

The Oyasin Leadership Initiation

**a journey through water, nervous system
regulation, and deep alignment**

Spring 2026 · Bacalar, Mexico



Immersion dates

May 2026.

Immersions are 3, 5 or 7 days.

Each immersion is a curated, carefully held group.

Private 1-on-1 immersions are available upon request.

The Leadership Reality

Many leaders have achieved what they once dreamed of.

Yet something essential still feels missing.

High responsibility. Constant decisions. Endless pressure.

Strategy, intelligence, and success no longer create the meaning or fulfillment they once promised.

The nervous system stays in constant activation. There is little space to pause, listen, to feel, and to simply be.



What Leaders Experience

Many leaders recognize themselves here.

Overthinking

Repetitive thoughts, difficulty finding clarity.

Burnout

Low energy, tension in the body, constant mental fatigue.

Disconnection

Feeling distant from yourself, others, and your deeper purpose.

Pressure and responsibility

Always holding everything together for others.

Loss of joy and freedom

Life becomes serious, heavy, and contracted.



What if the next level of your leadership doesn't require more effort - but more ease & flow?

There is another way.

A Different Kind of Leadership Work

Most leadership development works with strategy and mindset.

The Oyasin Leadership Initiation goes deeper, we work on the level of:

the body · the nervous system · the heart · spirit and deeper intuition

When these align, leaders experience:

Clarity

Clear direction and grounded confidence.

Vitality

A sense of calm, joy, and aliveness.

Presence

Authenticity that inspires trust and connection.

Wholeness

Alignment between life, leadership, and purpose.

Flow

Ease and trust in how life unfolds.

This is the kind of leadership our time is calling for.



Why Water

Leaders spend their lives holding everything together. Carrying decisions, teams, pressure, and responsibility - often without pause.

In water, something rare happens.

The body relaxes. The nervous system slows down. The mind becomes quiet. Roles and titles disappear. For a moment, leaders experience being held themselves.

Performance drops. Defenses soften. Leaders reconnect with themselves beyond their professional identity - without the masks they carry in their work.

Water works directly on the body, the breath, and the nervous system's ability to regulate - in ways that no boardroom, no coaching session, and no mindset tool can replicate.

The human body is 70% water. We are returning to it.

The Dive

You take one breath. You let go of the surface. And you descend.

Underwater, there is no performance. No strategy. No noise. Just the body, the breath, and the present moment.

Freediving is a mental game. It is about feeling - not performance. And anyone can do it.

People of seventy years old, people with one lung, people who never thought they could do it - all have joined our water retreats and made the dive. What they all discovered is the same: the limit is never the body. It is the mind.

That is exactly why it works for leaders.

In the stillness beneath the surface, the nervous system resets. The mind clears. What felt urgent above water becomes quiet below it. Leaders discover a quality of attention they rarely access on land.

One breath. One dive. Everything changes.





Bacalar

The Leadership Initiation takes place in Bacalar, Mexico, one of the **most extraordinary water ecosystems on Earth**.

Its turquoise lagoon is connected to vast underground freshwater systems and sacred cenotes.

Bacalar is also home to **stromatolites, ancient living organisms** that produced the first oxygen on our planet more than **3.5 billion years ago**.

Few places invite such depth, and connection with our origin.



The Practices

Each practice is evidence-based and chosen with intention - working directly on the body, the breath, and the nervous system.



Water Practices

- **Freediving** in cenotes - activating the body's ancient dive reflex for stillness and clarity
- **Janzu water therapy** - being held and moved through warm water for deep nervous system release
- **Embodiment practices** in water - reconnecting with the body beyond the thinking mind
- **Time with the stromatolites** - the oldest living organisms on Earth, a reminder of wisdom and resilience.




Inner Work

- **Daily yoga and meditation** - building a somatic foundation for presence
- **Breathwork** - using the breath as a direct tool for nervous system regulation and expanded awareness
- **Water ceremony** - a guided ceremonial experience in water to access deeper clarity, intention, and inner direction
- **Leadership reflection** and meaningful dialogue in circle
- **Deep purpose work** - exploring vision, values, and life direction
- **Plant medicine ceremony** (optional) - for deeper personal work and inner exploration



Nature & Nourishment

- **Kayaking** through the lagoon and waterways of Bacalar
- **Solo reflection time** in nature - to rest, write, or simply be
- **Nourishing food** prepared daily to support the body's reset



The Science of Our Practices

Every practice in this initiation is grounded in biology. This is what happens in your body and brain.

Blue Mind & Nervous System Reset

Marine biologist Dr. Wallace J. Nichols coined "Blue Mind" - the meditative state induced by water. Just two minutes of water exposure measurably lowers blood pressure and cortisol, *shifting the body from sympathetic (fight-or-flight) to parasympathetic (rest-and-restore) mode.* (Blue Mind, 2014; Axios Health, 2024)

Freediving - the Mammalian Dive Reflex

When the face enters water, the body triggers an ancient reflex via the trigeminal and vagus nerves: *heart rate drops 10–25% (bradycardia)*, and blood flow redirects to the heart and brain. This automatic parasympathetic activation is the body's innate biological response. (StatPearls, NCBI; Panneton, Physiology 2013)

Cognitive Clarity

Time in or near water mitigates mental fatigue and restores "directed attention" - the specific cognitive resource that is often depleted in high-pressure leadership roles and constant-decision environments. (Attention Restoration Theory, Kaplan)

Water Immersion & Brain Network Integration

A 2023 fMRI study found that water immersion increases interaction between large-scale brain networks, *boosting alertness and inspiration while reducing nervousness.* Participants reported feeling more active and attentive, with a measurable decrease in psychological distress. (Yankouskaya et al., Biology, 2023)

Janzu Water Therapy

Warm water (35°C) induces vasodilation and muscle relaxation, while buoyancy removes gravitational load, allowing the body to fully release. Rhythmic movement quiets the sympathetic nervous system, *facilitating emotional processing and deep physiological restoration.* (NeuroLaunch, 2024; Aquatic Alchemy, 2025)

Tools Leaders Take Home

You will leave with embodied practices for lasting personal and professional change.

A body that knows how to rest

Knowing how to release tension, restore energy, and return to calm - even in demanding seasons.

An open and resilient heart

The capacity to stay present and connected, without losing yourself in the process.

A magnetic presence

An authenticity that others feel - and that affects everyone around you.

Access to stillness

Tools to quiet the mind, and access clarity and your intuition.

Embodied wisdom

Not just theoretical knowledge, but wisdom that speaks from your body, aligned with what truly matters.





What Participants Say

"I came as a CEO. I left as a human being. The water did something no coach, no retreat, no strategy session had ever done - it gave me back to myself."

- Sarah M., CEO · Amsterdam

"I have done many leadership programs. Oyasin was the first one that worked on the level where the real change happens. My nervous system has not been the same since."

- James R., Executive Director · Zürich

"Freediving in the cenote was the most most liberating thing I have ever done. I cried underwater. I laughed on the surface. I went home a different person."

- Elena V., Entrepreneur · San Francisco



Immersion + Integration

The initiation unfolds in two phases.



Immersion

A five-day deep immersion in Bacalar.

Through water, nature, and dialogue, participants reconnect with clarity, and purpose.



Integration

Three months of private one-on-one leadership guidance.

This phase ensures that insights become real changes in life and leadership.

The investment for the experience varies based on your chosen accommodation for the immersion and the cadence of your integration sessions, whether weekly or biweekly. We will explore the best fit for your personal journey together during our conversation.

About Moniek

Moniek van Erven holds an MSc in Finance and is a serial entrepreneur. She understands the pressure, high-stakes decisions, and relentless drive inherent in leadership.

Then, the water changed her life. A personal encounter with the ocean sparked a profound reorientation: from boardroom strategy, to embodied leadership at the water's edge.

Founder of Oyasin and Born From Water, she has spent over a decade guiding executives and high-performers through deep transformation.

By bridging high-performance, indigenous wisdom, nature-based intelligence and nervous system science, she helps leaders integrate clarity and purpose into their professional lives.

Executive advisory

Embodied leadership

Water-based practices

Indigenous wisdom





The Team

The retreat is guided by a carefully assembled team of world-class freedivers and water guides - each bringing deep expertise, and a shared commitment to transformation.

Freedivers

World-class freedivers who guide participants safely and gracefully into the depths of stillness.

Water Guides

Experienced water therapists and embodiment facilitators who hold space for deep nervous system work.



Practical Details

Location

Bacalar, Mexico

Arrival airports

Chetumal (CTM) or Cancun (CUN)

Climate

Warm and tropical. Water temperature is ideal approximately 28–30°C

Experience

No previous freediving or water experience required. Learning these practices is part of the immersion.

Group

The group is intentionally small to create trust and meaningful dialogue.



Giving Back

Heart-centered leadership leads to service.

We foster a deep connection to water and nature.

Initiation empowers leaders to act with stewardship and purpose.

Ocean stewardship

A portion of your tuition funds marine ecosystem protection.

Stepping into service

We learn to lead for the benefit of the greater whole.

Regenerative leadership

This work transforms leaders into stewards of their communities and the environment.

Ready to Begin?

Participation begins with a short conversation to assess timing and fit.

If this speaks to you, you can reach out to me directly:

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With love,

Moniek

