What Is Our Responsibility, As Parents, To Our Children and to Society?

If we see war as futile in solving world problems, have we made that clear to our children? In what ways? How can we, as parents, set an example of what sort of world we want to see?

What if we brainstormed with our children, whatever their ages, about what they hope their future will hold, and what it will take to get there?

What if, at the same time, we spoke to them realistically of our concerns about living under a government devoted to war-making, both under Democrats and Republicans?

How could we protect our family members and our larger communities from a military draft?

What might we have to do, as parents and family members, to help our youngsters as they decide to resist our government’s war-making?

Are We Allowing Others, Such as the Military, to Make Decisions about Our Children?

As parents, we judge ourselves on how our children fare in the world. We are concerned for their well-being, and naturally we hope they will choose courses in life which reflect our values.

How is it, then, that so many young people in the U.S. have been recruited into the military, when polls show that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are unpopular and widely regarded as illegal and inhumane?

When You Do The Math, War Money For College Doesn’t Add Up.

For many years, registering for the draft with the Selective Service System has been required in order to get Federal student aid. The good news is that in late 2020 Congress voted to eliminate this requirement. The bad news is that the change won’t take effect until 2023.

In the meantime, paying for college is hard, but there may be alternatives that don’t require registering for the draft.

And if the price of college is enlistment in the military, should we tell our children that college is worth that price?

What message do we send our children if we tell them to compromise their beliefs to get college aid, but aren’t willing to make comparable sacrifices in our own way of life to save money for our children’s education?

www.Resisters.info

For more information, or to arrange for a presentation to your group, see our Web site or contact the Radical Family Collective, beneficialbug@sonic.net, 510-900-1160.

(Updated March 2021. See Web site for latest info.)
As Caring Parents, We Need to Watch Out for Our Children. If We Fail to Do So, the Military Will Be Happy to Take Over.

So how do we do so when most of us have been well-schooled to obey orders, whether from teachers or bosses, the IRS or the military?

It comes down to communication. Lots of it. As Cindy Sheehan, whose son died in Iraq after enlisting in the U.S. military, has said, “We need to be getting to the soccer moms with babes in arms.”

It’s never too late to go to our kids, explain why we might have felt uncomfortable having such a conversation with them before, and talk about what they might do if they don’t agree with war as a means to “solving” conflict. Let them know that they aren’t alone in not wanting to fight, kill, and die at someone else’s command, and that we’ll support them if they choose to resist the military and the draft.

What If My Kid Acts Aloof, Or Sees No Problem With The Military Or The Concept Of War?

Unlike some other species, human children emerge from the womb immature, and need years of guidance and protection. Military recruiters are trained to take advantage of teen-aged immaturity.

Most teens don’t have the time or experience fully to appreciate all the forces that lead governments into war. It’s up to us to help make sure they see the implications of the choices the military offers them.

This Is Our Chance, and Our Children’s. Let’s Not Blow It!

We need to sort out our own values and — once we have, perhaps, reassessed our own lives — give our kids a list of things we are willing to do to support their resistance. (For some of the things young people themselves can do, and have been doing, to resist the draft, see our Web site at Resisters.info.) Here are some of the things we can do as parents:

- “Opt-out” of having our children’s contact information turned over to military recruiters.
- If we wouldn’t accept or pass on solicitations for our children to join a dangerous, violent, cult, why accept mail for them about military recruiting or Selective Service? Protect our children against military recruiters’ lies by throwing away recruiters’ junk mail, hanging up on their phone calls, and shutting the door on them if they come to our homes.
- Make it as hard as possible for the Selective Service System to draft or recruit our children into the military. Don’t help them find our children, register them, or induct them.
- Throw away Selective Service junk mail and threats. Don’t accept Selective Service mail for our children, or give the Selective Service their forwarding address. Don’t sign for any registered letters from the Selective Service or the Department of Justice. (No one ever has to accept mail for someone else, and no one has to talk to the Feds. Anything we say, and will, be used against us, and against our children.) Tearing up an induction notice could be considered a crime, but it shifts the risk of prosecution (however small that risk may be) from our children to ourselves.
- Don’t make it easy for the military: Make them track our children down individually to order them to register, and track them down again individually to order them to report for induction. The government has to prove that someone actually received orders to register or to go into the military. So no one can be prosecuted without either signing for a letter telling them to register or report for induction, or being found by the Feds in person and served with a notice.
- Let our children know they’re not alone in resisting draft registration. Since the current draft registration resumed in 1980, millions of young people have not registered with Selective Service, or have “unregistered” by moving without telling the government. Many who registered will resist, or will simply ignore an induction notice.
- If our children are thinking of joining the military to get money for college, find ways we can finance their education without leaving them indentured to the Pentagon.
- Speak out. Organize. Talk to our friends and neighbors about the threat to our children. Let the politicians know that we won’t let the military take our children without resistance.
- Consider taking some of the same risks, in our anti-war actions, that our children take in resisting military recruiting and the draft.