



# Ethics in Leadership

**From 6pm on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June until 4.00pm on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>**

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As leaders, we often face ethical dilemmas. Each year this Conversation considers how we as leaders can find and retain our ethical focus in life and work and so live at peace with ourselves.

We will consider:

- who we are becoming as leaders as we make decisions, inside and outside of relationships, inside and outside of power
- the thoughtful operation of conscious principles and the deeper intuitive voice of conscience
- honestly, the tension between who we aspire to be and what we actually do
- the system we are leading in and the ethical dilemmas it presents
- what it takes to build and maintain the ethical character of any organisation, even when survival is threatened
- how we are collectively shaping the moral and ethical foundations of our society and institutions that we will be handing on to future generations



# AGENDA

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## Defining 'ethics'

The Oxford dictionary defines 'ethics' as moral principles that govern a person's behaviour.

- Do we take action based on our understanding of rules?
- Do we take action based on a consideration of the consequences?
- What is the virtue of the one making the decision to act?

Leading in any system has us face ethical dilemmas. This conversation recognises the significant moral and ethical responsibility of leaders and seeks to penetrate real insight into the nature of ethical leadership grounded in our own truth, reality, dilemmas and conscience. The stakes are high, ethical lapses stay with a business for a very long time, reputation is damaged and trust eroded.

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"** – this will include a stimulating exploration of **Ethical Conundrums** by Dr Hueston Finlay, Warden of St George's House, giving us a chance to see more clearly habituated patterns in our own ethical thinking and understand more fully the systems for ethical thinking. This will help us enquire more deeply into our learning and access rich insights together as we probe into our own experience of ethical leadership in action.
- **"Yes I can, Yes I will"** – helping each other translate these insights into clear intention and practices to inform our leadership going forwards.



## “THIS IS ME!”

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We will open the Conversation with a sharing of stories: what caused us to choose this conversation, what ethical dilemmas do we find ourselves in, what maybe is troubling us right now as we look at our own leadership context. This will help us explore the moral and ethical patterns we see playing out in our own experience of leadership, the inter-play of 'personal', 'principle' and 'business' decision-making.

Essentially, who am I and how do I notice myself making decisions in these times I find myself in?

## “TELL US MORE”

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In the second phase of our Conversation we have the chance to gain new insights and practical learning by applying some core philosophical models of ethical thinking to our experience of leadership – under the theme of '**Ethical Conundrums**'

Hueston will introduce us to some rich thinking and different perspectives on the application of ethical principles to life, drawing on the experience of hosting the core social and ethical programme with leaders from all walks of life at St George's House. For decades this has been bringing people together to discuss the 'big issues' facing our society.



## “TELL US MORE”

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We will then move from a philosophical base to our lived experience.

- What are the habituated patterns we see playing out in our business?
- What has been highlighted for us through these tumultuous times?
- How is our decision-making impacted?
- Where are our ethical boundaries being challenged?
- How are our leadership decisions impacting the reputation of and trust in our organisation?
- How do we ensure the ethics held at the leadership table are lived throughout the organisation?

This will be an honest and empathic enquiry, held in the safety of the Vicars' Hall with other leaders of considerable experience and a deep desire to learn, face the truths of our lived experience and lead well. To know reality we cannot step outside it and define it, we must enter into it, be it and feel it.

- What are the realities we are living with?
- How are we seeing them differently as we step back and take a fuller, more grounded perspective on them?
- What is the practicality of ethical leadership, how do we temper and exercise it in ways that gain traction rather than trigger rejection?

Coming out of this, what different choices, subtle or large, present themselves to us about how we show up in our own leadership?



## “YES I CAN!”

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The final phase of the Conversation will have us, after a period of reflection, crystallising these insights into specific intentions and commitment, and ongoing personal practices, that will support us in our aim of 'ethical leadership'. This is where the experience of the Leadership Fellows will really come into its own as we challenge each other to be both bold and realistic in what we seek to step into.

This will then form the basis of something of a 'social experiment' between the close of the Conversation and our subsequent video link-up.

- Where and what have we tried to strengthen our effectiveness and impact as ethical leaders?
- What have been the learnings and insights as we have done this, both joyful and painful?!

Our hope would be that as a group you will be motivated to continue in this enquiry for a few further follow up sessions, to learn together from the leadership journey.



## Timings: Tuesday 11th June

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- 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 break for small groups and when we return we encourage you to share some personal aspect of your personal story that helps other Fellows gain a sense of how 'ethical leadership' is at play in your leadership context
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- 2000** Working dinner in the House Dining Room
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- 2130** We go back to the Sitting Room for tea/coffee, and after dinner drinks
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- 2145** Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel, departing the Sitting Room (*optional*).
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## Wednesday 12th June

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- 0745** Breakfast is served in St George's House. Please clear your personal belongings from your room and bring them down to the Vicars' Hall, so that the domestic staff can prepare the rooms for the next group
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- 0845** We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall. At roughly 10.00am we move on to Stage 2: ***Tell us more***. We will consider the territory of ethical conundrums: how we make choices in situations with no easy answer and explore the conscious application of ethical considerations in amongst the other drivers in our decision-making
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## Wednesday 12th June cont...

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**1015** Refreshments in the Vicars' Hall, as we continue in Stage 2: **Tell us more**. We move in and out of small groups as we identify specific aspects and challenges in our different situations that require more focussed attention and quality thinking time. We capture key insights and take-aways as we go and at around 13.00 prepare for Stage 3: **Yes I can!**

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**1315** A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall and we work together in our groups, reflecting on how our insights from the morning are speaking to us and our intentions as leaders. At 2.10 we have a team photo on the West steps of the Chapel (weather permitting!)

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**1415** Back together as one group, we draw out the key outcomes of our lunchtime discussions and reflections. We prepare for our final round of small groups, after which we invite each of you to sharpen up your personal resolves to enable you to become more effective as a leader in how you handle the moral and ethical dilemmas you see playing out.

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**1600** Conversation close

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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