



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



SEEING THROUGH THE NOISE

6.00PM ON MONDAY 12TH JULY - 4.30PM ON TUESDAY 13TH

ST GEORGE'S HOUSE, WINDSOR CASTLE



WHY THIS CONVERSATION?

There is so much 'noise' - generally in the world today, and specifically in our lives as leaders. How do we develop the art of discerning what really matters beneath all the clamour and obfuscation - some of it deliberate, some of it just human reactivity and misunderstanding?

For leaders, this is not just an annoyance. It is a fundamental challenge. We are expected to set direction, make decisions, and communicate with clarity - but the ground of shared understanding on which these things depend has been obscured. Information is everywhere, but sense is scarce. As one leader memorably put it in a conversation on quality and efficiency - *'the biggest source of waste in business today is words!'* We have access to more data than any generation in history, yet many of us feel less clear than ever. Not having information is no longer the problem. The problem is that we cannot find the signal for the noise.

This Conversation will explore the art - and it is an art - of finding a clear line of sight through the clamour and the fog. Not by blocking it out, which is naive, but by learning to see through it: to detect the deliberate obfuscation, to not get caught up in unnecessary distractions, diversions and disputes and to cultivate a quality of attention that cuts through to what matters. There is an art in listening to the 'tone' of the noise, or the energy within it (anxious, joyful, jangly, jarring, painful excited etc) and getting to the root of this.

We will also explore our own relationship to noise - the unnecessary noise within our own heads and hearts? How much do we generate, and what drives this? How much do we absorb and internalise from others if we are not careful? And what happens when we stop - when we create silence, even briefly - and let clarity arrive on its own terms?

More insidiously, obfuscation - the deliberate act of making something obscure, unclear, or unintelligible - seems to have become more and more a feature of our public and organisational life. We will also explore this - how we learn to see it, call it, and navigate our way through it.

This is a wisdom process, the root of which is a quality of discernment founded on attentive and penetrative listening. The value of this conversation will lie in helping each other identify and become more conscious of this wisdom process as a facet of our day-to-day leadership. A little bit of wisdom that can make a massive difference!



CORE THEMES

The Signal and the Noise <i>We have more information than ever. Why do we feel less clear? Honing the wisdom to see through the noise to see what is really needed?</i>	Truth, Evidence and Narrative <i>How leaders communicate uncertainty honestly without compromising authority or trust. The bases of what we call 'truth'</i>	Fog and Clarity <i>Where we currently feeling 'fog-bound', what is it like and how do we help each other through? What does clarity actually require?</i>
The Noise We Generate <i>Our own contribution to the noise. How much do we create, consume, amplify? What would it mean to stop?</i>	The 'tone' of the Noise <i>And what this is telling us about what is really going on.</i>	
Obfuscation <i>Deliberate obscurity as strategy, political, corporate, personal. Learning to detect it and name it.</i>		

CONVERSATION FLOW

All our Conversations follow a fundamental three phase 'flow' which has been proven not only to yield rich and powerful insights but also to engender sustained shift in personal clarity, conviction and commitment.



'See'

Helping each other as leaders to 'see our seeing', where we:

- Enquire into the honest reality of our own experience.
- Notice the lens through which we are viewing things.
- Grasp the full significance of what we are in.
- Identify new invitations and possibilities for our leadership.



'Be'

Helping each other embrace the deeper invitation to change, where we:

- Identify our own blocks and resistances - emotional and/or practical.
- Explore the deeper dynamics of the situation we are in.
- Access a wisdom and inner clarity that can shape new intention.
- Mobilise the energy, resources and belief to step into real change.



'Do'

Helping each other move from intention into committed action, where we:

- Find new and sustainable focus, grounded in practical action.
- Engage significant others in this.
- Ground the practical resolve to overcome old patterns that may resurface.
- Learn powerfully and positively as we step into change.



PHASE ONE:

See:

Seeing the noise and the fog

We begin by naming what surrounds us. In the opening phase we will share honestly:

- Where are we experiencing the noise and fog and finding it difficult to see our way and set direction?
- What is obscuring our view?

As we share, we will help each other notice something important: the noise is not random. Much of it is fear or anxiety-based, our natural human reactivity to things we cannot control or shape our way.

Some of it may also be designed, by actors or systems that benefit from confusion.

- At what point does information become noise?
- Is it deliberate obfuscation or is it genuine uncertainty and not knowing?
- How much energy is being wasted on pointless or anxious speculation?
- What do we know, what do we know we don't know?

As we explore some of these questions, we will help each other hone and sensitise our capacity to detect obfuscation and see it for what it is, without falling into cynicism or paranoia.

We will also turn the lens inward.

- How much noise do we ourselves generate - in our communications, in our meetings, in our own busy minds?
- Where might we be contributing to the very fog we are complaining about and where within ourselves do we find the signal of truth below the noise?



♥ PHASE TWO:

Be:

Being in the clarity that silence offers

Having named the noise, we will do something counter-cultural: we will create silence. This phase of the Conversation will include moments of deliberate quiet - not as a retreat from the complexity, but as a practice of the attention that allows us to see things differently. We will explore what clarity actually feels like, in the body, in the mind, in the quality of our thinking.

- When did we last feel genuinely clear?
- What were the conditions?
- And what happens when we operate and make decisions from that place?

Using our own current and recent experience, we will help each other discern the basis on which we learn to see more clearly. This involves learning to discern the true 'signals' within the noise and to frame our actions and decisions from this place of deeper insight and understanding - the very essence of wisdom in leadership.

We will work in small groups, exploring themes such as: truth, evidence and narrative - the different bases of what we call 'truth' and how we navigate between them. We will explore how we ground our own awareness as part of the process. Because much of the noise can often take root within our own minds, we will explore how to use our heart and gut knowing to give us a different perspective.

We will also help each other reflect on how we express our leadership in these situations.

What is the word that brings peace, that settles others down? Our role in enabling people to get to the genuine intent beneath the words and to work productively at that level? Also how do we communicate uncertainty honestly, without losing the confidence of those who look to us? And how do we resist the temptation to generate our own noise, to fill the silence with reassurance, to 'perform' a certainty we do not feel, when the honest answer is "I am still finding my way through"?



✓ PHASE THREE:

Do:

Being clear on how we include this practice into our leadership

As we find our line of sight, we will work together to identify the actions, practices and disciplines that will help us sustain this as part of our leadership process.

- How we bring a bit of stillness that enables perspective.
- How we leave space for reactivity to vent itself and not get caught in it.
- How we maintain the compassion and understanding to see beneath the surface of others' behaviour.

Also, as we look back into our context, we may see practical things that we can be letting go of – meetings, reports, communications that add to the noise without adding to understanding? We can also help each other look at specific areas where we may want to refine our own leadership style and stance – how to communicate in a way that is clear, honest and human – even when the situation is not? This in particular is where we can positively support and challenge each other as leadership fellows as we seek to play our part in bringing a bit more calm and clarity to a noisy world!



DETAILED AGENDA

MONDAY 12TH JULY

You are welcome to check in to St George's House from 3pm

16.30	Welcome refreshments in the Sitting Room.
17.00	Evensong (<i>Optional</i>)
18.00	Vicars' Hall Introduction and context setting: why we are here, questions we want to explore.
18.30	Phase One: See Personal stories: individual and organisational.
19.45	Break
20.00	Dinner in the Dining Room of St George's House
21.30	Private Tour of St George's Chapel

TUESDAY 13TH JULY

07.30	Mattins – St George's Chapel (<i>Optional</i>)
07.45	Breakfast in the Dining Room of St George's House. <i>Please clear your luggage from your bedroom. You are welcome to leave bags in the Sitting Room or bring them to the Vicars' Hall.</i>
08.00	Holy Communion – St George's Chapel (<i>Optional</i>)
08.45	Phase One: See (cont)
10.00	Phase Two: Be
11.00	Break
11.30	Phase Two: Be (cont)
13.00	Working lunch with informal networking and continued discussion.



DETAILED AGENDA

14.00	Consolidation of morning insights: Recap key reflections and emerging themes.
14.30	Phase Three: Do Action planning session to formulate practical commitments in response to the wisdom arising from the conversation. Applying these to our leadership practice.
15.00	Break
15.15	Paired/trio discussions: refine personal and collective action steps.
16.00	Group reflections and final commitments: Sharing next steps and key resolutions.
16.30	Close of Conversation and departures

FOLLOW-UP

Virtual follow-up check-in within 4–6 weeks to review progress on commitments.

Ongoing dialogue through a dedicated digital channel (e.g., WhatsApp).

Share summary and any supplementary resources/readings on Seeing Through the Noise