

# What 'Into the Spider-Verse' can teach us about resilience

February 7 2019, by Nikki Martyn

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Miles Morales (Shameik Moore), Peter Parker (Jake Johnson), and Spider-Man Noir (Nicolas Cage) in 'Spider Man: Into the Spider-Verse.' Credit: Sony Pictures Animation

What can the movie *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* teach us about child development?

All stories and fairy tales contain symbols and archetypes. These are what make [stories universal and relatable to everyone](#). Such symbols and archetypes can represent human conflicts, struggles or experiences we

have or may encounter—such as trauma and loss.

Stories provide us with options for how to deal with the adversity we face. They provide a way of experiencing how things could be resolved and show us that we are not alone in how we feel or experience events.

The film [\*Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse\*](#) helps us to learn the importance of relying on people and fighting through life's adversity to save ourselves and the world.

Resilience is the process of adapting to adversity, the ability to bounce back after difficult experiences throughout life. It helps [children](#) manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty—[think of it as a balancing scale](#), with protective or positive experiences and coping skills on one side and adversity or [negative experiences](#) on the other.

Resilience is evident when the scale tips to the positive experiences even when there is a heavy load on adversity.

*Spider-man: Into the Spider-Verse* shares this message of resilience, frequently encouraging the main character, Miles Morales, to get up and keep fighting. In one scene, Peter Parker tells Miles: "No matter how many hits I take, I always find a way to come back."

The theme of bouncing back and continuing the fight is consistent throughout the film.

As viewers watching the film, we find ourselves rooting for a teenage boy who has newly developed superhero abilities and is struggling to become a hero: Spiderman.

## **Strong together**

The story is about the Spider-heroes throughout the multiverse who come together to help Miles Morales learn how to be a hero, to be himself, to fight through the pain, loss and tragedy.

It's a reminder that we are not on our own and that we need each other; we are stronger together. It reminds us of the importance of connection, relationships and asking for help.



Miles Morales played by Shameik Moore in 'Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse.'  
Credit: Sony Pictures Animation

Relationships help children develop the ability to [monitor, plan and regulate behaviour as well as adapt to changes which help children respond to adversity.](#)

Miles Morales searches for the support of loved ones. [His mom supports him, while reminding him:](#) "Our family doesn't run from things."

Research indicates the [most common factor for children who do well after experiencing a trauma or stressful time is to have the support of at least one loving and committed relationship](#), such as with a parent.

Such relationships are the most important factor in building resilience. They protect children from negative outcomes by providing a loving, personalized response while helping the child understand and manage their feelings.

Important relationships help Miles cope and discover who he is and his capabilities. [Peter's friend Gwen Stacy](#) tells Miles: "I know how hard it is to have to figure this stuff out on your own. It's kind of nice not being the only Spider person around."

"We are probably the only ones who... understand."

[And Uncle Aaron says](#): "You are the best of all of us, Miles."

Relationships help children develop the ability to [monitor, plan and regulate behaviour as well as adapt to changes](#).

This process is a critical aspect of learning to cope with manageable threats. The movie tells us we cannot do that all on our own.

Miles's dad speaks to him through a closed door and says: "I see this...this spark in you. It's amazing, it's why I push you."

But Miles's father also tells Miles the spark is his and whatever he chooses to do with it, he'll be great. Then he tells him: "I love you... You don't have to say it back though."

These are important lessons for children and parents.



Peter Parker serves as Miles Morales's reluctant mentor. Credit: Sony Pictures Animation

When adversity or stress feels overwhelming to the child and the parent is not available, the stress can feel toxic and create an opportunity for more negative outcomes.

This movie is a great reminder that not all stress or adversity is harmful.

## **Takeaway tips**

*Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* provides important tips for helping children develop resilience:

1. **Make connections:** Create a strong family network and teach your child how to be a friend and make friends. This will help deal with stress.
2. **Help your child remember they are not alone** and others may feel

as they do at times. This is important for trusting others and developing empathy.

3. Teach children how to move towards goals: focus on accomplishments rather than failures. Break down the desired outcome into smaller achievable goals and support your child in seeing them through.
4. Nurture a positive self-view and keep things in perspective: in this way, a child learns to trust their ideas, solve problems and make appropriate decisions, to understand past challenges, to build strength to handle future challenges.
5. Look for opportunities for self-discovery: tough times are often when children learn the most about themselves. Help your child look at what they can learn from whatever they are facing.

[The movie ends with a quote from Stan Lee](#): "That person who helps others simply because it should or must be done, and because it is the right thing to do, is indeed, without a doubt, a real superhero."

It's a beautiful message reminding us the importance of [resilience](#) and connection with others. These are two key factors in childhood development that will help our future generations become healthy and productive citizens—and save the world.

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