

SOCIETY OF LEADERSHIP FELLOWS,  
ST GEORGE'S HOUSE, WINDSOR CASTLE



# PROMOTE OR FIRE: NAVIGATING CHALLENGING RELATIONSHIPS IN LEADERSHIP

**From 9.45am until 4.30pm on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April**

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Promote or fire? Strange but both these apparently polar choices may be right. The starkness of the decisions invites us to look more closely: something isn't working out, what do we do about it? Promote ...? Fire...? or, how often, do we just do nothing and soldier on.... The key issue is how consciously we make these decisions - the quality of awareness we bring to them.

This Conversation invites us to get real and share our hard won wisdom about the dynamics of leading leadership teams – where so many of our hopes and ambitions rest on the shoulders of key appointments and their capacity to bring their full potential to work generatively and purposefully together.

Our aim will be to open up challenging questions, share practical tools and access deeper reflective insights from our experience of navigating the complexities of leadership team dynamics – and how making informed decisions about promotions and terminations while fostering a supportive and productive work environment.



# AGENDA

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We will cover:

- Team Fulfilment. Identifying if team members are in right roles: recognising signs, symptoms and deeper causes why someone might not be a good fit.
- Decision Making: finding the 'firm base' for people decisions; criteria for hire/fire choices, balancing patience/support for one against the needs of the enterprise
- Self-reflection: exploring our own patterns and experiences as a leadership team leader; how we may be contributing unconsciously to the dynamics.
- Breaking out of the 'Drama Triangle': recognizing habitual roles of Persecutor, Victim, and Rescuer. Adopting healthier roles: Challenger, Creator, and Coach.
- Promoting growth: strategies for coaching team members into new roles to ensure they are 'ready' for what they are taking on.
- Handling the subtleties and complexities of role suitability and performance management.

## Who is this for?

This will be of benefit to anyone who is finding the quality of their leadership team, or individuals within it, high on their radar. It may be due to changes in the team or changes in what is being asked of them. It may be that you have been putting up with something that is not right for just too long, or that your gut is starting to tell you that something isn't right. Either way, this Conversation will provide a unique, focused space to give powerful and precious air time to explore your concerns in the company of experienced fellow leaders, to get perspective and to leave clearer on what your stance needs to be.

This will be real-time learning, where we work empathetically and creatively on our real-time team leadership dilemmas together in a climate of deep listening and complete confidentiality. So please only join us if this is a real issue for you, or if you feel you have real wisdom to share from your own journey. This is not an intellectual exercise; it is about the wisdom of making real decisions concerning real people, where there are rarely easy or straightforward answers.



# AGENDA

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## How will it flow?

We want this to be a focused, practical and real Conversation, combined with healthy self-reflection that has us be aware of our own part in all that is unfolding.

Following our usual flow, the Conversation will proceed through three phases:

- **"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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We will open the Conversation by sharing our personal stories in relation to how this question is real for us right now as well as looking back and noticing how and where it has played out for us in our leadership journey to this point. That will start to open up some of the wisdom that is already available to us that we may have forgotten or not 'noticed that we know'.

We will introduce a couple of frames to help us reflect on our leadership team dynamics, which will help us explore relational, emotional and energetic factors as well as role and capability. These will help us see patterns which may be playing out in the team and, indeed, within ourselves.

We will use frames like the Drama Triangle ('Victim', 'persecutor', 'rescuer') and the energy investment model (Victim, Cynic, Spectator, Player) to help surface more of the subtlety of what may really be at play.



Having done that, we will then be in a position to help each other enquire into these and open up the richer mix of variables that we need to work with to inform our perspectives and decisions.

# “TELL US MORE”

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Here we will work in small groups, with clear, grounded listening and constructive challenge, in a focused, in-depth exploration of identifying and addressing team member issues. Depending on the particular issues and opportunities we are working with, we will help each other explore some of the following:

- Identifying if team members are in the right roles and places.
- Understanding the root causes of problems within the team.
- When the problem might be a management issue that needs addressing
- Role issues and boundaries; unexpressed expectations and assumptions, judgements and self-fulfilling perceptions.
- Dynamics of role switching and unhealthy interactions
- Clear seeing - the person beyond the role and the pattern of their conditioning
- Analysing and re-orienting the Drama Triangle dynamic
- Underlying drivers of Victim, Cynic, Spectator, Player behaviours.
- Our own patterning, uncertainties doubts... clearing the fog and hearing the clear voice of wisdom within.
- As we engage honestly and creatively with this deeper enquiry, insights will surface for us. Some of these may be cognitive as we access new perspectives or insights, some may be emotional or simply 'gut' knowing. Our role as participants in the conversation will be to hold a quality of space for each other that enables this to happen spontaneously and naturally.
- As these insights start to become clear, we move towards the 'so what...now what..?' phase of the conversation. What is being invited of us in response to our enquiry?



## “YES I CAN!”

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Here we will help each other firm up our intentions and ground these in practical application and action planning. This may for example include

- Firming up our criteria for a specific hire or fire decision
- Coaching plans and methods to create shifts in performance
- Practice handling difficult conversations about performance and role suitability.
- Personal leadership: our own role in creating a productive and fulfilling environment for our teams; finding the inner alignment to step into the decisions and conversations that are needed.



We will close the Conversation by helping each other articulate our personal commitments as well as garnering the practical, and depth, wisdom that has been surfaced in the Conversation, which will form the basis of our capacity to continue finding the right state of awareness as leaders to confidently make these complex, subtle and challenging leadership team decisions.

You will be encouraged to stay in touch with at least one or two of your Fellow leaders from the conversation to share learning and progress with your commitments.



## Timings: Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April

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- 0915** Arrivals, refreshments and introductions.
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- 0945** 'Gathering together' Introductions, purpose, Guiding Principles.
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- 1015** Stage One: **"This is me!"** We break into small groups and share some aspect of your personal story, from which we develop the Conversation and open up the main issues arising.
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- 1115** Tea and Coffee Break.
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- 1130** We move into the second phase of the Conversation: **"Tell us more"**. This involves us accessing and sharing the deeper, sometimes hidden knowing that lies beneath our experience.
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- 1300** Break for lunch and continued reflection, perhaps a walk, alone or in pairs. What is the wisdom that is starting to emerge in this?
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- 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.
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- 1445** Moving into the third phase: **"Yes I can!"** In small groups or pairs, over coffee, we sharpen up our personal insights and intentions in relation to the questions we have been exploring. What is this emerging leadership wisdom inviting/calling/moving us towards?
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- 1500** Working Tea and Coffee break.
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- 1545** We work on helping each other sharpen our commitments and resolves in the light of our intentions.
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- 1615** Closing words and 'gathering up' of the wisdom that has flowed, large or small.
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- 1630** Conversation close.
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