



Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World (Frank W. Abrams Lectures)

By Daniel Yankelovich

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In this work, the foremost figure in American public opinion research offers a provocative prescription for strengthening the public's hand in its silent power struggle with the experts. Yankelovich sees a need for a proper balance of power and influence between the public and elite groups.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Drawing on his experience as a public-opinion researcher, Yankelovich's (*Starting with the People*) highly readable work offers his notions on how ``creeping expertism'' is causing Americans to lose their ability to govern themselves. He also presents some optimistic views on what to do about it. When political leaders have problems, they consult experts (economic, military, scientific and so on), who assume that if the public knew as much as they do, all would acknowledge that they're right. Not so, says Yankelovich: the public has its own perspectives and priorities (though how these are formed remains unclear). Moreover, it is possible to improve the quality of what he calls ``public judgment'' (mass opinion that is thoughtful and accepting of the consequences of its conclusions, as opposed to the off-the-cuff opinion that polls often measure), not simply through better information but through a better process of forming judgment. Yankelovich offers a three-step model for achieving this: consciousness-raising (learning about the problem); working through (confronting the need for change); and resolution (forming coherent and responsible solutions).

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From the Back Cover

In his most important book to date, Daniel Yankelovich, the dean of American public research, offers a prescription for strengthening the public's hand in its silent power struggle with the experts.

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