

## Environmental Politics



- ◆ **Discussion:** What is your view of democracy? What is your role in our current democratic system?
- ◆ **What is Living Democracy?**  
(Journal #7)

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## Environmental Politics



**Discussion:** (Journal Entry #7)  
Write a sentence or two about each statement as we go -

- What is Living Democracy?
- America's Top Ten Myths
- Formal Democracy vs Living Democracy
- Do you have a public life?
- What is the "Art of Democracy"?
- Why is having a "public life" good for democracy?

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Frances Moore Lappe & Paul Martin  
DuBois

**Authors of:** The Quickening of America - Rebuilding our Nation, Remaking our Lives  
1994 by Jossey-Bass, Inc.,  
Publishers, 350 Sansome Street,  
San Francisco, CA



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## Living Democracy



### What is living democracy?

- Democracy as a *way of life*
- Role of **everyday people** in **solving public problems**
- Learning key lessons about remaking America and remaking ourselves
- It's about gaining meaning & joy in our lives
- And bringing day-to-day democracy to life - moving America toward a more effective form of democracy . . . A living democracy . . . In our jobs, our schools and our communities?

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## America's Top Ten Myths



### Which of these have you learned?

- Myth One:** Public life is what someone else - a celebrity or big shot - has.
- Myth Two:** If I'm not a celebrity, public life is unappealing and unrewarding.
- Myth Three:** Public life involves a lot of ugly conflict.
- Myth Four:** Public life competes with - even detracts from - a satisfying private life.
- Myth Five:** We must learn to squelch our self-interest for the common good.

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## America's Top Ten Myths



### Which of these have you learned?

- Myth Six:** For most people, public life is really about pursuing their own selfish interests
- Myth Seven:** Power is a dirty word.
- Myth Eight:** There's only so much power to go around, so I have to fight for what's mine.
- Myth Nine:** Power is a one-way force; if I've got it, I can make others do my bidding.
- Myth Ten:** Power is about winning victories today, now!

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## What's wrong with these myths?



For more & more Americans, they do not create the good life, the meaningful life, the effective life.

Regular people - almost all of us - have to connect to the larger world!

To know that *our lives count beyond our immediate family!*

What's missing is the concept of *public life!*

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## Public life



Not public life as mere voting

But public life as the roles we take at work, at school and in our communities

We cheat ourselves of potential decision-making opportunities. . . . When we don't embrace our public life!

Where do you stand?

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## Formal democracy versus Living democracy: An Argument



**Compare Voice One - the formal view of democracy (the view most of us inherited)**

**Voice Two - represents a newer voice - the new voice growing across America!**

**Where have you heard or read these arguments?**

**Which voice matches best with your views?**

**What has shaped your views?**

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## We each have a public life



According to Moore Lappe and Martin DuBois . . . Americans learn to focus on private life and not public life . . . At a great cost

Those myths leave us as passive onlookers while some of the most important decisions of our lives get made by others!

What's missing is the core of democracy: whether democracy works or not - depends on how each of us lives our public life, our lives outside our families!

Without meaningful public lives, we can't protect and further the well-being of those we care about most in our private lives

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## Ten Arts of Democracy



Active listening - encouraging the speaker and searching for meaning

Creative conflict - confronting others in ways that produce growth

Mediation - facilitating interaction to help people in conflict hear each other

Negotiation - problem solving that meets some key interests of all involved

Political imagination - reimagining our futures according to our values

Public dialogue - public talk on matters that concern us all

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## Ten Arts of Democracy



Public judgment - public decision making that allows citizens to make choices they are willing to help implement

Celebration and appreciation - expressing joy and appreciation for what we learn as well as what we achieve

Evaluation and reflection - assessing and incorporating the lessons we learn through action

Mentoring - supportively guiding others in learning these arts of public life

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## Some concluding thoughts. .



Our real crisis may be the obstacles that prevent us from coming together to solve real problems

Some call this a crisis of democracy. . .a failure of public problem solving

Some blame it on concentrated economic power (the top 1% of us receives as much income as the bottom 90% of us put together)

Some blame power of big money to influence our elected officials

Some blame the media for keeping us uninformed and isolated from each other

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## Some concluding thoughts. .



Add to this rising costs of basic needs (food, housing)

How can these barriers to public problem solving be overcome?

- Only by more democracy and a “richer” form of democracy
- Only by people discovering that despite these barriers they do have sources of power to develop and use
- Everyone has something valuable to contribute
- Without participation by all, we cannot tackle the economic, environmental and social problems that we all face!

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Some real examples of individuals involved in "public life" . . .



- Lois Gibbs
- Karen Silkwood
- Lorraine Ross
- Frank Schiavo
- Don Aitken
- David Gottfried
- Ted Smith

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Some real examples of individuals involved in "public life" . . .



- Barbara Williams**
- Local issue
  - Heated battle over toxic nature of residue from silver mining activities
  - Concerned about health impacts on local community
  - Community is very divided on this issue!
  - Let's check out some websites!
- Websites to visit this week!!
- <http://www.imbris.net/~pacrrcco/> (Silver Valley People's Action Coalition)
  - <http://www.environment.uidaho.edu/Issues/bunkerhill/bunker.htm> (K. Aiken article)

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Some real examples of individuals involved in "public life" . . .



- Frank Schiavo**
- Professor of Environmental Studies, SJSU
  - National issue - nuclear power
  - Concerned about safety issues, health impacts and residue of the nuclear industry
- **Ed Quevedo**
- Environmental Lawyer
  - Interested in moving corporations in the direction of sustainability
  - Assists in the development of responsible Environmental Management Plans
  - Argues that this is good for business!

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## Some real examples of individuals involved in “public life” . . .

### David Gottfried

- Founder of U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)
- President, World Build
- Promotes sustainable “green” buildings
- Works with government agencies, industry, citizen groups and local communities to guide them through a “greening” process



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