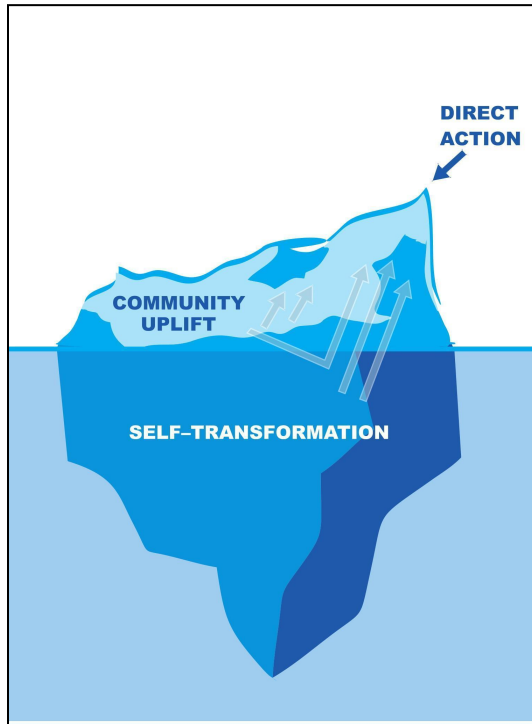


An integral approach geared towards direct action¹

This three-fold combination has guided and strengthened changemakers and their movements across the globe, across history:



direct action,
constructive program, and
self-transformation.

Collective direct action is central to our coming together as a network. We are each deeply and actively engaged in other crucial work, as well, in our lives and in our communities. Deep ongoing work of self-transformation and hands-on engagement in the society-healing work of community uplift are essential features of membership in the network. These three types of work overlap and complement one another in many powerful ways.

Self-transformation. The biggest, weightiest part of the iceberg--the enormous mass underwater--represents the work of aligning our personal choices and behaviors with our deepest principles. This is where we practice being unhealed together while simultaneously seeking healing for ourselves and for one another. 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. If we don't treat each other differently, we're going to repeat and multiply harm. This, of course, is the story of trauma repeating itself across generations, simply put: *hurt people hurt people*. While the work of self-transformation is often the least outwardly visible, we hold it to be utterly essential and foundational. For many in our network it is fueled by spiritual practices and connection to what we hold as sacred. This aspect of nonviolence

¹ Excerpted from the Fierce Vulnerability Network Handbook.

does not develop only out of good intentions or through ideology. It requires significant practical and intentional work.

Constructive program² is where our commitment to align principle and practice moves from the personal realm into the wider community. This is the work of building the new, nonviolent society within the shell of the existing, exploitative and destructive one. This includes a great variety of culture-shifting economic, ecological, educational, religious/spiritual, and direct service initiatives. Regenerative agriculture, forming new approaches to group process and decision-making, ending poverty and economic inequality, the way we treat our elderly and educate our young-- any form of building life-supporting structures to replace the existing extractive systems are all examples of community uplift. Each member of the network engages in their own combination of such initiatives, and we've also chosen to hold one community uplift commitment in common network-wide: **making reparations real**.

We believe it is essential that **direct action** is carried forward in tandem with the **creation of meaningful alternatives** to the systems we are working to dismantle.

Direct action, the tip of the iceberg, means directly intervening in violent systems and situations to immediately stop harm. It is where our underwater transformations, our courage and creativity, our grief, rage and fierce love move us into choiceful confrontation with systems and forces of domination. This is where our **private heartbreak** becomes our **public witness** and our unseen power becomes real. When we stand in front of 10,000 tons of coal traveling by train, or between militarized police and a targeted community, when we defy laws to see the homeless housed and the undocumented protected - we are telling the truth about the world around us in powerfully disobedient ways. Disobedience to "that's just the way things are." Direct action is our deliberate engagement in constructive conflict, putting our bodies into action to clear the way for the fullest expression of our humanity and for the building up of the nonviolent society we long to inhabit.

Our best guess is that the full-blown societal change we long for cannot come into being unless each piece of this three-fold approach is being practiced powerfully out in the world. Our lived experience also leads us to believe that each component needs the other two in order to be fully activated.

² Gandhi coined this term during the Indian Freedom struggle.