

What Is The Fullpower Course Like?

By Erika Leonard, Manager of California Services

Kidpower is an educational charitable organization that, since 1989, has brought "People Safety" education to over 1.2 million children, teenagers, and adults, including those with special needs, from many different cultures - close to home and around the world. For publications; free articles, podcasts and e-newsletter; and information about our services and locations, please visit www.kidpower.org.

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Many people have powerful preconceptions about self-defense training. Some believe that pursuing such training is, by definition, inconsistent with their personal identity as a peaceful person; some believe that it must be scary. These preconceptions are normal and often based in an experience or awareness of a program that was indeed poorly conducted or frightening or that presented physical skills without establishing the overall goal of getting to safety as soon as possible, not "winning."

When preconceptions of any kind prevent people from pursuing accurate information, those preconceptions do them a disservice by interfering with their own growth and development. We find that often the words of our students are most helpful in the process of enabling others to identify their own preconceptions about self defense training and to research options for themselves. Therefore, we'd like to share this e-mail we received two weeks ago:

Dear (Instructor),

Thank you so much for the introductory class for adults Thursday night.

I have already raved about it to several friends. When I initially thought about taking the class, just the thought of raising my voice (!) seemed near impossible, embarrassing and frightening. I also thought there is no way I can "fight" with the man in the padded suit.

The fact that I had such fears about mere role- playing made me think that I really am someone who needs the class. Also, since the birth of my (now 3 year old) son, I've been striving to be a good role model for him by working on my self confidence and assertiveness, overcoming my shyness, and generally standing up more for myself and my son.

I erroneously expected the "fights" with the padded man to be much faster paced, violent, and scarier than they were - you might consider mentioning this in your descriptions of the classes, if you think other prospective students might have the same misconception and not

enroll because of it. I do have some woman friends who were thinking along the same lines I was and became interested in the class after I told them what it was really like.

I first heard about Fullpower/Kidpower when you gave an introductory talk to my homeschooling group a few months ago. I will definitely take a class with my son when he is four. I was so impressed then by the positive approach that you take. I felt the same way about the adult class last Thursday night. I just wanted to say what a wonderful teacher I think you are. And I also have the same feelings about the padded instructor.

I really appreciated the gentle approach you took with us; the fact that you stayed physically close to us, coaching us through the simulations; the gradual introduction to the padded man. What I mean by that is that by first seeing the padded instructor out of his suit, then showing us and explaining his suit and letting us touch it, that he talked to us too, giving us additional encouragement or explanations or reactions to our feelings and questions in adjunct to what you said, you both really de-mystified him and enabled me to see him as a real person, a nice, gentle, caring person, in addition to his role of the harasser or attacker which, frankly, really terrified me when I first walked into the classroom.

I feel like I could take the same class again and learn so much more. Do people sometimes repeat the class? Anyway, I did come away from it feeling so much more confident, and I really had fun too!

My friend and I are both definitely interested in taking a subsequent class. You mentioned some others - weapons, multiple attackers, on the ground, and one other that I can't remember. Can you tell me what all the topics are, and when / where they will be taught?

Thank you very much,
(Name withheld due to Kidpower privacy policies)

And a final note from those of us at Kidpower: Yes, people often take the Introductory Fullpower more than once. If you have any questions about our workshops, please call us at (800) 467-6997 ext. 1#.