

Organisations as Conversations



From 6pm on Thursday 8th July until 3.30pm on Friday 9th

"In language we build our own identities, our relationships with others, the countries that we live in, the companies that we have and the values that we hold dear. With language we generate life." Fernando Flores

This Conversation will look at the extraordinary power we possess as leaders to shape both our own and others' experience of reality through language. It will aim to help us be more alert to the power of language and more attentive, purposeful, and often more subtle, in our interventions.

How we communicate with one another is a powerful determinant of the health of our organization. We are linguistic beings, who shape and are shaped by language and it is through conversation that we build relationships, create hope and possibilities and turn those possibilities to action.

During our time together we will explore the nature of conversation taking place in our organisations, and ask, 'Is the life and health of your organization, that is being brought about by the conversations taking place, the life and health that is really living in you and your people?' Somehow, the conversations that often gain the most attention and air time are a diminution of the real power and potential of our organisations – whether 'hollow' phraseology around strategy and culture or 'cynical' commentary in corridor chatter about 'what is really going on'. And of course these conversations become self-fulfilling. They become our truth.

- What are the themes and meta narratives pervading your organization, and where are they taking you? What are the conversations that you are not having, but need to have?
- What are the conversations taking place, as the buzz in the hive? How do those within role structures and boundaries and more formal settings compare or contrast to those in informal settings, across boundaries, in corridors, pubs, social media?
- What is the effect of your involvement, as leader, in any conversation you are having? What do you initiate, join, respond to or avoid? What is the story that your involvement tells?
- How has living in a virtual world impacted the natural flow of conversations?
- What is the impact of the conversations taking place on the climate and culture of your organisation and how do you channel the energy that is brought about to become a powerful force for good?