



# Leading Culture Change

**From 6.00pm on Tuesday January 16th  
until 3.30pm on Wednesday January 17th**

**Background Note and Agenda  
for our 14th Leadership Conversation**

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Society of Leadership Fellows, St George's House, Windsor Castle

“If you get the culture right,  
most of the other stuff will just  
take care of itself”



## ***This conversation is organised in 3 parts***

### **Part one**

#### **Your role as a driver of culture change**

**HOW** have you helped to influence and drive culture change so far?

**WHO** do you see as the major influencer/s of the culture of your organisation?

When we talk about culture change we can easily slip into very impersonal language and talk about the values and behaviours of people in your organisation, as if they are somehow independent of YOU as one of its leaders.

This is why in the first part we want to concentrate on your personal roles as leaders in driving culture change.

We want to hear from those among you who have helped to influence and drive culture change.

- How did you achieve this?
- What worked best for you?
- Might there have been an approach that you tried and then discarded in favour of another that worked better for you?
- What lessons do you learn from this and are there any wider lessons that we can draw out for the rest of us to take away as well?

We also want to ask ourselves who we see as the major influencer/s of our organisation's culture. To be a significant influencer ourselves, we need to know who we want to share influence WITH.

We focus on you as a leader because all of the evidence from successful culture change is that culture change leaders achieve a personal connection with their staff and then build on this to drive through changes in behaviour that staff associate with you as a leader (*Tony Hsieh being a very good example of this principle*).

Successful culture change involves you investing your personal identity as a leader in the whole change process. Staff need to see you "walking the talk" and embodying the culture that you are asking them to take on and make their own.

## Part two

### **Linking the imperative for change to the desired new behaviours**

**What do you see as the IMPERATIVE for culture change?**

**What do you most want to ACHIEVE?**

Successful culture change nearly always requires an imperative. It might be a dramatic loss in income or a competitor going to the wall and new growth prospects presenting themselves. Whatever it might be, for an effective leadership it is the way in to a conversation that you've known you need to have for a while.

Once you have your imperative, and the sense of urgency that goes with it, it's vital to draw out the link - in plain English - between this imperative and what you want to change in staff behaviours.

During these discussions we want to make sure that we nail down the behaviours that you are proposing. We want to press you to give some razor-sharp answers to a member of your staff who might say:

*As part of this new culture that you're talking about, exactly HOW do you want me to change my behaviours?*

## Part three

### **Sharpening up the leadership skills required to win over the doubters and build greater staff support for the culture change process**

In all of our Leadership Conversations at the House, we try not to be too easy on ourselves! This is why we are very keen that we engage directly with one core challenge in this third part of our Conversation:

*How will you engage with and win over the doubters and prospective blockers?*

We ask this question because they are always there. If they weren't, you probably wouldn't feel the urgent need to change your current culture.

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**Part  
three**

The simple truth is that changing your culture WILL make some of your people feel uncomfortable. Best to face this up-front, so that when they say this you're not taken by surprise.

You know who some of the “usual suspects” will be at the back of meetings muttering that they've heard it all before. Instead of ignoring them and pretending they don't exist, how about going to them and saying how much you want to hear whatever ideas they might have?

**Informal coaching**

As we continue these discussions, we will encourage informal coaching across the group. This has become one of the strongest features of our Leadership Conversations to date, and we hope that it will develop naturally in January, just as it has done in earlier Conversations.

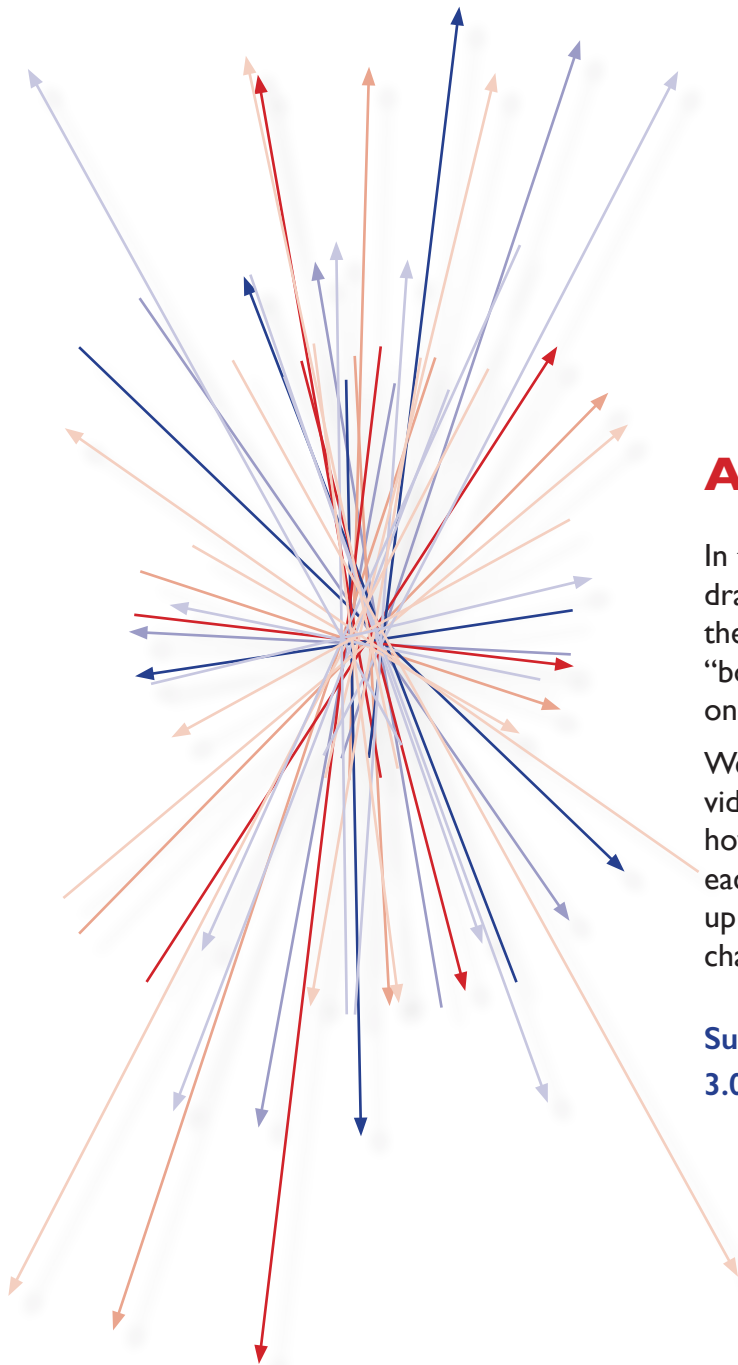
We should be able to gain a lot from looking at how we define our roles as culture change leaders and asking what skills you will need to develop further to be really effective in engaging with colleagues.

You will be tested for your coaching and listening skills, as well as your ability to think on your feet and let your ideas move on as others engage more with your thinking.

- How committed are you to creating the space for doubters to have their say?
- How much will you let yourself be open to challenge from others if they feel that you are not taking on the behaviours you're encouraging them to adopt?

In opening up discussion about these sorts of issues, we will encourage you to share ideas and feedback across the group about how best to step into this space as leaders.

This process of sharing feedback about our different leadership styles, and which styles can be most effective for “winning hearts and minds”, will be an important part of our discussions together on the Wednesday afternoon.



## April 16 video link-up

In the final minutes of the Conversation we will draw together our key points of learning and share them in a way that enables you to take away a lot of “bonus ideas” and tips from others, to top up the ones that you already have.

We will also arrange a time in April for a follow-up video link-up to swap notes, so that we can hear how much progress others have made and inspire each other once again as we continue to sharpen up our own leadership roles as drivers of culture change.

**Suggested time for Video Link-up:**  
**3.00 to 4.30pm on Monday April 16th**

# Agenda

## Tuesday, January 16th 2018

2.30pm	You can check into your room in St George's House
4.30pm	Tea in the House for those joining Evensong in the Chapel
5.05pm	Evensong (optional)
6.00pm <i>In the Vicars' Hall</i>	Refreshments, then start of the Conversation. After agreeing our groundrules, we agree our first questions for small groups: "In what ways have you helped to influence the culture of your current organisation – or a previous one? If you hold back from seeing yourself as a driver of culture change, what does this tell us about YOU as a leader?"
7.30pm	After feedback and debate, we agree on one or two key issues to explore over dinner
7.45pm	Free time/ drinks until dinner is served promptly at 8.30pm
10.00pm	Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel (optional)

## Wednesday, January 17th

7.45am	Breakfast is served in St George's House
8.45am <i>In the Vicars' Hall</i>	We hear any overnight reflections and agree the question for our next round of small groups, when we will ask what you see as the imperative for culture change and how you expect this to link in with the changes in behaviours that you would like to see
11.00am	By late morning we will be engaged with the critical challenge of how to create momentum in the culture change process and open it up so that more and more of your staff can share ownership of it
12.30pm	A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall. In small coaching groups, we ask how you see your leadership roles developing in sharing and developing your messages so that staff can truly co-own them with you
1.15pm	We share personal insights, asking what they imply for how we need to develop if you are to enable staff truly to co-own the new culture with you
2.20pm	Brief comfort break and opportunity to grab a fresh drink and bring it back to a new chair
2.30pm	We continue the process of sharpening up resolves, creating the space for supportive challenge and feedback across the group so that we can all gain as many insights as possible from each other as we determine our personal strategies for becoming more effective as culture change leaders

We will finish on the dot of 3.30pm.