ART IS A SPIRITUAL PATH: CREATIVE PROCESS AS PRAYER (90 MIN)
Rabbi Adina Allen
At its best, we might describe prayer as: a pathway to access deep places within ourselves, a tool for understanding our place in the world, a bridge that connects us to community in meaningful and authentic ways, an opening to feel the power of something bigger than ourselves, a link to our ancestors or an avenue through which to gain insight into life’s biggest questions. In this hands-on session we will use the Jewish Studio Process – a methodology that combines text study, processing using art materials and reflective writing – to explore the power of art making as prayer practice. In what ways can creative process serve to connect us to our deepest selves, to one another and, ultimately, to the Divine?
*Please note: This session will run for 90 minutes, which will include the first 15 minutes of the break following the session.*

THEOLOGY IN ISRAELI WOMEN’S MIDRASHIM
Tamar Biala
We will read in translation a series of Midrashim written by contemporary Israeli women offering varying strategies to deal with the horrifying question: is God involved or even in charge of patriarchy?

BETWEEN NEO-HASIDISM AND PARADIGM SHIFT JUDAISM
Dr. Shaul Magid
The umbrella movement called “Jewish Renewal” is actually a more complex web of various groups that coalesced around Judaism’s adaption to the New Age in the 1970s. In this session we will explore renewal in two overlapping yet also different forms: Neo-Hasidism and Paradigm Shift Judaism. Each one has a different approach to Hasidism, to the present age and to spiritual reform. What might be the next stages of Jewish Renewal, its new challenges and its new forms of adaptation?

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF ADDICTION
Rabbi Joey Rosenfeld
Addiction as a neurological disease and psychological condition has much to offer us in terms of understanding the human condition. In this session we will analyze the phenomenological experience of “addiction” as it can be found in each subject qua human being as well as the intensification of presence that can emerge from there.

EXPERIENCING THE DIVINE: A STRUCTURED REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE
Rabbi Jenny Solomon
When have you experienced God’s presence? When have you felt God’s absence? How do you make space for God in your life? In this Reflective Structured Dialogue (a dialogue format honed by Essential Partners, Inc. in Boston, MA), we will engage in meaningful, intimate conversations in small groups built on a constructive cycle of: listening, reflection, response and inquiry. The point of Reflective Structured Dialogue is not to change the mind of the other. Rather, this format allows us to understand the other (and ourselves) through deep listening and heartfelt speaking based on our own lived experiences. This is a session for anyone curious to learn how other fellows conceive of, experience and connect to God.
THE ART OF TESHUVA: CREATIVE PREPARATION FOR ELUL (90 MIN)
Rabbi Adina Allen
In the words of psychologist David Richo, “Hidden in everything negative is something alive and beautiful that wants to belong to us.” Immense power and potential dwell in the unresolved places in our soul. It is only when we allow ourselves to come face-to-face with these less desirable parts of ourselves that we can understand and unlock the creative vitality contained within them. Teshuva is commonly understood as the practice of turning away from our missteps. In this session we will flip this understanding of teshuva on its head. Using the Jewish Studio Process – a methodology that combines text study, processing using art materials, and reflective writing – we’ll investigate the creative potential of turning toward those places in which we faltered. In this hands-on session, you’ll explore the power of art making in the process of teshuva and gain a new tool for spiritual growth during the month of Elul and beyond.

Please note: This session will run for 90 minutes, which will include the first 15 minutes of the break following the session.

WHAT’S THE PROBLEM WITH TRANSCENDENCE?
Tamar Biala
The critique of transcendence from the perspective of feminist theology: the ways in which a transcendent God shapes human selfhood and human relations with one another. What are the meanings of sacrifice, holiness, perfection? We will analyze Maimonides’ theology and explore whether we can do away with transcendence altogether?

RELIGION AND RACE: THE CHALLENGES OF JEWISH IDENTITY IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICA
Dr. Shaul Magid
In the 1930s a movement called Tri-Faith America emerged that sought to create a religious triangle including Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism. Much of it was based on the aspiring religious co-existence of white America. How have Jews understood their whiteness and used it to their benefit? Race consciousness in the 1960s put Jews in a difficult position of being too white for blacks and not white enough for white Christians. Multiculturalism has somewhat altered this situation, but American Jews are still negotiating their “racial” (or ethnic) allegiance with their “religion.” We will explore some of the twists and turns in the history of Jews, Judaism and race.

SPIRITUAL WORK WITH NON-JEWS
Rabbi Joey Rosenfeld
This session will address the possibility as well as the difficulty in translating one spiritual world onto another. The power of translation – in the philosophical sense of the word – will be seen as the unifying factor that seeks the universal language of spirituality within and underneath the particularities of spiritual experience.

SOULFUL PRINCIPLES FOR PARENTING AS JEWISH LEADERS
Rabbi Jenny Solomon
Our leadership and professional training often implicitly or explicitly asks that we leave our identity as parents and our work as caregivers at the door. This session, designed specifically for parents, will invite participants to engage in soulful reflection and conversation about parenting. With the gifts of intimacy and vulnerability that this community affords, this session will allow participants to reflect on their parenting experience from a spiritual perspective and how they can amplify their “soul” voices as they go forward. I will facilitate this session as a devoted parent of three children, ages 16, 14 and 7, deeply engaged in professional work, and as a passionate advocate for the ways in which our experience as parents can qualitatively enhance our work as Jewish professionals. As “whole” people, we will take time to reflect honestly about the challenges and joys of parenting in the context of our lives as Jewish leaders.
SPIRITUAL STARTUP: INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP & GOD
Rabbi Adina Allen
Have an idea for something new you’d like to bring into the world? Wondering what it’s like to be an entrepreneur? Curious what role “God” or “spirituality” might play in this work? Not long ago I was a Wexner Graduate Fellow, sitting where you are, dreaming about an organization I might create to fill a void I saw in the Jewish world. Seven years later, I’m now the Co-founder and Creative Director of a national organization. In this session I’ll share the story of Jewish Studio Project and my own personal journey as an entrepreneur, including the surprising successes, wild failures, biggest challenges and everything in between. You’ll have space to ask all your questions like: What’s it like working with your spouse; How to do you balance startup life while raising young kids; Where do you find spiritual sustenance when things get hard? At the end you’ll have space to share the big ideas brewing inside you and to receive support, advice and guidance in how to turn your dreams into reality!

WHAT’S THE PROBLEM WITH IMMANENCE?
Tamar Biala
Feminist theology celebrates and sanctifies immanence, at times, uncritically. We will discover the depths of immanent theology through Kabbalistic and Hasidic texts and discuss the costs.

HAVE THE WAYS PARTED?: CAN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY EVER BE TRULY SEPARATE?
Dr. Shaul Magid
Jews and Christians generally think that they practice two different religions. In this session, we will examine whether this is actually true. Or, are they practicing one religion in two very different ways? What separates Judaism from Christianity may in fact be what makes it impossible for them to fully sever ties. What might this mean for Jews (and Christians) today in terms of how we practice and what we believe?

TEACHING AND HEALING
Rabbi Joey Rosenfeld
In this session we will be discussing the therapeutic value of "study/teaching" itself. As opposed to the utilitarian view of teaching, which views the conveying of information as a means to an end, we will try and show a model of spiritual teaching that contains the goal within itself. Seen from this perspective, "study/teaching" opens up into the therapeutic possibilities of spiritual healing.

MINDFULNESS IN JEWISH LEADERSHIP: TOOLS FOR SURVIVING AND THRIVING IN CHALLENGING TIMES
Rabbi Jenny Solomon
After years as a Jewish professional whose inclination for striving and aspirations for perfection began to take their toll on my soul, I discovered Jewish mindfulness practice. This practice, and more specifically, Jewish mindfulness meditation, has become a profound tool in my life and my work. In this session we will explore meditation through text and practice. We will sit, sing, walk and sit some more. I will offer some basic practices and wisdom that can support and nourish us as Jewish leaders (and human beings) in order to cultivate our capacities for: compassion (for self and others), clear thinking, deep listening, managing change/impermanence, self-care, inter-connectedness, courage, vulnerability and bearing witness to suffering (our own and those around us).
A HEART OF MANY ROOMS: DISSENT, DISAGREEMENT & CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES (90 MIN)
Rabbi Adina Allen
Conflict is the raw material of creativity. Like a black box, until we embrace the conflict, we don't know what we have to work with. Creative process gives us the tools, safety and inspiration to encounter the Other and ourselves in new and generative ways. In this session we'll use the Jewish Studio Process – a methodology that combines text study, processing using art materials and reflective writing – as a tool for helping us gain insight into our most challenging communal issues. You'll leave with new insight into the power of art-making as a tool for personal and societal change.

Please note: This session will run for 90 minutes, which will include the first 15 minutes of the break following the session.

MIDRASH WRITING WORKSHOP ON ‘PROVIDENCE’
Tamar Biela
This session begins with a short Rabbinic texts study, continues with guided creative writing of Midrash and ends with people sharing their work with the group.

THE MEANINGLESSNESS YET SIGNIFICANCE OF GOD IN KABBALAH: THE WORD OF GOD IS NO WORD AT ALL
Dr. Shaul Magid
What do Kabbalists really think about God? Or, do they even think about God? In this session we will explore, through a series of texts, the nothingness, or no-thingness, of God in Kabbalah and how it is the very absence of God that drives the engine of Kabbalistic Judaism. For the mystics, God is both everything and nothing simultaneously and it is that experience of absence and presence that makes the kabbalists both hyper-theists and a-theists. In short, the word of God is no word at all.

TOPICS FROM THE ZOHAR
Rabbi Joey Rosenfeld
In this session we will be using "The Book of the Zohar" to uncover the blessings of exile and the deep potential of experience that abides within darkness itself. Themes such as longing, anxiety, absence, wandering and nighttime will be used to illuminate the Zohar’s profound reading of suffering as the space of transformation.

MIKVEH: NAVIGATING LIMINALITY IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE
Rabbi Jenny Solomon
At its core, mikveh is a ritual which invites us to navigate liminality in our lives. This session will offer new (and ancient) understandings of mikveh as a sacred tool for encountering God and Self in a deeply spiritual way. This learning emerges from my role as the founding director of a community mikveh, which is dedicated to reclaiming and reinventing one of Judaism’s most ancient rituals – immersion in the mikveh. We will use the framework of mikveh to explore liminality in our personal lives as we intersperse text, personal reflection and sharing. This is a session for those who are interested in exploring mikveh for the first time and for those who are familiar with mikveh but want to dive in deeper to see how this ritual might fill a psycho-spiritual need in a more expansive way. Please note that while we will be discussing the topic of mikveh, we won’t be immersing... though I hear that informal, optional, and *clothed* immersion opportunities exist at the institute in natural bodies of water.