

## ***Working* by Studs Terkel**

\*\*\*\*\*How did everyone like the book? Was it a good pick? Was it a good book for the end of year meeting?

1. Studs Terkel opens *Working* with one of the most stirring sentences ever read: "This book, being about work, is, by its very nature, about violence - to the spirit as well as to the body." How much do you agree with this statement? Is the word "violence" the best choice within the context of the discussion that will follow?

2. It is said that "What you do is what you are." Do you agree with this statement? What does it mean? How can a job become a person's life? Is this something you want for your life? Why or why not?

3. Terkel has spent most of his life working on human nature and experiences, investigating the lives of the "common," "ordinary" people who fill our land, trying to make their stories seen and heard, in the hope of showing the people how much we all have in common "deep down," and bringing us together to work to change a social system that strains and drains us all. Does he successfully accomplish this in *Working*? Discuss.

4. The experiences these workers recount and the emotions that they exude are personal but universal. Does this help with the previous question's aim at trying to "unite" rather than "divide" people?

5. It is said that Terkel had a way of getting people to talk, share, discuss things with him as if he was part of the family. Do you see this in this work? Why or why not?

6. Terkel has made it clear, in numerous interviews, that he would rather be considered a "guerilla journalist" than an "oral historian." What is the difference and why is this important to him?

7. If Terkel were to interview you, how do you think you would be portrayed? What would you highlight from your own job experiences that would be noteworthy?

8. What would Americans say to the same questions Studs posed in today's working world? Would there be the same complaints/joys? Explain.

\*\*\* If time, what has been your worst/best job? What factors contributed to the way you feel/felt/reminisce about it?

**\*\*\*\*\*WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OF THE YEAR ?  
WHY?**