



# **Citizen Speak: The Democratic Imagination in American Life (Morality and Society Series)**

*Andrew J. Perrin*

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When we think about what constitutes being a good citizen, routine activities like voting, letter writing, and paying attention to the news spring to mind. But in *Citizen Speak*, Andrew J. Perrin argues that these activities are only a small part of democratic citizenship—a standard of citizenship that requires creative thinking, talking, and acting.

For *Citizen Speak*, Perrin met with labor, church, business, and sports organizations and proposed to them four fictive scenarios: what if your senator is involved in a scandal, or your police department is engaged in racial profiling, or a local factory violates pollution laws, or your nearby airport is slated for expansion? The conversations these challenges inspire, Perrin shows, require imagination. And what people can imagine doing in response to those scenarios depends on what's possible, what's important, what's right, and what's feasible. By talking with one another, an engaged citizenry draws from a repertoire of personal and institutional resources to understand and reimagine responses to situations as they arise. Building on such political discussions, *Citizen Speak* shows how a rich culture of association and democratic discourse provides the infrastructure for a healthy democracy.

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