

# IRENE YUN SALTER, PHD

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IreneSalter.com

Palo Cedro, CA

I am a Stanford-trained, PhD neuroscientist who uses science to help leaders **thrive**, not just survive. I hold space for **powerful conversations** that change people's lives and that draw out the **collective wisdom** of their teams.

## EDUCATION

**Ph.D. Neuroscience** - University of California, San Francisco 2002

**MS Psychology, BA Human Biology** - Stanford University - 1997

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Leadership Coach / Trainer / Writer**  
Inquiring Minds 2020 - present

Created 1:1 coaching, leadership circles, and retreats for executives driven by passion, purpose, and people. If your goal's work is your soul's work, then I'm your guide.

**Superintendent / Administrator**  
Chrysalis Charter School 2014 - 2021

Led a teacher-powered and science & nature-focused K-8 public charter school. Doubled enrollment and tripled the reserves. Won two leadership awards.

**Department Chair and Associate Professor**  
California State Univ., Chico 2007 - 2014

Founded the Dept. of Science Education. Nurtured future teachers, researched inquiry learning, won two teaching awards, and landed \$2.25M in grants.

**Middle School Teacher**  
Archway School 2003 - 2007

Innovated new curriculum and taught science and math at a private school. Represented faculty on the board.

**Curriculum Developer**  
Lawrence Hall of Science 2007

Designed and wrote the first GEMS guide specifically for after-school settings.

## LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

**Board Member** - Board of Directors  
Leadership Redding 2025 - present

Fostered the belief that a vibrant, caring community is the result of an active, engaged citizenry through leadership development for local leaders.

**Board Member** - Governing Board  
Shasta Scout 2025 - present

Supported and sustained an independent, award-winning, ethical, and transparent local news service.

**Board Member** - Graduate & Postdoc Alumni Association, UC San Francisco 2022 - 2025

Advanced the university's mission and built a more connected and engaged alumni community.

**Treasurer** - Board of Trustees  
Turtle Bay Exploration Park 2019 - 2024

Oversaw the \$21M annual budget of a world-class museum, four-star hotel, wildlife center, and garden.

**Co-Chair** - School Attendance Task Force  
Shasta County Office of Education 2018 - 2019

Boosted attendance and engagement of all students in Shasta County.

**Chair** - Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning - California State Univ., Chico 2009 - 2012

Led fellow faculty in the effort to reward exceptional instructors, disseminate innovative learning strategies, and improve teaching across the University.

**President and Treasurer** - Chico Nursery School Board of Directors 2011 - 2013

Led parents and educators at a preschool cooperative.

**Vice Chair** - Woods Edge Board of Directors 2004 - 2007

Represented the faculty of a private school.

## SAMPLE SPEAKING AND TRAINING

### **FEATURED TRAINING (4 hours): California Assessors Council - 2025**

“Candor + Compassion = Communication that works” for annual conference

### **KEYNOTE (0.5 hours): Shasta Regional Medical Center - 2025**

“What’s the opposite of overwhelmed? (It’s not what you think.)” at Go Red for Women’s Health

### **ROUNDTABLE (1.5 hours): California Association of Museums - 2025**

“How to lessen impostor syndrome” for the Centering Equity Project

### **WORKSHOP (1.5 hours): United Way of Northern California - 2025**

“Mentoring in the modern workplace” as part of the Building Bridges Initiative

### **TEAM BUILDING (8 hours): Leadership Redding - 2025**

“How to work together in diverse groups” in partnership with Project Discovery

### **KEYNOTE (0.5 hours): Association of California School Administrators - 2024**

“I am a woman who... 5 steps to your authentic leadership style” at the Women’s Leadership Conference

### **SUMMIT (4 hours): Charter School Development Center - 2024**

“Work life balance in the balance” for school leaders at their annual conference

### **PLAYNOTE (1 hour): Society for Human Resource Management - 2024**

“Escape room: Using science to navigate change and uncertainty” for the NorCal annual summit

### **SUMMIT (0.2 hours): Greatest of All Time Summit - 2023**

“Rediscovering wonder: Explore the realm where science and magic meet” in Barcelona, Spain

## AWARDS

**Teacher-Powered Schools Extraordinary Achievement Award**, Education Evolving - 2017

**Principal Shining Star Award**, Afterschool Alliance - 2017

**Educator of the Year**, Rotary Club of Chico - 2012

**STEMposium Finalist**, EnCorp Teachers and Citizen Schools - 2011

**Long Teaching Award**, University of California, San Francisco - 2000

## CERTIFICATIONS

### **Shift Positive 360 - 2022**

Provided 360 feedback for leaders grounded in positive psychology and human systems research.

### **Center for Mind Body Medicine - 2021**

Certified facilitator for a global organization taking a public health approach to heal community trauma.

### **International Coaching Federation - 2021**

Associated Certified Coach within the gold standard of excellence in the coaching field.

### **Universal Design for Learning - 2018**

Certified Trainer of Trainers through the Tehama County Office of Education.

### **Restorative Practices - 2018**

Certified Trainer of Trainers in restorative practices in schools through Hope City.

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

<b>Co-Leader</b> - Women's Leadership Collective Shasta County, CA 2024 - present	Co-facilitated a bi-monthly leadership circle with Hope Seth and the United Way of Northern California.
<b>Co-Founder</b> - Action Salon Shasta County, CA 2016 - present	Hosted a gathering space for civic engagement on topics like civil rights, social justice, and sustainability.
<b>Leadership Team</b> - Shasta County Mini Maker Faire - Redding / Anderson, CA 2016 - 2019	Coordinated school outreach and facilitated leadership team meetings for 2,000+ visitors and 300+ Makers.
<b>Consultant</b> - Gateway Science Museum Chico, CA 2012	Mentored undergraduates who designed exhibits promoting active scientific inquiry.
<b>Co-Leader</b> - Exploratorium San Francisco, CA 2002 - 2007	Led Physics of Toys, a monthly museum program providing hands-on physics explorations to visitors.
<b>Scientific Consultant</b> - Exploratorium San Francisco, CA 2002 - 2006	Advised during the design process of a brand new exhibit: Mind.
<b>Scientist</b> - Science and Health Education Partnership - San Francisco, CA 2001 - 2002	Organized a bimonthly science club for middle school girls. Mentored teachers in the research lab.
<b>Leader</b> - Fort Miley Adventure Ropes San Francisco State University 1998 - 2002	Facilitated high and low ropes courses for Bay Area non-profits and youth at risk.

## PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

<b>Jayna Gaskell</b> Exec. Director, Pivot Charter Schools	jgaskell@pivotcharter.org	(530) 550-7616
<b>Kristina Harris</b> CFO, Hat Creek Construction & Materials, Inc.	kris@hatcreekconstruction.com	(530) 945-0626
<b>Heidi Hartigan</b> CEO, Connections, ABA	heidihi@smalltalkpeds.com	(530) 355-0804
<b>Glenn Zane</b> Ex-School Board Chair, Chrysalis Charter School	gzane@crsinet.com	(530) 515-7007
<b>Leslie Atkins</b> Prof. of Curriculum, Instruction & Foundational Studies, Boise State Univ.	leslie.atkins@gmail.com	(208) 340-8317
<b>Sarah Flowers</b> Former Head of School, Archway School	flowers.sf@gmail.com	(510) 502-1691

## PERSONAL INTERESTS

Dungeons & Dragons and board games	Building community in Northern California
Paddle boarding and camping	Raising egg-laying ducks
International travel	Reading nonfiction, sci fi, and fantasy

### Books, Podcasts, Essays, Courses, and Curriculum

Salter, IY. (Coming soon) Have Brain, Will Travel: The science behind our wanderlust. Agented by Kimberley Cameron. Seeking a traditional publisher. [www.IreneSalterBooks.com](http://www.IreneSalterBooks.com)

Salter, IY. (2024) The Leaders' Playground Podcast: What if work could feel like play. Stories, science, and strategies that help leaders thrive, not just survive. <https://www.irenesalter.com/podcast>

Salter, IY. (2023) "Thought Experiment". Essay in Hidden Compass.

Salter IY. (2022) Leaders Lighthouse: Survival skills they didn't teach you & advanced training for a leader's mind, body, and soul. [tinyurl.com/irenesalter](http://tinyurl.com/irenesalter)

Austin, J, Creek, A, Cushman-Patz, B, Davis, L, Gavins, A, Junge, A, O'Connor-Morin, A, Pellam, M, & Salter, I (2018). Collaborative Leadership for Thriving Teams: A guide for teacher-powered site administrators. Education Evolving.

Elliott, LA, Jaxon, K, & Salter, I (2016). Composing Science: A Facilitator's Guide to Writing in the Science Classroom. Teachers College Press.

Donovan, D, Rousseau, J, Salter, I, Atkins, LA, Acevedo-Gutierrez, A, Kratz, R, Landel, C, Mullen, V & Pape-Lindstrom, P. (2014) Life Science and Everyday Thinking. Activate Learning.

Salter IY, Beals K, Willard C. (2009) AfterSchool KidzScience: Falling and Flying. Activity Guides and materials kit. Developmental Studies Center..

### Selected Research Publications

Atkins, LJ, Salter, IY. (2015) Engaging future teachers in having wonderful ideas. Chapter in Recruiting and Educating Future Physics Teachers, edited by E. Brewe and C. Sandifer. APS.

Salter, IY, Atkins, LJ (2013) What Students Say Versus What They Do Regarding Scientific Inquiry. Science Education. 9(1):1-35.

Salter, IY, Atkins, LJ. (2011) Student Generated Scientific Inquiry: Course development, outcomes and implications. Journal of Science Teacher Education. 24 (1) pp 157-177.

Yun IA, Wakabayashi KT, Fields HL, Nicola SM. (2004) The ventral tegmental area is required for the behavioral and nucleus accumbens neuronal firing responses to incentive cues. Journal of Neuroscience. 24(12):2923-33.

Yun IA, Fields HL. (2003) Basolateral amygdala lesions impair both cue- and cocaine-induced reinstatement in animals trained on a discriminative stimulus task. Neuroscience. 121(3):747-57.

### Selected Conference Presentations and Papers

Salter, IY. (2023) Transform your Feedback and Evaluation System with a Shift Positive. California Charter Schools Association, Sacramento, CA. Workshop.

Austin, J, Krafel, P, Salter, IY. (2018) Teacher-Powered Principals: Reimagining the roles of administrators at teacher-powered schools. Teacher Powered Schools National Conference, Boston, MA. Workshop.

Salter, IY. (2017) Composing Science: A facilitator's guide to writing in the inquiry classroom. National Science Teachers Association National Conference, Los Angeles, CA. Workshop.