



WHEN KNOCKED DOWN

Journal entry from 4/9/2020

When not grounded here at home during this pandemic, I am often traveling and speaking on the topic of how to be resilient in challenging times, post-traumatic growth, and working to overcome moral injury. I often cite those heroic spirits who have risen up out the ashes of some personal tragedy and by their living have given us a glimpse of the what the human spirit is capable of. That spirit when driven by a strong faith and an unassailable purpose is truly undeniable. It will find a way. And they inspire us. And their silent voices whisper into our hearts to get up when we get knocked down.

During this marathon pandemic battle, I find myself drawing from my pantheon of giants who have risen up out of seemingly impossible circumstances to not only carry on in their lives, but seem to shine all the brighter than they did prior to whatever calamity drove them to their knees. This morning I think of the Louis Zamperini. He is the inspirational subject of the book entitled: "Unbroken". Zamperini grew up in a hard scrabble existence and had to scarp and scrape his way through his early life. He became a tremendous distance runner in high school and became an Olympian running the 5,000 meters at only 19 years of age. He enrolled as student at the University of Southern California but then World War 2 broke out. He enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps. While stationed in Hawaii he and his crew members were sent out on a search for a lost aircraft. The aircraft he was on developed major mechanical difficulties and crashed in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, far from anywhere. 8 of the 11 crew members perished in the crash but Zamperini and 2 other crew members survived, and managed to inflate a life raft. While on the raft, they lived on rain water, raw fish and the

occasional bird that would land on their raft. A Japanese bomber strafed the raft, but they were able to patch bullet holes. Later, one of the men on the raft died and was laid to rest in the sea. After 47 days they arrived at Marshal Islands, only to be captured by the Japanese army. Zamperini endured torture in more than one prisoner of war camps. There was one Japanese guards they called the "The Bird" Mutsuhiro Watanabe, who was especially cruel to Zamperini. When the war was over, Zamperini wrote a letter to Watanabe forgiving him. Zamperini went on after the war to become a Christian Evangelist, and died at the age of 97....unbroken.

Throughout all of human history there are countless stories of those who have risen up with tenacity from what some might see as impossible situations. Seek them out, learn from them, then get up. You get knocked down, you get up again, and again, and again.

This contemporary song had me fighting back tears the other day and hasn't left me. I leave it's words with you. Easter is almost upon us...and those of us who are of the Christian Faith will proclaim: "He has risen!" and like Him....we too rise.

Andra Day

You're broken down and tired
Of living life on a merry go round
And you can't find the fighter
But I see it in you so we gonna walk it out
And move mountains
We gonna walk it out
And move mountains
And I'll rise up
I'll rise like the day
I'll rise up
I'll rise unafraid
I'll rise up
And I'll do it a thousand times again
And I'll rise up
High like the waves
I'll rise up
In spite of the ache
I'll rise up

And I'll do it a thousands times again
For you
For you
For you
For you
When the silence isn't quiet
And it feels like it's getting hard to breathe
And I know you feel like dying
But I promise we'll take the world to its feet
And move mountains
We'll take it to its feet
And move mountains
And I'll rise up
I'll rise like the day
I'll rise up
I'll rise unafraid
I'll rise up

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