

THE SPIDERMAN PRINCIPLE

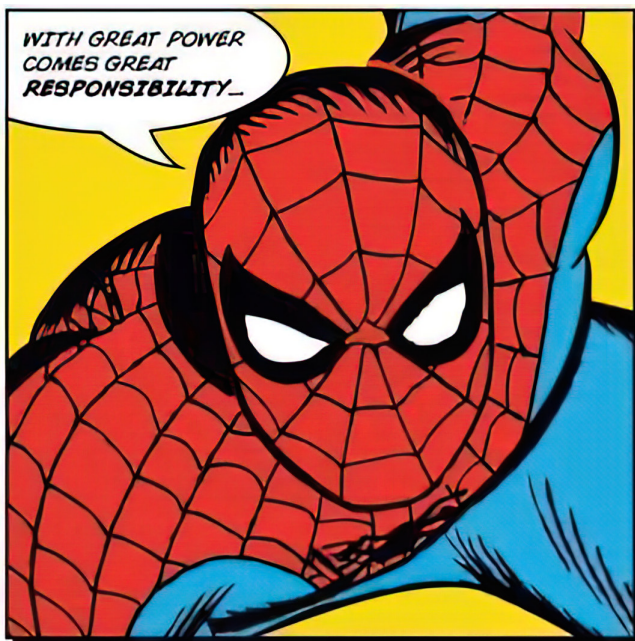
Have you ever imagined that you have a superpower? Ever since I can remember, I wanted to have superpowers, like Spiderman, Superman or other cartoon superheroes.

Have you ever thought about which power you would choose? Would it be to fly? Or, what about becoming invisible? That would be cool. Oh wait, what if you could read people's thoughts!

Having a super-powered memory or being really amazing at soccer would be cool, too. But for me, I always wanted to become invisible. If I was invisible I could sneak into people's houses, go to the cinema without paying, get out of the classroom during tests to check the correct answers and then slip back in, unnoticed... Or, I could listen in while my friends were talking about something, go to the store and take anything I like, or simply disappear when I didn't want to be somewhere.

Of all the superheroes, I think Spiderman has always been my favorite. He has that perfect combination of physical power and being able to create a spider's web, basically in the palm of his hand. I think I've read all of the comic books about Peter Parker, i.e. Spiderman.

But one day, I stumbled upon this picture:



This one sentence really hit me. What did it mean? After reading it a couple of times, it suddenly dawned on me. While I was dreaming about superpowers as an ability to do whatever I wanted, Spiderman was actually saying something totally different. For instance, I was thinking of the superpower to be invisible as a way to take things from people or cheat on tests, but I wasn't thinking about how this would actually be causing harm to myself and to others (e.g. by taking things from them or by getting in the habit of not studying).

Spiderman understood that having superpowers could do harm to himself and others, or it could do a lot of good. This made him aware that with great power comes a great responsibility. And in one of those classic cartoons "aha!" moments, the lightbulb went on in my head. The fact that Spiderman had the power to "do whatever he wanted" and yet he chose to only use his powers to help others and to make the world a better place, is what makes him a superhero. It's not his great strength. It's not even about how much other people like and admire him. The thing that makes Spiderman a hero is one thing only: that he chooses, day in and day out, to use his powers for the good. If that isn't the hardest thing to do, what is?

QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:

1. If you could have a superpower, which one would you choose?
2. How would you use it? Would you apply The Spiderman Principle?
3. Which unique powers human beings have which no other living or non-living beings possess?
How should we use them, according to The Spiderman Principle?