



Making Sustainability Second Nature in our Leadership

From 10.00am to 4.30pm on Tuesday 7th February, 2023

One theme in our conversations with Leaders is a recurring sense of dissatisfaction that we are not 'doing enough' to engender environmental sustainability into our way of life in our organisations and, indeed, in our own personal leadership. How do we get beyond good intentions, words and platitudes into transformed will, behaviour and daily decision-making.

Our purpose on this Conversation is to immerse ourselves honestly in this dissatisfaction, to mine our own experience of it, reflect deeply on what lies behind it and to challenge ourselves radically about what is possible if we can shift our mindsets.

A particular theme will be how we develop and embed a 'sustainability mindset' that informs the very pulse of our ways of working – recognising that many of the deeply embedded patterns, habits routines of life in our organisations were formed from historical attitudes that were very different to what is needed today.

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"

After a brief process of arriving and connecting, we will begin the Conversation with a personal sharing and honest exploring of our gut sense of how we are each faring with the challenge of sustainability in our leadership.

We will ask everyone to complete a structured self-reflection on the subject before the Conversation to help inform this. As we share our own enquiry and lay out our experience of sustainability in action, we expect there will be an immediate practical exchange of ideas and learnings from the dialogue - what people have found helpful and/or limited in their own contexts and what might transfer to others.

Beneath this however we will discern the deeper forces at play, some of which are likely to be common to us all – underlying psychological, cultural and systemic drivers that are causing us to fall short in various ways of the true significance of what is at stake here. An important part of this will be us helping each other examine our own inner process around the issue, which will then take us into the next phase of the conversation....

"Tell Us More"

After our mid-morning break, we start to enquire more deeply and critically reflect on the dynamics we are discerning. This is about 'seeing our seeing' and challenging our-selves to find different perspectives. Alongside the healthy peer challenge we will naturally engender, we hope to bring at least one 'challenger' into the room, someone with a specialist expertise in sustainable leadership, to help us reframe our thinking and attitudes and hopefully expand our sense of what is possible when we view this through a different lens. (We will confirm who as soon as possible).

As well as opening ourselves up to challenge about our cognitive assumptions around sustainability, we will also enquire into the significance of how we feel about the topic – for example, the effect of a kind of 'existential guilt' or a certain sense of powerlessness at the scale of the issue, both powerful 'dampeners' of the human spirit. How do we transform our own energy in relation to this and access the deeper desire, hope and belief that progress is not just possible, but inevitable.



"Tell Us More"

Following this provocation we will then move into purposeful phase in the conversation working before and after lunch in small groups on specific themes that are speaking more powerfully to each of us.

What are the implications of these for our own leadership in action, what possibilities start to arise and what will it mean for how we embody and progress our own leadership mission?

As ever this will take us into questions about how we occupy our own roles - how we re-prioritise our own focus and where we intervene to create shift, both in ourselves, in our own leadership practice, and in our surrounding contexts, from 'nudging' the organisation conversation through to more direct action.

Where is the invitation for each of us and what therefore will we step into, and step out of, in order to pursue this?

"Yes I can!"

In the final phase of the Conversation, during the afternoon, we will help each other solidify our own insights and intentions – not just the practical 'head, hands and feet' aspect in terms of commitments, experiments and enquiries, but also from the 'heart'... What do we really have a fire in the belly for? How do we keep our hope and energy alive? How do we lead from this to inspire and influence those around us?

We will close the Conversation with a pause to notice and 'hoover up' all the wisdom that has been gleaned and shared – big and small, from deep insights to practical little tips. Finally we will pair up to help each other to firm up on our specific commitments and intentions - and maybe even offer to stay in touch from time to time to help each other with this...

We expect this Conversation to be something of a catalyst too. Obviously there is a limit to what we can achieve in a day, but we expect some of the insights and challenges arising from this will inform future sessions at the House, where we will take these further and deeper.



Timings: Tuesday 7th February, 2023

0930	Arrivals, refreshments and introductions
1000	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? What is our responsibility in it? What is not? What are the very real dilemmas it brings for us as today's leaders?
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 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 pair 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 leadership focus on an ongoing basis.
1615	Closing words and insights, finishing the Conversation promptly at 4.30pm
