that individual over the course of a year.

**Goal** – Making schools relevant to students by bringing life into their studies.

**Process Objective** – Use existing resources to create experiential programs that make learning more relevant to the community and individuals within.

**Outcome Objective** – To connect with at least 2 school-related programs in the next year to supplement their programming with experiential components that make their learning more relevant to life outside of school.

## Requirements

Throughout the course there will be several self-evaluation questionnaires as well as several tools that you will be able to test out and find exactly what works for you on the road to success. There will be no grades as this class relies heavily on self-reflection and constructive peer evaluations. You should also be able to develop your own tools for self-development. Each person learns differently and you are the project you get to work on.

## Evaluation

The goal of this course is to give you something that you can take with you as you pursue your passion and purpose in life. At the end of this course you should have several tools at your disposal for performing at your personally highest level and continuously improving. These tools will be your own evaluation, what you take away from this class is up to you to determine. There will also be several questionnaires throughout the course that will help determine your growth and give you constructive feedback on your progress. These include Critical Incident Questionnaires and a life skills assessment that will be filled out by you, your mentor, and your program facilitator.

## Materials

As far as supporting materials are concerned, everything is optional, and you will get out of the optional materials what you put into them. These are here to help you in your journey to self-discovery and success.

- Deborah Tannen – You Just Don't Understand
- Meryl Runion – Power Phrases

# Program Purpose and Mission

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*“I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins unconsciously almost at birth, and is continually shaping the individual’s powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions. Through this unconscious education the individual gradually comes to share in the intellectual and moral resources which humanity has succeeded in getting together. He becomes an inheritor of the funded capital of civilization. The most formal and technical education in the world cannot safely depart from this general process. It can only organize it or differentiate it in some particular direction.” John Dewey*

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From the moment we are born, we are surrounded by community. If we are to become healthy, engaged, and contributing members to our community, we must learn what this means. School has become such that instead of learning to become a part of a community, we learn to focus on knowledge and ideas. As such, many people feel disillusioned by school and don’t see the connection between school and the real world. When this happens, many people choose not to finish school and look for new ways to be successful outside the school system. Fortunately, there are many skills, abilities, and attitudes that employers find to be necessary to be a successful employee, and surprisingly enough, these are all great skills, abilities, and attitudes to have as an engaged community member.

One of the most important skills and abilities necessary to be a contributing member of a community is inclusion. Inclusion takes many forms from learning to be accepting of others to being proactive socially to saying “yes, and” in order to accomplish more as a team than you could as an individual. Super Ninja seeks to be inclusive and find ways to connect the workforce, the school system, and the community. The first place this starts is with the community members who don’t have the financial means to go through schooling long enough to understand the value. Super Ninja programs are designed to give young adults the skills and abilities necessary to be contributing members of society even if they haven’t had the education necessary to get into the workforce.

# Flow of Activities

## 2 Year Plan

- ✦ **Introduction to community and program**
  - » Two meetings will happen with the group being served and the surrounding community to introduce the program and outline the groups future involvement as well as explain roles and expectations for the program directors and the facilitator.
- ✦ **Trust and Values**
  - » The goal for the first one or two sessions is to establish trust among the community and program participants.
  - » As a group, we will identify important values required to participate in program.
  - » We will introduce and explain each of the life skills with real life examples of their importance.
- ✦ **Life and Leadership Skills**
  - » Each follow up session will be designed to instill learning with “homework” in between asking individuals to customize their own set of tools for success in a way that makes sense to them.
- ✦ **Mentoring and Giving back**
  - » We will establish a mentor program so participants can continue giving back to the program and stay in touch with the program as they transition to the real world where they will not have the guaranteed support of this type of group.

## Daily Flow

- ✦ **Introductions** (~20-30mins)
  - » Activity to enhance group dynamics and remind participants of the importance of relationship building in life.
  - » Overview of previous session.
  - » Activity introducing the life and leadership skill/attribute of the day.
- ✦ **Full Value Contract** (~30mins)
  - » Activity reminding participants of their desire and ability to get the full value out of this program.
  - » Activity building trust among participants and the program.
- ✦ **Challenge/Growth Zone** (~15-30mins)
  - » Activity incorporating leadership skill/attribute while demonstrating that everyone learns at their own pace, and that learning can be fun and very valuable.
  - » Activity increasing in difficulty with same purpose as above.
- ✦ **Culminating Activity/Event** (~30mins)
  - » Final Activity that incorporates leadership skill, growth, and relationship building.
- ✦ **Homework** (~5-15mins)
  - » CIQ
  - » Prepare for next session either a handout or a fun tool for remembering the skill learned, and a way to put it into practice over the next couple weeks

# Detailed Outline of Learning

## Life Skills Session Details

### Goal Setting and Reflection

The two most essential life skills this program will strive to teach is the ability to set SMART goals and know what it means to reflect and how to do it well. The better a participant is able to set the right goals, the easier it will become for them to achieve those goals and be more effective within their community. Reflection is the ability to make sense of each moment and the way in which it defines you. Reflection also helps us find a way to grow and be the change we wish to see in the world.

Throughout the program we will incorporate goal setting and reflection into each activity. Each time we will attempt to fine tune each individual's ability to set goals and reflect and give them tools to facilitate these processes. By the end of the program each participant should be confident in their ability to set goals and reflect on their lives.

### Life Skills

The following life skills will be the major topics of this program which we will go over in detail in each session we have together. Many of these skills overlap, but we will attempt to focus on one skill during each session so we can slowly build upon each skill and then put these skills together to make sense of it all at the end of the program. These life skills are listed in the order in which we will focus on each goal as the first few are meant to set the foundation and cover individual skills and abilities. As each individual begins to grow on their own, we will begin to incorporate these skills into their community so they will feel a seamless transition into working with others and being cognizant and aware of their surroundings.

*Vision and Passion*

*Communication*

*Respect*

*Learning to Learn*

*Dealing with Conflict*

*Problem Solving*

*Making Decisions*

*Understanding your Community*

*Getting to Know your Neighbors*

*Communication with Others*

*Problem Solving with Others*

*Making Decisions as a Group*

*Leadership Roles*

*Making Sense of it All*

### Tools for Learning

Each life skill will incorporate several tools that will be used to make learning and reflection easier for each participant. It is the goal of this session for each participant to walk away with much more than just knowledge. Participants will be able to use the tools that have been specifically designed for this course, however, they will be asked to customize each tool for themselves so they feel comfortable and understand how to use it properly. There will also be several times when participants will be asked to create their own tools for success in each life skill to take them one step further towards taking control of their reflection and learning.

## Milestones

### Event #1 – Getting to Know Your Immediate Community

Our first Milestone will be several challenge course initiatives involving low and high stress activities to develop your ability to self-evaluate and understand your effect within the community. This event will occur on a date selected within the first 3 sessions and taking place after 4 months.

### Event #2 – Engaging Your Community

The second milestone will be a major event open to the community that will be created and managed by the group. This event will occur on a date selected within the first 3 sessions after the first event and taking place after 8 months since the start of the program.

Community Conference – different theme each year, but each student will prepare a presentation to engage the community in some way.

### Event #3 – Celebrating Your Involvement

The final milestone of the course will be a community fun day where there will be fun activities and plenty of time to reflect on past events and how you will use what you learned as you leave for better things. This event will occur on a date selected within the first 3 sessions after the second event and taking place after 12 months since the start of the program. This will be a graduation of sorts.

# Assessments

## Critical Incident Questionnaire

The Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) is designed to measure the success of the activities as well as pinpoint areas of potential growth for participants.

## Life Skills Assessment

Demonstrable skills showing growth in the following categories:

### ✦ **Mission & Vision**

- » **Self Awareness** – Are you able to define your mission and vision? Do you know what are the strengths and weaknesses of your mission and vision?
- » **Learning to Learn** – Are you able to identify others' missions and visions? Are you actively seeking improvement to your mission and vision?
- » **Work Ethic & Passion** – Are you constantly applying your mission and vision to everything you do?
- » **Emotional Stability and Control** – Are you in control of your mission and vision or are your feelings and emotions dictating your direction?
- » **Dealing with Conflict** – Do know how to apply your mission and vision to conflict? Can you handle things effectively when there is a conflict in your mission and vision?

### ✦ **Communication**

- » **Self Awareness** – Do you pay attention to how you talk to yourself or others? Can you recognize your communication style and other's communication styles? Are you aware of your own use of body language and the different ways others might interpret your communication?
- » **Learning to Learn** – Are you able to find new ways to communicate and can you assess their effectiveness? Are you actively seeking ways to improve your communication skills?
- » **Work Ethic & Passion** – Are you able and willing to put forth effort into the communication process so that others may understand you? Can you make up for others' lack of effort in the communication process?
- » **Emotional Stability and Control** – Are you able to communicate effectively when your feelings and emotions are affecting you? Do you have the ability to empathize with others?
- » **Dealing with Conflict** – Do you know how to deal with conflict in your communication efforts?

### ✦ **Relationships**

- » **Self Awareness** – Can and do you distinguish your relationship with coworkers, supervisors, friends, and family from one another and do you know what is appropriate behavior for each relationship?
- » **Learning to Learn** – Do you know how to improve your own self efficacy through an understanding of what it means to build and maintain quality relationships? Are you able to continuously improve your relationships?
- » **Work Ethic and Passion** – Are you able to enhance your relationships on a daily basis? Do you make the effort to improve your relationships daily? Do you take your relationships for granted?
- » **Emotional Stability and Control** – Are you able to maintain emotional stability and resiliency within your relationships? Do your feelings and emotions often control your relationships?
- » **Dealing with Conflict** – Are you proactive about dealing with conflict in your relationships? When relationships become difficult, are you able to grow and enhance your relationships?



**✦ Leadership**

- » **Self Awareness** – Do you know the different roles of a leader, your natural leadership style, and your ability to assume different leadership styles or roles as needed?
- » **Learning to Learn** – Are you able to recognize the different types of leadership and define for yourself what are important leadership qualities so you may learn to be a better leader through reflection?
- » **Work Ethic and Passion** – Do you understand what it means to work towards leadership and what sort of effort is needed? Do you actively seek to improve your leadership skills?
- » **Emotional Stability and Control** – Are you able to control your emotions and become more stable and consistent during situations when you need to be a leader?
- » **Dealing with Conflict** – Are you able to foresee conflict among groups you lead? Can you effectively handle conflict when it presents itself? How well do you mitigate conflict?