



Achieving your priorities in 2019

- 5 weeks in

From 10.30am until 4.30pm on
Tuesday, February 5th 2019

Background Note and Agenda for our 27th Leadership Conversation

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



“Nobody's life is ever all balanced. It's a conscious decision to choose your priorities every day.”

Elisabeth Hasselbeck

Following up our Conversation on December 12th

This Conversation follows on from the one on December 12 2018 on an almost identical theme, except that for this one we have the added benefit – or pressure, depending upon your point of view! – of being some five weeks into the year.

This is why our focus is on supporting each other in **taking stock** of our priorities five weeks in and asking whether we think we are each on track for being able to nail our priorities for the year sooner rather than later.

To help us on our way we have the added benefit of the Insights report arising from our December 12 Conversation, available on our Insights page from December 20th.

We hope that it will be a useful background read for everyone joining this Conversation, with the only caveat that every group is unique and whilst we want to gain whatever we can from the experiences of the Leadership Fellows following a very similar path to ourselves in December, we also want to chart our own route, too, and not be inhibited in any way by what they agreed on – or perhaps disagreed on!

A three-part conversation

As before we will engage with this Conversation in three parts, within the framework of our [Guiding Principles for Leadership Conversations](#):

- **BUILDING TRUST**
- **ACHIEVING A STRONGER CONNECTION**
- **GOING FOR THE STRETCH**

Challenging ourselves about our self-belief as leaders

We hope that every Leadership Fellow joining this Conversation will end up with a clearer sense of your priorities as a leader in 2019, and how best to increase your sense of pace after this Conversation in focusing more sharply on what you want to achieve, and by when.

Possibly even more important than this, we hope that you will also end up more confident in your ability as a leader to **follow through with the resolves that you take away from Windsor** and win the support of all those that you need on board to achieve the priorities that you set yourself.

We know that the key to this is our ability to deal with those behaviours of ours that get in our way as leaders.

This is the core challenge that we will engage with on February 5th.

Combining increased self-belief with determination and focus

During the day, we hope that we will be able to move a considerable way forward as a group in understanding better how we can best combine increased self-belief with determination and focus to ensure that, five weeks in to the year, we all end the day **more confident** in our ability to achieve the priorities that we have set for ourselves in 2019.

Increasing pace and
focusing more sharply

Part I **BUILDING TRUST**

TRUST

The challenge for our first round of small groups

Once we have agreed our groundrules for the day we will break into small (standing) groups for 20 minutes, in which we will ask each of you to come up with your personal answers to three questions:

- ❓ **What do you regard as your top 3 priorities for 2019?**
- ❓ **Reflecting on your experiences in the first few weeks of 2019, which one of these priorities do you think you are **LEAST LIKELY TO ACHIEVE** because of some leadership behaviour or habit of yours?**
- ❓ **Can you please capture this self-limiting behaviour/habit in very few words to help the others in your group understand what it is about you that is most likely to get in your own way?**

Your No 1 self-limiting behaviour – in no more than six words

At the end of your time in this small group, please write up on one of the whiteboards, in no more than six words, the one behaviour of yours that is most likely to get in your way.

At the end of your six words, please add your first name. Many thanks.

TRUST
CONNECT
STRETCH

Part I **BUILDING TRUST**

continued

TRUST

So often a “no go area”

You see why we put this first part under the banner of trust, don't you? We need to ask every one of you to share with us an answer that captures something about you as a leader that you might not have discussed much with yourself – let alone shared with members of your immediate team at work.

It is remarkable how many of us can regard our self-limiting behaviours as a “no go area”, even for ourselves!

We ask for this level of openness, knowing that it should offer us a real prize. We can all learn so much about the range of behaviours that tend to get in our way as leaders - and **which ones in particular** can limit our ability to achieve our priorities more than any others.

Connecting more strongly with others' experiences

Once we have had a few minutes to absorb your answers on the whiteboards, we want to progress to the second part of the Conversation under the banner of our guiding principle about achieving a greater connection across the group.

This will enable us to delve more deeply to try and understand our best strategies for letting go of those behaviours of ours that can so easily compromise our effectiveness as leaders.

TRUST
CONNECT
STRETCH

Part 2 **ACHIEVING A STRONGER CONNECTION**

CONNECT

We will then break into new small groups and ask each of you to share with the others in your group **one self-limiting behaviour of yours that you want to work on.**

Once you have each identified this behaviour, please then share with each other your personal answers to these questions:

- ? **In the past, have you tended to accept this behaviour on the grounds that you can't really do much about it? Or have you tried to change it – and if so, how?**
- ? **If you tried and failed, what do you think was the number one reason for failing?**

If you say you didn't try hard enough, can you press yourself on why not. For example, did you enlist anyone else's support with changing this behaviour? Or did you keep this all to yourself - and if so, why?

Self-limiting behaviours: others come to expect them of us

After your time in small groups, we will be very interested to hear how many of you actively tried to change this behaviour of yours that was getting in your way, and who else you involved with this process.

One of the reasons why so many of us find ourselves trapped into repeating our self-limiting behaviours is because those with whom we work most closely tend to **expect them of us** – and tell themselves that it is not their role to expect us to be any different.

TRUST
TRUST
CONNECT
STRETCH

Part 2

ACHIEVING A STRONGER CONNECTION *continued*

STRONGER CONNECTION

Sharing our challenge with others

This is why it is so important that when we are trying to change some long-established habits that get in our way as leaders, **we say something out loud** about what we are trying to do – and **why**.

It helps us to build our own confidence in making the change, as well as signalling to others that we would appreciate their support with this.

Some people find that one of the best ways of leaving behind an unhelpful behaviour is to ask one or two people they work most closely with to **say something** (it might even be a pre-agreed phrase) when they exhibit this behaviour.

There is so much evidence now which shows that the people who **do** manage to change some of their longstanding “bad habits” as leaders make a point of telling those they’re closest to at work **which particular habit** they are most keen to change, and why.

Picturing ourselves letting go of unhelpful habits

So often, our single greatest self-limiting behaviour is to do with our lack of faith in our own ability to change.

This is why it is so important that we work at picturing ourselves in situations where we are successful in letting go of unhelpful habits.

The more we are able to do this, the more we will take away from the third and final part of this Conversation, that starts with us working together in small groups over lunch and is all about **going for the stretch**.

TRUST
TRUST
CONNECT
STRETCH
STRETCH

Part 3

GOING FOR THE STRETCH

STRETCH

At this stage, our thinking is that in groups over lunch we should give ourselves the following challenge:

Please imagine that

You will be completely successful this year in dealing with the one or two behaviours of yours that are getting in your way the most, as a leader.

This very achievement will enable you to step forward as a more confident and empowered leader.

Taking this now as **given**, and reflecting on the top priorities that you shared with other Fellows in the first round of groups this morning ...

- ❓ **Do you still think they are the right priorities for this year, or do you think that one or perhaps two of them could become rather more ambitious?**
- ❓ **After all, without some of those self-limiting behaviours that have held you back in the past, don't you think that you could stretch yourself rather more in 2019 – and expect to achieve more through your top priorities for the year?**

As we engage with this challenge, it is really important that no-one feels under any pressure to stick to the priorities that you outlined earlier in the day.

Please let your thinking move on in whatever way feels right for you, taking it for granted that everyone else in the Vicars' Hall is part of your support group to help you end up with top priorities for 2019 that are both stretching and also achievable.

TRUST
CONNECT
STRETCH

Part 3

GOING FOR THE STRETCH

continued

STRETCH

One volunteer from each group

At the end of your lunchtime group, we will ask you to identify the one Fellow who seems to have ramped up what they expect to achieve as a leader in 2019 the most, as a result of being able to **imagine themselves as free from their top one or two self-limiting behaviours.**

Whilst the rest of us have a 5-minute break, we will ask one Fellow from each group to capture on a whiteboard:

- **The top one or two priorities that they are now setting for themselves and the one or two bad habits of theirs that would, in the past, have made it virtually impossible for them to achieve these priorities, and they now believe they can leave behind.**

When they are ready, we will ask each of them to put their whiteboard up against the glass doors to the bookcases along the wall opposite the entrance to the Vicars' Hall.

Preparing for the final stretch

Then at 1.50pm we all stand round the whiteboards and hear how some Fellows are thinking of setting themselves more ambitious priorities, now that they can picture themselves leaving behind those leadership behaviours of theirs that have most got in their way in the past.

With the sense of confidence and inspiration that we hope to gain from them, we will break you into your final round of small groups in which we ask you to focus on your top two priorities for 2019, and your strategy for ensuring that you are in a position to go all out to achieve them.

TRUST
CONNECT
STRETCH

Part 3

GOING FOR THE STRETCH

continued

STRETCH

Final round of small groups

Subject to fine-tuning on the day, our thinking is that in three's and two's we take on this final challenge:

- Please sharpen up what you now see as your top two priorities for 2019.
- Please now capture the one or two behaviours of yours that would be most likely to get in the way of you achieving them.
- Please now share your personal strategy for minimising any possible negative impact of these behaviours on your top two priorities and invite the other Fellow/s in your group to support you in developing it further.

Nailing our top priorities for 2019

Your answers to these questions should set us up for a powerful final session in which we hope to support each other in thinking through our personal strategies for managing our self-limiting behaviours so that they no longer hold us back from achieving our top priorities as leaders.

If we can support each other in achieving this, we hope that we will all feel more confident that we really can “nail” our top priorities for 2019 and in the process truly step forward as more confident and purposeful leaders.

TRUST
CONNECT
STRETCH



“Know your priorities and identify the five powerful action steps that you intend to take to move your initiatives forward each day. If you go to a tree with an axe and take five whacks at the tree every day, it doesn't matter if it's an oak or a redwood; eventually, the tree has to fall down.”

Jack Canfield

Agenda

Tuesday February 5th 2019

10.15am+	Coffee and light refreshments served in the Vicars' Hall
10.45am <i>(prompt, please)</i>	We welcome you to the Conversation and suggest a small number of ground rules for our time together. We then break into small groups of 3 or 4 for 20 minutes to consider our first question, as set out on page 5. At the end of groups we each write up on one of the whiteboards our No 1 self-limiting behaviour, in no more than six words (Refreshments available)
11.20am	We go round the whiteboards taking stock of everyone's answers, and then break into new small groups to consider the questions on page 7
12.05pm	(Refreshments available) Back in the circle in new seats, we capture the key messages coming forward from this second round of groups. As this part of the Conversation develops we prepare for our lunchtime groups in which we will stretch ourselves to convert self-limiting behaviours into assets and strengths for us to deploy as leaders
1.00pm	Lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall. Over lunch, working groups engage with the questions on page 9, and each group nominates one of their number to share with us how they intend to set more ambitious priorities for themselves, now that they see themselves as free from their top one or two self-limiting behaviours (page 10)
1.55pm	After lunch, we work round the whiteboards from each of these Fellows and draw inspiration from them to 'set us up' for our final round of small groups
2.25pm	In small groups we each capture our top two priorities at this stage (page 11), and seek support with firming up our personal strategy for minimising any negative impact from our self-limiting behaviours and ideally converting them into strengths that support us in achieving our top priorities for 2019.
2.50pm	Back together, we explore how you see your leadership style developing throughout the year to ensure that you are constantly managing what you have seen as your personal shortcomings so that they don't hold you back from nailing your personal priorities in 2019. We have a ground rule of "no recycling". We all need to find fresh language if we wish to go back to an idea that was raised earlier on.
3.25pm	We will have a 5-minute comfort break just before 3.30, and light refreshments will be available to bring back into the circle (to different chairs, please). We will make sure that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from quality feedback from others in the group before we bring the Conversation to a close on the dot of 4.30pm .

2019 priorities ✓

*"I don't do perfect
- but I shouldn't be too far off!" ✓*

“You are your own worst enemy.
If you can learn to stop expecting
impossible perfection, in yourself and
others, you may find the happiness
that has always eluded you.”

Lisa Kleypas
