

Ninja Turtles

Michelangelo is radcool

Mike Guidice

Michelangelo

In my opinion, it's clear who the true leader of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is. If not leader, then hands down the superior teenage turtle anomaly. It is Michelangelo, representing the orange pride of the group.

The obvious selection as to who the leader of the gang is would be Leonardo. Since the TMNT's inception in the mid '90s he's been labeled as the group's battle commander and overall head honcho.

He has a glaring fault as far as I'm concerned though. His superiority complex is something that is detrimental to the team. Being Splinter's "star pupil," he feels like he is the chosen one, and therefore thinks he's better than he really is. Learn some modesty, Leo.

Donatello is the creative mind behind much of the Turtles' combat strategy and weapons. Sure he's nice with designing things, but would you really want him watching your back on the battlefield? I think not.

Rather than use his weapons or brawn, he prefers to be a thinker. This passive-aggressive nature can only be presented as a weakness.

I'm not even going to get into the fact that he is clad in purple.

What legitimate warrior would ever sport purple? He might as well be wearing pink. On that choice of wardrobe alone, you can't help but question his character and overall makeup as a true man—or mutant turtle for that matter.

* Some might even argue the case for Raphael. He has skill with the Sai, I'll give him that, but is inferior in other aspects.

When things aren't going his way he becomes very witty, to an extreme though. His demeanor turns extremely sarcastic which can only aggravate and annoy the hell out of the rest of the turtles. He's selfish and struggles with insecurities that he is in denial about.

This is where I now make the case for who I believe to be the chosen, superior, "turtle in a half-shell,"

Michelangelo. Mike holds it down for all the charismatic and carefree turtles and humans alike. This attitude is a direct reflection on his character and personality.

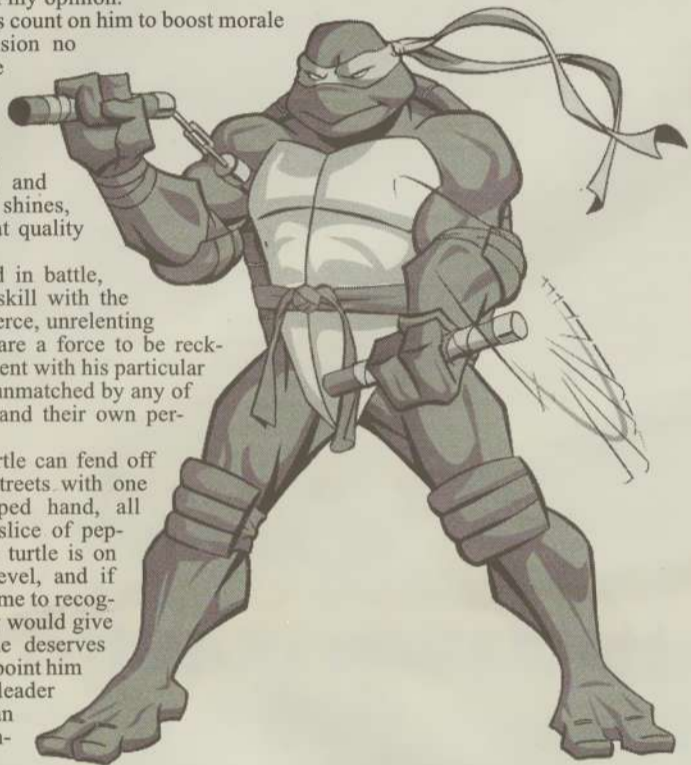
No matter the circumstances, Mike remains cool as the other side of the pillow. Where most would panic, Mike just chills, and chooses to be secure in his position. This attribute is what makes him above and beyond the rest in my opinion.

You can always count on him to boost morale and ease the tension no matter how intense

the situation may be. Under duress is where this cool, calm, and collected turtle shines, and that is a great quality to possess.

When engaged in battle, his unparalleled skill with the nunchakus and fierce, unrelenting attack mentality are a force to be reckoned with. His talent with his particular weapon alone is unmatched by any of the other turtles and their own personal abilities.

What other turtle can fend off the filth of the streets with one nunchakus-equipped hand, all along holding a slice of pepperoni? No other turtle is on Michelangelo's level, and if people took the time to recognize his skill they would give him the props he deserves and ultimately appoint him the prestigious leader of the TMNT. Can I get a "cowabunga, dude"?



Leonardo: turtle with honor

Isalah Creel

Leonardo

Although all four Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are radical, one stands out amongst their ranks as a turtle of power, honor, integrity and ability. He is a turtle of no fear, few words and numerous actions. That turtle is none other than the honorable Leonardo, leader of the Ninja Turtle Clan.

For the sake of continuity amongst these opinions, we must assume that the Ninja Turtles of reference are from the cartoon series which aired from Dec. 10, 1987, through Nov. 2, 1996 (Note: if we were going by the comic book series, I would remind everyone that Leonardo is the one who ultimately decapitates Shredder).

Keeping that in mind, we must also remember that Cam Clarke (voice actor for the 1987 cartoon Leonardo) also did the voice of Liquid Snake of Metal Gear Solid fame, giving Leo badass points through proxy.

His weapons are far and away the best of the four turtles. The Japanese long-sword combines length with speed, versatility, deadliness and shininess, and is vulnerable to blows only from the side. Since Leo is so serious about Bushido, we can assume that he is a follower of not only ninjutsu, but of the teachings of Miyamoto Musashi as evidenced by his use of not one, but *two*, katana simultaneously.

Musashi is heralded as the best swordsman in the history of Japanese sword-fighting, and in some circles he is known as the best swordsman anywhere. It is said that by age 30, he had fought 60 duels and was not once defeated. There were some who thought him to be invincible, and still others who thought him a demon, but one thing is for certain: he wrote his philosophies down so that others could learn his unstoppable fighting ways.

Even though he has the best weapon/style of his compatriots, therein lies his only downfall. In the cartoon (again, the basis of this character analysis) Leo tends to save the cutting ability of his razor sharp blades for robots which would otherwise dull them, while

merely deflecting laser fire at his humanoid enemies (in reality it would prove far more efficient to simply rend his enemies in two with the blade which made the respected place/era that it was).

Leonardo is the most dedicated to Master Splinter, and as such has at his disposal the sage wisdom of that wise old rat. Bare in mind that in the cartoons, Splinter was at one time an honorable (human) ninja master by the name of Hamato Yoshi who upon contacting a rat and some mutants was transformed into that world-renowned wizened old (rat) codger.

While the other turtles go swill sodas and gorge themselves on pizza, both of which Leonardo is fond, Leo can be found either in quiet meditation or boning up on his ninjutsu. He is the only one of the turtles who takes

his training, ability, sensei and mission seriously enough to devote his whole being. All of that is not to say that Leo doesn't kick back from time to time; he only relaxes after the work is done.

Besides which, Leonardo's name sake was one of the most brilliant artist/inventors of all time, and without his ideas, modern marvels like the Turtle Van or the Turtle Blimp would not be possible.

