



SUPERHERO IRL

RESILIENCE

By Dr. Janina Scarlet

Just a reminder that resiliency is the ability to recover or “bounce back” quickly from a stressful, scary, or painful event or situation.

Think about Spider-Man’s origin story. In case you are not familiar with him, Spider-Man (real name Peter Parker) was bitten by a radioactive spider when he was a teenager. He also lost his uncle, who was like a father to him.

As a result of this, Peter gains superpowers, such as “spidey senses” (he is able to see, hear, and sense things more than average humans can), he also has increased strength and is able to create spider webs, allowing him to swing from building to building. This allows Peter to become Spider-Man.

In each loss, there might also be something that we can gain. For example, we might learn that we have certain powers and abilities, we might gain new friends, or gain a life mission.

The top row of the table below shows how Peter Parker both lost and gained something after his uncle was killed. See if you can fill out the rest of the table, one row with another fictional example of your choice, for example using Batman, Harry Potter, Wonder Woman, or any other character; and the last row with your own example.

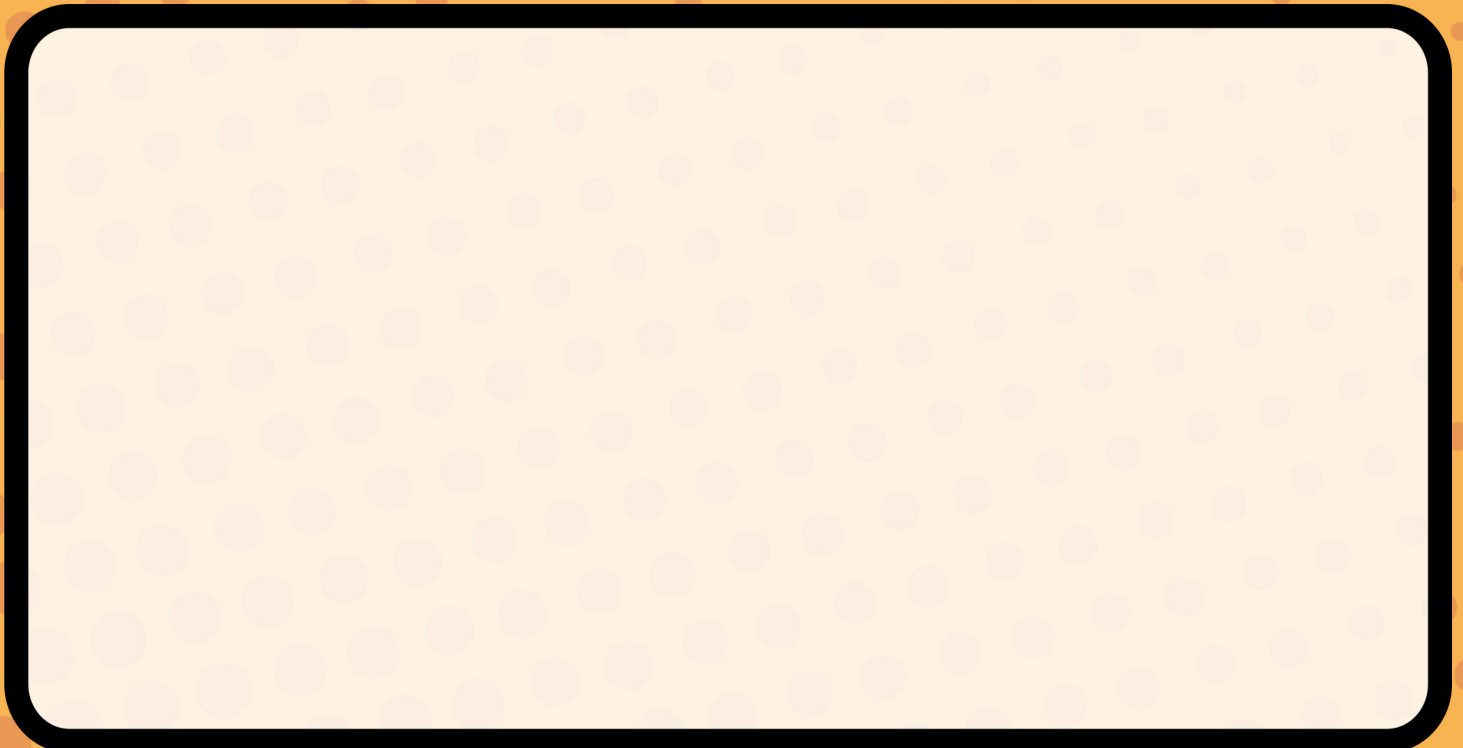
You can type or draw your answers. If you do not feel comfortable writing or drawing your answers, that’s okay. Spend sometime thinking about them instead.

	What the person lost	What they gained
Spider-man	Peter Parker lost his uncle when a mugger killed him	Peter gained a sense of mission. He decided to use his new powers for good in order to help people
Your own fictional example		
Your own real life example		

Based on the table above, how do you think the characters' painful experiences might have contributed to their resilience?



Do you think that resiliency is a learned or teachable strength? Why?



Here are some other strategies to help you build your own sense of resilience:

Reach out to your friends on Zoom, FaceTime, Discord, or through video games.

Build good relationships with your family.

Take the problem or stress one day at a time.
(only handle what you can handle)

Visualize how the future might get better.
(positive forecasting)

Help other people who may be going through tough times – this is your call to be like Batman or Wonder Woman in real life.

Set goals and move toward your goals.

Build a routine in your day, especially during a pandemic.

Journal, write, or paint/draw your experiences.

Avoid unnecessary drama and peer conflict.

Take care of yourself – rest, do things that you find enjoyable, take frequent breaks.

MEET THE DOCTOR

Dr. Janina Scarlet is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, author, and a full-time geek. A Ukrainian-born refugee, she survived Chernobyl radiation and persecution.

She immigrated to the United States at the age of 12 with her family and later, inspired by the *X-Men*, developed Superhero Therapy to help patients with anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Superhero Therapy refers to incorporating popular culture examples into evidence-based therapy to help the client to become the hero of their own journey. Dr. Scarlet is the recipient of the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award by the United Nations Association for her work on Superhero Therapy.

Dr. Scarlet's work has been featured on Yahoo, BBC, NPR, Sunday Times, CNN, CW, ABC, Huffington Post, The New York Times, Forbes, the Nerdist, BuzzFeed, Bleeding Cool, CNET, Mugglenet, LADbible, and many other outlets. She currently works at the Center for Stress and Anxiety Management in San Diego and has authored *Superhero Therapy*, *Harry Potter Therapy*, *Therapy Quest*, *Dark Agents*, *Super-Women*, as well as numerous contributions to *Star Wars Psychology*, *Star Trek Psychology*, *Wonder Woman Psychology*, *Supernatural Psychology* and many other books.

Founded in 2013, SuperheroIRL is a project of Pop Culture Hero Coalition, the first 501c-3 non-profit to use relatable stories from TV, comics, and film, to develop tools for living, including conflict resolution, resilience, empathy, and other crucial mental health skills.

Created by pop-culture-fluent clinical psychologists and educators, our work is in schools, comic cons, children's hospitals – and homes in the age of COVID-19.

www.PopCultureHero.org

For info and requests, please email **info@PopCultureHero.org**

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