

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR LOCAVESTING

Locavesting is a call to rethink the way we invest, so that we support the small businesses that create jobs and healthy, resilient communities.

1. Thinking about your own community, what makes it special? Do you have favorite independent merchants? What kind of merchants or amenities do you wish you had more of?
2. Have you or anyone in your family ever owned a small business? What were the challenges that business faced? Competition? Securing financing?
3. Is there a difference between capitalism as we idealize it and the capitalistic system we have today? How so?
4. Was there anything that you learned in the book that surprised you? (For example, that just 1% of all the money sloshing around the stock market actually goes to productively funding companies? Or that we once had dozens of local stock exchanges in this country? Or that locally owned businesses contribute much more to their local economies than non-locally owned ones?)
5. Has the book changed the way you think about where you shop and invest? How so? Have you changed your behavior?
6. The book gives many examples of local investing across the country. What were some of your favorite examples?
7. Which of the investment models described in Locavesting would work well in your community and why? Which would you be most likely to try yourself? Community loan funds? LIONS? Crowdfunding? Direct public offerings?
8. Does it matter to you what companies you are invested in? Do you know where your money is invested now? How important is the “social” return on investment to you?
9. Knowledge of a company and the market it operates in are important factors when assessing an investment. Do you feel you would be better informed when dealing with a local company or a multinational? Why?
10. How much of a person's portfolio should be invested in local economies? 5 percent? 10 percent? 50 percent?
11. Thinking about our securities laws, in what ways have the rules that were put into place to protect small investors had negative or unintended consequences? How have these same laws failed our small businesses and entrepreneurs?
12. How will the recently signed JOBS Act, which legalizes crowdfunding, help local investment efforts? Do you think crowdfunding will be a boon to small businesses and investors, or do you think it will open the door to rampant fraud?
13. In this age of social media and Internet technology, will crowdfunding begin to displace Wall Street intermediaries or disrupt the conventional financial system?
14. Do you think the concept of a local stock exchange makes sense? Why or why not?
15. Can locavesting help improve the country's economic health? Can it make the economy more resilient to future downturns?