



Rebalancing our lives as leaders and taking on our inner postponer

**from 10.30am until 4.30pm
on Wednesday, December 9th 2020**

Background Note and Agenda for our 53rd Leadership Conversation

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**

The quote below comes from page 6 of the report of our previous Conversations on this theme. 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:

- How do we each view the **CURRENT BALANCE** in our lives, especially, in these times, our emotional attunement to ourselves and others?
- If we sense our balance is out of kilter, **HOW COMMITTED** are we to doing something about it and how do we find and sustain the will to make this shift?
- What clear, practical, simple **INTENTIONS FOR 2021** can we set for how we will adjust the balance and take back control over our lives
- How might we best engage with those we are closest to in order to **SUPPORT** us in achieving this?
- Which of these intentions we are most likely to **POSTPONE** and - knowing ourselves as we do - keep on postponing
- We will then explore what we might each do to ensure

"This is me!"

"Tell us more"

*"Yes I can,
yes I will!"*



The three stages to our Conversation

1 "This is me!"



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"



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!"

Our third stage is about supporting each other in setting challenging resolves for ourselves. At the two previous Conversations on this theme, the enquiry centred in on how the right resolves become life-changing. If we are honest we know how difficult 'life-changing' is because it involves instigating new habits and breaking old ones. We will therefore take some time to face directly into the workings of our 'inner postponer' and the little tricks and habits that we deploy to avoid doing what in our hearts we know we deeply want 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!"

After agreeing our Guiding Principles for this Conversation, we will explore our first question in small groups. Prior to the Conversation we will send you a brief self-assessment that will enable you to look coolly at the balance you are actually striking. Our opening question will therefore be an invitation to share one or two key insights you got from this assessment.

What is so important at this stage is that you're completely honest in your assessment of how things are at the moment. In 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 are the most important things that stand out for you.

"Tell us more!"

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 Easter 2021. 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 balance, 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 preventing you from being the leader you really want to be.

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**.

"How different could life BE?"

From lunchtime onwards we see ourselves moving into our "stretch zone", seeking to push ourselves on personal strategies for rebalancing our lives as leaders.

Over lunch we can focus on the four behaviours identified in Chapter Two of Rebalancing our lives as leaders (pages 20-21) that lead us into workaholism:

We over-indulge our perfectionist

We fail to curb our people-pleaser

We make ourselves overly available

We over-think things

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

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 will also explore the thought that really captured people's imagination when we discussed this theme in our last Conversation (page 27 of the Insights report) - 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.

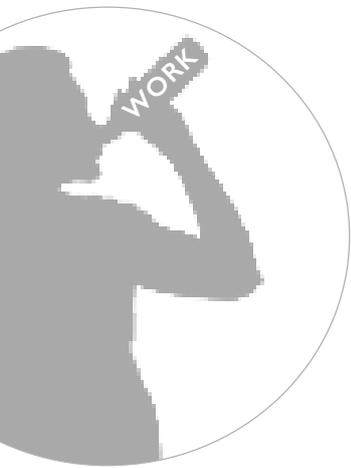
As with all of our Conversations, we hope that those of you drawn to this proposition will want to take it further, and those of you not drawn to it for any reason will want to come up with another proposition that also excites and challenges us. No pressure then ...

"Yes I can"

After lunch we will get into the heart of the matter, how do we empower ourselves to make the sometimes small but highly significant shifts that will lead to lasting change?

Taking on Our Inner Postponer

Working in small groups we will help each other identify and crystallise the tangible shifts in mindset and behaviour that will rebalance our lives as leaders. Focussing on the clear priorities we will then challenge ourselves (and each other) honestly about which of these we will instinctively and subtly postpone - and how. Identify our inner postponers at work and tackling them at source.



Welcoming peer feedback

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".

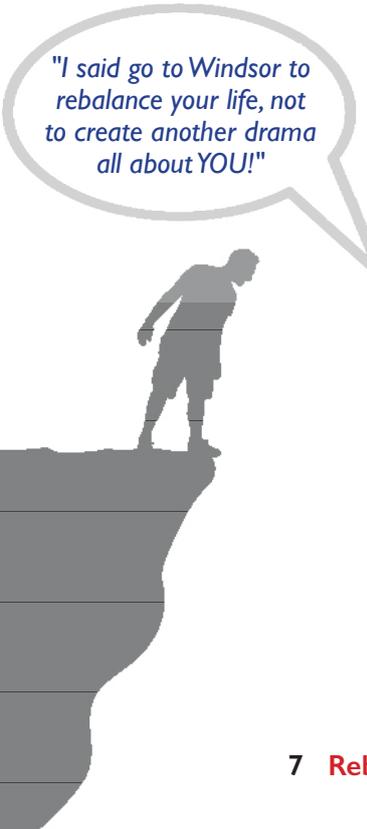
Sharpening up stretching take-aways

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.

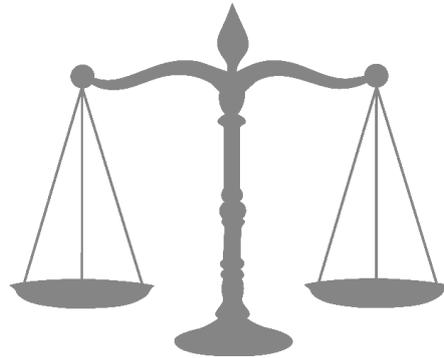
It is always exciting hearing Fellows come up with propositions that they never dreamt they would come up with before the start of the Conversation!

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

Wednesday, December 9th 2020

- | | |
|---|---|
| 10.30am | 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 |
| 10.45am
<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 |
| 11.30am | 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 |
| 12.00pm | 2nd round of small groups consider agreed question (suggested on page 6). Refreshments available |
| 12.30pm | 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 6) |
| 1.00pm | 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 6) |
| 1.55pm | We draw out key insights and challenges from these stories |
| 2.30pm | In groups we support each other in prioritising our intentions and taking on our inner postponers. |
| 3.15pm | 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) |
| 3.40pm | 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 4.30pm . |

**Please click below
to read**

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



Rebalancing our lives as leaders

*Insights from two
Leadership Conversations*

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

