



# Rebalancing our lives as leaders

from 10.30am until 4.30pm  
on Tuesday, June 2nd 2020

**Background Note and Agenda for our 51st Leadership Conversation**

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

## **This Leadership Conversation** is our third on the theme of **Rebalancing our lives as leaders**

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The quote below comes from page 6 of our report of the two previous Conversations. A link is on the final page.

*We talk about how we fail to be emotionally present when we're at home.*

*If we can change this, we might be in a better position to change how we are at work, too.*

*After all, if we were more emotionally present at work we would be more aware when we reach those moments of overload.*

*We would hear the voices within us warning of the dangers of burn-out ...*

# Especially designed for our inner workaholic, to make every minute count



*Supporting each other in determining what steps we each need to take to achieve a better balance in our lives as leaders, across the whole of our lives.*

## **We will ask ourselves:**

- What do we each regard as the **CURRENT BALANCE** between the five different strands of our lives: at work, with family, with friends, volunteering and enjoying some "me time"?
- If we feel that the balance is currently tilted too far in favour of our leadership time at work, **HOW COMMITTED** are we to doing something about it?
- What do we intend to **DO DIFFERENTLY** to take back control over our lives, and how might we best engage with those we are closest to to support us in achieving this?
- How do we intend to go about gaining greater energy from the **NON-WORK** parts of our lives, and how big will the shift in our lives have to be for us to be able to say that our lives are now well balanced?

"This is me!"

"Tell us more"

"Yes I can,  
yes I will!"



# The three stages to our Conversation

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## 1 "This is me!"

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We put stage one under this heading because early on we want to encourage you to **share a story** that enables us to understand better where you are coming from as a leader. To help us achieve strong connections across our group, please be up for sharing something about yourself in a way that helps others gain some sense of **how much** you have struggled with your work-life balance as a leader.

## 2 "Tell us more"

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Stage two is under this heading because we hope that by now we will all want to mobilise the power of questioning to draw each other out. We want to **draw on our shared curiosity** as we think through how we might best take back control over how we organise our lives, and what adjustments we might need to make in our leadership roles at work to demonstrate **more effective self-leadership** in the rest of our lives!

## 3 "Yes I can, yes I will!"

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Our third stage is about supporting each other in setting challenging resolves for ourselves. At our two previous Conversations on this theme, we talked about our resolves being **life-changing**, because no lesser term could be adequate to measure up to the scale of the challenge most of us faced to rebalance our lives in the ways we wanted to do.

**For every breakthrough in thinking that we achieve during this final stage, we will be able to identify its origins in the stories that we have each shared and the curiosity that others have shown in response.**

# "This is me!"

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After agreeing our Guiding Principles for this Conversation, we will explore our first question in small groups. We want to start by asking:

- *how would you assess the current balance across the five different strands of your life, as captured in the colour chart below?*

What is so important at this stage is that you're completely honest in your assessment of how things are at the moment. In both our previous (overnight) Conversations on this theme, it came out strongly how so many of us can let ourselves live in a state of **denial** for quite some years about the degree of imbalance between the different strands of our lives!

We're rather more up against the clock at this one, so please dive in with your **frank and fearless assessment** of what you see as the current balance across these five strands.

Also, it would be great if you could share with others in your group whether you are **surprised** by your answer.

What lesson do you take from this?

WORK

FAMILY

ME TIME

FRIENDS

VOLUNTEERING

# "Tell us more!"

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As we move into the second stage of this Conversation, we want to focus forward and ask you the question (in our second round of small groups):



- Suppose you achieve a **'better version of you'** by Christmas. What would this version look like?

For this sort of conversation, it is really important to gain a sense earlier rather than later of what sort of scale of change we're each up for in our lives.

Some of you might only want modest changes in your work-life balance by Christmas, whilst others might feel at this stage that there need to be some pretty fundamental changes to get a grip on some deep-seated habits that are rather getting in the way of you achieving what you want from life.

## No single right way

In all of our Conversations, we are always careful to follow through the maxim that there is no single right way!

For any Leadership Fellows joining this Conversation as your first one, it is really important to us to assure you in advance that we always champion the individuality of all of our take-aways at the end.

All that matters in the process that we are going through is that you feel supported by others in the circle in developing outcomes that will work for **you**.

What we ask, as you know, is that you are up for reciprocating by supporting other Fellows in achieving outcomes that are tailored to meet their needs as leaders, too.

# "Yes I can!"

From lunchtime onwards we see ourselves moving into our "stretch zone", when we hope to push ourselves as hard as we can in sharpening up our own personal strategies for rebalancing our lives as leaders.

Our thinking at this stage is that over lunch it could be really useful for us to focus on the four behaviours identified in Chapter Two of Rebalancing our lives as leaders (pages 20-21) as encouraging many of us to slip into workaholism:

*I was hoping the problems here are someone else's fault. I now have a horrible feeling they're down to ME!*

**We over-indulge our perfectionist**

**We fail to curb our people-pleaser**

**We make ourselves overly available**

**We over-think things**

We would like to ask if one or two of these are particular challenges for you personally, and if so which ones.

We also want to ask whether there are one or two **other** habits of yours that are in league with your "inner workaholic".

## How different would life be?

Through your discussions over lunch we hope that you will identify one of your number to share their own story in which they picture themselves **without** these habits and then tell us how different life would be and how they think they would **feel** about it.

It makes such a difference if those who are sharing their story with us can make it as vivid as possible, so that we gain a real sense of the **scale of their challenge** in changing the habits that are the heart of the imbalance in their lives.

# The non-work parts of our lives

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Once we have had a chance to reflect on these stories, we will break into small groups for possibly the most important part of this Conversation.

- *In this round we want to ask how you might each draw greater energy from the non-work parts of your lives.*

## The power of being

As you will see from page 27 of the Insights report, the thought that really captured our imagination when we discussed this theme last July was that

- *the key to taking on our workaholic tendencies is to focus on the power of being.*

Of course, we will still be drawn to the power of achieving, and rightly so, for many reasons.

What our heightened awareness of the power of being can do is to create a context in which the power of achieving still has a key part to play in our lives, but is no longer permitted to marginalise all else.

We flag this up now to encourage you to think about this before we are together in Windsor on June 2nd.

*As with all of our Conversations, we hope that those of you drawn to this proposition will want to take it further, and those of you not drawn to it for any reason will want to come up with another proposition that also excites and challenges us.*

*No pressure then ...*





# Welcoming peer feedback

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This is the stage in a Conversation when we gain so much from our Guiding Principle of welcoming peer feedback.

We have had moments at previous Conversations where a Fellow has had an instant breakthrough in the "final lap", triggered by someone else having the honesty - and generosity of spirit - to share an ambition for them that they were reluctant to articulate themselves.

This dimension to our work as a Society is only possible because of the **exceptionally high levels of trust** that Leadership Fellows have worked hard to establish with each other.

It means that in the final stages of a Leadership Conversation a good number of Fellows can achieve some really significant breakthroughs because the outcomes that we are each able to take away **matter** to everyone else in our "circle of trust".


## Sharpening up stretching take-aways

As you will see, our final round of small groups will all be about asking you to sharpen up two or three stretching and yet achievable take-aways.

It is always exciting hearing Fellows come up with propositions that they never dreamt they would come up with before the start of the Conversation!

So please be as open as you can let yourself be throughout the day, and when we get to our final lap please be ready to push yourself to come up with some personal resolves that take you right to the edge of your comfort zone.

Our role will be to help you make sure that you don't quite fall over the edge. No one has yet!



*"I said go to Windsor to rebalance your life, not to create another drama all about YOU!"*



Ending a pattern of workaholic behaviours ... involves us rethinking in a pretty fundamental way how we define ourselves in relation to others.

So many workaholic leaders define themselves overwhelmingly through the nature of their job title and the organisation that they work for.

It is this self-definition that helps to trap them into their workaholic behaviours.

If we are to find new ways of engaging with all of the different strands of our lives, we will - over time - need to develop a broader sense of our identity as human beings.

*Insights report, page 26*

# Agenda

**Tuesday, June 2nd 2020**

<b>10.30am</b>	Please make sure you are with us by this time. Coffee and light refreshments will be served in the Vicars' Hall from soon after 10.00
<b>10.45am</b> <i>Prompt, please</i>	We welcome you to the Conversation and invite you to agree on our Guiding Principles as providing the framework for today's Conversation. We then break into small groups for 15 minutes to consider our first question (page 5). Refreshments available
<b>11.15am</b>	We hear your stories and insights arising from small group discussions. After a while we agree on our key challenge for our second round of small groups
<b>11.40am</b>	2nd round of small groups consider agreed question (suggested on page 6). Refreshments available
<b>12.05pm</b>	Back in the circle in new seats, we capture the key messages coming forward from this round of groups, drawing out the most challenging issues that we might want to return to later. From 12.45 we change gear and think our way into the challenge that we want to consider over lunch (page 7)
<b>1.00pm</b>	Lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall. Over lunch, working groups engage with the agreed challenge. At the end of lunch, each group nominates one of their number to share with us their own story of how life would be without any of their current workaholic habits (page 8)
<b>1.55pm</b>	We draw out key insights and challenges from these stories
<b>2.35pm</b>	In groups we support each other in thinking through how we could draw greater energy from the non-work parts of our lives (page 8)
<b>2.55pm</b>	Back together again as a single group, we sharpen up key messages from groups and prepare for our final most stretching round (refreshments in groups)
<b>3.20pm</b>	We share our personal resolves, with time for feedback at key stages, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to take part before final reflections and the close of the Conversation at <b>4.30pm</b> .

**Please click below  
to read**

***Rebalancing our lives  
as leaders:***



## **Rebalancing our lives as leaders**

*Insights from two  
Leadership Conversations*

**Society of Leadership Fellows**  
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