



What can we learn from working with Government?

From 10.00am to 4.30pm on Monday 5th September, 2022

In the course of many of our recent conversations, a consistent theme has been that of people's experience of and encounters with different arms of government. Clearly the role of the State has had to shift radically in response to the pandemic and this has introduced very different pressures into the system. What has become very apparent is that old ways of getting things done are no longer working. It can seem to be harder to get decisions and harder to locate where decisions need to be made. Parameters and guidance seem to be constantly changing. Power too may be shifting within the system, as well as morale, energy and accountability....

The Conversation will take the form of a genuine enquiry. What are we learning about our dealings with government in different sectors and with our different perspectives? Are there any common themes that we might use to inform how we approach our own engagement across or within diverse sectors of the State? What have we been learning as we go? How have we adapted our approaches and mindsets? What is working, not working? What might we do differently as a result of these insights?

This conversation we hope will be of interest to anyone who has found themselves having to adjust to different experiences and expectations of government agencies – whether you work in them or with them... and whether as supplier, partner or customer.

It will follow a classic flow, beginning with a sharing of experiences and insights and then looking behind these at what may be changing in more profound systemic ways in the relationships between the different sectors of the economy, between central and local initiative and between short and long term agendas. We hope and trust that the insights from this will then help us each practically inform and infuse our own approaches going forwards...



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By its nature there is no established wisdom in this Conversation, so we will be inviting everyone who signs up to conduct their own small piece of 'action research' into the topic by crystalising views and insights from your own networks, particularly on deeper systemic and relational changes that you have been experiencing over the last couple of years.

How and where have you and some of your key peers been noticing significant shifts in the pattern of your work with Government? How and where are you seeing different mindsets and assumptions taking hold? What have you been learning/concluding from this? What have you been trying out in your own ways of working to adjust to this? Which of these are showing signs of success, which not? Prior to the conversation we will provide you with some thoughts and tips on how to go about this.

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"

We begin by sharing what it was that drew us to this conversation and then sharing the highlights of our own enquiry into the question '**what are we learning in our work with(in) Government?**' What surprised us when we looked more closely at this question, what veils have been lifted, maybe, for how we lead in our own systems and 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 maybe the beginnings of a deeper or different knowing we are accessing here.

"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. In this phase we will 'mine' some of the most significant and powerful insights/question emerging from our sharing above. What is really shifting in how we view our roles and relationships across sector boundaries? Is there a whole new way of looking at it that can be both purposeful for us and liberating/empowering for those we work with?

This is where the unique quality of the Fellowship we hope will come into its own as we allow ourselves to challenge and be challenged in ways we may not have anticipated. What are the radical possibilities that this may open up? Where are there powerful insights emerging that warrant further, deeper enquiry? How do we liberate our own understanding and expectations about what government is for and about? What questions do we need to be asking of ourselves and others? How do we ask these questions in a way that unlocks generativity and purpose, rather than self-protection and politicking?

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



"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 own leadership, or into further enquiry? What is becoming clear to us in terms of practical changes we need to make:

- Where and how we want to change the conversation in our own relationships with(in) government...?
- How we are sensing the mood for this in others and how we seek awaken new insights, possibilities and perspectives in those around us..

Any specific interventions or conversations we know we need to initiate on our return.



Timings: Monday 5th September, 2022

1000	Arrivals, refreshments and introductions
1015	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 our personal enquiry
1045	We develop the Conversation and begin to pull out some of the patterns and connections in our sharing. What is our discerning of the core themes/seams being opened up? What are the possibilities and implications emerging?
1130	Tea and Coffee break
1150	We move into the second phase of the Conversation: <i>Tell us more.</i> We take some of the core insights identified above and work these in more depth/challenge with respect to our roles as leaders. This involves us accessing the deeper knowledge 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 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 changing conversations.
1500	Tea and Coffee Break
1520	We work on helping each other sharpen our commitments and intentions and develop a personal practice to help sustain our intentions going forwards.
1615	Closing words and insights, finishing the Conversation promptly at 4.30pm
