



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.



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 when we have seen love and fear playing out in our own experience of leadership in action. This will take us into a conversation of the balance of love and fear in organisational life and the relative merits/demerits of both – recognising that both seem play a role in the effective functioning of our organisations at this moment in time. We will then explore key questions further arising from our own real experience. Is there such a thing as a 'healthy level of fear', what is our real learning and experience of this? Is there a place for 'love' in the cut and thrust of a high achieving workplace, or in the focused, efficient service ethic of caring organisations. What does it mean to 'lead with love', what seems to happen to people who do?

Tell Us More

This takes us into the second phase of the conversation where we will explore these insights in more depth. What is our experience of the long term effects of a fear culture creeping into working life and how have we attempted to ameliorate or rectify this? What our own experience of getting this balance 'right' and 'wrong' in our own leadership – particularly in how our behaviour is often received in ways we never intended it to be...? What this saying to us about our role in leading with love? What is the state of mind we need to be preserving in order to be capable of playing a proactive role in this area? How do we find this and lose it, and how do

we learn from this? This will be an honest and sensitive enquiry, probably only possible in an environment such as this with other leaders of considerable experience and a deep desire to learn and lead well. There are no right answers in this space, it is more a matter of being present and making wise choices at the right time. We will therefore be exploring what it takes to nurture the right level of self-insight and self-awareness to make this possible. 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 show up as leaders in daily life.

Yes I can

The final phase of the conversation will have us, after a period of reflection, crystallising these insights into specific intentions and commitment, and ongoing personal practices, that will support us in our aim of 'leading with love' whilst sustaining high performance working environments. 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 balancing of love and fear 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 8th July

- 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 story that helps other Fellows gain a sense of how 'love and fear' are at play in your leadership context.
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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*).
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Friday 9th July

- 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 we move on to Stage 2: Tell us more. 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 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 9th July 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 effective as a leader in how you handle the dynamics of love and fear at play around you. 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!