



Beyond Mastery

From 6pm on Tuesday 12th March until 12.00 noon on Thursday 14th

Beyond mastery is when we are no longer bound by 'rules' because we have grown through them. When the apprentice no longer mimics the master but has the capacity to invent new, novel responses beyond what has been known before.

As leaders, we are shaping organisations to serve an ever-changing world and inviting people to bring their fullest intellectual and emotional capacities in support of that. Does the way we are leading stimulate mediocrity and expediency or mastery and ingenuity?

As we rely on technology and other forms of decision support do we risk losing our confidence and the wisdom that emerges instinctively when we dare to trust this – and let others do the same?

- The process of moving from laborious analytical understanding to rapid intuitive responding?
- The emotional, vulnerable risk-taking that comes with making interpretations and the overwhelming responsibility that is felt with that.
- The practice, practice, practice that means we know what to do and can act with peaceful conviction in times of stress.
- The humility to know the boundaries of our mastery and the willingness to re-learn.

Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, in the 2023 St George's Annual Lecture challenged us that "our future well-being depends on ingenuity and mining the talent of future generations" and that "We have the opportunity to be the engine of innovation".

This Conversation is an opportunity to step purposefully into this challenge.



AGENDA

The Conversation will follow our usual flow in 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"** – 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 settling into the Vicars' Hall we will begin the conversation with a grounded enquiry into 'mastery' and 'beyond'. This will involve the sharing of personal stories about significant experiences where we have found or now find ourselves being drawn into operating instinctively, beyond the 'rules' and 'guide rails' - 'Making the path by walking'.

As we do this, we will start to explore the nature of this experience:

- What is it like?
- What are we working to?
- What is our attitude to the 'rules'?
- What is the consequence – for ourselves and others?
- When do we find ourselves losing our way? How do we know?



“THIS IS ME!”

The following morning we will do some enquiry work, exploring where and how we are sensing an invitation to extend the range of our own 'mastery'.

- Mastery for the sake of what? Where is something different, fresher, bolder needed from us? What are we avoiding noticing?

Possibly opening up into new areas/aspects where we need to become novice for a while in order to move beyond 'expert to master'. What old certainties we need to be surrendering, to allow expansion to occur? Possibly 'letting go' in key working relationships to release ourselves and others?

This will involve a degree of self-questioning and we will provide some challenging reflective prompts to help you with the shifts in perspective needed for this. There is a necessary creative disturbance needed here and we expect that the mix and quality of your fellow leaders will be a powerful stimulus to this.

“TELL US MORE”

In this phase of the Conversation we start to 'mine' and develop the wisdom that is emerging:

- How we really challenge ourselves to get 'beyond mastery'
- How we bring others with us and sustain connection?
- How we release others further along the path from novice to beginner to proficient to expert to mastery and beyond
- How we test and expand the limits of our knowing
- How we nurture humility – the fine lines between true and false confidence, insecurity and arrogance
- The emotional aspects – handling fear and excitement, doubt and trust.



“TELL US MORE”

We will also look and learn and support each other on how and where we are being invited to step into our own journey, individually and organisationally, 'beyond mastery'

- Strategic opportunities and risks – what is really possible if we cultivate this
- Processes to support – relationships and feedback loops, safety nets and limits
- How to keep our focus and not lose sight of the basics

During this phase of the Conversation we will create space for powerful small group and peer coaching sessions as we seek to stretch our sense of what is really possible. We will also look at our role as leaders in creating the climate and 'atmosphere' around us – particularly an atmosphere of healthy confidence.

All this will serve to sharpen the lens through which we view our leadership and we will then start to apply this to the reality of our own situations. This is where we will help each other shift perspective and find more powerful, clearer insight into where the invitation to growth is for us.



“YES I CAN!”

In the final phase of the Conversation we will help each other crystallise the clarity we have found into intentions and specific commitments for how we lead going forwards. This may concern:

- Our own growth – how we embody the wisdom we have gleaned and don't get knocked back into old patterns
- How we support and challenge others around us
- Key relationships – where different conversations are needed
- The public face of our leadership and what we consciously communicate/project into our context

Having got to the quality of connection that the two-night format provides, we will be able help each other turn our enquiry and reflections into purposeful commitments going forwards.

The nature of this Conversation is such that we will need to bed it down into tangible and concrete next steps or risk slipping back. We will therefore give this plenty of space on the last day.

There will then be an opportunity to follow-on with each other and explore what happens as we push beyond the bounds of 'mastery' and the learning that arises from this, both for ourselves and others, and the impact on our organisations.



Timings: Tuesday 12th March

- 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 share our personal stories as leaders in small groups, then any themes emerging – with the wider group. In light of the themes, we agree on our question to consider during discussions over dinner.
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- 1945** Drinks followed by dinner in the House Dining Room at 8pm
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- 2115** Tea/coffee and after dinner drinks in No. 25 The Cloisters
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- 2145** Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel, departing the Sitting Room (*optional*).
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Wednesday 13th March

- 0745** Breakfast is served in the House Dining Room.
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- 0845** We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall, exploring in more depth some of the themes that emerged yesterday evening and identifying the most fruitful lines of enquiry in this for each of us.
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- 1000** We move on to Stage 2: **"Tell us more"** where we work more intentionally on the aspects that are most relevant to us, supporting and challenging each other in the process. This may be 'inner work' on our own leadership or 'outer work' on how we seek to shape and transform our team and organisations – or both.
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Wednesday 13th March cont...

- 1100** Break for tea/coffee and personal reflection time
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- 1130** We draw out key messages from our reflection time and take our particular challenges into another round of small groups.
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- 1300** A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall
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- 1355** Team photo on the West Steps of the Chapel ...Then back together as one group in the Vicars' Hall to continue in the **"Tell us more"** enquiry into the issues that have most resonance and significance for us
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- 1515** We pause to take stock and notice what is really moving for us and take some personal reflection time. Tea and refreshments
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- 1600** Back together in the Vicars' Hall, we move onto Stage 3: **"Yes I can!"** As we go through this stretch stage, where we start to ground our learning and self-awareness in our own specific context, we encourage more feedback. We also focus energy on any 'stuckness' amongst us, where anyone may appreciate group support to help unlock their thinking and move forward.
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- 1705** (Optional) Evening Prayer in the Chapel
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- 1800** The Conversation resumes, as we start to crystallise and step into the wisdom and insights that are speaking to us directly in our own leadership
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- 1930** Drinks in No. 25 followed by dinner in the Dining Room
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- 2130** Tea/coffee and after dinner drinks in No. 25 The Cloisters
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Thursday 14th March

- 0730** 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
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- 0845** Vicars' Hall. We start again promptly and take a moment to notice what is starting to become clear to us as we begin our final day together. From this we then we help each other focus and firm up our intentions. Where is the invitation for each of us more fully to embody the wisdom we are accessing?
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- 1045** We invite each of you to work in pairs or trios over tea or coffee to sharpen up your personal resolves and commitments in the light of your intentions
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- 1140** Closing words and a whole group 'gathering up' of the wisdom that has flowed, both major insights and smaller practical tips.
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- 1200** Close of the Conversation
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Video link-up:

At the end of the Conversation, we will confirm the arrangements for our follow-up zoom call to check in on the progress we have each made in progressing our resolves.

The key to us making the best possible use of our time in this is for Fellows to post a brief Whatsapp beforehand updating the rest of us on how you have been getting on, and especially which ones you found the most challenging. We then take it from there!

Suggested date and time: tbc