

Citizen Ninja: Getting Started



"Being an activist doesn't come naturally. It is a set of skills. Some people are soft spoken and sensitive and shy away from confrontation. It can take a while to feel confident to persevere even when feeling beaten."

Mary Baker-Citizen Ninja, Stand Up to Power

I. Personal Assessment: Are you an effective activist?

Below are a series of statements divided into four topics: Emotions, Political Conversations, Activism, and Americanism. Please rate how much each item is LIKE you, using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all like you and 7 is most like you.

Emotions

I am tolerant of opinions which differ from mine.

Not like you				Most Like you		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I speak with confidence on political topics.

Not like you				Most Like you		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I remain unruffled when bullied by an aggressor.

Not like you				Most Like you		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I know how to manage my fears.

Not like you				Most Like you		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I avoid using inflammatory language.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I refocus my frustrations/anger into productive action.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Political Conversations

I seek opportunities to discuss local politics with others.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I don't try to change people's political views.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

My political conversations with others are civil.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I can calmly discuss politics with people whose opinions differ from mine.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I listen attentively before I speak.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

My comments are constructive, not insulting.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Activism

I know my civic rights.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I know pertinent local/state laws.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I pay attention to municipal activity.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I know which issues directly impact my community.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I speak at local council and school board meetings.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I effect positive change in my community.

Not like you Most Like you

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Americanism

I know I have a right to access government business.

Not like you			Most Like you			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I speak out against corruption and ethical wrongdoing.

Not like you			Most Like you			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I encourage others to get involved in local politics.

Not like you			Most Like you			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I believe in a government that is of, by, and for the people.

Not like you			Most Like you			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I value individual freedom and inalienable rights.

Not like you			Most Like you			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I know citizens are the power.

Not like you			Most Like you			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Add up your numbers. Total Score: _____

- A. Score: 24-83
- B. Score: 84-131
- C. Score: 132-168

Results:

- A. Low Effectiveness—S.O.S. You need a lifeline!
- B. Occasional Effectiveness—You feel like you are spinning your wheels. It's time for training!
- C. Consistent Effectiveness—You are an activist. Now it's time to become a Citizen Ninja!

II. What is a Citizen Ninja?

A Citizen Ninja is a person who is jealous of his intrinsic sovereign, independent, and self-determining rights, and whose temperament burns for freedom, truth, and justice. Citizen Ninjas don't wait for others to speak or stand up in their place when something alarms them: they are prepared, discerning, self-reliant, and assertive. They step out of their comfort zone and nimbly challenge powerful entities that disenfranchise the public and reduce their citizen power.

Citizen Ninjas (are the people who respond to community issues.)

Examples:

Citizen Ninjas (pay attention to government business.)

Examples:

Citizen Ninjas (are activists whose objective is to preserve self-government.)

Examples:

III. The Citizen Ninja Way

Citizen Ninja is a metaphor for activists who employ powerful non-traditional techniques to reclaim the power of self-government in the world of politics. Being passionate on a political topic is not enough to be effective. To exert influence, effect change, stand up to entrenched power, expose corruption and unethical practices, and stop government dictates you need to observe the Citizen Ninja way.

Notes on Key Points:

(conviction, consistent participation, communication skills, active v. passive, non-inflammatory, build trust, stick to,

facts, thoughtful messaging, credibility, constructive solutions, strategies/plan, training, civic knowledge, tactics

network, influence, etc.)

IV. FACE the Public Successfully

The Citizen Ninja way encourages a strategic approach to municipal engagement and civil political discourse instead of haphazard, emotional, spur of the moment outbursts. Preparing to speak up to face the public successfully with impact requires you to plan and think about the best approach.

FACE is the primer.

F	_____
A	_____
C	_____
E	_____
P	_____
S	_____

Notes on Key Points:

V. Citizen Ninja Powers

James Madison believed the survival of a self-governing republic required the adoption and adherence to civic virtues. He also stated that without sufficient virtue by the citizenry, a government that could secure liberty or happiness was a “chimerical idea.” The prescription for civic engagement can be articulated using James Madison’s four civic virtues: Civic Knowledge, Self-Restraint, Self-Assertion, and Self-Reliance. All four of these virtues are also powers Citizen Ninja’s wield when engaging the public.

Civic knowledge

Civic knowledge is knowing the pertinent rules and laws, and understanding your civic rights within that framework.

Self-restraint

Self-restraint is discerning environments, situations, people, and issues before engaging.

Self-assertion

Self-assertion is the willingness to step out of your comfort zone to engage in the public square.

Self-reliance

Self-reliance is relying on yourself rather than waiting for someone else to lead.

The Citizen Ninja Way



Citizen Ninjas are motivated by justice and truth and the unwavering belief that we, the people, are sovereign beings who have natural rights—rights that cannot be taken away by any person or government. We have the right to think independently, to determine our own course, and to make choices—good as well as bad ones. If our rights are diminished, we cannot preserve a free and just society where we can publicly deliberate the issues without fear of imprisonment, exclusion, being fired, or being fined.

Mary Baker—Citizen Ninja, Stand Up to Power

I. Manage Emotions

To become a Citizen Ninja, you must learn to regulate your emotions. Reacting to your feelings can control you in negative ways and leave you stumbling and ineffective. Citizen Ninjas channel emotions in positive ways to be more effective in the public square.

Expressing an opinion in friendly surroundings is easier than in the company of strangers. Why? What keeps you from revealing your thoughts to the public?

Exercises:

List your fears:

Personal Reflection:

Recall times when you felt a strong opinion on an issue but avoided revealing your thoughts to a neighbor, a friend, or a family member.

Become Mindful

Instead of allowing fear and anger to control you, calm yourself by “reframing”—redefining—how you think or talk to yourself about what is happening.

Negative inner talk:

Write down what you said to yourself about the event. Be specific.

Positive inner talk:

Reframe your negative inner talk.

II. Zones of Awareness

A Citizen Ninja operates in well-defined zones of awareness. It is difficult to spot opportunities without this mind-set.

Zones



Notes on Key Points:

Condition Green

Condition Yellow

Condition Red

Rest zone

Assess zone

Engage zone

Switching zones

Being deliberate

III. Opportunities to Engage

A Citizen Ninja seeks opportunities for daily engagement and discerns how to take advantage of them.

Exercise:

What are the opportunities that you can take advantage of?

Daily

Monthly

Yearly

IV. Pegging

Pegging is a tactic Citizen Ninjas use to discern an audience's knowledge and bias on a topic we want to talk about.





Notes on Key Points:

Staging effective discourse

Informed people

Uninformed people

Misinformed people

Partisan People

Inform Indirectly

V. Ask a Question

Citizen Ninjas who identify a worthwhile opportunity for engagement, start by asking questions. Asking a question is the best way for a Citizen Ninja to introduce a topic, gauge interest, and expose the opinion of an individual and a small or large group.

Notes on Key Points:

Pick a topic

Be assertive/Inject a secondary topic

Listen

Know your facts

Educate directly or indirectly

Speak to the audience around you

Challenge false claims

Stay civil/professional

VI. Make Statements

Statements (either spoken, written, or visual) are not haphazard speech; they are strategic and intentional and are delivered using a variety of tools and in a variety of venues. There are traditional tools and there are cyber tools which require more technological aptitude. Statements can be one sentence, an entire presentation or article, a video, or images.

Blog	Power Point	Email	Tablet
Video	You Tube	Facebook	Twitter
Buttons	Resolution	Newsletter	Press Release
Signage	Public Comment	Presentation	Smart Phone
Elevator Speech	Postcard	Infographic	Letter
Petition	Radio	Rally	Letter to Editor/ Op Ed

1. Are you more comfortable speaking _____, writing _____ or both _____?
2. Do you prefer to use words _____ or imagery _____ to communicate?
3. Circle which tools you already use and underline the ones you would be willing to try.
4. What would you add to the list?

Notes on Key Points:

Active listening/Pegging

Keep it short

Crowds are opportunities

Images move us

Power of Video

Stick to the facts

VII. Resource Management

Source Material

To be effective in the public square, Citizen Ninjas are equipped with a battery of factual data derived from multiple legitimate sources.

Notes on Key Points

Primary Source/Personal Accounts

Credibility

Secondary Sources

Hearsay, rumors, third party talking points

Author's qualifications and credentials, connections to the subject and organization, motivation,

Selling a product, bias, fact or opinion, authoritative sources, facts from multiple sources ...

Digital Research and Clipping

Citizen Ninjas must have an organized, quick and easy method of capturing and sharing their resources.

Notes on Key Points

Linear vs Hub thinking

Cloud Technology

Google Alerts

Evernote

Citizen Ninja: Stand Up to Power



The British Army had the might to squash the Colonial forces, so to stand up to such power the Minutemen, like the ninja of medieval Japan, broke the rules to their advantage. They invented guerilla warfare—espionage, ambushes, and hand-to-hand combat. As with the Japanese ninja, be inspired by Minutemen fighters who defeated the highly organized, confident, and well-funded seat of entrenched power! The Citizen Ninja way uses the weapons of ideas, robust debate, respect, and tolerance to stand up to power rather than the all-too-typical tactics of bullying and prejudice to cow opposition.

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I. The Power of Words

To Citizen Ninjas, words are a mighty tool for communication. Words are powerful, whether used for ill or good. To stay the course, learn to recognize when people (strange or familiar), organizations, and elected public servants and staff manipulate language to persuade the public to agree with their agenda.

Manipulated Language

Notes on Key Topics:

Warm and Fuzzy Language

Soft Language

Changing Definitions

Counter Measures

Notes on Key Topics:

Ask for clarity

Pegging

Speak the same language

Adapt

II. False Arguments

False arguments are rooted in fallacies—false-logic errors in reasoning—crafted to win an argument. Citizen Ninjas recognize false-logic arguments so they can neutralize or counter them.

Ad-Hominem

Sharpshooter

Bandwagon

Red Herring

Straw Man

Appeal to Emotion

Counter Measure

Notes on Key Points:

Expose the fallacy. Public exposure of the fallacy strategy discredits the argument or claim and puts you back in control and back on message.

III. Citizen Ninja Rules

Citizen Ninjas follow a set of rules that encourage the purposeful exchange of ideas, robust debate, and respectful and tolerant interactions in the public square.

Bully Tactics

Notes on Key Points:

Saul Alinsky

The Have-Nots vs. the Haves

Twelve Rules

Counter Measures

Notes on Key Points:

Knowledge

Zones

Pegging

Deflection/redirection

Citizen Ninja Rules

Exercise:

Pick a current issue and write down how each rule could be used to effect positive change.

Rule #1—Training Optimizes Success

Rule #2—Effective Activism Inspires Others

Rule #3—Create Credentials

Rule #4—Hold Em' Accountable

Rule #5—Avoid Ruts and Stagnation

Rule #6—Pressure Tactics

Rule #7—Shift Public Opinion

Rule #8—Propose Solutions

IV. Nudging

Nudging is an innocuous psychological push to get you to agree with a desired viewpoint or engage in an action sought by the nudger. Citizen Ninjas know how to recognize, analyze, and question the nudge.

Notes on Key Points:

Show nudging examples from the internet (photos, video, on-line surveys)

Counter Measures

Notes on Key Points:

Respond critically

Expose the nudge

V. Public Workshops

Citizen Ninjas' role in self-government is to participate in public workshops or visioning meetings which are organized by a government agency staff at the behest of elected councils or boards to facilitate public deliberation on upcoming planning, zoning, or ordinance changes.

Setting the Stage

Notes on Key Points:

Early stages

Facilitators/consultants

Goals and tactics

Public Forum Structure

Bullying strategies: Skewed outcomes, hoping for false consensus, ignorant/passive citizens

Counter Measures

Notes on Key Points:

Get a seat at the table early on

Work with other Citizen Ninjas

Plan ahead/prepare statement/strategy

Arrive early

Bring a recording device

Work as a team

Maintain composure/be patient

Follow through

The Citizen Ninja Stakeholder



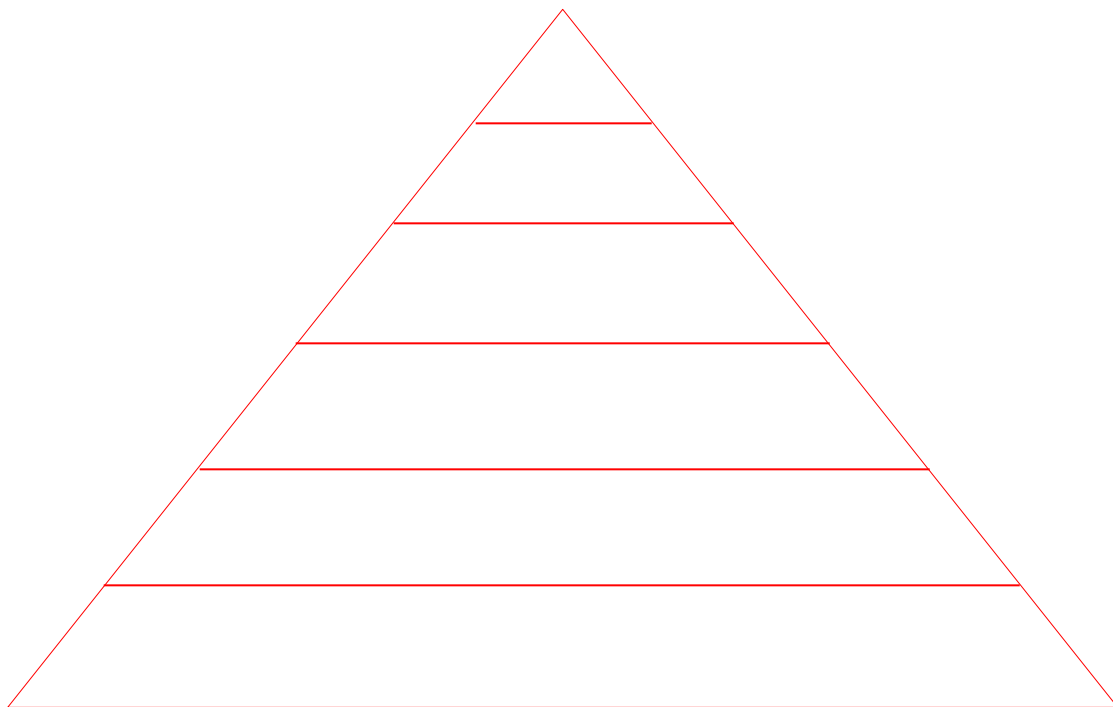
American citizens are endowed with intrinsic sovereign independent and self-determining rights. Supported by our founding and state documents and laws, Citizen Ninjas work to preserve the power of self-government to keep it a representative republic that is of the people, by the people, and for the people. Citizen Ninjas actively engage in the public square, lest we are sidelined by the government agencies and public private partnerships that increasingly dominate political and governmental landscapes.

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I. Govern for Us; Not Over Us

As Citizen Ninjas, we expect our elected public servants to govern *for* us and not *over* us. We make the choice to participate in government, stand up to dominant power, and be political watchdogs because we support and want to protect a representative republic that is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Ruler’s Law ----- People’s Law ----- No Law



Notes on Key Points:

Traditional government

Top down governance

Grassroots

We are the power

Governance by stakeholders

Public Private Partnerships

Citizen Stakeholder

II. Measures of Engagement

Daily life is filled with ways that lead Citizen Ninjas to community engagement and political discourse. Our municipal activity is measured by three different types of engagement: civic, electoral, and political.

Civic

Community volunteering, active membership, volunteering for leadership roles, grassroots

Organizing, elected public servant

Electoral

Vote regularly, register voters, display campaign literature, host a candidate forum, walk

precincts

Political

Post flyers, letters to the editor, participate in a rally, organize a rally, write a resolution, contact
Officials, attend a public meeting, deliver a public comment

III. We Have Rights

The *Constitution of the United States*’ purpose was not to establish a government of men but rather to institute a government of laws that protect our inalienable rights. Those rights are in harmony with a higher divine law—the laws of Nature and Nature’s God. These laws cannot be amended, taken away or new ones be decreed by a monarch or issued by local petty dictators at their own discretion.

First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of _____, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of _____, or of the _____; or the right of the people _____, and to petition the Government for a _____.

Government Transparency

Public Records, Freedom of Information

Transparency laws for public meetings

Transparency laws for board, councils, and commissions

IV. We Are the Power

Fundamentally, our government is *just* when it protects individual and States' rights, and it is *strong* and *healthy* when the public participates. We are the true power! When Citizen Ninjas engage, we are exercising our civic powers to direct and influence the electorate.

Governance by PPP Stakeholders

Silos vs integration, cooperation, collaboration

Governance by Citizen Stakeholders

Citizen Stakeholders demand a seat at the table; early decision making group

Citizen Ninja powers

Claim your power

V. Become One

Citizen Ninjas who make a commitment to be actively engaged are important role models of civic responsibility.

Clear Set of Values

1. *Civic Knowledge*

2. *Self-Restraint*

3. *Self-Assertion*

4. *Self-Reliance*

Lead by Example

Passion

Resilience and Perseverance

Working with Others

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance is your promise to hold the rubric to its standard—liberty and justice for all. When you recite the pledge, you make a promise to engage and exercise your civic rights. Elected officials take an oath: American citizens make a promise.

I

Pledge

Allegiance

To the Flag

Of the United

States of America

And to the Republic for which it stands

One Nation

Under God

Indivisible

With Liberty

And Justice

For all.



Reflections:

What does the pledge mean to you?

What did you learn from this training that will support your efforts to become a Citizen Ninja and exercise your civic duty? How will you use your Citizen Ninja powers to be an effective and strategic activist?

Civic knowledge

Self-restraint

Self-assertion

Self-reliance

We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our Sacred Honor.
—Signers of the Declaration of Independence