

We are the
Fierce Vulnerability Network,
a constellation of
direct action teams positioned
at the intersection of
racial healing and
climate justice

Deeply aware of our imperfections, and of the humbling enormity of the crises humanity is facing, we are nonetheless determined to act. As we move forward, we pledge to listen, learn, experiment, and GROW; to make our mistakes, adapt, and try, try again.

We are but one element in an expansive movement ecosystem, a "movement of movements", each part of which is essential. Within this vast movement ecosystem, our network is called to two core commitments:

To contribute to racial healing and reconciliation by making and facilitating concrete acts of reparations and atonement.

To honor, uplift, and defend life through bold civil disobedience and creative initiative to address the climate emergency.

While *climate action* and *reparations* represent the “what” of our work, three additional elements represent the “how”:

fierce vulnerability, personal vocation,
and *emergence*

This zine summarizes these five primary strands of our network’s DNA for you. We hope it will help you get a sense for whether you are called to join us.

reparations and atonement: opening pathways to trust through action

"It makes no sense to consider a
tender of apology a true apology
while the atrocity is raging on."

- Roy L. Brooks



Reparations: Returning what can still be returned, repairing what can still be repaired.

Atonement: Spiritually and relationally healing actions in solemn acknowledgment that only a tiny fraction of what has been stolen and destroyed can ever be returned or repaired.

Racial healing makes the relationships that power our movement possible. The current crisis requires a power and unity of social response unlike any seen before. We believe that only relationships created, sustained, and transformed by trust and honesty can open our way to this capacity. By ignoring longstanding calls for reparations, people of European descent block this possibility. Our network seeks to break through this barrier.

Racial healing in our society requires concrete expressions of reparations. Acknowledging the complexity of our differing/mixed/intersecting racial identities, all members in our network are committed to making reparations real. For those who identify as white in our network, this means the naming of the lives, lands, and cultures that can never be restored, and the turning over of time, energy, money and land to those impacted by the brutal legacy of colonization and white supremacy, most notably Indigenous peoples of this continent and Black descendants of slaves. For those who identify as people of color in our network, this includes continuing and strengthening the design and facilitation of reparations redistribution pathways.

Reparations must be both societal and personal. The possibility of full-fledged reconciliation depends on full-fledged redistribution. Any sincere redress for unspeakable crimes against humanity requires action on a societal scale that individuals can never accomplish in isolation. While keeping this big picture imperative in view, we nevertheless hold the hope for authentic one-to-one connection at the center of our reparations paradigm. Members of our group who engage in reparations, however, do so without expectation of relationship. For white people,

in particular, to put conditions on the movement of resources perpetuates the race-based power dynamics we are trying to dismantle.

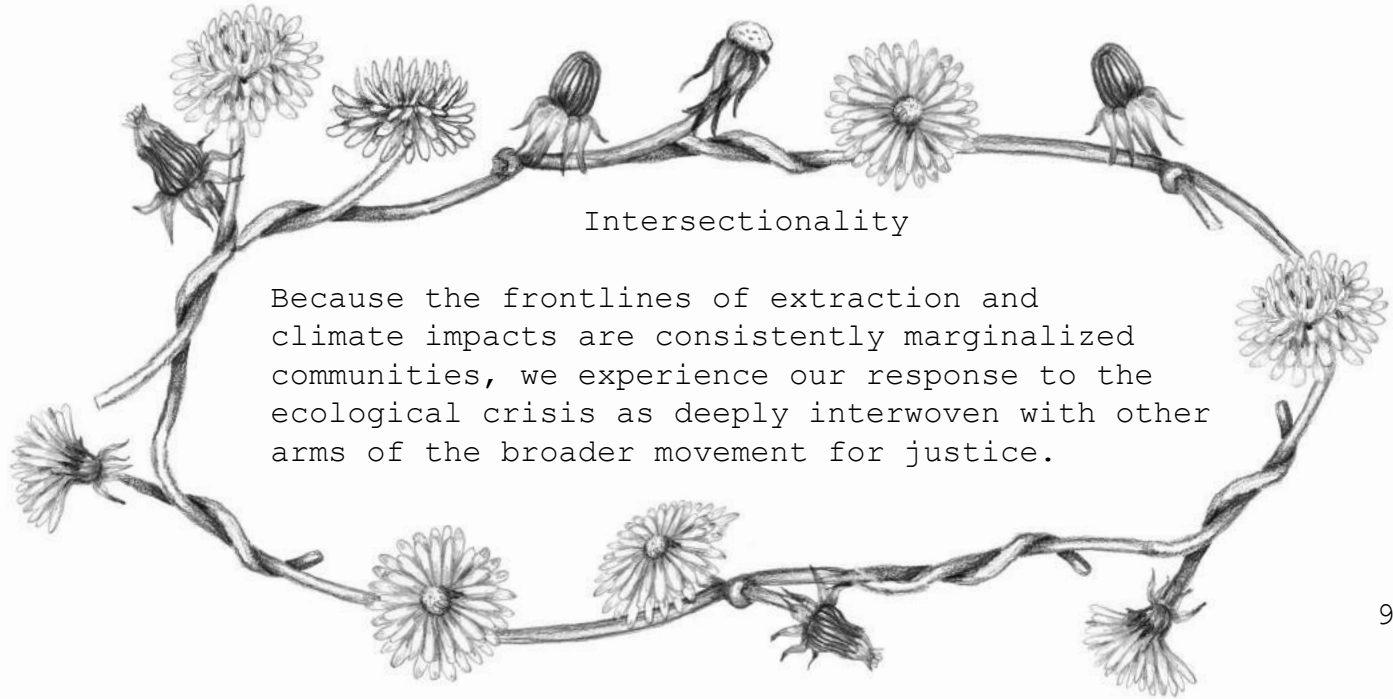
Restitution for past harm must be combined with direct, impassioned struggle for racial justice here and now. While we hope reparations for past wrongs will be of some use, our network is committed to actively engaging our time, hearts, minds and bodies in the critical struggles that persist as a result of white supremacy. This historic moment requires our collective embodied response to longstanding and present-day calls to action from Indigenous, Black, Muslim, undocumented, and other present and historically oppressed members of our communities.

Attempts to repair the centuries of damage done represent a wildly incomplete work-in-progress. We are called to do something now to address the legacy of genocide, theft, kidnapping, rape, and so many other forms of brutality and dehumanization, knowing we have nothing near an adequate solution. We expect our methods and understanding to change as we move forward, and we will continue to turn to the leadership of those most impacted as our network grows and diversifies.

the necessity of climate action + big picture strategy

Each day the fossil fuel industry further threatens the possibility of sustained life for more and more of Earth's species, humanity very much included. This unimaginably destructive energy system is inseparable from other major causes of the current catastrophe, such as factory farming and unfettered deforestation. Our network stands against all systems based on domination and exploitation, while supporting the emergence of truly just, life-sustaining alternatives. We recognize that reforming existing systems with "green" technologies and practices often perpetuates the exploitation and materialism that lie at the heart of the climate crisis.

In defense of life, our network engages in bold direct action to halt the systems driving ecological collapse. While at present our collective strategic focus falls most squarely on the fossil fuel industry, this focus by no means restricts our teams' engagement in other essential arenas of climate action.



Intersectionality

Because the frontlines of extraction and climate impacts are consistently marginalized communities, we experience our response to the ecological crisis as deeply interwoven with other arms of the broader movement for justice.

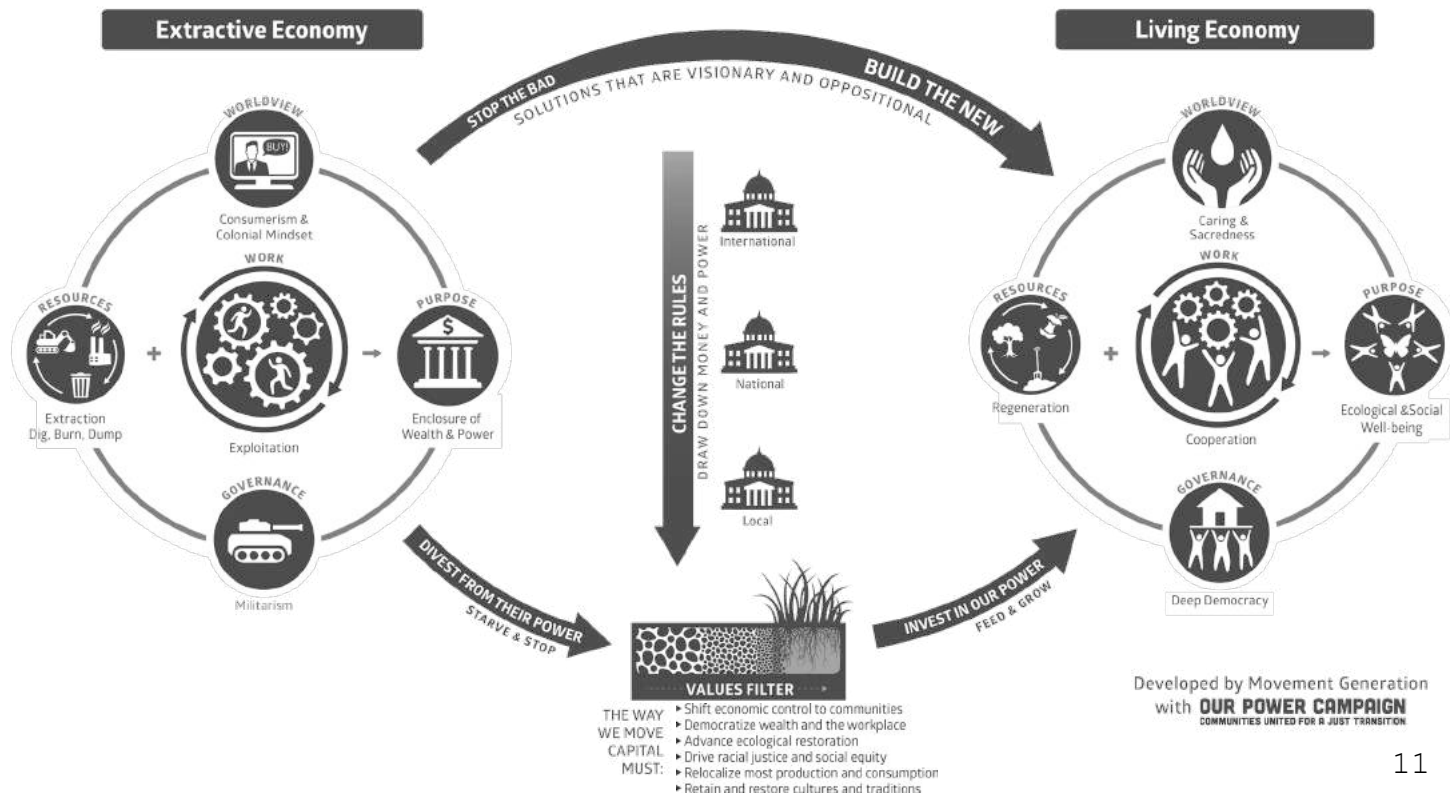
Balancing defense with creative initiative

For good reason the climate movement has mostly resorted to a strategy of firefighting, with activists constantly reacting to the onslaught of the domination system in order to alleviate as much suffering and immediate damage as possible. As important as this work has been, and will continue to be, we believe this reactive firefighting strategy is sorely inadequate—especially when we take in the long view.

We envision a coherent, big picture strategic arc which balances such necessary defensive action with creative initiative. In other words: a long view strategy that combines bold direct intervention in response to the destruction wrought by the domination system and imaginative, culture-shifting initiative that builds a movement characterized by vulnerability and courage. By taking and keeping such initiative we hope to see the balance of power shift in the direction of those defending life.

Our network gratefully acknowledges Movement Generation's excellent illustration of where our society is and where we want it to go. Our network hopes to advance this powerful model, through hands-on experimentation with "visionary and oppositional" action in service of life.

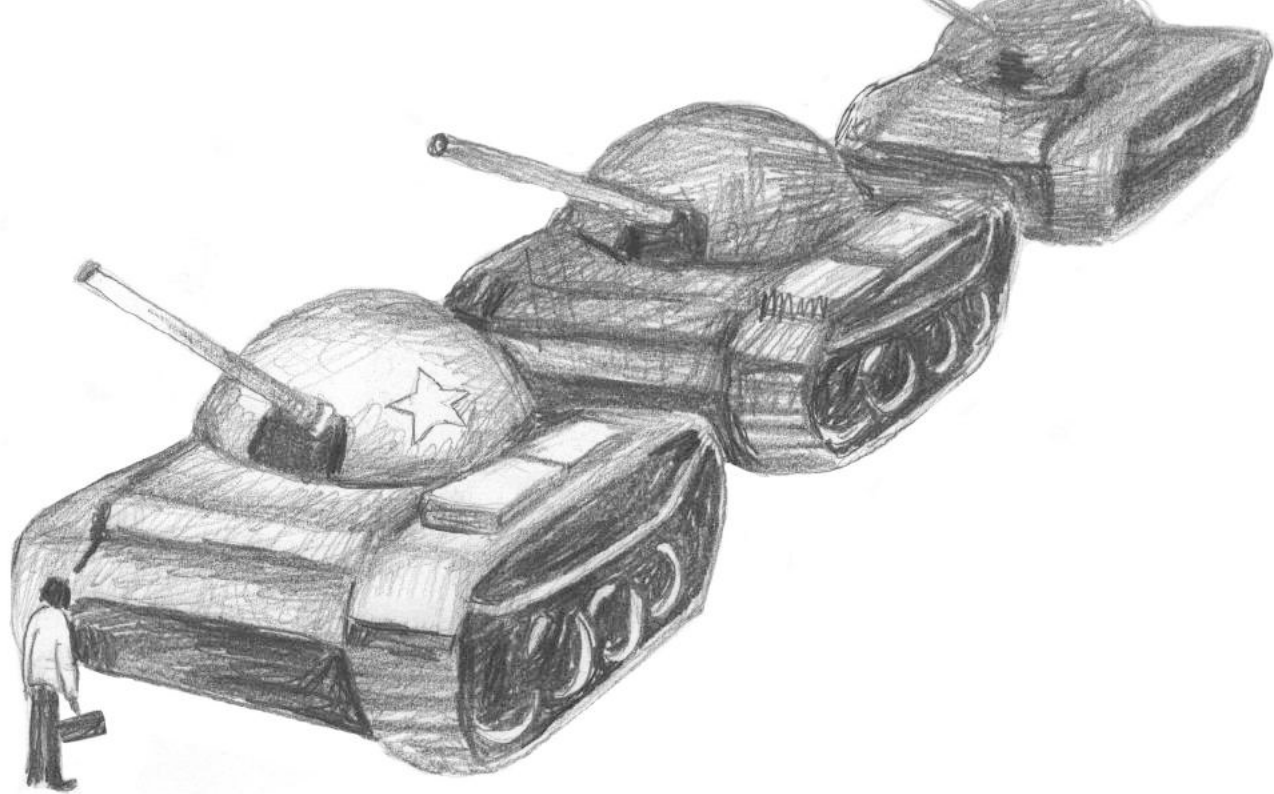
A STRATEGY FRAMEWORK FOR JUST TRANSITION



fierce vulnerability

"Vulnerability is not weakness; it's
our greatest measure of courage."

— Brené Brown



Vulnerability is our strength – made evident as a lived combination of love, truthfulness, and courageous action.

We recognize the need to excavate the dark and forgotten places in our hearts, to heal from past and present traumas, and to embrace restoration and reconciliatory practices with one another, in order to show up to this work well and empowered. We make space for our heartbreak and anger, uncertainty and regret. For our joy, wonder, laughter, tenderness, grief and praise.

As we act to honor, uplift, and defend life, we are committed to taking and holding the initiative. We show up authentically, standing for what we believe in, with strength and firm resolve, and with openness, love, and respect for all we encounter. This love for all is expressed without timidity or deference to those who would exploit or demean us and others.

We seek to lovingly hold one another accountable to the ways we ourselves cause both personal harm and systemic exploitation.

We center the building of trust and love among us, knowing that ultimately the strength of our relationships with one another will be the measure of our contribution to the movement.

Breaking free from the cycle of trauma and shame

All of us have been traumatized living within a dehumanizing and genocidal civilization. This trauma is too often perpetuated and passed on through the weapon of shame. Having seen the toxic and paralyzing effect of a culture of shaming on activist communities, we commit to not perpetuating trauma and shame. We strive to honor each other's trauma with empathy, and rather than internalizing and passing on that trauma, we seek to hold it with compassion and love. We commit to not forgetting the injustices that have caused trauma, while remembering how easily we ourselves can justify harming others. Resisting the tendency toward shame allows us the space for the difficult process of being accountable for genuine guilt, repentance, and healing.

personal vocation

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

— Frederick Buechner

We are each unique in the entire history of the universe. Our individual gifts, callings, and perspectives cannot be replicated, and if they are not activated they will be lost forever. Our network strives to help each person live their heart's calling and unleash their/her/his potentials to the fullest extent possible. Living out our vocations in service to this radical network will strengthen and grow the movement. We commit to dismantling barriers that stand in the way of individuals discovering, embracing, and living their purpose, especially those experiencing marginalization.

What gifts are needed? Healers, conflict transformers, musicians, artists, actors, documenters, builders, dismantlers, strategists, everything-riskers, listeners, monastics and other deep pray-ers and presencers, group process virtuosos, storytellers, radio broadcasters, cooks, resource collectors and distributors, dumpster divers, clowns and jugglers. The list is endless. What each of us can bring to this network can be brought by no one else. We long to find a way to set the full spectrum of our gifts into motion for the greatest impact towards healing, justice, community, and an end to the destruction and division that is blocking so much of humanity's core goodness and beauty.

A large flock of birds is depicted in flight, starting from the word 'emergence' and moving upwards towards the top right corner of the image. The birds are small, dark silhouettes, and their collective movement creates a sense of upward flow and expansion.

emergence

Inspired by Indigenous wisdom and direct observation of nature's patterns and systems, we have come to trust life's capacity, when given the chance, to resolve incredibly complex problems, and to thrive. Life is diverse resilient experimental iterative spontaneous dynamic nonlinear and beautiful beyond description. We seek to emulate all of this to the best of our imperfect, limited abilities.

In the face of multiplying, intensifying crises, we do not know what will bring a life-affirming culture into being. Our incessant reliance on the belief that we can analyze, solve, and control seems only to speed the unraveling and is, in fact, part of the cycle of domination we are working to end, heal from, and replace. We choose instead to give ourselves over to the magic of emergence, which might yet allow for the miracles and connectedness we need in this moment – and which we believe can take us far beyond where strategy alone can ever go.

A self-organizing system

Our decentralized network invites emergence by embracing core principles of self-organizing:

*We are a living system made up of a web of relationships. We hold relational health and trust-building as primary.

*We are a learning system, evolving constantly.

*We endeavor to stay clear about our identity and purpose, while remaining flexible and adaptable.

*We seek the mysterious paradoxical combination of full personal autonomy and deep collective unity.

*We listen deeply to and are shaped by those targeted by colonization, white supremacy, patriarchy, and all interconnected systems of oppression.

*We seek to make all information within our system available to everyone. Nothing is hidden or hoarded for power.

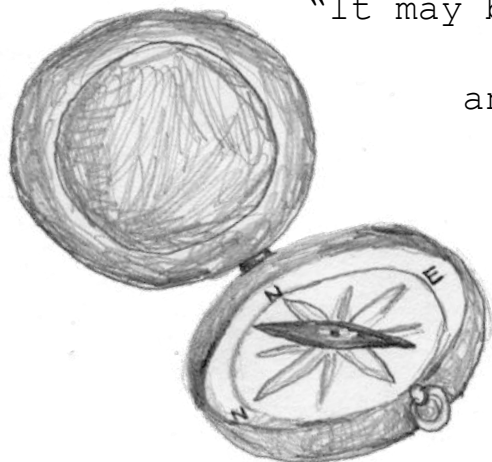
*What we do and how we do it are most meaningful to us, not the eloquence of our written materials or our professed values.

*We invite our members' whole selves into the system and do our best to model authenticity.

*We are willing to experiment, and to make and learn from mistakes.

Nationwide localism

Everyone in our network is accountable to our shared principles and practices, and everyone freely determines how to apply them. We are a network of fully autonomous teams responding to specific needs in our own communities and regions. And, whenever necessary, any and every team is free to put the call out across the network for collective mobilization.



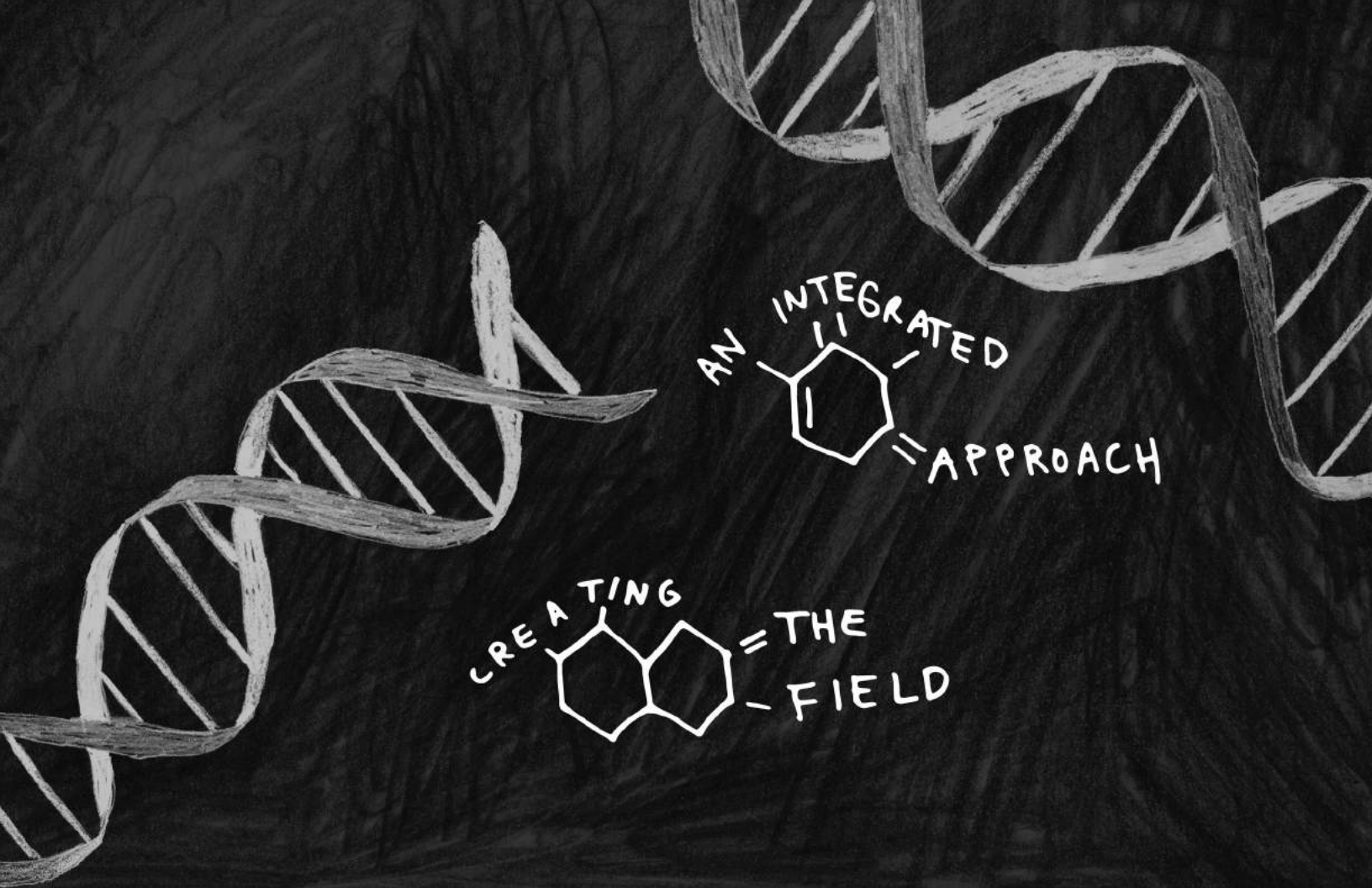
"It may be that when we no longer know what to do,
we have come to our real work,
and when we no longer know which way to go,
we have begun our real journey."

— Wendell Berry

two more key strands
of our network's

DNA





AN INTEGRATED
= APPROACH

CREATING
= THE
FIELD

an
integral
approach
geared toward
front line action

direct action →

community
uplift

self transformation



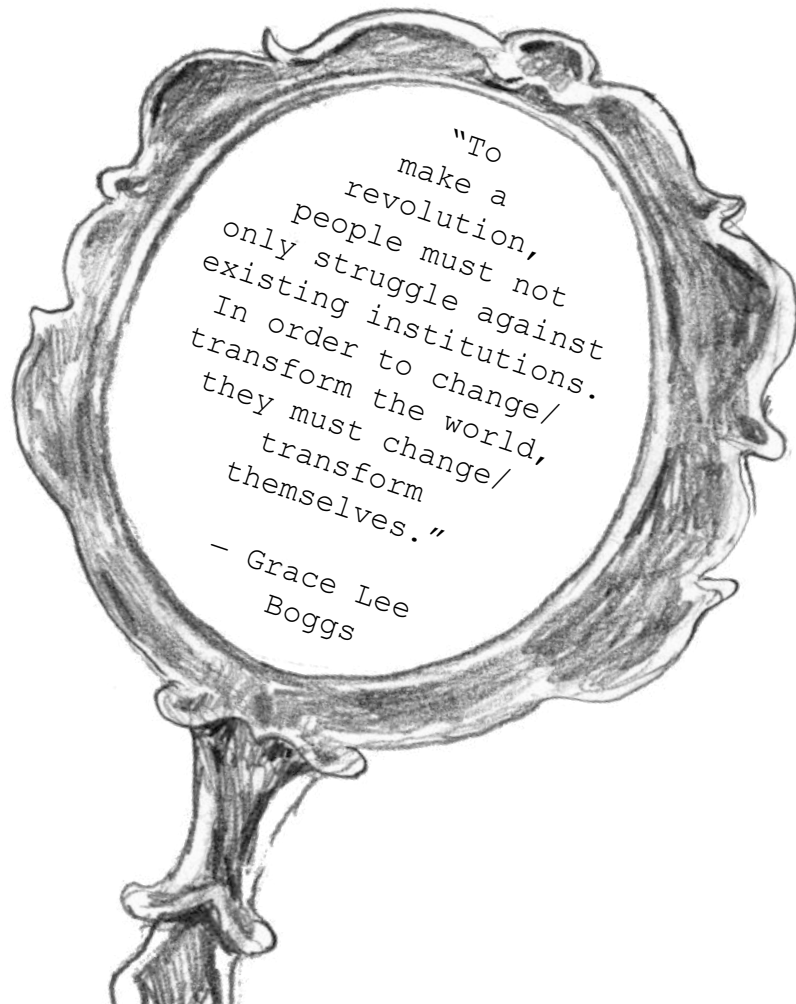
Our members are grounded by a daily practice that integrates

direct action, Community uplift,
and self transformation

a three-fold combination that has guided and strengthened changemakers and their movements across the globe, across history.

We believe that direct action is only truly effective when it is carried forward in tandem with the creation of meaningful alternatives to the systems we are working to dismantle. Collective direct action is the primary purpose of our coming together as a network, and we are each deeply and actively engaged in other essential work, in our lives and in our communities – including the critical work of changing ourselves. If we do not dismantle our own

internalized patriarchy, racism and colonization, we are likely to reproduce or be complacent to patterns of oppression in our direct action work. If we do not openly challenge how our own behaviors contribute to the destruction of the biosphere, we will likely replace one form of environmental exploitation with another. We use concrete practices of self-directed self-transformation, such as peer-to-peer support groups and trainings in decolonization, to bring our inner and outer work into closer alignment.



but there is no need to wait

We have experienced that our frontline encounters with the suffering of both people and planet activate our gifts like nothing else. And we have witnessed time and again how small groups of people taking bold actions of great love, risk and sacrifice stir the hearts of others and mobilize them to bring their bodies and their gifts into the struggle. Self-transformation is an ongoing process, and we experience it as entirely inclusive of frontlines action and hands-on community uplift. We aren't waiting for enlightenment before stepping out!

The background is a dark, charcoal-like texture with dense, swirling lines. Scattered throughout are numerous white, hand-drawn stars of varying sizes and orientations. The text is written in a white, cursive, handwritten style.

creating + holding
"the field"

Within a wider movement that shouts “Shut it down!”

we long for direct action equally determined to

OPEN IT UP

We want to harness a power far beyond what conventional marches, rallies, signs and slogans can offer. We want to experience a life-affirming, militantly loving quality within the movement. A quality built and held with deep silence, sacred song, bold risk-taking, soulful strategy, and revolutionary creativity.

The current response to systems of domination and oppression has largely been to mimic their mode of power. But if we achieve our goal through power over others, we ourselves perpetuate domination and oppression. Thankfully, there are other kinds of power. There is the power that arises between and among people who act together.

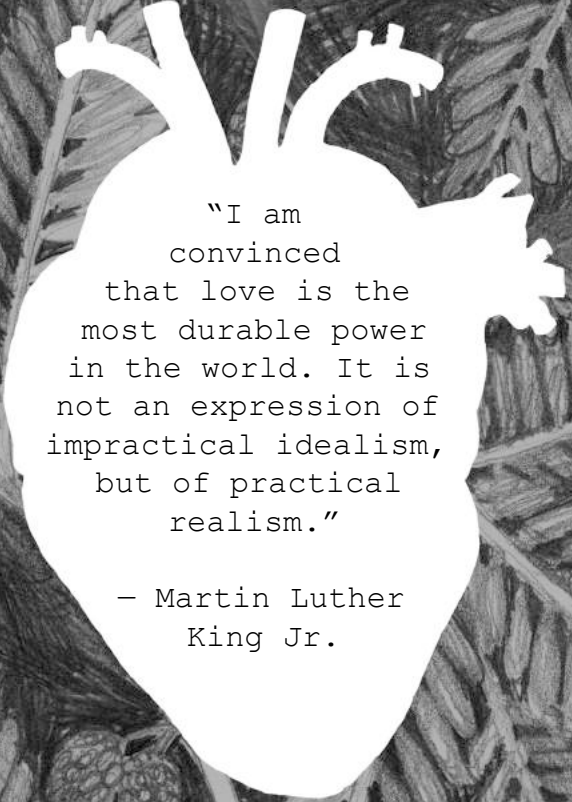
There is the power that arises within individuals – a spiritual power that transcends the control of 'power over' and which isn't constrained by what seems possible.

We seek an alternative to both a passive objection to injustice which appeals to those 'in power', and rageful fantasies that we can overpower the largest, richest military industrial empire the world has ever seen.

We show up for this sacred work grounded in love for all. We show up in meditation, prayer, and strength. When we show up in this way, we call the energy created among us "the field". It is a field, we hope, which reflects our core belief that the goal we seek is pre-existent in the means we use to get there.

Transparency

Our core aspiration to practice fierce vulnerability leads us to prioritize a culture of transparency over a culture of security. One expression of this for us is our shared commitment to not wear masks. We embrace this as a practice within our network, while respecting that others in the wider movement ecosystem find it necessary to choose differently.



"I am
convinced
that love is the
most durable power
in the world. It is
not an expression of
impractical idealism,
but of practical
realism."

— Martin Luther
King Jr.

a word about our network's racial makeup so far

Our network's origins can be traced to collaboration between a couple dozen activist-organizers, the large majority of us white, who shared a deep commitment to making reparations and climate mitigation real in our lives and communities.

From the beginning, a small number of people of color have been instrumental in shaping this process, a few as members of our core group, and a larger circle offering deeply impactful feedback from the periphery. It's critical to acknowledge, however – especially in view of the fact that racial healing is at the heart of our network's DNA – that the predominant whiteness of our group set significant limits on how the beginning stages of our work were envisioned and carried through.

The emergent vision described in this zine has nonetheless resonated with people across the racial spectrum. We've chosen to carry on, therefore,

continually incorporating feedback – particularly from those who identify as non-white – and doing our best to build a solid but flexible network structure that will serve as a tool and a resting place for anyone seeking to embody the DNA summarized in these pages.

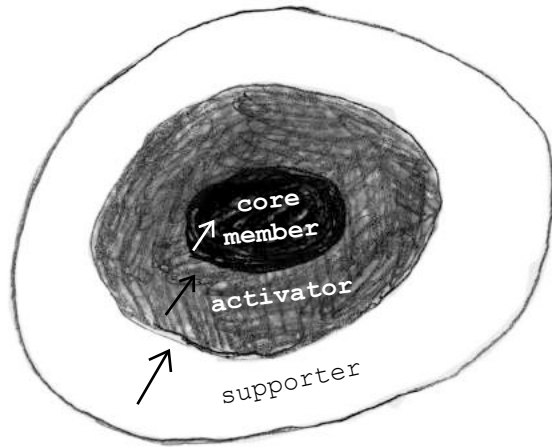
We firmly believe that diversity of experience and identities – race, gender, sexuality, class, legal status, education, vocation, and more – makes our network more robust, addresses crucial areas of undeveloped awareness, and leads us further into integrity. It remains to be seen whether or not the groundwork we’ve laid will lead to the building up of a richly diversified network. We wholeheartedly hope it will and are working to open opportunities, while recognizing that we can’t (and shouldn’t try to) force this to happen. We are committed to continue learning and adapting, while doing our best to place our trust in the power of emergence.

To learn more about some of the people who have been engaged in the early stages of our network’s process, check out the following organizations:

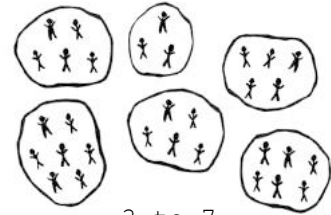
- *Climate Disobedience Center
- *Cultural Catalyst Network
- *East Point Peace Academy
- *Evening Star Farm

- *Jerusalem Farm
- *Joyfield Farm
- *New Community Project/Vine & Fig
- *Possibility Alliance

how to be a part of this network?



3 to 7 members
make a team



3 to 7
teams make
a community



3 to 7 communities
make a village

*** Be a supporter:** spread the word; donate time, money, or other resources.

*** Be an activator:** host a house party to promote the network; offer hospitality to frontlines changemakers in the network; show up to direct actions; fundraise; actively participate in network reparations efforts.

*** Be a core member:** (1) engage in some pre-training study and practice (preferably w/two or more would-be teammates); (2) attend our 4 day training; (3) complete post-training assignments within specified timeframe; (4) form or join a local team and you're part of the network!! Then (5) fulfill your "core commitments" and "supportive practices".

core commitments

***A minimum three weeks per year frontlines engagement.** For example: serve a pre-existing campaign (at the invitation of local leadership, or maybe it's already under your leadership) as a civil disobedience arrest-risker, medic, song leader, conflict mediator or [insert personal vocation here]; you and your team plan and launch your own direct action campaign somewhere at the intersection of racial healing and climate justice; or accept the invitation to join a campaign initiated by another team or constellation of teams in the network.

***Help make reparations real.** We are still wrestling with the question of how to maintain the uncompromising strength of our collective commitment to reparations while acknowledging the complexity of our differing/mixed/intersecting racial identities. Some broad guidelines are nevertheless proving helpful:

For folks in the network who identify as white: Complete your reparations self-audit and follow through on it. Examples of some reparations practices of current members: 20% monthly income returned to Indigenous-led and Black-led grassroots movement organizations; return of land and/or other property to Indigenous peoples; weeks of full-time volunteer service in impacted communities battling environmental racism.

For folks in the network who identify as people of color: Design and facilitate reparations redistribution pathways; bridge the network with other parts of the movement ecosystem; hold the network accountable to a relational, not transactional, reparations paradigm.

supportive practices

Adopt and follow through on your self-growth program with your accountability circle; participate in ongoing enhancement trainings; and link your team with the wider network.

for more information or to apply
for an upcoming training

call

510 371 4539

email

info@eastpointpeace.org

write

East Point Peace Academy
PO Box 30652
Oakland, CA 94604

Be revolutionary... The changes we are responsible for shaping are profound. When we can see the end of our species on the horizon, we must operate at a scale that extends our life beyond the horizon.

- adrienne maree brown

designed + illustrated by rachel rolseth

creative commons 2018

climate action
reparations
fierce vulnerability
personal vocation
emergence

