



Who we are as people in the world, whether we're social justice activists, community members, organizational members, or movement leaders, matters. How we are within our organizations, whether they're social justice organizations, etc. and sectors, matters.

Who we are, how we are with ourselves and each other, and how we approach change matters. What we practice and how our embodied practices are aligned, or not aligned, with the change we seek, matters.

Our "shape", as individuals, organizations and movements allows for some possibilities and doesn't allow for others. What we have embodied, what we practice daily, how we *be*, feel and act allows us to create and be motivated by certain thoughts, strategies, relationships and power-building to happen, while limiting others.

generative somatics believes personal and systemic transformation are interdependent and inseparable. If we are going to accomplish radical social change, then we must change *how* we are. By themselves personal transformation work, spiritual development practice, organizing, advocacy and policy work will not change the multiple causes and expressions of injustice. None of these alone can transform the individual and collective systems of oppression and privilege people have embodied. The new shape of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions and social norms needs to emerge from an analysis and practice deeply rooted in political ideologies of liberation and transformation.

Many of us in the social and environmental justice movements are exploring this interface of personal and systemic change, and see that a transformative path and ideology are necessary.

We see situations again and again of good people within organizations committed to social justice treat each other poorly, struggle with personal and organizational relationships, and harm each other in the name of justice. We see progressive organizations building cultures based on critique, blame and shaming of emotions, or not knowing how to work deeply with the ongoing impact of oppression and harm our communities face. We see movement sectors that have split and are managing distrust, that are unable to build strong, lasting alliances, and others that see healing as bourgeois.

On the other hand, we also see most healing work as devoid of a social justice analysis or social action. There is often good intention related to the work for peace, justice and the environment, but the dynamics of power, oppression, privilege, cultural appropriation and individualism go unchecked within practices and organizations. Very few programs train healers, coaches or therapists to understand the impact of the social context in which they work or how to work with the traumatic impact of oppression. Those that do, unfortunately, continue to perpetuate the idea that healing is an individual process with goals at only the individual level. The lack of access to most of healing modalities also leaves many communities and organizers without those resources. To interrupt, heal from, and end oppression, we need to

This article can be found at:
<http://www.generativesomatics.org/content/theory-personal-social-transformation>



work with the individual and collective forms simultaneously. Healing and social change work are mutually empowering for the individual and the collective.

We see the intersection of a systemic analysis, organizing work, movement building, self-cultivation, and deep personal and collective healing as the needed components to addressing the root causes of injustice, creating systemic change and developing practiced norms of liberation and sustainability.

The Next Decade: Strengthening the Left

We see the next ten years as a turning point in the social justice movement. Either transformative methodologies will be deeply integrated into movement culture, theory and strategy, or they will be a passing fad and the opportunity and power of this integration missed or delayed.

We define transformation as methodologies, practices and processes that create systemic and lasting change in individuals, organizations, and communities. The change is noticeable, increases choice, lessens reactivity, spurs new actions, creates more emotional well being, increases trust, informs innovations in strategy, etc. Transformation is not just an exercise that has one feel themselves more deeply or gives a new insight. Transformation involves a process and method, is practiced over time, and results in alternative reactions in difficult situations. Most transformative methodologies and paths have mentors or teachers, are practiced within community, have daily practices, and evolve as the practitioner changes. For means of integrating personal and systemic change, Transformational Paths or methods need to be deeply rooted in a systemic analysis and liberation ideology. They are practiced for the sake of personal and systemic change.