



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

From the President

The Aspen Institute

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Dear Aspen Friends and Partners,

At certain points in our lives, many of us feel the need to reflect on what it takes to lead a life that is good, useful, worthy, and meaningful. Perhaps we have noticed ourselves trimming our principles and making too many compromises in our careers, and we want to reconnect with our values. Or perhaps we yearn, in a world filled with clashing opinions, to understand the great ideas and ideals that have competed throughout the progress of civilization.

Aspen's seminars, policy programs and leadership initiatives offer a chance for restorative reflection on the meaning of the good life, leadership, and sound public policy based on nonpartisan principles and timeless ideas. The endeavor is particularly relevant today. We have passed through a period in the 1990s when we saw the consequences, in both the business and political arenas, of becoming unhinged from underlying values. We face a world in which the biggest threat, to nations and to communities, is a lack of tolerance and understanding.

The original goal of the Aspen Institute, in the words of one of its earliest mission statements, was “for American business leaders to lift their sights above the possessions which possess them, to confront their own nature as human beings, to regain control over their own humanity by becoming more self-aware, more self-correcting and hence more self-fulfilling.”

Since then, we have added a variety of policy programs, study groups and leadership initiatives, and we have updated our original executive seminars, now called the Aspen Seminar, to deal with the challenges of a world threatened by fanaticism, clashing cultures, and a disdain for enduring values.

But our core mission remains the same. We seek to foster enlightened leadership and open-minded dialogue. Through seminars, policy programs, conferences and leadership development initiatives, the Institute and its international partners seek to promote nonpartisan inquiry and an appreciation for timeless values.

We help people become more enlightened in their work and enriched in their lives. Together we can learn one of the keys to being successful in business, leadership and life: balancing conflicting values in order to find common ground with our fellow citizens while remaining true to basic ideals.



Walter Isaacson
President & CEO