

UNBROKEN: ONE PAGE DISCUSSION GUIDE

This page offers questions for the entire book. It is meant to be used during a one-time book discussion.

Discuss the questions that seem to resonate with you the most.

Questions created by Mount Prospect Public Library

1. Louie moved from being a rambunctious toddler into what some would call a delinquent. Did you find it difficult to empathize with Louie given his devious behavior?
2. What are the ways in which Louie's childhood prepared him for his time in the war?
3. What impact did seeing the German dirigible Graf Zeppelin have on Louie as a 12-year-old boy? Why did Hillenbrand choose to open the book with this image?
4. What did you take away from Louie's time on the boat to Berlin? Can you believe he gained 12 pounds eating the almost unlimited amount of food?
5. Louie came in 7th place at the Berlin Olympics, but had such a fast stride at the end that Hitler wanted to meet him. What did you think of this experience?
6. How many of you knew Zamperini survived? Did that affect your reading of the book?
7. Did anyone find it unusual that Louie had so many photographs of these different times in his life, especially the war photos?
8. When Louie, Phil, and the crew of Superman returned from their first mission, they found that their friends' plane crashed on take-off and the entire crew was killed. How did this affect Louie's view of the war?
9. Were you surprised the majority of Army Air Force casualties in World War II were due to accidents? (p. 80)
10. Why did the lieutenant ask the men to take the Green Hornet on the search mission, in spite of their misgivings that it wasn't airworthy?
11. What explains how Louie and Pete were able to survive on the raft while Mac, who seemed to have no physical injuries, did not? Are survival skills learned or inherent?
12. Why were many of the Japanese who first found Louie and Pete kind to them? Why were they surprised that the men had been fired on in their raft?
13. What do you find the most horrifying about Louie's captivity? Were you aware of the biological experiments the Japanese were conducting on POWs and civilians alike?
14. Why didn't the guards kill the prisoners when they knew the end was in sight for Japan?
15. Do you think there is less of a focus on Japan's role in historical accounts of WWII than on Germany's? If so, why would that be?

16. How was Louie able to readjust to life after the war? How was he able to overcome the struggles that were common to many veterans such as alcoholism and depression?
17. Which do you think was more responsible for Louie's drastic life change, the idea that his wife was going to leave him or his attending the Billy Graham revival?
18. What role did Jimmy Sasaki play in the book and in Louie's life? Why was he on campus at USC when Louie was in college and what did he do when he showed up at the POW camp? (p. 357)
19. How was Louie able to forgive The Bird and his other captors? How does this inform and instruct your own perspective on forgiveness? What happened to The Bird?
20. Did you learn something new from this book?
21. Were there parts of the story you found difficult to believe? What parts were most profound?
22. What did you think of Hillenbrand's style of writing? Was there anything you didn't like in the writing or anything you wished Hillenbrand would've covered more deeply?
23. Why did Hillenbrand include this quote from Walt Whitman's *The Wound-Dresser*, "What stays with you latest and deepest? Of curious panics, of hard-fought engagements or sieges tremendous, what deepest remains?" What do you think are the "deepest remains" for Louie Zamperini?