

Discussion Menu and Study Guide #1
CONSIDERING DEMOCRACY: 8 THINGS TO ASK A REPRESENTATIVE
Documentary, 58 Minutes

Appetizers - Before the Screening

Some screenings will have people who have opposite points of view. Remember to have respectful (yet spirited!) dialog. Also keep in mind that while the film brings up different ideas, we live in a democracy. It's good to discuss these things! The following questions are different than the questions presented in the film, but of a slightly different, yet distinctly delicious democracy flavor.

Main Course and Discussion - After Watching the Film

Americans and Leisure

How might legislated vacation time help society and the economy?
Who would it benefit and who might it hurt?

Most developing and first world countries have an annual method of raising the minimum wage so that the wage can fluctuate with inflation. Why do you think those countries have a regular method of raising the minimum wage?

Healthcare

How do you think you formed your ideas on healthcare?
Have you traveled outside of the United States?

A theoretical situation: What might happen if a potentially fatal airborne virus (like the bird flu) came to a country and 25% the population either does not have healthcare or is underinsured?

Media

Do you think that the news would be different if it did not have any commercials?
If so, how do you think that it would change?
What are your sources of information?
Do you think certain topics and questions are avoided on the news?
If so, which ones?

Foreign Policy

Do you think that large amounts of spending (for privately contracted jobs) are strengthening America? Why or why not?

Foreign Aid

Did you know your taxes are going to other countries as weaponry grants?
Do you think that people in other countries know that American dollars are funding weapons and possible instability in their country?
How would you react if you found out that another country was funding weaponry and instability in your country?

Any modifications can be made. Use your creativity! These are just a start!

Values

How did you react to how the father interacted with his daughter as she grabbed the microphone during his interview?

Did you notice that almost every time a person in the values section referred to people, they put the female first?

Do people in other countries have different or similar concerns?

Political Finance with the Supreme Court
(Note: This dish is also known as campaign finance.)

Do you think that corporations should have personhood rights?

Should money be equated as free speech?

The U.S. Constitution begins with "We the People." Should it be changed?

Can you think of an example of when a Supreme Court case was reversed?

Businesses have been benefiting societies by supplying goods and services throughout history. Recently, in the 1970s, U.S. corporations were given a more broad interpretation of rights. Some people believe that this has impacted the political and societal landscape of the United States. Do you think that American society has changed since the 1970s? If so, how?

A theoretical situation: There is a community of 10,000 people and an outside corporation comes into that community and decides to make a 15,000 head hog farm in the middle of the community, next to the river that supplies water for the community. Under current laws, who has more rights, the community of 10,000 people, or the corporation run by three people? Who do you think should have more rights?

Lobbyists

Which of the following has more power: an agricultural community of 50,000 people, or a corporation with 500 well paid lobbyists?

While the 1st amendment right to petition the government is important, should multinational corporations also have that right? Why or why not?

The Revolving Door

When a former corporate lobbyist or employee becomes a government official, do you think that they often formulate policy that benefits their former employer, or do they generally create policy that ultimately benefits their constituents?

If money is thrown into the equation, how does it impact actions?

Words to Think and Chew Upon

These words have been tossed and drizzled with oil in our linguistic culture:
Freedom, Fire of Liberty, Political Capital, Preventative Attack

What do these ingredients mean to you? What kind of nutrition do we get when we mix them together? Delicious and nutritious, or just filling enough to get by?

*These are simply questions to ask and issues to discuss in a democracy. Thank you for your time. If you have people over, before people leave, even if you disagree, shake hands and appreciate the good that people bring to society.

Offer Dessert!

Desserts - After Screening and Discussion

These are all quite delicious, so hopefully you have saved a little room for a taste of all of them.

Nutrients must be digested, then we go back to the table for more.

There are many things that a person can do.

Remember to have fun and enjoy yourself!

One

Continue to have more polite and passionate conversation. You may find that the more you do it, the better you become! Host more parties. Be happy! Walk with a spring in your step. Be empowered! Create a talking group that meets once a week to help define solutions.

Two

Find and ally yourself with organizations that like to promote rights for people, as opposed to corporations. Be savvy and smart, because some organizations can be multinational corporate wolves in sheep's clothing. Ask questions and do research. Seek out good people, organizations and things.

Three

Talk to people. Travel. Usually when I do this, I find that people are actually really cool, and that I have way too many material things.

Four

Find your candidates and government officials and ask them questions. Fun questions can include: have you ever been a lobbyist? What is your favorite time of day: morning or evening? What is your favorite law that you have voted for and why? Have you ever sponsored a bill or law? Which was your favorite and why? Do you have good dreams or bad dreams when you sleep? Do you want to talk about them? Where did you take your favorite vacation? Did you know that a lot of countries have paid vacation time? Could you work on sponsoring that bill? Do you like being in Washington D.C. or your home state better and why?

Five

Remember that we, in the United States, were one of the first democracies in the world. It's good to be proud of this, but it is also very good to develop one's communications skills and participate in any way that you can.

Enjoy yourself! Remember to take breaks, relax and have fun.
There is another Discussion Menu (#2 for the DVD Extras) on the website.
www.consideringdemocracy.com

Discussion Menu #1

CONSIDERING DEMOCRACY

A documentary to **Refresh** and **Recharge** your Dialog!

Host a Screening Party!

Invite friends and have great, in-depth conversations. Seek solutions. Define change.

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