



Pushing the Limits of Persistence Featured Video and Book - Discussion Questions

To persist is to endure. To last over time - even against the odds. Examples are everywhere: A persistent person weathers physical, emotional, or environmental setbacks and keeps trying. Elements that persist in the world around us connect us to a certain place, to an event, or to our past. We can read history in canyons carved by unstoppable rivers. Enduring artifacts and memories can wrench or lift our hearts. Put simply, PERSISTENCE expands the human experience in myriad ways.

Featured Video – Ricardo Peña

Being really good isn't ever quite good *enough* for Ricardo Peña. He sets an ambitious goal for himself. Then he trains relentlessly and pushes through obstacles, persisting until he makes the improbable happen. One day, high up on a mountain while pursuing a dream he's harbored since childhood, Ricardo finds something that will change the course of his life.

- What do you think about Ricardo? What are some of the ways persistence has shaped his life trajectory?
- Where does persistence come from? Are you this persistent or is there someone in your family who is? Is it something we are born with?
- What do you see as the physical parallels in his athletic training and his training as a musician? Why would being in such top physical shape help him as a musician?
- Ricardo's discovery of the actual crash site of flight 571 started as a "hunch" that where others were looking was wrong. What do you think spurs us to have an idea like that?
- There are so many kinds of sports equipment that have changed over the years, even in our own lifetimes. How has that influenced mountain climbing?

Featured Book – *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption*

Laura Hillenbrand, Nonfiction. Available in young adult adaptation. In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean,





against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.

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- What do you admire most about Zamperini? Do you think he had an unusual persistence to survive?
- What enables him to survive the plane crash and POW ordeal? Does he possess special strengths, personal or physical?
- How do the POW captives help one another survive? How are they able to communicate with one another? What devices do Zamperini and others use not only to survive but to maintain sanity?
- Did Louie's athletic career help prepare him for what he would face in war?
- Were you surprised by how many servicemen died in flight training or in planes that went down outside of combat? What do you think motivated pilots to persist in preparing for their time in combat?