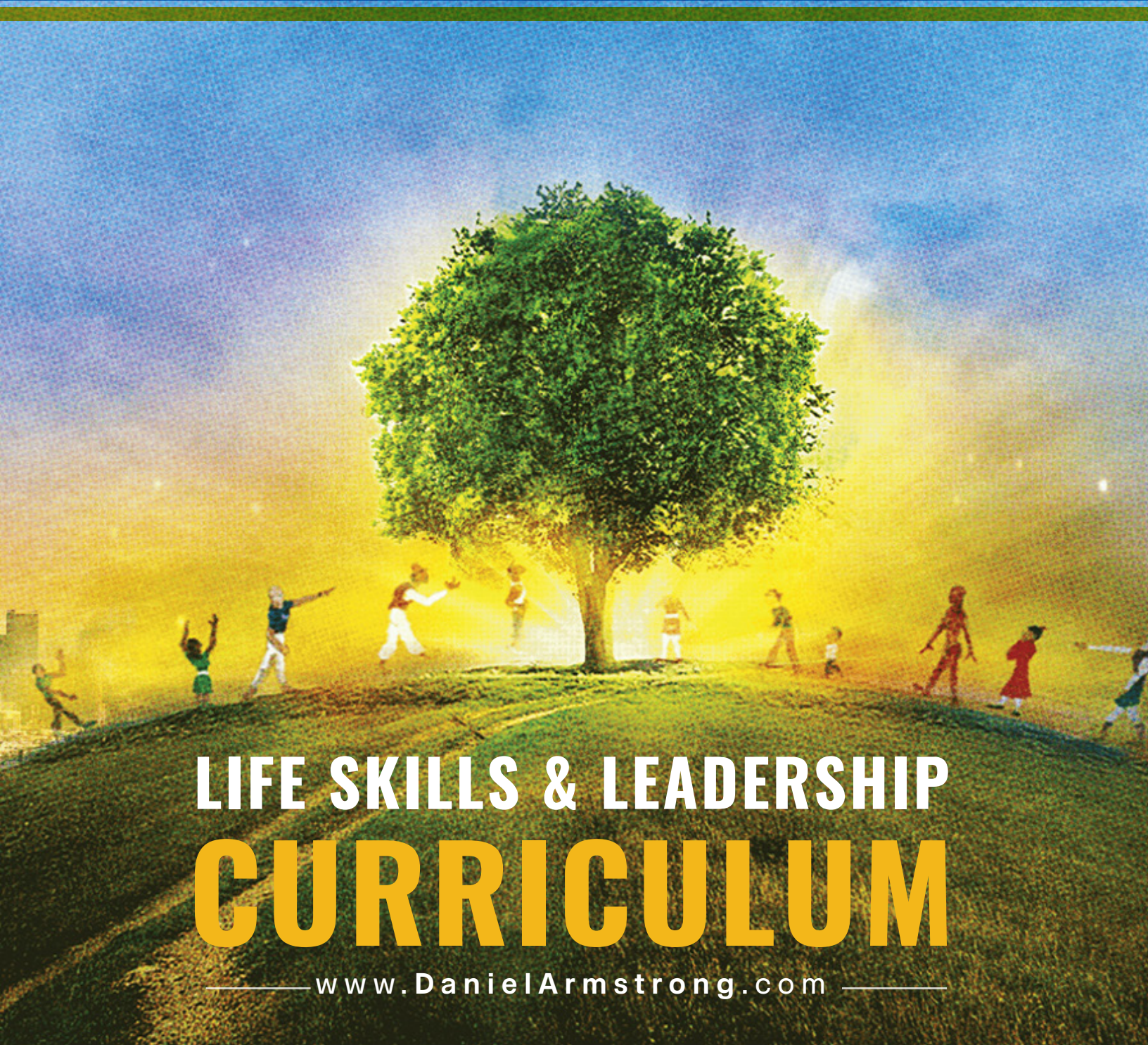
DANIEL ARMSTRONG'S

FIND A TREE®

A Pathway to Your Dreams®



LIFE SKILLS & LEADERSHIP

CURRICULUM

www.DanielArmstrong.com

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Daniel Armstrong®

BEHIND EVERY SUCCESS STORY IS A DREAMER

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Find A Tree curriculum is to provide students with the life skills to make their career dreams a reality. Additionally, the Find A Tree program will produce students who are self-empowered, motivated, proactive, and who take ownership of their education and career. Through the Find A Tree program, students learn how to produce results and not excuses, despite obstacles and challenges they may face. In addition to identifying and pursuing career and academic goals, students learn the following skills: time management, resource building, human relations, and public speaking.

This curriculum is based on Daniel Armstrong's book *How to Live Your Dreams: Find a Tree and Get Started.*

BACKGROUND

Daniel Armstrong worked in Ghana, West Africa, for two years, pursuing business and development projects. While there, he also worked with Ghanaian youth, coaching basketball and teaching them how to launch their own businesses. Two of those youths, twin brothers Jonas and Jonathan Atingbui, dreamed of having a school of their own. However, they had no building or other resources.

Armstrong advised them to "find a tree and start their school there." Soon, Jonas and Jonathan had nearly 100 students coming to their school under a tree. Seeing their success, a businessman in the community gave Jonas and Jonathan a new building he had constructed to use as their school. That is how the Find A Tree program got its name and its inspiration.



THE FIND A TREE PROCESS:

AN OVERVIEW

1 Identify Talents And Interests

Students identify their talents and interests.

2 Determine a Dream

From their list of talents and interests, students determine a dream. Students realize that school can help them to achieve their dream. This understanding changes the student-teacher relationship and motivates the student to want to learn and graduate.

3 Link Academic Subjects to Their Dreams

Teachers must help students bridge the gap between their dreams and academic classes. Teachers should assign reading related to students' dreams, which will help students become motivated to master their academic subjects.

4 Connect the Role of Higher Education to Their Dreams

Students need a road map to their dreams. They must be shown the connection between getting each night's homework done, graduating from high school, attending college, and achieving their goals.

5 Knowledge

Students often have a goal but know nothing about the field in which they hope to work. Doing research on their hoped-for career makes learning relevant. Many students then begin to recognize the relationship between reading, researching, and realizing their dreams.

THE FIND A TREE PROCESS:

AN OVERVIEW

6 Service Projects

Students should be encouraged to get started immediately. Service projects provide practical, hands-on experience related to a student's dream. For example, future doctors may organize an anti-smoking campaign on their campus. Students who dream of being teachers may establish a tutorial program in which they teach their peers or younger students. This experience can motivate students to work hard in all their classes and correct any behavior issues.

7 Life Skills

The Find A Tree Program provides teachers with opportunities to teach life skills such as persistence, planning, and implementing a project, as well as working with others.

8 Mentors

Students meet professionals who work in the area of their dream, learning more about the field and the steps those professionals took to realize their career goals.

9 Life Challenges

Students need a supportive environment and a caring adult with whom they can talk. This process does not require a psychologist, just an adult they trust. Academics are unimportant to students who are in pain. To reverse the dropout rate and low achievement, the human element must be addressed.

IMPLEMENTATION NOTES:

PIONEERS, WATCHERS, AND REBELS

Students will respond to the curriculum at different rates. Some have already thought about these issues; others have not. Some are open to new ideas; others are resistant. Our experience in working with students since the program's inception has shown that they normally fall into the following categories:

Pioneers:

Pioneers are students who are eager to find their tree and get started. Pioneers carry out their assignments.

Watchers:

Watchers are students who are waiting to see if there are any benefits from participating in activities such as researching their dream and working on service projects. Once they realize the tangible benefits that Pioneers are receiving, Watchers begin asking how they can get started as well.

Rebels:

The name says it all. No matter what you say they will not cooperate, initially. However, once a wave of motion begins with the Pioneers and then the Watchers, Rebels will not want to be left out. They will ultimately take steps to "find their tree." Once Rebels realize the benefit of participation, a culture shift will take place in a classroom and the school: achievement becomes cool.

THE FIND A TREE PRINCIPLES

1. Identify what you are passionate about—your interests, talents, and gifts.
2. Determine your dream: find a tree and get started.
3. Explore life.
4. Nurture your dream with knowledge.
5. Empower yourself.
6. Be willing to march into hell.
7. Build the trust of others.
8. Embrace struggle.
9. Sometimes you just have to have faith.
10. Create opportunities through service.
11. Value people.
12. Plan, prioritize, and manage your time.
13. Distinguish yourself with excellence.
14. Understand the process: from a seed to a tree.
15. Tap in to your creative genius.
16. You will achieve what you expect and try for.
17. Lead yourself.
18. Start a Business.
19. Work in Harmony with Universal Law (There Is No Santa Claus).

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

1

Education Plan

Each student will write their plan to improve their overall school performance and graduate. Students should ask their teachers for recommendations on how to improve performance. Students will also develop their personal plan for attending college.

2

Research Paper

Students will write a research paper on a topic related to their dream.

3

Service Learning Project

Students will work individually or in Dream Teams on a service learning project. These projects will embody their dream.

4

Class Participation

There will be reading assignments, discussion questions, and work book assignments.

PART ONE: KNOWLEDGE

MY TALENTS, INTERESTS, AND DREAM

Find A Tree Principles:

Identify What You Are Passionate About—Your Interests, Talents and Gifts
Determine your Dream: Find A Tree and Get Started

Goals:

1. Students will be introduced to the basic ideas of Find A Tree. Students will examine their lives, passions, struggles, and hopes for the future.
2. Students will determine a dream and a reason (purpose) for being in school.
3. Students will understand that having numerous interests and dreams or not knowing one's dream is common; however, they cannot use that as an excuse for inaction. Students will know that they must become proactive in order to uncover their dreams.
4. Students will be ready to take action toward their dreams.

*All readings are from the book *How to Live Your Dreams: Find a Tree and Get Started,* by Daniel Armstrong.

Class 1:

Read: Preface to page 17.

Watch: The Find A Tree video "Hope for American Education." (Running time: 15 minutes 26 seconds). Complete exercises on pages 178–181.

Class 2:

Read: "Identify What You Are Passionate About—Your Interests, Your Talents, and Your Gifts," pages 31–40.

Students share with the class their list of 20 talents and interests, page 180.*

*Students are encouraged to stand in front of the class and share to improve their public speaking skills.

Class 3:

Read: "Determine Your Dream: Find a Tree and Get Started," pages 41–44.

Students share their dreams with the class.

Students select any of their responses from page 180 and share them with the class.

Class 4:

Read: "Explore Life," pages 45–57.

Discuss: "Explore Life" reading.

Questions:

Who would you want to interview to learn more about your dream?

How could you contact that person or a person in that industry?

What would you ask that person?

For students with several areas of interest, what can they begin doing now to explore those interests?

(This class will help those students who say, “But I don’t know my dream!”)

Class 5:

Write: Workbook pages 182-184.

Once students have completed work, select questions from pages 182-184 for group discussion.

Class 6:

If necessary, continue group discussion from pages 182-184.

Write: Visualization and Mission Statement exercises, pages 185- 186 (top).

Students share their Mission Statement with the class.

KNOWLEDGE + ACTION = MY DREAM

FIND A TREE PRINCIPLES:

Nurture Your Dream with Knowledge
Tap into Your Creative Genius

Goals:

1. Students will realize the connection between their academic subjects and their dreams.
2. Students will understand that the more knowledge they have about their field, the more it will help them to make informed decisions about their dreams.
3. Students will learn to write an education plan, which will include specific actions they must take in order to become an "A" student.
4. Students will realize the importance of meeting with their teachers to discuss what they must do to raise their grades.
5. Students will understand that their having knowledge about their future career will impress professionals they may meet in the future.
6. Students will understand that they must overcome obstacles that might prevent them from pursuing their dreams.
7. Student will conduct research on their dreams.

Class 7:

Read: "Nurture Your Dream with Knowledge," pages 58-64.

Write: Research, Information, and Knowledge exercises, page 187 (top).

Discuss: Students will analyze the relationship between their academic classes and their dreams and connect each class to how it will help them pursue their dreams. Students will also discuss the importance of graduating from high school and attending college in realizing their dreams.

RECOMMENDED HOMEWORK ACTIVITIES:

- Search the internet for information about your dream.
- Visit a library and get books on the area of your dream.
- Read newspaper and magazine articles related to your dream.
- Learn key terms and words used in the industry of your dream.
- Research on the internet about colleges with programs or classes in the area of your dream.
- Determine the educational requirements to realize your dream.
- Research which colleges offer courses of study in the area of your dream.
- Find out which college major(s) will prepare you to pursue your dream.
- Go to the websites of colleges with relevant courses of study and review their application process. If appropriate, apply for enrollment.
- List actions you can take in order to improve your grades.
- Ask a teacher for extra credit for writing a paper on your career dream.
- Contact and interview a professional who works in the area of your dream. Find out how they accomplished their dream.
- Write a research paper about your dream. Include a description of the field, educational requirements, and specific steps you will take to achieve this goal.
- Include insights learned from the interview with the professional.

Class 8:

Students report on what they learned about their dreams.

Homework: Students continue to research their dreams.

Class 9:

Students write out responses to the following questions for their education plan.

1. What must I do to earn an “A” in each of my classes?
2. If behind on credits, how many will I need to graduate?
3. What is my strategy to catch up on credits to graduate on time?

The teacher outlines for students the areas they will need to research.

For Example:

1. Key terms in the field of their dream
2. Overall industry knowledge and structure
3. Education requirements
4. Career path
5. Daily activities
6. Questions they would ask a professional who works in the area of their dream

Homework:

Students complete their education plans.
Students determine a topic for their research papers.

Class 10:

Students share with the class what they are learning about their dreams. Students should present in front of the class to work on their public speaking skills. Class members provide feedback on the level of knowledge the presenting student has and his or her public speaking skills.

Students continue to research their dreams.

TIME MANAGEMENT

FIND A TREE PRINCIPLE:

Plan, Prioritize, and Manage Your Time

Goal:

Students will have the tools to effectively manage their time and accomplish their daily and weekly priority tasks.

Class 11:

Read: "Plan, Prioritize, and Manage Your Time," pages 112–120.

Discuss: reading.

Discuss: pages 188–189 ("Sacrifice, Focus, and Priorities").

Students will list their regular activities and the times they do those activities.

Students will list their priorities for the upcoming week and make a sample management schedule for the following week. See pages 197–199.

Homework:

Students are to begin preparing their daily and weekly tasks and priorities that need to be completed.

CHARACTER AND CHALLENGES

FIND A TREE PRINCIPLE:

Build the Trust of Others Embrace Struggle

Goals:

1. Students will understand the importance of character and their ability to build professional relationships.

2. Students will understand the importance of the small things they do, such as keeping their word, in building the trust of others.

3. Students will recognize the inevitability of struggle.

4. Students realize that challenges are learning opportunities that build our character and are not reasons to quit.

Class 12:

Read: "Build the Trust of Others," pages 72-75.

Discuss: "The ultimate measure of a man [or woman] is not where he stands during times of comfort and convenience, but where does he stand during times of challenge and controversy."—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Write: Workbook page 180 ("Character").

Class 13:

Discuss: How will students' characters impact their ability to realize their dreams?

Discuss: Actions that help to build the trust of others.

Discuss: Students share their responses to workbook page 180.

Class 14:

Read: "Embrace Struggle," pages 76–85.

Discuss: The importance of overcoming difficulties and challenges.

Discuss the following quotation:

"The greatness comes, not when things go always good for you, but the greatness comes and you are really tested, when you take some knocks, some disappointments, when sadness comes, because only if you have been in the deepest valley can you ever know how magnificent it is to be on the highest mountain."

—Former U.S. President Richard Nixon

Class 15:

Discussion:

Students will share a struggle or challenge they have faced in their life and the lesson(s) learned from that struggle. Students can also share how they could have handled their challenge differently.

RESULTS...
NOT EXCUSES / I AM RESPONSIBLE

FIND A TREE PRINCIPLE:

Tap into Your Creative Genius Empower Yourself

Goals:

1. Students will recognize that they must be creative, resourceful, and determined when faced with a challenge.

2. Students will know that they are responsible for their success or failure and that blaming others or circumstances beyond their control will not help them achieve their dreams.

Class 16:

Read: "Tap into Your Creative Genius," pages 123-124.

Students will discuss challenges they have faced and how they dealt with past challenges, page 207.

Class 17:

Read: "Empower Yourself," pages 65-67.

Students share the obstacles they expect to face in pursuit of their dreams.

The class will offer suggestions on how to overcome the obstacles.

HUMAN RELATIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

FIND A TREE PRINCIPLE:

Value People

Goals:

1. Students will recognize the value of all people around them.
2. Students will realize strategies to avoid and address conflicts.
3. Students will also learn how to effectively work with people with whom they initially did not feel they could work.

Class 18:

Read: "Value People," pages 100-102.

Discuss:

1. How will effective human relations skills help students in the realization of their dream?
2. Strategies on how to work effectively with a person who a student may not like.

Class 19:

Read: "Darwin Ramirez — From Lock-up to Beverly Hills," pages 103-111.
Discuss the reading.

Discuss: How can you demonstrate the following qualities:
respect, appreciation, interest, honor, humility?

Class 20:

Students are matched with someone in the class with whom they rarely interact. Students must find out something interesting about that person that others would not know.

Students share their findings with the class.

Class 21:

Discuss: Students describe a conflict they had in the past. How could they have handled it better? Also, students share how they effectively used human relations skills to resolve a conflict in the past.

Class 22:

Discuss: Effective strategies to resolve conflicts with:

1) A peer (friend)
2) A peer (enemy)
3) A teacher
4) A parent
5) A work supervisor

SACRIFICE, FOCUS, AND BELIEVE

FIND A TREE PRINCIPLES:

You will Achieve What You Expect and Try For
Sometimes You Just have to Have Faith

Goals:

1. Students will recognize the importance of maintaining their focus and positive thoughts.
2. Students will understand the importance of a positive attitude.

Class 23:

Read: "You Will Achieve What You Expect and Try For," pages 125-129.

Discuss: What thoughts undermine your ability to live your dream?

Discuss strategies to stay focused on one's goal when filled with doubt and faced with obstacles.

Class 24:

Write: Workbook page 189 ("Faith, Obstacles, and Creativity").
Discuss responses.

Class 25:

Read: "Sometimes You Just have to Have Faith," pages 86-94

Discuss:

1. Do you believe that you can live your dream?
2. If not, why not?
3. If you do believe, what specific actions have you taken this past week toward your dream, in addition to attending school?

Class 26:

Read: “Andrea Vaughn—$25 and a Dream of Going to Africa,” pages 95-97.

Discuss:

1. Do your friends and family believe that you can live your dream?
2. How would you respond if they told you that you could not achieve your dream?
3. How will you maintain a positive mindset when others express doubt in your ability to reach your goals?



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Daniel Armstrong earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Columbia University in New York City. Following his graduation, he was a Ford Foundation Fellow in Zimbabwe where he studied youth development for nine months. Armstrong returned to the US to earn his Master of Business Administration and Juris Doctorate in Law degrees from UCLA.

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The Find A Tree Program encourages the student to examine his or her aspirations. By learning the guiding principles presented in the program, the student begins to dream of possibilities, create real life projects, develop responsibility, and take ownership of his or her future endeavors.

—Beverly Silverstein
Teacher and Training Magnet Coordinator
Los Angeles Unified School District

From the perspective of one who has taught in the Los Angeles Unified School District for more than 25 years...Find A Tree is the most effective day-to-day program I've seen in terms of encouraging students to develop meaningful goals and then relating the importance of education to achievement of those goals.

—Randy Fong
Teacher
Los Angeles Unified School District

Find A Tree helps students find themselves, their dream, and connect with school. Find A Tree is the starting line to the greatest goal in life: the achievement of living your dream.

—Angel Jimenez
Find A Tree program graduate
Los Angeles Unified School District

Find A Tree is a structured method that supports students, linking education to their dreams. This program has a very grounding and motivating force to help students master their academic subjects.

—Wanda Szeremeta
Teacher
Los Angeles Unified School District