



Retrench or Re-imagine?

From 10.15am until 4.30pm on Tuesday April 20th

It is said that we are living, and therefore leading, in one of the largest social science experiments of the past 75 years and that the time and cost of recovery from COVID 19 is the crisis of our time. This Conversation invites us to explore the deeper forces underpinning our reactions and responses, decision points, and the impact and implications of our choices. When faced with responsibility for leading ourselves and others through a time with this level of dislocation, do we re-trench and make safe or re-imagine and explore.

Together we will reflect on the powerful, largely unseen, active forces

- within us: our habits, innate courage, new vision and approach to risk
- in our stakeholders: their expectations, projections, demands and offers – their attitudes to risk, needs for certainty/security and how we handle these. What do we accept what do we reflect back?
- in the fabric of our own organisations: the systems and processes designed for another time, another set of conditions – what is stifling us even potentially threatening our survival. What radical changes are now possible in these times?
- in context and climate of our wider society: attitudes of fear and frustration on the one hand the call for social renewal on the others.

When life is uncertain, anxiety goes up. When anxiety goes up creativity and adaptability is paralysed. Our psychological and emotional energy is drained and we tend either to withdraw or direct.

In this Conversation, we seek to reverse those responses. We come together for space to connect, to challenge, to unlock restrictive patterns and to re-imagine the potential of our leadership together.

'No-one can remove our freedom to think and respond" Viktor Frankl



Agenda

The Conversation will follow the same flow as our face to face conversations, following 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
- **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 begin with an honest and frank enquiry into our own experience of the movement between re-trenching and re-imagining that took place in response to the pandemic. In this phase of the conversation we will encourage you to share your own stories and learning journey on this theme. What have you learned from your experience so far? In hindsight, how did you and your organisation respond in the immediacy and over the mid to longer term? What did your response show you about your habitual patterns and the forces at play? How conscious were your choices? What are the implications for where you now find your-self?

Tell Us More

This takes us into the second phase of the discussion, which will inform our thinking over a break for lunch and a reflective walk. What is the **discerning wisdom** we need to access here that helps us break free from our anxieties, restrictive mind-sets or habitual patterns, keeps dialogue open and reaffirms our commitment to what is sacred.

It is said, "There is no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate". As we share our stories we will find some key inquiries emerging amongst us that, if explored, help us see into the culture and climate of our organisations, and our own values, in new ways.



- **What did we do, re-trench or re-imagine?** How quickly did that play out? How culturally aligned was our response? How did I contribute to the decision? What did it take for me to contribute in that way?
- **What were the forces that I now see were present?** In me, our stakeholders, the fabric of our business, society?
- **What did I see in my own leadership that was previously unseen?** What surprised me? What disappointed me?

Yes I can

Following the sharing of insights that emerge from our deeper reflection over lunch we will move into the closing phase the conversation. Here, we crystallise the insights into our own intentions, and further enquiry, as leaders.

What is becoming clear to me in terms of practical changes I will make?

- For me personally, how I respond to situations,
- For my team, being in this enquiry as a collective responsibility

In making sense of who we are becoming and the opportunities that affords, based on our move in the last 12 months to re-trench or re-imagine?

In the final session of the Conversation we will make arrangements for a video link up to share progress for those who want to maintain accountability on their intentions.



Timings:

1000	Log on and meet each other online before we begin
1015	Introduction to the Guiding Principles and then on to Stage One: This is me. We break into small groups and share some aspect of your personal story
1045	We develop the conversation and begin to pull out some of the patterns and connections in our sharing
1130	Screen and Coffee Break
1150	We move into the second phase of the conversation: tell us more. We identify the rich seams in what has been shared and mine these. This involves us accessing the deeper knowing that lies beneath our experience.
1300	Break for lunch and personal reflection, usually a walk, alone or in pairs (on the phone). What is really speaking to us in this?
1400	Back together as one group, we draw out the key outcomes of our lunchtime discussions and the deeper significance of these for our stance as leaders.
1445	Moving into the third phase, 'Yes I can', 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 effective as leaders who make a point of "reflecting peaceful strength" in the mirror.
1500	Screen and Coffee Break
1520	We work on helping each other sharpen our commitments and intentions and develop a personal practice to help manage this duality on an ongoing basis.
1615	Closing words and insights, finishing the Conversation promptly at 4.30 pm.
