

Greg Ranstrom Testimonial

The American Leadership Forum (ALF) is a preeminent leadership development and networking organization throughout the U.S. that for thirty-five years has supported more than 2,500 Fellows to refine their leadership skills, increase their capacity, and strengthen their commitment to work together on public issues. The Silicon Valley Chapter of ALF is passionately committed to building diverse networks of leaders from all sectors of society, focused on personal and community transformation, in order to create an inclusive and thriving Silicon Valley. Our powerful alumni network, regular alumni programs and other features are hallmarks of the Fellowship. However, it's the yearlong Fellows Program that is our programmatic centerpiece. Fellows meet for twenty-one days in multiple retreats over twelve months, led by distinguished faculty from a range of fields.

Clearly the first retreat is extremely important. It sets the tone for the yearlong Fellowship. For this reason, we've selected Lawrence Ellis to kick off the first two days of our program.

We start with mindfulness because it is foundational to all we do – not just for enhanced self-awareness for each Fellow, but also because of the impact on collaboration and emerging futures for the Fellows collectively. Very specifically, the work of MIT's Otto Scharmer, his [Presencing Institute](#) and their [Theory U](#) is woven throughout our Fellowship. (Theory U proposes that the quality of the results that we create in any kind of social system is a function of the quality of awareness, attention, or consciousness that the participants in the system operate from.) Our first day sets the stage for Fellows to become increasingly aware of their collective social system; to collaborate more deeply in service to a common regional goal and project; and to attune to and co-create emerging futures – which is one of the primary ways in which Theory U is used in organizational and community settings around the world.

Lawrence is outstanding at powerfully weaving together mindfulness, emerging futures and sustainability. A meditation teacher for decades, he is able to take a group of the most senior leaders in Silicon Valley, most of whom have not meditated before, and gently yet rigorously introduce them to the core principles and practices of mindfulness. He then ties mindful awareness to transformative sustainability concepts and practices that have a profound impact on many spheres of Fellows' lives – personal, professional and more. Throughout the retreat he leverages science, poetry, forays into nature, his engaging personality, his expert knowledge of his fields, demonstrations, group conversations, and his enormous facility with senior leaders. The resulting deeper levels of mindfulness and collaboration, along with a greater awareness of sustainability imperatives, set the initial stage on emerging futures, which we develop more fully throughout the rest of the Fellowship.

The Fellows love Lawrence – as do we program staff at ALF. It is rare for a single individual to be able to command the respect and attention of such senior leaders across so diverse a range of topics. Through his expert knowledge, his consummate instruction and skillfulness, he sets our yearlong Fellowship up for amazing success.

Greg Ranstrom
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American Leadership Forum – Silicon Valley