

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **2012 Summer Institute**

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#### *1. How do I know if this is right for me?*

- Some people attend for the chance to learn with particular faculty in a focused, small-group setting. ALIA is known for the caliber of its faculty.
- Some attend because of the richness of the whole experience; they know there are few leadership programs that are so deeply engaging and stretching without being manipulative in some way. They know they will be able to take risks, see themselves in new ways, and strengthen a centered and open way of being that is the foundation for authentic leadership.
- Others attend because they want an intensive laboratory, packed with resources, that will help them design their project, take next steps, or get help untangling something that is stuck.
- You will find that this is the right place for you if you
  - are aware that the complexity and urgency of current trends require re-thinking, innovation, and collaboration at every level of scale
  - have an ongoing commitment to learning, questioning, and growth
  - are looking for ways to reconnect with an underlying wholeness, dignity, and resourcefulness in yourself and in society
  - enjoy the arts, community, and collaboration
  - come as both learner and teacher

#### *2. What will I experience at the Intensive?*

- The Intensive is made up of three streams: Foundations of Authentic Leadership, Skill-Building for Action, and Community Dialogue and Celebration.
- The **Foundations** stream includes mindfulness, creative process, and peer coaching. Everyone participates in guided mindfulness together, at the beginning of each day. This is usually followed by a creative process or mindfulness-in-action exercise, such as listening or embodied presence.

Coaching trios are established on the first day and continue to meet throughout the Intensive.

- The **Skill-Building** stream is made up of parallel tracks that run for a total of 15 hours over four days. When you register, you will choose one of five tracks. Each track includes both content (e.g., a strategic lens or framework) and opportunities to apply this lens to your project and/or your own leadership. Tracks range in size from 20-40 participants and are led by thought leaders and experienced practitioners who are active in their fields.
- The **Community** stream surfaces some of the talent and experience within the Intensive community, so that you can then connect during meal breaks, in self-organized sessions, and in more structured activities that allow for peer learning and exchange. This stream also includes guest speakers and celebratory activities, such as an arts evening and a closing banquet.
- To read more about these three streams, see the [Summer Institute website](#).

### *3. What will I get out of the Intensive? What will I take away?*

- The ALIA Intensive meets you where you are, so take-aways will be personal to you. Like any transformational process, the specific outcomes will depend on the intention you bring and your willingness to stretch and take risks. They will be influenced by the people you meet, the sessions you attend, and the track you choose.
- It is quite certain, however, that you will leave with new insights about yourself, your leadership, your current direction, and your work. You will be more empowered to achieve your goals. You will gain practical tools that you can apply immediately. You will be introduced to practices that you could continue, as an ongoing foundation for your leadership journey.
- You will also leave with new connections and networks. Over the years, many relationships that began at ALIA have led to lasting friendships and strategic collaborations.

### *4. Who will attend? Who will I meet there?*

- ALIA attracts people who come from a diversity of backgrounds and positions of formal and informal leadership—leaders in government, business, and society; entrepreneurs; educators; internal and external change-makers.
- come as learners and collaborators rather than as experts

### *5. How do I choose a track?*

- First decide whether your primary focus is strengthening your leadership or acquiring skills and strategies for innovation. All of the tracks integrate both of these “inner and outer” aspects of leadership, but some have a stronger focus

on one or the other. Beyond Yes, Women Leaders Coming into Their Own, and Presencing place more emphasis on the personal and interpersonal dimensions of leadership. Hosting Transformation and the Change Lab focus more on innovation.

- Read through all the track descriptions and choose the one that best suits your needs.
- If you are having difficulty choosing a track, [contact us](#) and we will help you arrive at the best fit.
- If you don't have time to think this through immediately, you can register now and choose your track later.
- If after the first track session you decide that you aren't in the right place, you can request to switch to any other track that has openings. After the first session, all tracks are closed for the remainder of the Intensive.

#### ***6. Can I attend part-time? Four days is a significant time investment.***

- Real learning takes time. To be able to suspend the momentum of your everyday work and life, immerse yourself in new learning, and begin integrating and applying that learning in practical and lasting ways requires more than a day or two. This applies both to you individually and to the learning community as a whole. The Intensive is therefore not open to part-time attendance.
- Over the past decade ALIA has become known for its transformational program model. While other models also have value, they do not combine depth and breadth in the same way.

#### ***7. Why is mindfulness a part of the program? Are there spiritual or religious overtones?***

- Mindfulness is included in many ALIA programs because it is a simple and effective way to slow down and prepare for new learning, both individually and collectively.
- Mindfulness is the natural ability to shift one's awareness from auto-pilot to conscious attention. As Einstein famously said, a problem cannot be solved with the same level of consciousness that created it. Some form of mindfulness is key to going beyond established patterns of thought and action.
- While mindfulness is an aspect of many spiritual paths, both Eastern and Western, the particular approach ALIA uses is intended for people engaged in everyday work and life. This approach comes primarily from the Shambhala meditation tradition, which also connects mindfulness to themes of authenticity, creativity, and warriorship. Many of the founders of the ALIA

Institute were practitioners of this tradition and had a long history of applying these themes in professional, artistic, and educational settings.

- ALIA has no religious agenda. Its primary agenda is to use what works, from various fields and traditions, to create an empowering, transformational environment for leadership and innovation.

### ***8. What is ALIA and where did it come from? Who is behind it?***

- The name ALIA (AH-lee-ah) is an acronym for “Authentic Leadership in Action.”
- ALIA is (1) an international leadership institute and (2) a convening platform within the field of social and organizational innovation.
- As an organization, ALIA is an educational NGO based in Nova Scotia, a province on the east coast of Canada.
- ALIA began as the coming-together of two streams: (1) mindfulness-based leadership arts and (2) systems thinking and its applications
- ALIA has been offering week-long international leadership programs in Nova Scotia for up to 300 people annually since 2001, as well as other programs in various parts of North America.
- Core faculty, founders, and collaborators have included Barbara Bash (Big Brush Calligraphy), Juanita Brown (World Café), Michael Chender (Authentic Leadership), Glenda Eoyang (Human Systems Dynamics Institute), Arawana Hayashi (Embodied Presence), Jerry Granelli (Jazz Percussion), Lanny Harrison (Theatre), Adam Kahane (Reos Partners), Art Kleiner (strategy + business Magazine), Marianne Knuth (Berkana Institute), Myrna Lewis (Deep Democracy), Toke Moeller (Art of Hosting Strategic Conversations), Wendy Morris (Creative Process), Wendy Palmer (Conscious Embodiment), Otto Scharmer (Presencing Institute), Peter Senge (Society for Organizational Learning), Susan Skjei (Naropa University), Alan Sloan (Authentic Leadership), Sera Thompson (Deep Democracy, Art of Hosting), Margaret Wheatley (Berkana Institute), and Bob Wing (Aikido), among others.
- See also the [Little Book of Practice for Authentic Leadership in Action](#), which chronicles some of the people, practices, and principles that have shaped the ALIA Institute. This book is available for purchase or free download.

### ***9. What else does ALIA do?***

- ALIA offers coaching services and in-house programs. ALIA also welcomes partnerships with aligned organizations and networks. For more information, [contact us](#).