

# Challenging the Toxic System

**Principle 4. We openly challenge ourselves and this toxic system:**  
leaving our comfort zones to take action for change.

Nonviolent direct action can be challenging and may require disruption in our own lives.

Public acts of rebellion may be physically uncomfortable, involving getting cold, stiff, tired and hungry. They may also be psychologically challenging, evoking feelings of fear, vulnerability, anxiety and sometimes anger. **But** they can also be moments of real joy and deep solidarity with each other.

So we have to challenge ourselves - are we willing to act? Are we willing to make changes in our lives to give us enough free space in them to enable us to act? Are we willing to make sacrifices, even?

In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now.

**Wangari Maathai**, Nobel Peace Prize winner

To sin by silence, when we should protest,  
Makes cowards out of men. The human race  
Has climbed on protest. Had no voice been raised  
Against injustice, ignorance, and lust,  
The inquisition yet would serve the law,  
And guillotines decide our least disputes.  
The few who dare, must speak and speak again  
To right the wrongs of many.\

**Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850 - 1919)**