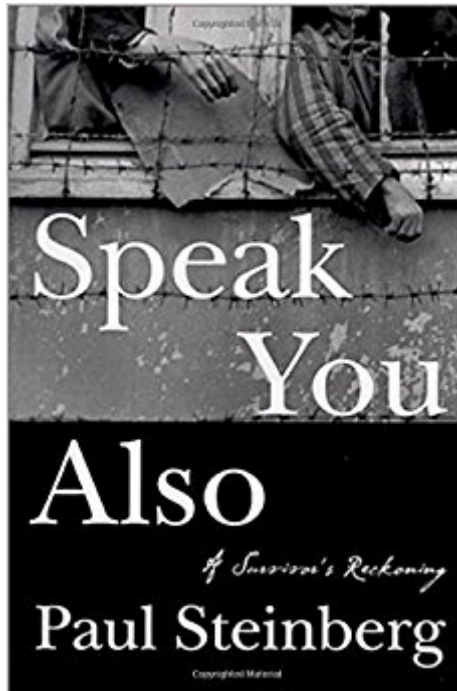




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# Speak You Also: A Holocaust Memoir



## Synopsis

In 1943, sixteen-year-old Paul Steinberg was arrested in Paris and deported to Auschwitz. A chemistry student, Steinberg was assigned to work in the camp's laboratory alongside Primo Levi, who would later immortalize his fellow inmate as "Henri," the ultimate survivor, the paradigm of the prisoner who clung to life at the cost of his own humanity. "One seems to glimpse a human soul," Levi wrote in *Survival in Auschwitz*, "but then Henri's sad smile freezes in a cold grimace, and here he is again, intent on his hunt and his struggle; hard and distant, enclosed in armor, the enemy of all." Now, after fifty years, Steinberg speaks for himself. In an unsparing act of self-examination, he traces his passage from artless adolescent to ruthless creature determined to do anything to live. He describes his strategies of survival: the boxing matches he staged for the camp commanders, the English POWs he exploited, the maneuvers and tactics he applied with cold competence. Ultimately, he confirms Levi's judgment: "No doubt he saw straight. I probably was that creature, prepared to use whatever means I had available." But, he asks, "Is it so wrong to survive?" Brave and rare, *Speak Your Mind* is an unprecedented response to those dreadful events, bringing us face-to-face with the most difficult questions of humanity and survival.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In *If This Is a Man*, Primo Levi describes Henri, a fellow inmate at Auschwitz, as a strategist of survival: flattering, stealing and endlessly manipulating the kapos and other prisoners for his own survival. Levi's empathy is challenged as Henri instills in Levi "a slight sense of defeat" and the fear that Levi has been "not a man to him, but an instrument in his hands." Now, 40 years later,

Steinberg's "Henri" of Levi's book has written his own memoir, which is both an answer to the other man's work and an explanation of his life and actions. Written in spare, highly unsentimental prose not unlike Levi's, balancing stark, horrific descriptions of life in the camps with self-critical meditations on the very purpose of writing such a memoir, Steinberg's book stands as a shocking rejoinder to Levi. Detailing his arrest and his life at the camp, Steinberg describes himself as crossing the "gulf that separates adolescence... and adulthood" by deciding to "become a player in the game": "that cold and calculating creature singled out by Levi." Unrelenting in his descriptions of his plans for survival, befriending and sharing choice food with a brutal camp kapo, using violence against an elderly Jewish inmate to reinforce Steinberg's own position of security, and lying about being Jewish, the author is unapologetic for how he survived. With brutal honesty and frightening self-examination, Steinberg dissects himself and forces readers to reexamine what morality means in the face of unrelenting horror. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

In 1943, the Berlin-born Steinberg was deported to Auschwitz. There, he worked beside Primo Levi in the camp laboratory, enduring disease and evading death time and time again, sometimes by ruthless means. The only member of his family to survive the camps, Steinberg purposely wrote this book 50 years later so that time might help ease the pain of his memories, but he realized that he still struggled with the way the camps had affected him. This guilt of surviving stayed with him up to his death in 1999. While many Holocaust books confine themselves to that time period, Steinberg's reflection on how Auschwitz changed the rest of his life makes this a valuable work. Steinberg's writing is also extremely moving in its poetic simplicity. Recommended for all public libraries and Holocaust collections, as well as for fans of Primo Levi, who wrote about Steinberg. DJill Jaracz, MLIS, Chicago Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I was curious about this memoir as its author is the man whom Primo Levi depicts in his own writing about the concentration camp where they were fellow inmates, as the lowest of the low.

Concentration camps were where people were pared down to the few basic shreds of their character. According to the revered Primo Levi, every shred of Steinberg proved contemptible. Steinberg makes a slightly better case for himself. One should read both accounts.

If you read only one book from Holocaust survivor, read this one. It was recommended by a dear friend and it will forever change the way that you perceive The Holocaust.

outstanding study of an amazing story. Extraordinary research, very thoughtful, careful, reflective. Amazing story.

Product was needed early in the shipping date period and arrived on the first day available; also in good condition

Speak You Also tells an empowering story of struggle and determination without showing the slightest trace of self-pity. Steinberg's novel was so moving, because he did not feel bad for everything he endured, but instead focused on the theme of what made him survive in contrast to the concept of death. From the point of view of someone who never witnessed the Holocaust, the memoir perfectly illustrates the life lessons that have come from those who endured it. One example would be the constant question of morality, which Steinberg comments "You do good when you can and when you happen to feel like it. In all other cases, you do evil, if you have even the slightest scrap of power". The author captures the emotions of himself and those around him. He is able to bring back all these horrifying memories to share with the reader so his story is never forgotten. This novel is by far a must read for people of all ages and backgrounds. Speak You Also is Steinberg's time to speak out about the horrors he witnessed during his days in Auschwitz as well as to reflect back on many unanswered questions in this extremely heart-filled and brutally honest account of the Holocaust.

I just finished reading this great first-hand account of living through the Holocaust in Nazi death camps, by Paul Steinberg. What separates this text is that it seems less caught up with providing the reader with every single detail of daily life and more focused with the author's personal struggle, the friendships gained and forgotten, the death camp's social hierarchies, and of course, his incredible task of survival. Paul Steinberg admits that he was an atypical Jew, uninvolved with Jewish ways and traditions, and he wonders why he survived and others perished; Jews that were more religious, possessed more wisdom, strength, etc. Truly, Steinberg's ordeal is almost unbelievable. He was able to do what he had to in order to survive. This book is great if you want to gain a good understanding of these historical events, a different time period in life, and the human struggle, all through the eyes of this remarkable man. He is honest and sincere, and holds nothing back.

I haven't heard of Paul Steinberg before I read this book. The book is a gem and recollects the life of a camp inmate trying to survive the war. Steinberg was one of those people who helped the inmate leadership run the killing camps. He was a chemist in one of the IG Farben complexes. His short but powerful story shows how stronger people were consumed, while a flexible youngster survived the camps by doing what he had to do to stay alive. This should be required reading for those people who deny that the Holocaust happened. It is also a reminder that the general population should always remember these events. Steinberg found this book hard to write, but it was easy to read and conveyed a powerful perspective.

This is a good book about the Holocaust.

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