



# POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY: NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS

**From 6.00pm on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June until 4.00pm on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>**

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In this Conversation, we will make the most of the special, high trust culture of the Fellowship to hold a full, frank exploration of our relationship with power as leaders.

In particular, we will explore the subtle dynamic between power and responsibility - 'With great power comes great responsibility', as the Spiderman adage has it. However, this is true the other way round too, when we step up and take responsibility we need to ensure we are wise to the power dynamics of this – otherwise we may succumb to weariness and disillusionment.

We will be enquiring into:

- Personal and Historical Contexts of Power: how individual experiences from childhood to adulthood shape perceptions of power and responsibility.
- Organisational Dynamics of Power: how it works overtly and covertly within complex systems, its impact on institutional structures and how to work wisely with this.
- Power and Its Consequences: the true responsibilities and false projections that come with power, the potential for misuse, and the ethical dilemmas leaders face.
- Power in Action: Strategies for harnessing power effectively to achieve desired outcomes while maintaining integrity and respect for others.
- 'Power-plays': both positive and negative. How to bring our true power into play and help others do the same; how to challenge power games and the abuse of power.
- Personal reflection: understanding our own power, its impact and limits; exploring our own questions on how to use and grow it - confidently, wisely and responsibly.



# AGENDA

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## Who is this for?

This is for anyone who may be wondering about the balance of power and responsibility.

<b>Power</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Do I sense I am not getting the balance of power right, right now?	What is weighing on me at the moment? How to empower myself?
Do I find myself lacking power or resorting to crude powerplays?	What might I be avoiding, perhaps not feeling I have the right or power?
Is the level of politicking around me too high? How do I address this?	How do I step back and spread the load more evenly?
Am I feeling out of my depth, or shut out in some way in certain contexts?	How do I awaken others to their responsibilities for what is needed?
Do I have a sense I am 'missing something' in the art of getting things done round here?	How do we create a culture of responsible leadership, not just for ourselves but our wider society?



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## How will it flow?

Like any Wisdom Conversation, we will use the time at St George's House to probe beneath the surface. Nowhere is this more important than with power, whose operation, for better or for worse, is at its most powerful when most invisible – whether personally, relationally or organisationally.

We will begin by using the fabulous opportunity presented by the diverse perspectives and contexts within the Fellowship, and our capacity to be honest with each other, to:

- Examine our assumptions and blind spots around power, arising from our personal history
- Do the same for our organisation and its assumptions about power
- Explore our own relationship with and attitudes to the exercise of power
- Question how power is exercised in our own systems.

The aim of this is to open up perspectives and remove blinkers, following which we will be in a position to see new opportunities for how we exercise our leadership. In particular, we will look at how we can redress the balance between power and responsibility, both for ourselves and in our wider system – in order for the system to function more freely and healthily. The same will be true for us personally.

As we start to get more practical we will look at how we empower ourselves to take on some of the established power dynamics. We will reflect too on how we strengthen, appreciate and/or stop 'leaking' our own power as we go about this. This will take us into some practical peer mentoring where we share the benefits of our experience and wisdom as leaders to help each other find a balance between power and responsibility that really is 'great'!



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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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In this opening phase, we will reflect on our personal relationship with power through different stages of our lives (from childhood as well as our careers).

- What does power mean to us and how have our perspectives been shaped?
- When do we feel most powerful and powerless, and how do these states affect us both personally and professionally?

We will also look at how power and responsibility are playing out in our own leadership contexts right now. Where is it healthy and unhealthy, what is behind this?

As we gather our thoughts and surface some of the wisdom of our past learning, we will use this to pose ourselves questions about what might be needed/possible for us right now.



## “TELL US MORE”

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This will take us into the next phase of the Conversation where we will explore these things in more depth to release the fuller insight and possibilities that are available to us. Amongst other things, we will look at:

- Issues and challenges we are having getting responsibility held in the right place
- The location and observation of power within our own organisations
- The effective use of power to foster respect, innovation, and transformation.
- Personal experiences with the uses and abuses of power in professional settings.

This will include a focused session on the practical applications of power in leadership:

- Getting our own balance of power and responsibility better aligned. What needs to be looked at differently?
- Recognising and stopping power leaks.
- Real decision scenarios we are facing into and teasing out the powerplays in these
- The implications of power in difficult or challenging situations, where conflict is surfacing
- The consequences of unrecognised power and strategies to honour and responsibly wield the power we possess as leaders.

We will most certainly start to see ways in which we can shift the balance of our current leadership and maybe to step into some things that, at some level of our being, we have been avoiding.

This will start to shape our intentions for how we want to lead differently following the Conversation.

# “YES I CAN!”

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In the closing phase of the Conversation, we will focus on the actions and commitments that will help us embody the new clarity of intention that has emerged from our enquiry.

In doing this we will, as ever, support and challenge each other in the specific changes we want to initiate to address the balance between power and responsibility in our own leadership, and our wider system.

There will be the opportunity to support each other in these commitments after the Conversation and to come back together to review our progress and learning in a follow up call a couple of months after the Conversation.





## Timings: Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> 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/ Coffee available in the Sitting Room of the House.
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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 work in small groups sharing our stories and experience.
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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 4<sup>th</sup> June

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- 0745** Breakfast in the Dining Room of St George's House. Please clear your personal belongings from your room and bring them down to the Vicars' Hall, so that the staff can prepare the rooms for the next group.
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- 0845** We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall and begin by noticing what is present to us as we start the new day, working in small groups and as a larger group. As we share our experiences and questions, we identify specific aspects and challenges in our different situations that require more focused attention and quality thinking time. At roughly 1030, we move on to Stage 2: **"Tell us more"**, where we start to 'mine' these topics for the wisdom that can unlock them.
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- 1100** Break for tea/coffee
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## Wednesday 4th June cont...

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- 1130**     **'Tell us more' cont...** Working in a variety of pair/trio or small group conversations, we delve together into the particular issues that have most resonance and significance for us
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- 1300**     A hot buffet lunch 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 1.50 we have a team photo on the West steps of the Chapel (weather permitting!)
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- 1400**     Back together as one group, we draw out our lunchtime reflections and engage in our final round of small group work as we clarify and solidify our intentions. Where is the invitation for each of us more fully to embody the wisdom we are accessing?
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- 1500**     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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- 1545**     Closing words and 'gathering up' of the wisdom that has flowed, however large or small.
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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