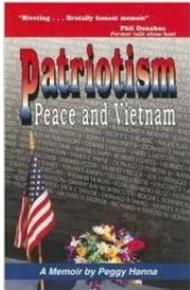




Discussion Guide



About the Book

Book Title: Patriotism, Peace and Vietnam

Author: Peggy Hanna

Published: Left to Right, 2007

Author Website: <http://www.peghanna.com/>

Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
 2. This memoir tells the story of the author's changing political perspective. What experiences caused her to rethink her political view points? Have you had any similar transformations in your life? Explain.
 3. What is your understanding of the Vietnam war? How did this book affect your understandings? Did you agree or disagree with Hanna's view point?
 4. This book focuses on patriotism. What does that mean to you? Can you be against war and be a patriot in the USA? How does the author answer this question? How do you?
 5. Before becoming involved in the peace movement, Hanna also broke out of the mold as a feminist. How does she describe this experience? What has been your own experience with feminism in your life?
 6. Hanna and her fellow activists fought against conservative views in their town, boldly speaking out, and organizing actions. How did this work out? Have you ever been an activist? How did your experiences compare or contrast to hers?
 7. Hanna continually broke out of her comfort zone. What was the story you enjoyed the most of her "stepping out"? Explain a time you stepped out of your comfort zone? In what way might you be called to step out in your life today?
 8. If you were to write a memoir on your life, what would you write about?
 9. Read over the MAMs comments on the book. Which of them do you most agree with and why?
 10. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?
-



NANCY: This well-written memoir unfolds Peggy Hanna’s story in a powerful way, as she shifts from her conservative Catholic upbringing to becoming a peace activist and believing that speaking out against an unjust war is the true form of patriotism. The book not only tells her personal story, but also weaves in the history of the war. Her story resonates with mine and I am so glad that she expressed what often concerns me. As a pacifist, I don’t believe any war is justified. And often, that view is considered unpatriotic. But if you study the history of wars, you will find that they cause more harm than good. And if you study the motives of the USA, you will become disturbed. And if you try to protest, you will often become thwarted in your efforts. And yet, even as Peg and her friends felt frustration, their voices were heard. Today, history tells the truth of the error of the Vietnam War. We must continue to speak for peace. Thank you, Peggy, for your excellent voice, and for continuing to be a voice for peace. I’m so glad you’re a part of my community.



SALLIE: I liked this book. I liked how Peggy took her children with her to rallies and involved them in her organizing. And I also liked that she stopped what she was doing and went to the hospital when her son was in an accident. I know it’s often hard for mothers to juggle family and work. Sounds like she had a wonderful husband, who helped out to make it possible. Great story, great Mom, working hard to make the country better for her children.



ABIGAIL: Thank you, Peggy. Like Nancy, I’m a pacifist. We take the minority position. But that doesn’t mean we’re wrong! As a Christian, I think Jesus was very clear in telling us to love, to turn the other cheek, and to move beyond “an eye for an eye”. Yet, there is a pervasive belief that supporting war is what Christians should be doing. This book lays it all out. It shows the problem with an unjust war, exposes the mistakes of our government and how a person of conscience can speak up. Unfortunately, our government keeps repeating this mistake. We need more books like this!



MOLLY: This book reminded me of how I felt when my son went to Iraq. It was so difficult to speak up against the war. We were labeled unpatriotic then, as well. I didn’t want to make my son feel I didn’t support him, and yet I also felt the war was a mistake. I hated that he made the decision to go. I thank God he came home in one piece. It’s so hard. I don’t see us learning from our mistakes.



PRISCILLA: Hmm... I think that a woman’s place is in the home. I think Peggy went too far, first with feminism and then with becoming an activist. I guess I’m one of those other Christians who believes in family values and supporting my country.



KATHARINE: From an academic perspective, I think it’s a great book to use to teach the history of the Vietnam War. It helps tell the social history of America at the same time. Hanna’s story mirrors the story of many women in the era, and also explains the peace movement in a realistic way, while explaining the developments of the war. I’ll recommend it to our history profs. As a good Lutheran, though, I believe there are just wars.



JANE: Go Peggy! What a woman! Flying to Paris, organizing marches and rallies, being a political force, and feminist to boot! I like this kind of memoir with a strong female voice. You almost made a dove of me, but I’m still a die hard supporter of our military. We keep the world safe, you know.