



Crafting your story as a leader

From 10.00am to 4.30pm on Friday 17th June

More and more of us feel under pressure to tell our stories as leaders. We are reluctant to come across as self-centred and yet we know that we are required to offer some sort of summary of our personal leadership journey. Should we expect to share some of our previous leadership experiences to establish our credentials for our current role? If we share some of our past experiences, how much should we be prepared to say about things that have gone wrong as well as those that have been a resounding success? Should we have one all-purpose personal story for any audience and maybe another, which offers some real vulnerability for those we want to let up close?

Building on our theme of "Growth", we will engage with all of these challenges as well as supporting each other with crafting the core propositions in our personal leadership stories.

Stories are one of the most powerful ways to engage and connect. The power of a single story goes far beyond simply relaying facts and data. Stories bring emotional depth to information and invite people to connect in a deeper, more meaningful way.

As Jim Loehr says, 'As human beings, we continually tell ourselves stories -- of success or failure; of power or victimhood; stories that endure for an hour, or a day, or an entire lifetime. We have stories about our work, our families and relationships, our health; about what we want and what we're capable of achieving. Yet, while our stories profoundly affect how others see us and we see ourselves, too few of us even recognize that we're telling stories, or what they are, or that we can change them.'

Stories can shape our reality.

Can you achieve your goals with the story you have got, or is it time for a renewed story?

In the words of Walt Whitman

*'The powerful play goes on...and you may contribute a verse,
what will your verse be?'*



Agenda

The Conversation will follow the traditional flow, 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"

Early on we encourage you to share a story that enables us to understand better who you see yourself as, as a leader today and to contrast this with a story you would have told 5 years ago.

In a small group we will explore what it is like to access and express the 'you' that you know yourself to be. We will then recall a time when you have been able to express yourself freely and another when you didn't represent yourself as well as you could have. What contrasted the situations? Where were you over or under done in expressing yourself as a leader?



"Tell Us More"

This takes us towards the end of the morning into the second phase of the discussion. In this phase we will draw on insights from our sharing, challenge and support each other to understand what is really going on in our story telling, our self-talk and its effect. How our story shapes and is shaped by our organisation, its own legacy, narrative and myths.

We will explore the voice that we are now ready to express and begin to craft the next chapter, building clarity and confidence in the authentic emotional core of your story. This is where we can really help each other, in the unique climate we have in the Fellowship – giving our honest responses to what we are hearing and seeing in each other and helping people express their 'true voice' – with humility, clarity and confidence.

"Yes I can!"

Here we crystalise the insights from our wisdom into our own intentions and commitments as leaders. What do we want to take forward in our voice and expression? What has been the most challenging proposition from the earlier discussions? What is becoming clear to us in terms of practical changes we need to make:

- Where and how you personally want to change your voice and the way in which you tell your stories to authentically express who you are, why you do what you do and to engage others in the vision and values you hold dear.
- How you are sensing the mood for this in others
- Any specific interventions or conversations you know you need to initiate on your return in order to align 'voice' in your organisation



Timings: Friday 17th June

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 telling.
1045	We develop the conversation and begin to pull out some of the patterns and contradictions in our sharing. We look beneath the surface to explore what is really going on.
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. We take a look at the organisational forces shaping our story and begin to explore and practice sharing the authentic voice within.
1300	Break for lunch and personal reflection, usually a walk, alone or in pairs. What is really speaking to us in this? Where can we make a difference?
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 in expressing your voice, telling your story.
1500	Tea and Coffee Break
1520	We work on helping each other sharpen our commitments and intentions and develop a personal practice to help maintain an authentic voice.
1615	Closing words and insights, finishing the Conversation promptly at 4.30pm.
