



# Integrity in Leadership

From 9.00am until 3.00pm on  
Wednesday, September 12th 2018

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**Background Note and Agenda for our 22nd Leadership Conversation**

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

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*"Real integrity is doing  
the right thing, knowing  
that nobody's going to  
know whether you did it  
or not."*

**Oprah Winfrey**

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*"It is true that integrity alone won't  
make you a leader, but without  
integrity you will never be one."*

**Zig Ziglar**

# Following on from our Annual Gathering AND our June 5 Leadership Conversation

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As you know, this Leadership Conversation has been designed to give us an opportunity to continue the conversation that we will have started during our Annual Gathering in the Chapel the previous evening, following speeches by three of our Leadership Fellows on the theme of integrity in leadership.

We hope that one or two of them will be able to remain with us for the day, so we will have a chance early on to draw them out further on any aspects of their thinking that we didn't have time to explore properly.

Our three speakers will themselves be able to draw on the insights that we will all gain through our June 5 Conversation on Leading with Integrity. The Insights report from June 5th will be available on our Leadership Insights page from June 12th and it will be an important background resource for this Conversation.

## A series of propositions

By the time we are together for 9.00am on September 12th we will have before us a series of powerful propositions on integrity in leadership. These should enable us to stretch ourselves in the way that we like to do at Leadership Conversations and come up with some fresh challenges to take forward with our own leadership teams as well as sharing them with all other Leadership Fellows.

TRUST  
TRUST  
CONNECT  
CONNECT  
STRETCH  
STRETCH

# Starting off by asking what was the most challenging idea from last night's Annual Gathering

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We expect that we will be joined at this Conversation by a small number of Leadership Fellows who were not able to be with us for the Annual Gathering. In the first few minutes we want to give them a chance to get up to speed with the rest of us, who will have taken part in the Gathering and then stayed in the House or nearby overnight.

So, once we have agreed the high trust guiding principles that we always ask Fellows to adopt at the beginning of every Leadership Conversation, we will break into small standing groups of three or four.

The agenda that we follow during this Conversation will be determined to a large degree by your answers to the question that you now consider.

At this stage, more than four months in advance, our expectation is that we should ask you a fairly open question along the lines of:



**"Reflecting on the different aspects of integrity in leadership that we discussed last night, which one do you personally find most challenging – and why?"**

## **The key word: "why?"**

In many ways, the most important part of your answer, for the rest of us, is how you respond to the last word "why".

In your groups, we want to ask you to sharpen up your answer with each other, because it is this process of working through our thinking in small groups that is so valuable when you come to share your personal conclusions with the rest of us.

# Challenging our own assumptions

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This is why we always discourage small groups from developing a shared group view. So many people are used to saying, “Who’s going to report back for the group?” that we are always careful to say up-front:

- **“No group reps, please, just bring back your personal answer to the question”.**

The reason we say this is not just because we want you to **pin each other down** as much as you can in your small group on how you define the key aspect of integrity that you want us to work through together.

It is also because we all tend to be more open to **moving on in our thinking**, and sometimes changing our minds, if we just have to represent our personal opinion during discussion. Even then, some people can be very hesitant about this because they have persuaded themselves that to be well regarded in a group we all need to be consistent, above all else.

From experience, we have found that those we learn from the most in groupwork are people who go into a process such as this ready to challenge their own assumptions.

In our view as a House, what matters most is that we **pursue our process of self-challenge**, and generous challenge of others, in such a way that we really move onto **new ground** in our thinking about integrity in leadership.

# Modelling high integrity leadership

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As you know, we try very hard not to succumb to the temptation to spend our time discussing what some of us regard as the lack of integrity across so much of our public life.

Our general view as a Society is that if we are to focus on our most difficult challenges as leaders, we need to be careful to deal with our own “stuff” and keep off the stuff of other leaders who aren't in the room!

At the same time, we are very keen that at this Conversation we spend some time discussing how, as leaders, we could all do more to **model** high integrity leadership in a way that encourages – and occasionally challenges – others to spend more time reflecting on how they might avoid compromising their own integrity in their professional lives.

How should we share with our immediate teams the very real challenges involved in leading with integrity?

## **When someone “manages the truth”, how should we respond?**

How should we respond when we know that someone working closely with us has displayed a lack of integrity, perhaps by “managing the truth” in a way that actively misrepresents a situation?

On all those occasions when the message that we are given by someone does not conform with our understanding of the truth, **what should we do?**

- **Say nothing** – as many of us tend to do?
- **Or express some surprise** that our versions of reality are so very different?

Suppose we challenge their version of reality and they agree with us that they had indeed **slightly bent the truth** in order to make it more palatable for us.

Should there be any **consequences** that flow from this?

We have lots of procedures in place for what is meant to happen when people under-perform in relation to their jobs. Yet when people “under-perform” as respecters of the truth, what do we do?

- **Ask them to say sorry?**
- **Tell them that if they're as casual in relation to the truth in future, we might need to ask them to consider their position in the business?**
- **Or do we change the subject in the hope that we don't have to challenge ourselves any longer on a genuinely tricky aspect of our relationships at work?**

### **Confronting the practical challenges that we face in modelling high integrity leadership**

We ask these questions now because discussions about integrity can become rather abstract and theoretical.

As a result we can fail to confront some of the very practical challenges for each of us as leaders in modelling high integrity leadership.

On the whole, we all seem to have clear procedures in place for dismissing staff when they blatantly lie about something, for example by signing a statement saying that they have undertaken a task when actually they haven't.

Where we seem to be weaker is in relation to those areas where some judgement is involved about whether or not someone has **knowingly** misrepresented the truth.

This is why we want to ask ourselves whether leaders wishing to model high integrity leadership should, perhaps, make clear that staff who are known to bend the truth in a way that conceals some under-performance, or makes it easier to convey a message that senior staff want to hear, will be deemed to be **in breach of their own integrity** unless they can show that they themselves have been misled by others.

Every leader will have their own view about what the consequences of a breach of integrity should be – and it will be interesting to hear your views about this when we reach that stage in our discussions.

### **How can we each have a greater impact?**

These are the sorts of questions that we need to challenge ourselves on if we are to be in a position to become more active as modellers of high integrity leadership.



**For us to have a greater impact in modelling high integrity leadership, what would we need to start doing, stop doing – or do differently?**

We hope to have a range of specific answers to this question before 3.00pm on September 12th.

# Defining ourselves more clearly as a Society

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By the end of this process, we hope that the product that we can create – drawing on the June 5 Conversation, the September 11 Annual Gathering and now today's Conversation – will be one of the most significant products that we have created together as a Society of Leadership Fellows.

So we hope that those of you who join us on September 12th will see yourselves as not just developing ideas that you can take away and share with your leadership teams and disseminate across your organisation.

We hope that you will **also** see yourselves as helping to co-create a set of ideas and propositions that define us more clearly as a Society.

We love the Zig Ziglar quote on page two about how none of us will ever be a leader unless we have integrity. And yet it's not really true, is it?

There are far too many leaders in this world who lack in integrity and are seen to get away with this, in so many ways.

What we aspire to is a world in which the Zig Ziglar quote **becomes true.**

How about seeing it as a hallmark of our shared leadership, and our shared ambition as leaders, that we seek to do all in our power to create our own set of imperatives that can help to inspire leaders more widely to step up to the challenge of modelling high integrity leadership?

We find this an exciting ambition, and hope that a good number of us will join together on September 12th to take this further – and, over time, **a lot further.**

**Who knows where this could lead?**

# Agenda

## Wednesday, September 12th 2018

<b>8.45am+</b>	Coffee and light refreshments served in the Vicars' Hall
<b>9.00am</b> <i>(prompt, please)</i>	We welcome you to the Conversation and suggest a small number of groundrules for our time together. We then break into small groups of 3 or 4 for 15 minutes to consider our first question:  ● <i>Reflecting on the different aspects of integrity in leadership that we discussed last night, which one do you personally find most challenging – and why?"</i> (Refreshments available)
<b>9.30am</b>	Back from groups (different chairs, please) We hear your personal answers to this question, capture the key messages coming forward and then agree on the two or three aspects of integrity that we want to focus on this morning. We will then move in and out of groups as necessary to sharpen up our thinking, with refreshments to coincide with our time working in small groups
<b>12.00pm</b>	Back in the circle in new seats, we draw together the main themes from the morning. If there is a key theme where we are not in agreement, and want to develop our thinking further, we have the option to stick with that. Otherwise, we focus on the theme of <b>modelling high integrity leadership</b> and agree on a question for small groups to consider together over lunch
<b>12.30pm</b>	Lunch in the Vicars' Hall. Over lunch, groups support each other in sharpening up their ideas and encourage any members of the group with challenging and risky ideas to "stay risky" and share their thinking with the rest of us when we are together again as one single group
<b>1.15pm</b>	Back in the circle, we ask if anyone has a particularly challenging and risky idea that they would like to share. We start with them, conscious that we don't all need to agree and in this session we want to develop a "menu of ideas" that we can all draw on in developing our thinking about how we might best model high integrity leadership and set a standard that others around us are keen to share as well
<b>1.50pm</b>	(Refreshments available) In twos we ask what more we should each be doing to promote high integrity leadership across the whole of our professional lives, in a way that visibly stretches us and encourages other leaders to stretch themselves too
<b>2.05pm</b>	Back together again, we explore how we each see our own leadership style developing to ensure that we maximise our impact as high integrity leaders. We are careful to keep to time so that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from feedback from others in the group before we close the Conversation on the dot of 3.00pm.



We hope that if we, as a Society of 250 Leadership Fellows, can now stretch ourselves and really set higher standards of integrity in our own leadership, this will ripple out.