

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CINDERELLA

## *Childhood Mistreatment, Resilience, and Sustained Hope*

### Discussion Guide

Use this guide to reflect on hardship, hope, and the ways resilience grows when a child is unseen yet continues to imagine a different life.

#### 1. BEFORE WATCHING



*Set the stage and notice what the child must carry.*

- What does it mean for a child to be overlooked or treated as less important in their own home?
- How do children survive emotionally when comfort, protection, or affection are inconsistent?
- Why might imagination become especially important for a child in a painful environment?

#### 2. WHILE WATCHING



*Watch for survival, hope, and emotional meaning.*

- Where do you see adaptation rather than weakness?
- How does the story show the difference between being kind and being powerless?
- What helps the main figure keep a sense of dignity even when treated unfairly?

#### 3. AFTER WATCHING



*Reflect on resilience and what it really means.*

- In what ways is resilience not the same as "being fine"?
- What parts of the story suggest that hope can protect something essential in a person?
- How does the ending invite us to think about dignity, self-worth, and possibility?

#### 4. FAMILY / PERSONAL REFLECTION



*Connect the themes to real life.*

- Have you ever known someone who stayed kind without becoming naive?
- What helps people hold onto hope when life feels discouraging?
- What are healthy ways adults can help children feel seen, safe, and valued?
- Try this: name one small source of hope or steadiness that helps you keep going.

#### DR. Z TAKEAWAY

*Resilience does not mean the pain was small.*

*It means hope survived long enough to keep the self alive.*



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.  
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology



Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.