ERWC

Value of Life

**Thinking Critically Questions - Jones**

**Questions about Logic (Logos)**

1. An interview is a form of nonfiction—a text that tells the “truth.” Do you think Jones is being truthful in his observations of Roger Ebert? Do you think Ebert is being truthful in his statements about himself? Are you more likely to believe what someone else says about a person or what the person says about himself or herself? Explain your reasoning.

2. How are emotional pain and loss different from physical pain and loss? Can the two be compared fairly?

**Questions about the Writer (Ethos)**

3. Unlike some cancer survivor stories, Chris Jones’s interview with Roger Ebert doesn’t make it clear that Ebert is successfully winning his fight against cancer. How does the uncertainty of Ebert’s health impact the way we see his attitude toward the value of life? Would Ebert’s credibility be the same if he had long ago defeated cancer?

4. Compare Ebert’s attitude about dreams to Hamlet’s. How do dreams affect the suffering of both men? What do their attitudes toward dreams reveal about their characters?

5. Compare Ebert’s attitude about death to Hamlet’s. How does each characterize “the undiscovered country” (Hamlet’s words) “on the other side of death” (Ebert’s words)? How do their attitudes toward death and what might happen after death relate to the way they approach life?

6. What does Ebert mean when he says, “When I am writing my problems become invisible and I am the same person I always was. All is well. I am as I should be.” (par. 18)?

7. How does Jones characterize the post-cancer Ebert as being different from the pre-cancer Ebert?

8. Re-read the paragraph beginning, “But now everything he says must be written. . . ” (par. 20). Why does Jones say of Ebert’s new life, “so many words, so much writing”? What does this statement help us understand about what Ebert values in life?

9. What evidence, if any, can you find that suggests Ebert is more of an optimist after fighting cancer than before?

10. What evidence, if any, can you find that suggests Chris Jones admires and believes Roger Ebert?

**Questions about Emotions (Pathos)**

11. Why does Jones describe Ebert’s medical crises in 2006 in graphic detail? What words suggest the brutality of the cancer treatment and recovery process Ebert experienced?

12. How do you think Jones’s description of Ebert’s “open smile” might impact readers?

13. What language in the excerpt from Ebert’s review of *Broken Embraces* in the article’s conclusion suggests Ebert’s enduring passion for life?