



## **WMS 2025 Summer Book Club Study Guide**

**Book: *Abundance* by Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson**

**First Meeting: An Introduction to the book will be presented by Bryan Thompson, Delaware State Senate Majority Leader, and then attendees will discuss Chapter 1. Please read Chapter 1 prior to the meeting.**

**The first meeting will be held on July 10, 2025, at 6pm at the Lewes Library, Lewes, DE**

### **Introduction to *Abundance***

Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson argue that tracing the history of the twenty-first century so far is essentially tracing a history of unaffordability and shortages. This crisis is not new or original. It is a crisis that has been brewing and building up for decades. The book speculates that our problems today are not the result of yesteryear's villains. Rather, one generation's solutions have become the next generation's problems.

*Abundance* will be asking its readers to suspend their idea of how government functions and consider that the institutions that we rely on to advance societal concerns are not functioning as they need to be. For liberals, it means recognizing when government is failing. For conservatives, it means recognizing when the government is needed.

As we read the book, here are some questions to consider:

1. What is the definition of *Abundance* that Klein and Thompson develops throughout the book?
2. A central theme developed in the book focuses on two ideas:
  - a. Government should have a strong hand in establishing, implementing and funding social priorities.
  - b. In the course of setting these priorities, the government should endeavor to get out of its own way.

Which idea do you believe to be true?

3. One of the "villains" that emerge in the book is *regulations*. Klein and Thompson ask readers to question the balance between protecting the environment, incorporating inclusion and diversity, providing for consumer protection, and creating innovation,

affordability, and politics of abundance. Think of processes and policies that create the balance.

## **Chapter 1 – Grow**

In Chapter 1, Klein and Thompson trace the power of growth that propelled the United States to levels of excellence in the worlds of technologies and ideas. In the early 1800s, America's wide-open frontier represented new resources and new opportunities. However, the authors comment that "the land that matters most is the land that aids in the fiery creation of the new" (pg. 22), and accordingly, "that land is the heart of our cities..." The cities, though, are where the problems plaguing America's housing crisis begin.

1. The authors write, "New York was once where you went to make your fortune; it is now where you go to spend it." How does this quote encapsulate the real obstacle of growth?
2. Cities are engines of creativity because people create in communities. How do people use zoning to preserve community character, and how does this tactic depart from the preexisting ways people used to curate community? (Think about the authors' discussion on page 27 of the ecosystems of talent that are located within some cities, such as New York.)
3. The authors try to disprove some commonly held assumptions about the causes of homelessness. What are these assumptions? Who benefits from their existence?
4. There is an adage in political science that Americans are "symbolically" conservative but "operationally" liberal. In reality, especially in many blue states, voters reverse this split political personality: they are symbolically liberal but operationally conservative. The authors dub this phenomenon "Lawn-Sign Liberalism." What examples of Lawn-sign Liberalism exist in Sussex County?