THE GREAT AMERICAN DRUG DEAL

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Study Guide

Whether reading the book on your own, as part of a book club, or in a class, we hope this study guide helps stimulate discussion that allows readers to more deeply examine their own attitudes towards healthcare, innovation, and affordability.

BEFORE READING...

Take yourself through these thought exercises. (Try them again after you read the book and notice if or where you've changed your thinking.)

1. **Identify three arguments about the drug industry that you hear in your own life.**
    a. Try and identify the place where you usually hear rhetoric supporting each argument. Family? Friends? Social media? The news? Somewhere else?
    b. Do you believe these arguments? Why or why not?
    c. What are two things the drug industry does well?
    d. What are two things the drug industry does not do well?
        - Can you propose a policy solution for each?

2. **What is the purpose of an insurance copayment?**

3. **What is the difference between a generic drug and a branded drug?**

4. **Why can't some patients afford the drugs they need?**

5. **What is the Biotech Social Contract?**

AFTER READING...

Engage in debates with classmates, friends, and family members over the following questions.
(You'll find you're now well equipped to do so!)

1. **Do you think copayments and deductibles serve a useful purpose?**

2. **What responsibility does the biopharmaceutical industry have to our society?**

3. **Are "fast follower" ("me too") drugs worthwhile investments? Why or why not?**

4. **Why are drugs more expensive in the United States than they are in other countries?**

5. **What should happen when a complex drug like an antibody or gene therapy cannot go generic? How can we prevent such a drug from becoming an undisruptable monopoly?**

6. **What is the purpose of a Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM)? Are PBMs useful in our system, and if so, how?**

7. **What are two concrete, actionable reforms that would make drugs more accessible to patients?**

8. **Do you support direct-to-consumer advertising for drugs? Why or why not, and if so, in what form?**

9. **How can we stop bad actors from price-jacking old drugs?**

10. **Are drug prices too high?**

THINKING FURTHER...

These are discussion questions meant to propel your thinking further.
There aren't always easy answers.

1. **Do you consider healthcare a human right?**

2. **How much healthcare is a human right?**

3. **How should a company determine the right price for a drug? What variables should they consider when doing so?**
   a. What is the relationship between research and development spending and the price of a drug? Does one of these variables depend on the other? If so, how?
   b. How may a market judge a product differently than a budget working group? Which is more likely to accurately capture the way price relates to value?

4. **What are the relative roles of federal agencies like the NIH and biopharma companies in bringing new medicines to market?**

5. **Why isn't it problematic that a drug company has the right to set their own price for each drug they sell? Doesn't that just mean they can raise prices as high as they want to in order to boost profits?**

6. **What happens when generic drugs aren't as good as their original branded equivalents? Are there steps we can take to minimize this risk?**

7. **Would insisting on price transparency help lower prices or set more rational prices?**

8. **How should America reform its health insurance system?**
   a. What does the government need to do more of or less of in healthcare?
   b. What do private entities need to do more of and less of?

9. **Is there a role for value-based pricing organizations like NICE or ICER? What variables should those organizations consider to ensure their evaluations are fair?**