

Pledge of NONVIOLENCE

I hereby pledge myself—my person and my body—to nonviolence, both as a way of life and as a strategy for achieving systemic social and political change. I will therefore commit to the following ten practices:

1 Meditate daily.

By taking time out every day for quiet reflection, I cultivate the presence of mind that I need in order to be more available to the wisdom of forgiveness and love, as well as to attend to my own complicity—however small—in creating and sustaining a culture of violence.

2 Remember always to seek justice and reconciliation—not victory.

My goal is not to reinvent a world of winners and losers; instead, it is to create a just society, one that heals our relationships with one another and makes whole the entire community.

3 Walk and talk in the manner of love.

In order to have and to make peace, I must be—in every thought, word and deed—an alternative to violence, hatred, and oppression.

4 Practice radical forgiveness.

I forgive those (including myself) who have done harm not because I must forget the injustices and injuries suffered, but because I recognize that unforgiveness is self-harm that binds me to a past I cannot change; closes my heart to the possibility of reconciliation; and, clouds my moral and ethical vision.

5 Extend compassion, love, and kindness to those who express and act with ill will.

As the heart of nonviolence, this practice of compassion, love, and kindness helps me to remember that my so-called “enemies” are my brothers and sisters who, like me, also wish to be free from suffering.

6 Perform regular, selfless service so that all children, women, and men might be free.

Through a practice of “dangerous unselfishness”—service to others that eschews loyalties of race, nation, or tribe—I hold sacred the needs of all (to the exclusion of none) and by so doing reject the self-centeredness and self-absorption that allow injustices to thrive.

7 Refrain and protect others from the violence of fist, tongue, or heart.

By disarming myself, I also commit to disarming those who would subject others to personal and systemic violence.

8 Reestablish a connection to Earth and other sentient beings.

To end the human war waged against Earth and other sentient beings—a war that threatens the survival of us all—I must step forward as a conscientious objector and affirm, through my actions and words, the interdependence of all living things.

9 Seek and nurture good bodily health.

Because disregard for my body is a form of self-inflicted violence that makes impossible my ability both to participate fully in my community and to be an agent of change, I make a pledge of nonviolence toward myself through a practice of radical self-care.

10 Cultivate hope.

By cultivating hope, I proclaim that what is realistic is not an acceptance of hatred, violence, greed and injustice as permanent features of everyday life; it is instead the affirmation of peace, justice, freedom, and equality as possibilities that are achievable and within our reach.

I sign this pledge, having seriously considered what I do and with the determination and will to persevere.

Name _____ Date _____