



Keeping Perspective – Seeing our Seeing

From 10.00am to 4.30pm on Wednesday 2nd March, 2022

One of our greatest challenges as leaders is keeping perspective, and nowhere is better than our time together in the Vicar's Hall for helping us restore it. This Conversation is designed to enable you to do a quick pause, check and reset.

It is an inevitable consequence of leadership that to some extent we get 'sucked in' to the 'systems' we are leading in, even though our job is to revitalise and renew these. More insidiously, we lose sight of how wider social forces are unconsciously shaping us – not always for the better. What are we 'putting up with' that we should be challenging? Also, as we focus on our own responsibilities, we can lose sight of why and how others are pursuing theirs....

When we get together as leaders from widely different sectors, in a context of high trust and openness, and share some of the things that are driving us, it can suddenly become much clearer:

- What really matters...?
- What we have in common – the complex forces and patterns are shaping our experience, irrespective of sector...
- How our own perspectives may be becoming distorted in relation to our core purpose
- How we each find ways to keep our perspective clearer going forwards...

As we step into significant responsibility, where there is always too much to do, we find all sorts of calls on our priorities and various tugs on our heart-strings. On the one hand we can get pulled into heads-down, 'blinkered' modes of operating or on the other we can get frustrated at our inability to instigate change at the rate of expectation we have set ourselves. And our emotional responses to these can create self-reinforcing loops – we can believe we are being much more or less 'successful' than we actually are....



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In this Conversation we will take some time to share how we are each experiencing our leadership journeys in the context of these times. As we do this honestly and creatively we will begin to see things from a different perspective:

- seeing our part in the bigger whole
- seeing the wider forces that are at play
- seeing our own responses and feelings
- seeing how others are responding to similar forces
- sharing practical learning

The effect is basically like a 'triangulation' – by seeing things from different angles, their shape, scale, position and potential impact become much clearer – as also does the way in which we have been previously looking at them. That gives us space to make new and different choices. It may also strengthen our wisdom and clarity – where to be more, or less patient, for example, or where to find more courage, resolve or compassion.

This conversation will be particularly relevant for Fellows who have a sense either of being a little 'crowded out' by demands or of being a little 'blocked' from making progress in some way.... a chance to step back and see more clearly....

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
- **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 by sharing what it was that drew us to this conversation and something of the nature of how this is playing out for us personally and more widely in our own organisations. Where are we sensing that we are coming up against our own, or others' 'blind spots'. What maybe has surprised us when we looked more closely, what disappointed as the veil was lifted, what excites us about the seeds of possibility.

As we share our stories we will find some key themes emerging amongst us – some simple practicalities to notice and share but also the beginnings of the deeper knowing we are accessing here. As we look back over our own journey in recent months what do we notice about how we have been looking at things? What has been 'capturing' our gaze and what maybe have we been missing or giving too little attention to? As we hear each other sharing from our own, diverse, perspectives, what does this trigger in us? If "you are what you see", who are you and who are you becoming?

"Tell Us More"

This takes us towards the end of the morning into the second phase of the discussion, which will then inform our thinking over a break for lunch and a reflective walk.

What is the **discerning wisdom** we need to access here? A key element of this will be developing our capacity to notice what we are noticing. Part of this of course is our capacity to be well attuned to what is happening around us, to be curious and enquiring and to notice how and where significant things are shifting in our organisation contexts and indeed in the wider contexts of our life and society.

Working in the unique breadth of perspective that is possible at St George's, we will be able to challenge each other to discern differently some of the forces that are at work around us that may require a shift in our perspective – looking up, maybe, to see the bigger picture or, looking out to sense into and anticipate what was be coming, or looking down to see what is really going on beneath our feet?



"Tell Us More" cont

A key element of this of course will be how we are seeing others. What are the eyes in which we are viewing some of our key relationships? What might be possible if we see them differently?

The other aspect of 'noticing our noticing' is being attuned to what is happening within us. As we reflect on times when maybe we haven't seen things in their true light, what was it that caused us to be that way, to engender a certain myopia or fogginess. Equally what is it like when we are in a state of clarity, seeing clearly? How do we cultivate a state and stance of leadership that enables us to retain this capacity for mental clarity? How do we access this wisdom in the pressure of the day to day?

Following our reflection and presencing in this enquiry, accessing the deeper knowing of the heart and gut as well as the head, we will move into the closing phase the conversation ...

"Yes I can!"

Here we crystalise the insights from our exploration into our own intentions and commitments as leaders. What do we want to take forward in our practice, or further enquiry? What is becoming clear to us in terms of practical changes we need to make:

- Where have I seen things in a different light as a result of this conversation?
- What is the invitation to action, or different engagement with others that flows from this?
- What am I learning about my own capacity to sustain a state of mental clarity?
- What might I do to sustain that more in my daily life as a leader?

What intentions do I want to set myself as I leave this conversation?



Timings: Wednesday 2nd March, 2022

1000	Arrivals, refreshments and introductions
1030	Introduction to the Guiding Principles and then on to Stage One: <i>This is me!</i> 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. What is our discerning in how this theme is playing out around us?
1130	Tea and Coffee break
1150	We move into the second phase of the Conversation: <i>Tell us more.</i> 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. What is really speaking to us in this? Where is the invitation for change?
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: <i>Yes I can!</i> we prepare for our final round of small groups, after which we invite each of you to sharpen up your personal resolves.
1500	Tea and Coffee Break
1520	We work on helping each other sharpen our commitments and intentions and develop a personal practice to help us in 'seeing our seeing' on an ongoing basis.
1615	Closing words and insights, finishing the Conversation promptly at 4.30pm
