Discussion Questions Vera Laska: The Power of Resistance

Name

1. How does Vera become part of a resistance group?

2. What personal qualities or characteristics are evident in Vera, which may have influenced her decision to help her friend and eventually to be an official part of the "resistance?"

3. Why is Vera sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau as a political prisoner?

4. What imagery does Vera use to describe her memories of arriving at Auschwitz?

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5. How does Vera explain her daily life and the living conditions in Auschwitz?

6. Vera says she "cultivates" her memories in solitude because people won't comprehend them. What does she mean by this, and how does she explain it further?

7. Vera demonstrates through her testimony that even as a prisoner amid terrible conditions, she never allows herself to feel powerless. What examples might illustrate this?

8. In her testimony, Vera illustrates the behavior of her guards at Gross-Rosen by saying, "and when the tide turned, suddenly they were nice; insurance, you know, [the guards] took out insurance. 'I brought a prisoner an apple. I am not a Nazi.'" What does this suggest about the belief system of the guards with whom Vera came into contact?

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9. What do all of the examples of resistance in Vera's testimony have in common? What conclusions might we draw about making a difference through acts of resistance?

10. Using Vera's testimony as an example, how important was it to have deeply held ideals and/or beliefs in order to carry out acts of resistance? Explain your answer.

11. Why is it important to stand up for an ideal or act against injustice, both of which are forms of resistance?

12. If we use Vera's story as an example or inspiration, then what may be a first action we can individually take in resistance efforts against genocide in today's world?