

# What i have learned from the book "unbroken" by laura hillenbrand

[History](#)



I decided to take AP World History because I believed it would be a way to challenge me. I wanted to be challenged because none of the History classes I have taken so far have been very difficult. I think this course could be one that brings a new more difficult aspect, that also brings new knowledge at a higher level than other classes. I chose the book Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand because my dad had read it before and he recommended it to me saying it was a great book. I had also previously seen the movie which gave me a basic understanding of what happened. I also typically love to read books about World War II usually Non-Fiction or Realistic Fiction. I knew this book was also about a plane crashing down into the ocean and the struggle to keep the survivors of the crash alive. Because of that, I expected to love this book as well.

Louie Zamperini grew up in Torrance, California, where he is known for being the town trickster and thief. Eventually, his brother convinces him to stop with all the pranks and thievery and to try track, where he blows past the competition for years eventually making the Olympic team. After performing astoundingly in the 1936 Olympics by being the first American to cross the finish line, Louie joined the Air Corps in WWII. While on a rescue mission in, Louie's plane crashed. Only Louie and one other man Phil Phillips survived the crash and were at sea for 47 days with little food and water. They were eventually found by a Japanese ship and captured. Where they were soon after sent to POW camps in Japan. While in Japan Louie endured immense torture from his captors. Louie finally was freed when Japan surrendered to the United States after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Louie returned to America, where he married Cynthia Applewhite and struggled

with a drinking problem and severe PTSD. Eventually, Louie became a Christian and began to switch his life around and recover from his psychological wounds, which included him forgiving his abusers in Japan.

When I was reading this book I didn't expect to learn much, because I had already known so much about WWII. But, I was wrong I learned lots that I hadn't previously known, such as I had no idea about the conditions that the American POWs in Japan went through. I learned how they were abused for the slightest infraction and for making no infractions at all the guards would abuse the POWs just for the fun of it. The guards tried to erase the dignity of the soldiers. I also learned that it was a few days after the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that the guards at the camps told the POWs that they were free. The guards seemed like they were just going to kill all of the prisoners instead of saying they were free and then they all just ran away for fear that the POWs would retaliate for the abuse they had undergone. A third thing I learned was that there were several guards and civilians in Japan who were willing to put themselves in danger to help the American POWs. That is very surprising because it always seemed from other books and articles that every person in Japan was completely loyal and would die for their country.

Most if not all of the story Unbroken is historically accurate. But, an article from the New York Post three doctors in a roundtable discussion discussed whether or not some of the things said to have happened to Louie were possible (Callahan 1). One such thing discussed was the possibility of going six to seven days in the scorching heat with no water and doctors said it

would be hard but possible. Another event discussed is when the plane crashed and the author says Louie was able to propel himself back to the surface with canisters of Carbon Dioxide. The doctors say is very unlikely and sounds too much like it is from a spy movie. The third question they discussed was whether or not an already frail man could have sustained over 100 punches from other men and then days later held up a six-foot wooden beam above his head for 37 minutes. They said this claim is the most far-fetched being that he was suffering from multiple severe illnesses and it would have been hard to know how many times he was punched and he probably wouldn't have known how long he was holding up the beam. The author may have over exaggerated slightly over what happened to Louie because she really wanted to make it seem like he was almost a superhero and wouldn't give up no matter the abuse he received. Another reason is so she could make it sound more interesting and daring so as to keep a reader engaged. The author most likely chose to write this book to shed light on the awful conditions American POWs faced in Japanese camps. This is because all though books had been written about these things before none of them had become as popular, and not many people had heard about the story of Louie Zamperini before the creation of this book.

The book Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand is a wonderful nonfiction book that shows the incredible hardships American POWs went through in Japan. I loved the book and couldn't put it down because you are engaged from the very beginning and during all of his races you are cheering him on even though they occurred over 70 years ago. The author gives you connections with these real people that make you see how bad there suffering was and

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how little most of the Japanese cared for them. But, the author also shows how some Japanese risked their lives to help people they didn't know. I think this book is wonderful because it shows how a beloved man can be forgotten so easily by his country and he can come back and prove them all wrong. It is almost a form of a comeback story because Louie comes back from being treated like an animal to a sad life but is then able to turn it around and forgive his tormentors.