

The Incredibles was released in 2004. This animated feature was written and directed by Brad Bird and distributed by Pixar Animation. The Incredibles follows the Parr family, a family full of superpowers who are forced to work together and disobey their government's ban on superheroes to save the world from a destructive robot.

The film begins with a flashback, a 1950s style television interview that introduces three superheroes of the time. We meet the self-absorbed Mr. Incredible along with Elastigirl, who both happily talk to the camera about themselves. Elastigirl laughs off the idea of a relationship with Mr. Incredible when asked, stating she would never leave the world-saving to the men. When a kid superfan named Buddy asks to be his sidekick, Mr. Incredible responds by saying that he works alone.

The film then jumps forward 15 years to a time when the government has placed a ban on superheroes, claiming they cause more harm than good. Mr. Incredible and Elastigirl, now married and known as Bob and Helen Parr, ironically settle down in the suburbs. The two are parents of Violet, a shy teenager, Dash, a troublesome tween, and Jack-Jack, a seemingly normal baby. The Parrs live a life that is far from incredible. Helen manages the home and the kids while Bob leaves every morning to work in his boring and draining office job. After becoming very frustrated one day, Bob is fired after sending his exasperating boss through several walls with the pound of his fist. Instead of greeting his family when he returns home, Bob distances himself and hides away in a room that appears to be a shrine to his superhero days. As he sulks alone, he discovers an electronic device on his desk that puts him in contact with a woman. The woman informs Mr. Incredible of a rogue robot on an isolated island that must be stopped. Bob accepts that mission and is sent to Nomanism Island to meet with the woman, Mirage, who initially called him for help. Bob's salary triples as he continues to work for Mirage and the top-secret company she represents. Bob's overall quality of life increases as he loses weight, buys a car and spends more time with his family. This sudden change in behavior caused Helen to question what was going on. She begins to look around and finds a strand of a woman's hair in one of his suits. This leads her to believe that Bob is having an affair. When Bob attempts to fight the robot, he is met by a now grownup Buddy, who styles himself as the supervillain Syndrome. Syndrome captures and restrains Mr. Incredible as he realizes that Mirage works for the supervillain. Helen, who still believes that Bob has committed adultery, goes to a family friend and ex-superhero designer: Edna Mode. Edna urges Helen to go after Bob and confront him. Helen jets off in a private plane that she navigates. On her way to Nomanism Island to see Bob, she discovers that Dash and Violet have snuck on board as well. Bob, now a prisoner of Syndrome, is forced to watch as Syndrome launches missiles to demolish the plane carrying his wife and children. As the missiles hit the plane, Violet uses her power of forcefield to protect them from the blast and Helen uses her power of flexibility to make herself into a parachute to safely bring down the children. The Parr family, excluding Jack-Jack, starts a mission to free Bob from Syndrome and in doing so, they end up all held captive. As the family reunites in captivity, Bob apologizes for everything he had done that led them to where they were. Helen and Bob are so deep in forgiving conversation, they don't even realize Violet disabling the locks that held the family as prisoners. As the family is freed, they waste no time and make their way to the city, where Syndrome is ready to show the world that he is a superhero by destroying his own robot that he programmed to demolish the city. The Parr family finally unleashes their unique superpowers as they come face to face with Syndrome and his robot. They fight together throughout the city and ultimately defeat the supervillain and his super robot. The film ends with Syndrome kidnapping Jack-Jack

whose multiple superpowers are revealed as he frees himself from the grips of the villain. Weeks later, the family is leaving Dash's track meet when another supervillain controls a large drill that comes out from underground, the family places on their masks and prepares to fight.

One thing that I find beautiful about this story is Brad Bird's ability to create such relatable characters. The Parr family does have superpowers, yet they appear to be a normal family that faces issues that everyone in the audience can relate to. Throughout the story, each character develops their own personal goals. For example, Bob wants to be a superhero again. Helen needs Bob to engage and get involved with their family and their marriage. Violet is an awkward teenager who has a crush on a boy that she can't bring herself to talk to. Dash is a show-off who only wants to use his power of super-speed.

These personal traits are represented in each character's superpower. Bob has the power of super-strength which represents his position as the head of the family, but also shows his weakness when he uses his strength in fits of anger. Helen is flexible, both literally and figuratively. She controls the family and can juggle multiple things at once, but also learns that she must let loose of her children for them to grow on their own. Violet has the power of invisibility and force-field which represents every teenager's desire to be alone by isolating themselves from the outside world. Dash has the power of super-speed which displays an elementary boy's unlimited energy. And Jack-Jack's powers are revealed to be unpredictable at the end of the film, showing the audience that a baby has the ability to become whatever they want to be when they grow older.

All of these personal characteristics and superpowers show us the vulnerabilities of the Parr family. Every imperfection makes this family relatable because while they are incredible, they are people too. Bird emphasizes the importance of family in his film. While each character has their own personal goal, they cannot achieve them without uniting as a family. When the family comes together and combines their powers to defeat Syndrome, their personal goals are attained. Bob feels alive again as he is allowed to use his powers to do good in the world. Helen rediscovers who she is outside of the family. Violet is allowed to feel confident in her abilities and Dash is allowed to push his limits. They each accomplish something for themselves, but even in achieving those individual goals, they come together as a family. Bird reveals that your weaknesses don't make you weak, they make you human and that being a loving family doesn't mean you have to stop saving the day.

In conclusion, the Parr family are vulnerable and real people underneath an armor of superhero powers. The combination of relatability, an ongoing theme of the importance of family and the achievement of individual goals by working together makes *The Incredibles* one of the most heartwarming family stories in film history.