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### The Causes of Perseverance

“MOVE!”. SMACK. “I SAID LEAVE!”. BANG. Martin Luther King Jr. was a civil-rights activist who faced an immense amount of discrimination, and he heard these awful phrases every day of his life. He eventually grew tired of this and decided to fight back. He was verbally abused and sometimes, physically abused, but he knew what he wanted and fought for it. He never gave up no matter how hard his life was or how many times he was put in jail. He strived to get African Americans the same rights as everyone else, and worked his tail off to get that. Throughout the human population, people face problems where they need to persevere and tackle their situation, just like Martin Luther King Jr.. In the book, *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand, Louie Zamperini is a former Olympian and a WWII veteran who endured being stuck on a raft, Japanese prison camps, and PTSD from his war troubles. Throughout each of these obstacles, Louie had to keep a strong mindset and overcome these obstacles, and no matter what the situation was, he conquered it. I have also experienced many situations where I felt lost, but I had hope and I knew I would get through it. Overall, the best reasons that people work hard

to solve their problems are because of having hope, strong religious beliefs, and determination throughout.

Having the mindset of believing in oneself and succeeding can take people a long way, and Benjamin Franklin agrees with this by saying, "You can do anything you set your mind to." This famous quote shows the importance of how a good mentality can help you overpower anything. In source E, Burton claims that "Hope can be defined as the desire for something combined with an anticipation of it happening. In short, hope is the anticipation of something desired". Believing in oneself is one of the biggest reasons why people work hard and persevere because envisioning yourself doing well allows you to keep getting up and trying. If people want or desire something so badly, they will do what it takes to get it. For example, in *Unbroken*, Louie and Phil show how helpful hope is when "Sometime on the fifth day, Mac snapped. After having said almost nothing for days, he suddenly began screaming that they were going to die. Wild-eyed and raving, he couldn't stop shouting... Mac's resignation seemed to paralyze him, and the less he participated in their efforts to survive, the more he slipped. Though he did the least, as the days passed, it was he who faded the most. Louie and Phil's optimism, and Mac's hopelessness, were becoming self-fulfilling" (Hillenbrand, 145). One of the biggest reasons that Louie and Phil survived the longest shipwreck raft with limited food and water is because they kept their brain stimulated and stayed positive throughout the entire ride. No matter how little water or food they had, both of these men continued to tell stories and dreamed of finding land. They also both knew that they may not live much longer, but they never spoke of it and never let it overcome their thoughts. By being hopeful and staying optimistic, they were able to outlast Mac, who did not participate in stories and had a negative mindset the entire time. Sadly, Mac

suffer a horrific death due to his pessimistic mentality, rather than making it to land like Louie and Phil. In addition to this story, source C explains that optimism can motivate individuals to take certain actions to protect their health, but pessimism leads to behaviors of no effort (Schiavon). This evidence proves what happened on the boat ride and it explains how Mac was doomed from the beginning. If everyone kept a positive persona and believed in themselves, our human population would go a long way. For many years, people have been scared of failure, so they never try, but if human beings thought of success instead of defeat, we could conquer the world. From everyday life to life threatening adventures, believing in your capabilities and oneself allows you to work hard and keep pushing through the challenges.

Along with a positive mindset, in order to overcome difficult situations, people need to have a determined and hardworking mentality. Without hard work and commitment, it is almost impossible to see results. One example of this is in *Unbroken*, where “the Bird”, a Japanese general from a prisoner of war camp, made it his job to abuse and torture Japan’s prisoners of war. He especially hated Louie and made it his goal to “crack him”. In one situation, the Bird forced Louie to hold a heavy beam over his head until he did not find it amusing anymore. “The Bird watched Louie, amused by his suffering, mocking him... Less and less blood was reaching his head, and he began to feel confused, his thoughts gauzy, the camp swimming around him... all he knew was a single thought: He cannot break me” (Hillenbrand, 261). Even though the Bird mistreated Louie, Louie never wanted to give in and show his weaknesses to the Bird no matter how much he was targeted. Throughout the Japanese camps, his friends would give up and feel miserable. On the other hand, Louie kept his mind strong, worked hard, and never gave in to the tough times. He was committed to show his strength no matter how cruel the punishment was.

Another fact is from the Medium, which suggests that, “No one should ever give up on something that they truly want to do because everyone can achieve something if they are willing to put in the work and have a strong mindset towards overcoming the particular challenge... That’s the power of determination and having that by your side can make a difference to your life” (Winn). Winn explains how having a strong head and strong work ethic can lead to success in any situation. As long as people do their best and put in the effort, they can accomplish anything. Another example is something that I have experienced throughout my gymnastics career, and it really shows how much hard work can benefit people. When I was in lower levels, there were many girls who were better than me and had more talent. Because they were so talented, they felt as if they did not need to work as hard, but eventually their talent ran out. Once we moved up levels and the skill difficulties increased, they could not rely on their talent. Since they never worked hard, they had nothing else to rely on, and soon burned out. Contrarily, I worked my butt off in the gym every. single. day. I may not have started off as good as everyone else, but my hard work allowed me to prove that I was better than those who never put in any effort. I was committed and kept the strong mindset no matter how rocky the start of my gymnastics career was. The girls who I grew up with that never worked hard have all quit gymnastics. Contrarily, I am a level 10 gymnast, the highest level, and I continue to work hard and improve. Overall, in order for people to achieve their goals, they have to put in the time and effort, and without hard work, nothing will ever get accomplished.

Religion is an outside source of hope that gives people a reason to work hard and believe in themselves. Having God on people’s shoulders can change anybody’s life. It really opens people up and gives them light at the end of the tunnel. If people feel lost or in a dark place, God

or any other religious figure can pull them out and give them the support that they need to succeed. For example, in Hillenbrand's book, on the miserable days on the raft, "Phil never spoke of his faith, but as he sang hymns over the ocean, conjuring up a protective God, perhaps rescue felt closer, despair more distant" (Hillenbrand, 130). Phil was a man who was in dire need of safety and reached out to what felt to be his only solution. He did not pray to God daily and was not a firm Christian, but when he needed help and wanted to keep going, he had to reach out to him. While God did not physically help Phil and Louie, God gave them the thought of success and the will to work hard towards it. God gave him the hope of surviving, and this was just enough to have the men push through 47 treacherous days. Later in the book, Louie was another person who needed religious help through tough times. After the war, Louie got addicted to drinking and could not stop the good feeling of it. Since he had so much PTSD and trauma from the war, he felt like drinking was his only escape. His wife was able to get him to church, and one day, God sent him a strong message that shook Louie's life. According to *Unbroken*, "What God asks of men, said Graham, is faith...Louie shone with sweat. He felt accused, cornered, pressed by a frantic urge to flee...When they entered the apartment, Louie went straight to his cache of liquor. It was the time of night when the need usually took hold of him, but for the first time in years, Louie had no desire to drink" (Hillenbrand, 360). Louie went from being a toxic alcoholic to the man he was before. He worked hard and never gave up because he found his place with god and believed it was for him. The only way that he could stop the addicting source of safety was by finding someone who showed him the right way. God opened up Louie and gave him the hope that he needed in order to quit drinking. In source K, "Our research here shows that having a belief system that 'substitutes' for some of the functions of human

relationships, like feeling valued and supported by God, may allow people who feel disconnected to restore some of this purpose that social relationships would normally provide.” There are many people like Louie who lost all of their friends or close relationships due to drinking or old age. People start to feel hopeless and just give up. God, or any figurative substitute, gives these people a feeling of desire and faith which pushes them to work hard. Sometimes, persevering through tough times cannot be done alone, and people need a higher figure to get them into shape and give them the optimism they need.

Throughout *Unbroken* and daily life experiences, people have worked hard to overcome difficult challenges. For my entire life, I have had to work my butt off every day and do my best. There have been days where I wanted to give up, but I stayed positive and kept an open mind. Sometimes I felt so hopeless to the point where God is the only solution. Each of these factors contribute to people achieving the goals they want. Even though I went through a lot of pain, in the end, it was worth it. Louie is another example of a hard worker with monumental dreams. He wanted to make it to the Olympics and win a gold medal, so he put in an exuberant amount of effort and made it to the Olympic trials. After he got second, he worked even harder before the Olympics. He ended up getting seventh at the Olympics, and continued to work hard for the next one. Soon after, he was drafted into war and faced another obstacle he had to overcome. Throughout the war, difficulties came one after another, but he was able to keep a positive mental and thought about how it would feel to be back home. He did his best to never give up and sometimes talked to God for comfort. Because of Louie’s hard work and optimism, he was able to live to tell his story about WWII. If the human population never worked hard, was always pessimistic, and did not use God’s help, we would still be in the Stone Age, unable to progress.

Progression comes with difficulties, and if people do not work hard to overcome these, then advancement would never be made.

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