



## **FTA Newsletter**



### **Systemic Voices for Peace**

*A manifesto for a world of peace, justice, and freedom*

Dear colleagues,

Within the context of international collaboration — and as co-authors of a collective publication — Valeria Pomini, Mauro Mariotti, and Peter Stratton initiated a reflection on urgent societal issues and global crises from a systemic perspective. From this initiative, a growing network has taken shape: **Systemic Voices for Peace**.

As systemic thinkers and practitioners, we believe that what happens in the world touches us deeply — in our hearts, in our conversations, and in our therapy rooms.

We feel it when war and political violence enter family stories.

We see it when climate disasters — floods, fires, and droughts — disrupt lives and attachments.

We witness it when migration and displacement fracture families, or when fear and polarisation fuel the rise of extremist politics that silence dialogue and compassion.

And we notice it when the world's suffering is met with silence — when humanitarian initiatives, like the civil flotilla to Gaza with humanitarian aid, are halted, or when words such as *justice* and *peace* are dismissed as naïve.

The complexity we encounter daily — in families, couples, teams, and organisations — cannot be separated from the broader social, political, and ecological systems that shape

them. The ethical frameworks that guide our practice also offer a compass for engaging with the larger challenges of our time.

## From crisis to rupture

We are not living through a single crisis, but through many interconnected ones:

- The **climate crisis**, threatening ecosystems and future generations,
- The **migration crisis**, exposing the violence of borders and the limits of empathy,
- A **psychosocial crisis**, marked by loneliness, burnout, and disconnection,
- The **erosion of democratic space**, where polarisation replaces dialogue and fear replaces trust
- And the ongoing **wars and genocide**, which expose once again how unequally human lives are valued across the globe.

From a systemic perspective, these are not separate. They are multiple expressions of the same rupture: a breakdown in relationship — relational, ecological, and epistemological. At the root lies a way of thinking that separates self from other, human from nature, personal from political.

Gregory Bateson warned us long ago about the dangers of dichotomous thinking and hubris:

*“The creature that wins against its environment destroys itself.”*

To heal, we must move beyond separation — toward interdependence, humility, and connectedness.

## The ethics of awareness

Systemic therapy is not neutral.

When we avoid “politics” in the name of neutrality, we risk silence — and silence, in unequal systems, becomes complicity.

Our epistemology teaches us to notice patterns, positions, and power. We must keep asking ourselves:

- Whose suffering do we see first?
- Whose pain is normalised or ignored?
- Which stories are being silenced?

These are not merely clinical questions; they are ethical ones.

To stay awake in such times is to practice **micropolitical care**: to see how power and oppression are reproduced not only between nations, but also between partners, families, colleagues, and institutions. Every therapeutic conversation contains the possibility to resist disconnection and to nurture solidarity.

## Complexity and commitment

Systemic thinking invites us to hold complexity — but complexity must not become a refuge for avoidance.

If we invoke multivocality yet refuse to name injustice,  
if we speak of inclusion yet ignore structural exclusion,  
our epistemology becomes hollow.

We are called to:

- See violence and oppression not only as trauma, but as systemic phenomena.
- Understand healing as both relational and political.
- Support not only insight, but also gentle, hopeful, connected resistance.

As the song *Todo Cambia* by Mercedes Sosa reminds us:

*“Everything changes, and because everything changes, I change too.”*

Change begins within — and extends outward, through relationship.

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# The Systemic Manifesto

## 10 Statements for Peace, Justice, and Responsibility

From these reflections, and through dialogue with colleagues across countries and contexts, we have written a manifesto — not as a final statement, but as an **anchor**: a moment to pause, reflect, and orient ourselves amidst the turbulence of our times.

We are pleased to share with you the **Systemic Manifesto — 10 Statements for Peace, Justice, and Responsibility**:

1. We are systemic thinkers — grounded in relationship, context, power, and meaning. Our thinking is not neutral; it is engaged.

2. We refuse silence in the face of violence. Neutrality becomes complicity when power is unequal and suffering is normalised.
3. We believe peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice, dignity, and mutual dialogue — never imposed.
4. We reject binary narratives of good versus evil. We see cycles of trauma and disconnection that require understanding and transformation.
5. We embrace complexity — not as an excuse for inaction, but as an ethical call to nuanced, responsible engagement.
6. We commit to naming power and privilege, and to challenging systems that sustain oppression — even when it is difficult or unpopular.
7. We centre multivocality. Every voice matters, especially those erased, silenced, or unheard. Dialogue is our practice.
8. We understand healing as both relational and political. No personal change is complete without systemic transformation.
9. We see all crises — war, injustice, ecological collapse — as interconnected, rooted in the illusion of separateness.
10. We choose to speak and act. Not from moral superiority, but from deep relational responsibility — because another world is possible, and urgently needed.

## **Peace as a collective act**

Peace is not passive. It is a collective act — a daily practice of connection, reflection, and responsibility.

In the name of these commitments, and as a community of systemic therapists, we choose to support peace — and all actions that nurture just and peaceful relations among peoples and communities.

This is a **call for peace from within the field of psychotherapy**.

The names of those who contributed to the creation of this manifesto can be found via the link below. Many systemic practitioners have already expressed their resonance with the text. Like us, they found in it a source of orientation, solidarity, and hope.

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## **In closing**

As systemic practitioners, we work at the intersection of the personal and the political. Our task is to keep connection alive — between people, communities, and the planet.

Let us remain critical, relational, and present.

Let us stay awake to suffering and close to hope.

Let us remember that resistance rarely begins with grand gestures, but with small, quiet acts — with how we listen, how we relate, how we speak truth in a world that rewards silence.

In the words of Dutch poet **Remco Campert**:

*“Resistance does not begin with big words,  
but with small actions —  
like the soft rustling in a garden before a storm.  
Like love, it begins with a glance, a touch, something you notice in a voice.  
To ask yourself a question — that is where resistance begins.  
And then, to ask that question to someone else.”*

With warmth, courage, and solidarity,

**Cinthe Lemmens** for  
***The Systemic Voices for Peace group***

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