SOFTWARE & TECH

Movies Like How To Train Your Dragon

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Introduction: Why We Crave More Stories Like How to Train Your Dragon

Few animated films have captured the heart and imagination of audiences quite like **How to Train Your Dragon** . Directed by Dean DeBlois and based on the book series by Cressida Cowell, the original 2010 film introduced us to Hiccup, a misfit Viking teenager who would rather befriend a dragon than slay one. The result was a visually stunning, emotionally resonant story about understanding, empathy, and the powerful bond between a boy and his Night Fury, Toothless. The trilogy went on to become one of the most beloved franchises in modern animation, winning over critics and audiences alike with its mature themes, breathtaking flight sequences, and unforgettable characters.

If you have already rewatched the trilogy twice and are craving more stories that capture that same magic—stories about unlikely friendships, soaring through the skies on the back of a mythical beast, or the bittersweet journey of growing up—you are in the right place. This guide explores the very best **Movies Like How To Train Your Dragon**, offering you a curated selection of films, series, and hidden gems that share its spirit of wonder, adventure, and heart.

What Makes How to Train Your Dragon So Special?

Before we dive into our list, it helps to understand exactly what ingredients made the original film so unforgettable. By identifying these core elements, we can better appreciate why certain films feel like natural companions to Hiccup and Toothless's journey.

The Power of an Unlikely Bond

At its heart, **How to Train Your Dragon** is a story about connection. Hiccup and Toothless come from worlds that have been taught to hate each other. Their friendship is built slowly, through trust, shared vulnerability, and a willingness to see beyond appearances. Films that master this dynamic—where two beings from opposing sides form a deep, life-changing bond—are the closest spiritual successors to this classic.

A Richly Realized Fantasy World

From the rugged cliffs of Berk to the luminescent caverns of the Hidden World, the visual world-building is extraordinary. The dragons themselves are designed with distinct personalities, behaviors, and ecosystems. The best **Movies Like How To Train Your Dragon** invest just as heavily in creating a world that feels lived-in, magical, and full of discovery.

The Coming-of-Age Arc

Hiccup starts as an underdog who feels out of place in his own tribe. His journey is not just about taming dragons; it is about finding his own voice, challenging tradition, and redefining what it means to be strong. This theme of growing up and forging your own path resonates deeply with audiences of all ages.

Stunning Aerial Sequences

Let us be honest: much of the magic comes from the sensation of flight. The scenes where Hiccup and Toothless soar through canyons, dive through clouds, and pull up at the last second are some of the most exhilarating moments in animation. Any film that can capture that feeling of wind, freedom, and vertical wonder deserves a spot on this list.

Animated Adventures with Dragons and Mythical Creatures

If you are looking for films that feature dragons prominently, or other mythical creatures that form bonds with humans, these are your best bets. They share the same sense of wonder and fantasy that defines the **How to Train Your Dragon** universe.

The Dragon Prince (Netflix Series)

This critically acclaimed Netflix animated series is perhaps the closest you can get to the tone and scope of the *How to Train Your Dragon* trilogy. Created by Aaron Ehasz (who worked on *Avatar: The Last Airbender*), **The Dragon Prince** is set in a world where magic is drawn from six primal sources. Humans have learned to harness dark magic, creating a rift between humans and elves. The story follows two human princes and an elven assassin as they team up to protect a dragon egg and restore peace to the land.

The series features a strong ensemble cast, deep lore, and a central theme of breaking cycles of hatred—exactly what Hiccup and Toothless stand for. The bond between the young characters and the dragon Azymondias (the titular Dragon Prince) is deeply moving and develops over multiple seasons. If you love rich, serialized storytelling with dragons, politics, and heartfelt character moments, this is an essential watch.

Wings of Fire (Books with Potential Adaptation)

While currently a book series (with a long-awaited animated adaptation in development), **Wings of Fire** by Tui T. Sutherland is a must-mention for any fan of dragon-centric storytelling. The books are set in a world entirely ruled by dragons, with different tribes that have been at war for generations. The story follows five young dragonets who are prophesied to end the conflict.

The world-building is exceptional, with distinct dragon cultures, unique abilities, and a deep exploration of what it means to be a leader. Fans of **How to Train Your Dragon** will appreciate the focus on dragon characters as protagonists, the themes of peace and understanding, and the epic aerial battles. Keep an eye out for the upcoming animated series—it has the potential to become a worthy spiritual successor.

Epic Fantasy Journeys with Unique Bonds

Some of the best **Movies Like How to Train Your Dragon** are not about dragons at all. Instead, they focus on the emotional core of an unlikely friendship between a human and a non-human being, set against a backdrop of an epic fantasy quest.

The Boy and the Beast

This Japanese animated film by Mamoru Hosoda (known for *Wolf Children* and *Summer Wars*) tells the story of a lonely boy named Ren who stumbles into a parallel world of beasts and is taken in by a gruff, solitary bear-like creature named Kumatetsu. The beast agrees to train the boy, but neither of them is prepared for the deep father-son bond that forms between them.

Like Hiccup, Ren is an outsider who finds belonging in a world where he does not initially belong. The training sequences, the growing mutual respect, and the heart-wrenching emotional climax all echo the beats of **How to Train Your Dragon**. The film also features a stunning transformation sequence that rivals anything in the dragon world. If you love stories about mentorship, family, and overcoming differences, this film will leave you

breathless.

Spirited Away

The masterpiece from Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli may not feature dragons in the same way, but it is undeniably a spiritual cousin. **Spirited Away**follows Chihiro, a young girl who enters a spirit world and must work in a bathhouse for magical creatures to save her parents. The film features Haku, a dragon spirit who becomes Chihiro's ally and protector.

The bond between Chihiro and Haku is built on trust and remembrance, much like Hiccup and Toothless. The film is rich with Ghibli's signature wonder, featuring incredible flight sequences (Haku in dragon form is breathtaking), a coming-of-age arc, and deep themes about identity and courage. For any fan of **How to Train Your Dragon**, **Spirited Away** is an essential watch.

Animated Films with Similar Themes of Friendship and Courage

Some of the most powerful **Movies Like How to Train Your Dragon** focus on the emotional resonance of the friendship between different species or beings. These films may not all have dragons, but they share the same heart.

Big Hero 6

This Marvel-inspired animated film from Disney tells the story of Hiro Hamada, a young robotics prodigy, and Baymax, an inflatable healthcare robot created by his late brother. After a personal tragedy, Hiro and Baymax form an unlikely team to uncover a conspiracy and bring justice to their city.

The bond between Hiro and Baymax is the emotional core of the film, much like Hiccup and Toothless. Baymax, like Toothless, is a powerful being who learns about humanity through his relationship with a young boy. The film features thrilling flying sequences (thanks to Hiro's rocket-powered microbots), a poignant coming-of-age story, and a tear-jerking finale that will resonate with anyone who has watched the **How to Train Your Dragon** trilogy. The theme of using technology for healing rather than harm echoes Hiccup's philosophy of peace.

The Iron Giant

Brad Bird's 1999 classic is a masterclass in storytelling about a boy and a giant metal robot from space. Set in the 1950s, the film follows a young boy named Hogarth Hughes who discovers and befriends a giant robot with a taste for metal and a childlike innocence. The government, however, sees the robot as a threat and moves to destroy him.

The parallels to **How to Train Your Dragon** are striking: an unlikely friendship between a boy and a misunderstood being, a community that fears what it does not understand, and a powerful message about choosing who you want to be. The Iron Giant's iconic line, *"You are who you choose to be,"*perfectly captures the spirit of Hiccup's journey. The film is funny, heartfelt, and features one of the most beautifully animated and emotional climaxes in animation history.

Lilo and Stitch

Disney's 2002 gem tells the story of a lonely Hawaiian girl named Lilo who adopts a strange dog, who is actually Stitch, a genetically engineered alien fugitive. Like Toothless, Stitch is seen as a dangerous monster, but through Lilo's love and the concept of *ohana* (family), he learns to be good.

The film shares the theme of an outsider being accepted and changed by love. The relationship between Lilo and Stitch is messy, real, and deeply touching. It lacks the epic dragon battles, but it more than makes up for it with raw emotional honesty. For anyone who loves the bond between Hiccup and Toothless, this is a perfect companion piece.

Live-Action Films with Flying Creatures and Aerial Battles

If you are looking for the thrill of flight and the majesty of large creatures in a live-action format, these films capture a similar sense of wonder.

Avatar (2009)

James Cameron's **Avatar**is perhaps the ultimate live-action film about the bond between a human and a majestic flying creature. Jake Sully, a paralyzed former Marine, is sent to the alien world of Pandora and eventually connects with a Ikran (a mountain banshee), a dragon-like creature that he must tame by forming a neural bond.

The taming scene is a direct analogue to Hiccup's first flight with Toothless. The entire film is a celebration of connecting with nature, respecting other cultures, and fighting for what is right. The aerial battles in **Avatar** are some of the most spectacular ever committed to film, and the bond between Jake and his banshee is deeply emotional. For fans of **How to Train Your Dragon** who want to see the same themes in a live-action science fiction epic, this is the gold standard.

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