

10/29 Study Guide Questions

1. In Frumkin's Chapter 2, what did you find to be most compelling and insightful about the political theories of association and why?
2. In Frumkin's continuum of civic and political engagement, where do you favorite charities lie? What are the benefits and risk of that placement?
3. How do you restate in your own words Rick Cohen's distinction between charity and philanthropy, and why or why not do you agree with that distinction? What would the beggar Lushkov (or the cook Olga) in Chekov's story think about this distinction?
4. Do you agree with Cohen's hypothesis that philanthropic foundations are not wholly private instruments of the donor's charitable interests? What if you'd made all the money that had been contributed to that foundation?
5. What implementation difficulties might there be with Cohen's statement that, "Philanthropy (at foundations) ought to catch up with the rest of society by opening itself to direct participation in decision making by those nonprofits (and their clients) purportedly served by those foundations.?"
6. Do you agree with Cohen (and why) that "if philanthropy is to achieve the goal of social justice, it should stop sitting on its assets, mobilize its capital more effectively and aggressively on behalf of the nonprofit delivery system, and use its tax-exempt, balance-sheet wealth, in addition to its grant-making, to address urgent public needs?"
7. Suppose you were a superintendent of the less affluent public schools in Vermont, and a newspaper reporter asked you to publicly comment on the paradox presented by the confluence of Act 60 and the Freeman Foundation, what would you say and why?
8. In your view, does a charitable foundation have the right to, as some of the Freeman Foundation critics state, "circumvent" public policy, or legislation, or arguably the will of the majority? Why or why not?
9. Brian Flagg, a local social justice advocate and community organizer, says you need a mix of "cold anger" power (spiritual or otherwise) and hope to change the status quo. How might cold anger and hope serve you in your nonprofit work?

Potential Questions for Peggy Hutchison, CEO of Primavera Foundation:

1. How have you utilized civic engagement and political advocacy strategies to further the impact of the Primavera Foundation?
2. From your lessons-learned about what works and what doesn't, what advice would you give to other nonprofits who might want to increase their use of public advocacy?
3. In your professional experience and judgment, what makes a nonprofit effective? And how can that be measured?
4. What trends in the nonprofit sector do you find most promising? Most troublesome? What would you change about the sector or its stakeholders if you could?
5. As a self-reflective leader, what are you learning these days that you find most intriguing and fruitful for your own development and practice?