

## Defining Transformation for Social Change

PMA Resolution

adopted at US Social Forum 2010

June 25, 2010 (*modified July 30, 2010*)

### CONTEXT

---

**A social change movement rooted in transformation is critical to making new worlds possible.**

**Because** the ends of justice can never be served by the means of injustice, even when the injustice is as subtle as the mental framework instilled by our quest for liberation; and because suffering cannot be alleviated by instigating suffering; the conditions under which we labor for change need to exemplify the conditions we wish to ultimately find ourselves in. And we, as agents of that change, must be empowered to thrive in seeking it.

**We believe** it is possible to attain a society that equally honors the humanity of every individual and works to enable safety, security and self-determination for all.

**We believe** movement work is at a vital and exciting transition point, one marked by larger and larger numbers of people who are interested in and hungry for transformation and transformative practice. We recognize burn out, difficulty in imagining the changes we seek and struggles over accountability in our collective actions detract from the steady expansion and sustainability of our movements. We acknowledge that we as agents of change, having been deeply affected by our conditions of oppression, need a deep and abiding commitment to **embody** the revolutionary change we seek. Thus, we see that revolutionary, systemic change is needed internally, in our relations and in our external conditions.

**We believe** that this process begins where we are, with an intention to share out into greater community. We believe that now, this moment, is the time to put hope into action, give it shape, definition, a body. Now is the time to identify the principles and core components of Transformation we need to make possibilities new revolutionary realities.

### RESOLUTIONS

---

**Thus, we resolve that:**

- ❖ Transformation, grounded in intention and directed by purpose, is the path by which our movements can accomplish the conditions necessary for a mutually beneficial, intersected vision for a just society.
- ❖ Transformation, as applied to social change, is defined as a process through which who we are—individually or collectively—is changed so deeply that the following are altered:
  - **identity** (way of seeing/thinking/reflecting upon ourselves and environment);
  - **emotions** (range of feelings, reactivity and emotional responsiveness);
  - **embodiment** (relationship and connectedness to and within our bodies and how we show up);
  - **actions** (behaviors, patterned responses);
  - **creativity** (capacity for responsiveness and ability to access resources);
  - **relatedness** (compassion and trust, learning with others and response to conflict); and
  - **paradigms** (overall perspective and mode of operating).

## Defining Transformation for Social Change, PMA Resolution

- ❖ The work of transformation requires the following components to be recognizable and sustainable:
  - Awareness of the default conditioning, habits and reactions in our individual, organizational and movement experience.
  - An understanding that the experience of disequilibrium: crisis, breakdown, “undone-ness,” or “not-knowing” is a necessary catalyst that moves us toward new identities and states. People and entities can and must be supported in these periods of opening and change.
  - Appreciation of old identities and ways of being as they evolve.
  - A “container” or means of holding the process at the individual, organizational and movement levels; and practices that support the process that are tied to an explicit vision and purpose.
  - A commitment to mentoring people into the necessary skills and processes of transformation.
  - A sustainable relationship with the whole web of life.
  
- ❖ The work of transformation exhibits these characteristics:
  - is deep, holistic and unfolds over time (rather than as an insight). We expect processes of transformation, *as distinct from change*, to be inclined towards being irreversible.
  - in the transformation process, one identity or self passes away and a new, radically altered one emerges. This process repeats itself and deepens through continued engagement in transformative practices and processes. The **old**, previous “form” sheds again and **new** emerges again.
  - can and does consist of multi-disciplinary practices, modalities and paths, but overall it points toward the centrality of consistent, rigorous process and practice capable of undoing conditioning. Such a process and practice must effect systemic changes, internal and external. We refer to the broad spectrum of varied modalities *as transformative practice*.
  
- ❖ Applied transformation leads to the following outcomes:
  - Radically increased awareness, clarity and comfort with direct experience of what is so.
  - Breakthroughs in ways of knowing, thinking and accessing creativity.
  - Impacts our character in a way that is observable, felt and experienced by others.
  - Increased ability to respond from a place of vision and compassion rather than ego, self-interest, or survival reactions.
  - Increased capacity for, skillfulness with and practice of: presence, authenticity, generativity and interdependence.
  
- ❖ The methods and philosophy of transformation must be unequivocally committed to liberation and must be rooted in an explicit analysis of systemic oppression, i.e., structural conditions that empower groups to determine the actions of others, whether by intent or design, through marginalization, disempowerment, exploitation, dominance and violence.
  
- ❖ We recognize that this work is grounded in ancient wisdom, lineages and history, and that it is entering a new phase of coherence, synergy and broader reach that empowers us to move forward. We also acknowledge that new orientations, practices and applications develop along the way.

## DECLARATION and COMMITMENTS

---

**This new world is not only possible, but necessary. It is in this spirit that:**

**We commit to a path of transformation that creates the conditions for justice by the way in which we seek justice so that by our very actions we are:**

- ∞ ending suffering and injustice;
- ∞ healing trauma and oppression;
- ∞ honoring and maintaining indigenous wisdom;
- ∞ tapping into our collective wisdom, power and creativity;
- ∞ choosing joy, celebration and play as a means to our ends, and;
- ∞ increasing our connection to each other, other living things and the earth.

**We commit to support our selves, our communities, partners, allies, and opponents in the movement:**

- ∞ To be rooted in a methodology and philosophy of transformation that moves towards a vision of liberation for all.
- ∞ To see this methodology and philosophy integrated into a wide range of issues, sectors and movements so that we can move toward a more life-affirming, sustainable, revolutionary agenda.
- ∞ To call for, empower and resource transformative leadership within our movements.
- ∞ To rigorously engage in and humbly honor the variety and difference among all our transformative practices that are capable of undoing our conditioning.

**We commit to a Transformative Social Change:** a philosophical, practical and strategic process to effect changes within ourselves, organizations, institutions, systems and society that are rooted in positively-oriented (vision-based), sustainable (personally and environmentally sound), equitable (interdependent), life-affirming (generative) purpose and vision. It reaches towards a world in which people are inspired towards liberation from both personal suffering **and** systemic oppression, no longer compelled by anger and separation, but by love, compassion and a deeper desire for connection, healing, and new beginnings. **Further,:**

**We commit to placing Transformative Social Change at the core of our movements,** with the recognition that it as the most critical and indispensable aspect of moving toward a more just, more equitable, more sustainable society for all.

**And we call on others in the US to join us.**