



Ethical Leadership

From 6pm on Tuesday 2nd December until 3.30pm on Wednesday 3rd

During this conversation, we will consider who we are as leaders, how we tend to make decisions and what it takes to hold for the processing of ethical considerations. We will also look at it systemically, the ethical dilemmas we face, the courage and wisdom it takes to build and maintain the ethical character of our organisation.

To define ethics and morality...

Ethics is the study of 'choice systems' that exist at all times and in all places [assuming we have free will].

Morality is the study of prevailing 'norms of behaviour'.

As leaders,

- Do we take action based on our understanding of rules?
- Do we take action based on a consideration of the consequences?
- What is the virtue of the one making the decision to act?

The complexity of **ethical leadership** comes about when moral principles are not shared, or when principles contradict or conflict with each other. Ethical considerations are often an inner working, only really understood when tested.

So, how do you build the ethical character of an organisation? What leadership qualities inspire and sustain that character, even when survival is threatened? What are those qualities that stand, that help to shape the future of not just this organisation, but serve as a beacon to others, that don't simply respond to the forces at large?

Ethical lapses stay with a business for a very long time, reputation is damaged and trust eroded.

According to a study by the Institute of Leadership & Management:

- 63% of managers say they have been asked to do something contrary to their own ethical code.
- 43% say they have been told to behave in direct violation of their organisation's own values statements.
- 9% have been asked to break the law.

The pressure on leaders is intense; often decisions are based on survival instincts, in exposed environments with tight time scales.

This conversation recognises the significant moral and ethical responsibility of leaders and seeks to penetrate into the real nature of ethical leadership. Who am I, inside and outside of relationships, inside and outside of power? How does my personal conscience and the decisions I make serve my team, my organisation, my industry, my society? How are we collectively shaping the moral and ethical foundations of future societies for others?



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.** This will include a stimulating exploration of **Ethical Conundrums** by Dr Hueston Finlay, Warden of St Georges House, giving us a chance to see more clearly habituated patterns in our own ethical thinking and understand more fully the systems for ethical thinking. This will help us enquire into our learning and access rich insights together as we probe into our own experience of ethical leadership in action.
- **Yes I can, Yes I will** – helping each other translate these insights into clear intention and practices to inform our leadership going forwards

“This is me”

We will open the conversation with a sharing of stories, what caused us to choose this conversation, the ethical dilemmas we find ourselves in, the moral and ethical patterns we see playing out in our own experience of leadership, the inter-play of personal principle and business decision-making.

Essentially, who are you and how would you like to make decisions? What, if anything, gets in the way of that? What is the cost of living and leading in the choices of these times?

“Tell Us More” – Ethical Conundrums

In the second phase of our conversation, we have the chance to learn more of the philosophical models of ethical thinking and find our place with them.

Hueston will introduce us to some rich thinking and different perspectives on ethical principles to life. He will draw on a rational account of the three major ethical systems: deontology, consequentialism and virtue.

We will then explore these systems in more depth, from a philosophical base to a lived, applied experience. What are the habituated patterns we see playing out in

our business? What has the pandemic highlighted for us? How has it impacted our decision-making? Where are our ethical boundaries being challenged? How are our leadership decisions impacting the reputation of and trust in our organisation? How do we ensure the ethics held at the leadership table are lived throughout the organisation?

This will be an honest and empathic enquiry, held in the safety of the Vicars Hall with other leaders of considerable experience and a deep desire to learn, face the truths of our lived experience and lead well.

To know reality we cannot step outside it and define it, we must enter into it, be it and feel it. What are the realities we are living with? How are we seeing them differently as we step back and take a fuller, more grounded perspective on them. What is the 'realpolitick' of ethical leadership, how do we temper and exercise it in ways that gain traction rather than trigger rejection? Coming out of this, what different choices, subtle or large, present themselves to us about how we embody our own leadership?

"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 'ethical leadership'. 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 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: Tuesday 2nd December

- 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 aspect of your personal story that helps other Fellows gain a sense of how 'ethical leadership' is at play in your leadership context.
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- 1930 Free time/drinks in the Sitting Room
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- 1945 Working dinner in the House Dining Room
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- 2115 We go through to the Sitting Room for after dinner drinks
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- 2145 Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel, departing the Sitting Room (*optional*).
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Wednesday 3rd December

- 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: Ethical conundrums, where we will experience making choices in situations with no easy answer and explore the drivers in our decision-making.
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- 1015 Tea and Coffee is served in the Vicars' Hall. 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 13.00 prepare for Stage 3: Yes I can!



Wednesday 3rd December cont...

1315 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 2.10 we have a team photo on the West steps of the Chapel (weather permitting!)

1415 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 moral and ethical dilemmas you see playing out. We close the Conversation promptly at 3.30pm.

Video link-up: January 31st 2022

In the final minutes of the Conversation we will arrange a time for a follow-up video link-up in January 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!

Suggested time for Video Link-up:

2.00 to 3.00pm on Monday, January 31st 2022