

Leading in climates of love and fear



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

Love and fear manifest themselves in many forms, and can be easily confused in our behaviour, but the energetic 'signature' or impact of each is profound and long lasting. It infects projects, relationships, culture, organisations and societies. It is something right now we may all be seeing a little more clearly, having travelled through Pandemic and the diverse responses to this. As you look at the leadership decisions being taken around you in these times, you may be able to sense the presence of one or the other of these forces at play. You will naturally also, be able to sense them in yourself.

Fear and love in the workplace manifest themselves of course in a myriad of tiny ways, rather than the grandiose sweeps we may see in art, cinema and literature. Indeed, it can be easier to banish these words to the unreal dramas of the movie-world. But maybe we neglect them at our peril, especially as leaders?

Fear, however slight, triggers feelings of threat and has us close down into forms of survival behaviour. Its signature can be found in many of the most common problems of organisational life, 'silo' mindsets, lack of curiosity or strategic perspective, conflict and misunderstandings in relationships, lack of innovation or accountability, low trust, poor customer awareness... Moreover, once fear takes hold it is highly infectious, as people become more and more self-protective.

In this conversation we will explore love in leadership as the antidote to fear - again in much more subtle ways than the cliché of romantic love: Love as a practical force that has us able to stay open and clear, to see the bigger picture, to take risks, to see the needs of others, to do what is right, to be both courageous and compassionate in the same breath... In particular, we will look at our capacity as leaders to affecting the climate in our teams and organisations.

The conversation will follow two tracks:

- i. Where and how we sense love and fear at work in our own contexts, what it is like simply to notice these forces at play and to allow this awareness to inform our leadership actions and interventions, particularly in times of change.

- ii. How we cultivate a practical capacity personally to lead with love rather than fear: noticing the subtle ways in which we ourselves get 'caught' and how we get beyond these to more resourceful, wiser, kinder responses.

The substance of the conversation will be our own direct experience and observation of these forces at work in ourselves and in our organisational systems. This is an area where there are few 'techniques', but plenty of practical wisdom.

By the end, and through the sharing of our mutual wisdom in this arena, we hope that we will leave more sensitised to the subtle, powerful dynamics of love and fear at work around us and therefore more able to intervene, however subtly, to shift the climate for the better.