



# Leading in Times of Transition

**From 6pm on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May until 12.00 noon on Friday 10<sup>th</sup>**

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We are all too familiar with leading in change, but the wisdom of transition is a different thing. Transition is what happens on the inside – a deeper, lasting change in mindset and behaviour. It takes longer, happens at its own pace and can be profoundly disorientating.

It is likely, almost inevitable, that in times of transition we lose perspective because the very ground we are standing on is moving. We are therefore particularly prone to errors in judgement in these times – for example, grasping at premature 'solutions' or changing our circumstances as a substitute for changing ourselves.... The recent 'great resignation' is possibly a manifestation of this at a societal level – a certain shared disorientation being 'acted out' on a grand scale.

There is a hard-won wisdom in navigating transition, a wisdom that only comes from experience. That is what we are seeking to uncover, share and sharpen in this three-night Conversation, giving us a unique space to delve deeply into this wisdom, whilst also applying it to the reality of our own lives. Amongst other things, we will explore:

- Timing – when to act and when to be patient
- Perspective – to see things as they are, not as we or others may want (or fear) them to be
- Presence – getting beyond our 'gut reaction' to lead with calm and clarity.
- Hope – sustaining momentum when the way is blocked or unclear
- Maturity – embracing natural life transitions along with external changes
- Power – how it shifts and flows and what happens as we lose it/gain it

St George's House comes into its own in these 3 night conversations, enabling us to get to a depth of exploration and reflection that leads to significant growth and transformation. This Conversation will be particularly valuable for Fellows facing into substantial personal or organisational transitions.



# AGENDA

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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!"

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After settling into the Vicars' Hall we will begin the Conversation with a sharing of personal stories about significant experiences of transition, which we will continue over dinner. This will provide us with a reminder of the foundations we are already standing on as we embark on this conversation.

The following morning we will do some work on a foundational skill in handling transitions - how to 'see clearly' and be attentive to the true nature our experience - as it really is, not how we hope or fear it to be.

On the basis of this, we will then help each other express and explore the reality of what we each find ourselves in as leaders right now and to notice some of the patterns and symptoms of transition that are present. This will be depth work in small groups and will require us to be really present and listening to each other in the way that only Fellows can.



## “TELL US MORE”

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In this phase of the Conversation we start to 'mine' the wisdom that is available to us in leadership transitions. We will explore the drivers and dynamics of different kinds of transition, including:

- life transitions and maturation
- increases in scale, breadth and complexity
- shifts in power, perspective and responsibility
- shocks and emotional transitions

We will also look and learn about how we process transition:

- psychologically in terms of cognitive and emotional responses
- relationally and culturally in terms of behaviour, shared values and narratives
- politically in terms of power and agency

As we will do this we will identify some of the common pitfalls we can make by being seduced into reactive responses, however well intentioned.

Known examples may include the 'hurry-up and get it over with' driver that causes us to be pre-emptive and impatient in some of our thinking and behaviour. Or the tendency to 'lose sight of the why' which can erode our clarity of direction in change. Or the temptation to try to solve everything all at once rather than a step at a time, which can lead to paralysis. But we will be exploring the unknown here too – what are the patterns and pitfalls we notice from our own experience in today's context that can inform our practical wisdom going forwards?

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 contexts as we described them yesterday morning by 'looking afresh'. This is where we will help each other shift perspective and find more powerful, clearer insight into what is being asked of us as leaders in transition. We will also help each other find a more stable place to stand on which to lead in shifting times. What are the enduring truths and principles on which we will base our leadership, what will we choose to keep uppermost in our attention as we navigate ahead.



## “YES I CAN!”

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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 level of depth and connection that we always find on these three-day programmes we will be able help each other with both the encouragement and the healthy challenge to ensure that what we leave with is energetic, sustainable practical.



## Timings: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May

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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.** 'Gathering together'. Refreshments, then start of the Conversation at 6.00pm. Introduction to the Guiding Principles and then on to Stage One: **"This is me!"** We take an agreed question into small groups and then share our personal stories and experiences of this.
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- 1945** Drinks in No. 25 followed by working dinner in the Dining Room
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- 2115** Tea/coffee and after dinner drinks in the Sitting Room of No. 25
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- 2145** Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel, departing the Sitting Room (*optional*).
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## Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May

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- 0745** Breakfast is served in the House Dining Room.
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- 0845** We start again promptly in the **Vicars' Hall**, continuing on the **"This is me!"** theme with a deeper sharing of our personal stories.
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- 1100** 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 where we start to sense into where powerful and potential change is really stirring – both within us and around us.
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- 1300** A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall and we work together in our groups.
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## Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May cont...

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**1355** Team photo on the West Steps of the Chapel ...Then back together as one group in the Vicars' Hall as we move into Stage Two of the Conversation. **"Tell us more"**. Here we seek to enquire more deeply and fully into the bigger questions that have arisen in our opening sharing. We start to focus on those relevant to us, and 'mine' the wisdom that lies beneath the surface of them, supporting and challenging each other in the process. This may be 'inner work' on our own leadership or 'outer work' on how we shape and transform our team and organisations – or both.

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**1600** Personal reflection time.

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**1705** (Optional) Evening Prayer in the Chapel.

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**1800** The Conversation resumes as we share our reflections and notice what is starting to move in us, as well as doing some more practical work on how to embody and experiment with this.

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**1945** Drinks in No. 25 followed by Dinner in the Dining Room at 8pm.

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**2130** Tea/coffee and after dinner drinks in No. 25.

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## Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May

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**0745** Breakfast is served in the House Dining Room.

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**0845** We start again in the **Vicars' Hall**, beginning with some personal space to notice what we are awakening with after our work yesterday. We start to explore our deeper aspirations and help each other harness our energy, will and passion for change.

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**1100** Personal reflection time.

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## Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May cont...

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- 1130** Back together as one group we start to work on stepping into change. What is really possible for us? Drawing upon our diverse perspectives and different life wisdom we release creativity and expand our practical options.
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- 1300** A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall and we work together in our groups.
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- 1400** We move onto Stage Three '**Yes we can!**' Working in small groups we start to explore the practical wisdom of change – where is the invitation for us to step into change and what might this mean for us in how we engage differently with those around us?
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- 1515** Refreshments.
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- 1615** Personal reflection time – sharpening up our intentions and focus.
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- 1705** Evensong (optional).
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- 1800** **Vicars' Hall.** As we continue with 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 attention on any 'stuckness' amongst us, where anyone may appreciate group support to help to unblock their energy and move forward.
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- 1945** Drinks in No. 25 followed by dinner in the Dining Room.
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- 2130** Coffee, drinks and conversation in the Sitting Room.
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## Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May

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**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 where we will be for the remainder of the Conversation

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**0845** **Vicars' Hall.** We start again **promptly** and take some 'pause time' to notice what is becoming clear for us as we begin this final day. From this 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? Then into small groups to work on our leadership **practice** going forwards. What will sustain the level of 'being' necessary to support the ambition of our 'doing'.

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**1045** We then invite each of you to work in pairs or trios over tea or coffee to sharpen up your specific personal resolves and commitments in the light of your intentions and practice

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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

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