



Re-imagining Team

From 6.00pm on Thursday 6th May until 3.30pm on Friday 7th

Now is a unique time to take permission to free ourselves from old notions of organisational functioning – to radically change how we connect, bound, focus and communicate in our patterns of collaboration in the workplace. Do we even need the notion of 'team' at all? Is it simply about smart, energetic collaboration.

Simply having VC calls with people in their own homes has changed the nature of connection we have with each other. It has also made us more conscious of when we need to meet, why and where, as well as when and how we need breadth or depth in communication. But beyond this, the need for rapid adaptation and prototyping in conditions of emergent change has made the notion of old-style team structures almost redundant. In these conditions 'Teams' need to be able to form and re-form rapidly around emerging needs across formerly rigid organisational barriers.

The increased acceptance of digital relating has opened up immense possibilities in this area. Is it possible also that the old obstacle of hierarchy is also changing – that, if we need to harness a coalition of the willing around a project or initiative, we assume the right to connect with whoever we need, irrespective of role and status. Also, if we are likely to be members of several teams and sometimes only for a short while, how do we build the necessary cohesion and identity, purpose and belonging? Also, for those in senior leadership roles, how do we sustain accountability and 'control'?

In this Conversation we will share, explore and develop our own experience of 'teams without boundaries'. In particular, we will look at what we have learned about building common purpose and trusting relationships across some of the familiar structural and political schisms of organisational life. We will also look at the increasing spread of informal small, nested teams, (quads or triads) as a powerful force in mobilising organisational change and rapid adaptation.



Agenda

The conversation will flow through three key stages:

- **This is Me** – taking stock of where we find ourselves currently in relation to this theme and the questions that are arising from our experience
- **Tell Us More** – enquiring more deeply into our learning and insights as we probe into this experience
- **Yes I can, Yes I will** – turning wisdom and insight into intention and practice

This is me

We will open the conversation with a sharing of stories of our recent experience of radical or different embodiments of 'team'. This will take us into a conversation examining our assumptions about what 'team' is and the way it is enacted. In particular we will draw on our experiences through the ups and downs of the pandemic and the different manifestations of teamwork that have materialised, from almost spontaneous self-organisation to deeply considered trade-offs and sacrifices. We will also look at the nature of team conversations and our different experiences of how these have shifted in the virtual environment – in particular the different ways we have come to know each other. As we do so we will start to mine our shared learning and insights from this experience, the 'knowing we didn't know we knew'.



Tell Us More

This will take us into the second phase of the conversation where we will explore these insights in more depth. What is possible to us if we were to become more radical and intentional about how we challenge old notions of team and encourage new, more 'natural', emergent team working to occur – in a much more unbounded spontaneous way? What are the control dilemmas we will face here and how to we manage these? Which are real, which are just habit? As we progress in this our expectation is that insights and challenges will start to crystallise for each of us about how we choose to frame our own role as team leaders and how we encourage cross-boundary working in our own contexts. It will also lead us into interesting questions about how we challenge established patterns in the power hierarchy and the concomitant risks/rewards associated with this.

Yes I can

The final phase of the conversation will have us, after a period of reflection, crystallising these insights into specific intentions and commitments to champion new 'team' practices in our own contexts – whether large or small. Where do we each see particular points of leverage where a small change can make a big difference? What conversations can we start to make progress with this? This is where the experience of the leadership Fellows will really come into its own as we challenge each other to be both bold and realistic in what we seek to step into.

This will then form the basis of something of a 'social experiment' between the close of the conversation and our subsequent video link-up. What have we tried in this work of 're-imagining team' and what have been the learnings and insights as we have done this? Our hope would be that as a group you will be motivated to continue in this enquiry for a couple of further follow up sessions.



Timings: Thursday 6th May

- 1430 You are welcome to check in to your room in St George's House
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- 1630 Tea in the House for those joining Evensong in the Chapel
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- 1705 Evensong (*optional*)
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- 1750 **Vicars' Hall.** Refreshments, then start of the Conversation at 6.00pm. Introduction to the Guiding Principles and then on to Stage One: ***This is me!*** We break for small groups and when we return we encourage you to share some aspects of your personal stories about 're-imagining team' over recent months/years.
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- 1930 Free time/drinks in the Sitting Room No. 25 The Cloisters
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- 1945 Working dinner in the House Dining Room
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- 2115 We go back to the Sitting Room for tea/coffee, and after dinner drinks
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- 2145 (tbc) Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel, departing the Sitting Room (*optional*). After the tour, please join us for a nightcap
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Friday 7th May

- 0745 Breakfast is served in St George's House. Please clear your luggage from your bedroom because the domestic staff need to service the rooms. You are welcome to leave bags in the Sitting Room or bring them down to the Vicars' Hall where we will be for the remainder of the Conversation
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- 0845 We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall. At 10.00am or earlier^[SEP] we move on to Stage 2: Tell us more (page 7). We move in and out of small groups as we identify specific aspects and challenges in our different situations that require more focused attention and quality thinking^[SEP]time. We capture key insights and take-aways as we go and at around 12.15 prepare for Stage 3: Yes I can!
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Friday 7th May cont...

1245 A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall and we work together in our groups, reflecting on how our insights from the morning are speaking directly to us and our intentions as leaders. At 1.40 we have a team photo on the West steps of the Chapel (weather permitting!)

1345 Back together as one group, we draw out the key outcomes of our lunchtime discussions and reflections. We prepare for our final round of small groups, after which we invite each of you to sharpen up your personal resolves to enable you to become more ambitious as a leader in how you re-imagine teamworking in your own context. We close the Conversation promptly at 3.30pm.

Video link-up:

In the final minutes of the Conversation we will arrange a time for a follow-up video link-up in September to hear how much progress we have each made in taking forward our resolves.

The key to us making the best possible use of our time in this is for Fellows to share a brief email beforehand updating the rest of us on how you have acted on your resolves, and especially which one you found the most challenging. We then take it from there!