



ASPEN
INITIATIVE
UK

ASPEN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

Leadership, Values, and the Common Good

Moderated by Maria Blair

In collaboration with The Aspen Executive Leadership Programme

WILTON PARK, WEST SUSSEX, 27 – 29 March 2020

Leadership, Values, and the Common Good

Leaders act in spaces of constant complexity and ambiguity, and this continual tension means that the most difficult leadership decisions we face are never purely economic or technical. Often our decisions are expressions of values, and it's important to know where those values originate from, and how we express them. Developing the knowledge and habits necessary for strategic thinking and interpersonal relationships takes time, and doesn't happen in solitude or in crowded auditoriums. It does happen in the Aspen Executive Leadership Seminar.

This seminar asks fundamental questions facing the UK and other Western democracies. What are the challenges facing a civil and democratic society? How do democratic institutions best renew themselves, and what leadership qualities are needed to facilitate this? What are the values – and tensions among those values – at the foundation of UK civil society? How do these values align with or differ from the values of continental Europe and United States?



During the weekend, participants will spend four sessions discussing the readings. They will also take part in cultural activities organised by Aspen UK, and dine and socialise together in the evenings.

WHEN

13:00 on 27 March - 14:00 on 29 March

WHERE

Wiston House, Wilton Park, West Sussex

Aspen Executive Leadership Seminars

Aspen Executive Leadership Seminars on Leadership, Values, and the Good Society have been run for almost 70 years, and have challenged participants in every field to achieve meaningful leadership development through critical examination of their core values.

An Aspen Executive Leadership Seminar is comprised of a series of lively and intensive roundtable discussions, lead by a moderator in a setting that is conducive to collaboration.

Aspen Seminars use texts to give participants a common starting point and guide the conversations. Readings range from classical political thought to contemporary Eastern and Western literature. Each reading list is carefully chosen to bring clarity to complex issues and to help participants dwell on the geopolitical, material and social forces at the root of today's global tensions.

What each individual takes home from the discussion will depend on the concerns, experiences and curiosity they bring with them.

The overall success of the seminar relies on the openness of each participant to the contributions of others.

Our aim is that rare occurrence – a genuine conversation about things that matter.

Each Aspen seminar convenes a small group of individuals who hold leadership positions in their sectors, including corporate, not-for-profit, government and academic. We ensure that each group represents diversity in profession, cultural background, and level of leadership responsibility, encouraging participants to challenge their assumptions, broaden their networks, and foster genuine friendships.

In this way, Aspen seminars offer a chance for leaders to clarify their convictions, reconnect with what is essential, and strengthen their ability to deal with complexity and ambiguity.

We find that participants emerge from Aspen seminars personally renewed, professionally refocused and more prepared to lead in the face of future challenges.



Moderator - Maria Blair



Maria Blair is a UK-based partner at ghSMART, experts in human behaviour who help high-performing organisations across all sectors to address their most important leadership challenges. She has been an Aspen Institute moderator for a number of years and has led Aspen Seminars across the globe.

Maria began her career as an Associate Principal at McKinsey & Company, serving financial institutions, not-for-profits and multilateral organisations.

She was also the National Vice President of the American Cancer Society, leading strategy and global operations, and before that served as Deputy Associate Director at the White House Council on Environmental Quality. She has also been the Managing Director of the Rockefeller Foundation.

As a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University's Balliol College, she earned a Master's degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, adding to her BA from Harvard University.

Alumni Testimonials



“Taking part in a seminar helped me to see myself and my ideas in a different way. Having the opportunity to debate and discuss with such diverse and accomplished people not only made me think ‘bigger’ but also allowed me to develop a higher level of respect for myself and my organisation. There has been a notable difference in my own outlook, and the outlook and development of my social enterprise since attending the event.”

BETH NUNN -

Founder and CEO of PIE: Pursuing Individual Excellence



“The biggest thing I got out of Aspen was the conflict of values – seeing the world with equally legitimate but different values. It has been a phenomenal improvement in helping my leadership.”

REED HASTINGS -

Founder and CEO of Netflix



“The Aspen Seminar didn’t only help me to revisit and rethink the values shaping my environment, but it also provided space for an inspiring and fun exchange of ideas.”

RITA DAYOUB –

Founder of Health Workers at the Frontline



“Leaders are increasingly confronted with moral dilemmas, not technocratic problems. This seminar addresses head on these moral questions, providing structured space for reflection, and helps individuals to understand their own moral compass. It’s life changing.”

SIR STUART ETHERINGTON -

Former CEO, The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

Upcoming Seminars

Aspen UK is planning a number of seminars in 2020. The following are already confirmed, and will also be held at Wilton Park:



Aspen UK Seminar - Leadership Challenges in Uncertain Times
5 – 7 June, Wilton Park, Sussex

Aspen Executive Leadership Seminar
18 – 20 September, Wilton Park, Sussex

Aspen UK Seminar
9 – 11 October, Wilton Park, Sussex

The Aspen Network

Your connection with Aspen UK doesn't end with the seminar.

At Aspen UK we are committed to building communities of actively engaged and enlightened leaders, inspiring them to work for the common good.



Participants of our seminars often choose to stay in touch with one another, to continue their conversation after the Aspen weekend. Attending a seminar means you are initiated into the Aspen network, and will be invited to specially created Aspen UK alumni events.

We arrange other, shorter 'conversations' and events to help our Alumni stay connected and engaged.

