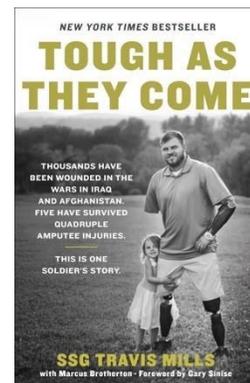


Discussion Guide

Tough as They Come

By Travis Mills

1. Travis grew up in a small town in Michigan in a close-knit, working class family. If he had a personal slogan during that time, what would it be and why?
2. Why is serving in the military a natural home for a guy like Travis? What similarities are there to playing high school sports? Differences?
3. Upon hearing the news that his brother's girlfriend's brother has died via sniper fire in Iraq, Travis's mother cries. Travis says, "I felt like crying, too, although I didn't know how." Why do you think Travis couldn't cry? What does it say about him if he does?
4. Upon his return to Afghanistan after his holiday trip home, Travis describes being "punked" by his Commanding Officers and platoon mates. What do you think was the purpose and effect of that experience? How does Travis interpret it?
5. In what ways do Travis and his troops deal with the boredom of being soldiers in Afghanistan? Does this surprise you that a war zone can be thought of as boring at times? Why or why not?
6. After a particularly long and frustrating day while on his second deployment in Afghanistan, Travis has what he describes as an epiphany of sorts: "Things can always be worse." How does this epiphany serve him? How does this epiphany change over time?
7. The bulk of Travis's memoir focuses on his three tours of duty in Afghanistan. Why do you think he devoted most of the book to this aspect of his experience?
8. While he's recovering at Walter Reed, Travis says, "I couldn't control the looks I received from others. I could only control how I responded to the looks." What do you think of the different approaches Travis used to respond to the way others looked at him?
9. Discuss some of Travis's turning points in his recovery. Do you relate to one in particular? Why?



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