**Big Questions**

What impact does national service have?

Is it truly a strategy for change? And if it is, what kind of change does it result in?

**Opening Exercise**

The below option can be done: 1) individually only; or 2) individually and then in pairs, small groups or large groups:

When you started your year of service as an AmeriCorps member, what did you think you knew about this work and your place in it? What has changed about what you know and how has this change affected the way you view it and do your service now?

**Clarification Questions**

1. What is the intended goal of national service that Covey talked about?
2. What does the title mean?
3. What was “the plan” when Covey started working as a VISTA?
4. What does Covey say she didn't know at 22? What does her age have to do with it?
5. What is the “dismantling” that Covey says was required?
6. Why does “the way of knowing” mean “dismantling” the things Covey had been sure of?
7. What is key to Covey’s success, in her opinion? Do you believe that to be key for you?
8. What leads Covey to direct so much frustration at the Just Say No organization?
9. In the reading, there is a quote by James Baldwin: “Any real change implies the breakup of the world as one has always known it, the loss of all that gave me an identity, the end of safety.” What does this quote mean to you?
10. In this piece, what or who does Covey seem to learn from?
11. Why is Covey unable to be “patient and unbroken” by her experience in North Dakota?
12. Why was “the lake meant to be a mystery”
13. On page 192, she says “just what they needed, right?” – please talk more about
14. What does Covey think she knows at the end of her VISTA year?

**Significance and Implication Questions**

1. What do you think is the author’s point?
2. How does Covey's conclusion strike you that “the greatest change occurs in the people who serve, not in the communities where they offer themselves”?
3. Covey says that she “always had issues with positive people because they made me feel negative, and truth be told, I thought something must be wrong with them. What are your issues and how have they shown up for you in this year?
4. What role do relationships play in your service year and your success? What relationships have been easy to build and what relationships have been challenging and why?
5. What leads to frustration in your year of service?
6. What was the intended goal that Covey referenced in the beginning of the story? What is your experience as it relates to the intended goal?
7. Can you relate to Covey? Have you experienced any of the things she experienced?
8. What big ideas did you bring into this year and what has been your experience with them through your term?
9. Is your service and this program “just what people who are homeless need?
10. What does this reading bring up for you as it relates to your year of service?
11. What should we take away from this reading?
12. What impact does national service have? Is service a solution?
13. Is it truly a strategy for change? And if it is, what kind of change does it result in?
14. Do we have an obligation to ensure that certain things happen as a part of our experience? If so, what are those obligations?
15. The AmeriCorps Issue Areas are: Getting Things Done; Strengthening Communities; Participant Development (Encouraging Responsibility and Expanding Opportunity) - What does this article remind us of as we think about these four areas?
16. Does the program have an obligation to ensure that certain things happen as a part of your experience?
17. What ideas do you have to ensure that next year is even better?
18. Is the change in person important?
19. What issues do you have?
20. What “sold” you into national service?
21. Have you had moments where you felt strongly about where you are while at the same time also equally strong that you do not belong?
22. Does this work take 1 year? Can change happen in 1 year?
23. What questions do you have?
24. Are there benefits to bringing “outsiders” to communities to address real social change?
25. Is service supposed to be a mystery?

**Closing Exercise**

The below option can be done: 1) individually only; or 2) individually and then in pairs, small groups or large groups:

What questions does this discussion raise for you and in what ways can you bring these questions up?