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Introduction

Everything in Life that we really accept undergoes a change.

Katherine Mansfield

I am so glad you have chosen to read *From Ought to Is*. I wonder, what has been your motivation? Perhaps your primary reason relates to the sub-title, *Catalysing Change and Movement in a Polarised World* – you wish for guidance on how to bring change to stuck places. But what about the title? Have the words, *Ought*, and *Is*, also caught your attention? Right now, what resonance do these two words have for you, and do they have a different quality? What associations come to mind? Do the two words elicit different feelings? Or even somatic sensations (ease, or tension)? Are you curious about what this movement means, to go *from* ought, *to* is? What is this journey?

Well, I know for sure that getting alongside the meanings of both *ought* and *is*, and discerning their distinction in how we bring the world into being, is an essential task if we wish for change: change that is true movement to a different place, change in which you can release yourself from stuck patterns and be more at ease in your life.

And this key skill, of how we navigate between *ought* and *is*, ideology and reality, is an attentional one: do we default to our imprinted codes through which to see the world, or can we intentionally summon a perceptual shift in what we experience, to see what is truly there? This fundamental distinction, and the path you choose to walk between *ought* and *is*, will shape your entire capacity to bring change to the places where you dearly long for movement.

Our world and the entire cosmos are always in motion. However, for good reasons of stability and continuity, we have become rather skilled as a

human species at creating institutions and communities that go against this grain and stay in repeating patterns. Given the waves of disruptive (and increasingly, destructive) change now coming our way, be that in technology, geo-political power relation shifts, or the wider planetary biosphere, can we up our game in adaptation to match this context?

Whether you are a local community leader seeking greater societal cohesion, a Chief Executive Officer leading business and digital innovation, a team leader implementing workplace change, a family member considering how to bring greater flow and contact among people you love, or a politician wishing to effect change in your constituency, service or nation, this book will speak to you.

Change Starts by Acknowledging What Is¹

And here's the heads up: change that we wish for across any walk of life starts by *acknowledging what is*, not by *striving for what ought to be*. When we can bravely and respectfully stand in the full truth of a situation, movement to a new place becomes possible, whatever the challenging costs and consequences of facing *what is the case* and relinquishing our loyalties to the partial lenses through which we previously viewed reality. Conversely, when we fixate on an obligated, wished-for state – the 'oughtyness' of how we, others, or the situation needs to be – we stay stuck in our story and repeating patterns.

(Ever been in a 'tiff' with a neighbour and gone round to them with all kinds of *ought to* sentences in your head about the upset? Only to find these scripts melted away when, on meeting your neighbour, you allowed the pure relational contact between the two of you about *what is here now* in the conversation to take over, and then found that the issues got resolved?)

It's a paradox: we are better able to initiate change when we give up our proclamations of and attachments to how the world needs to be (ought) and fully immerse ourselves in the lived matter of things (is).²

This immersion, being fully with *what is*, means making an equal, non-hierarchical, unprejudiced space for everything to exist (yes, including those elements that irritate, even repel us). Contrast this with the experience of ought, which is the pressure that drives us to retain conformity to values (be they from family, our profession, or faith) that interfere with our capacity to allow what is to exist; we bend reality to our loyalties.

What a distinction: do we dare seek out reality, or stick with our wiring? Move towards *is*, or stay within *ought*?

From Ought to Is will take you on an educational and experiential journey, and I recommend you have a real-life change case in mind to work through as you go; a situation from your life or your workplace that seems stuck,

over which you have agency, and where you long to spark some movement. Along the way, I will be sharing experiences from my life and my work in the field of change to help illustrate the concepts and encourage your exploration.

Here's why I believe us all getting on this journey between *ought* and *is* is invaluable: I can easily say that it was my realisation of this paradox – that we are best able to initiate change by *really accepting* what is currently the case (thank you, Katherine Mansfield, for the opening quote) – that has had the most transformative punch for me in my life, both personally and professionally.

Transformative for sure, yet an extremely challenging insight to translate into practice; as I found that giving up my loyalties to how I wished, expected or imagined the world to be – my oughts – very, very hard (I still find that, if I am honest). How so?

While an *is* predisposition to the world might be better than an *ought* fixation when initiating change, as meeting reality *as it is* releases movement far more effortlessly than prodding it towards where we wish it to be, I will show in Chapter 2 how *the oughts that underlie this prodding come from an unrelenting source in our neurobiology*, and unless we can see and honour their source, we will be forever in their grip.*

Moving From Ought to Is Is Not Easy, But It's Worth It

So here is the upfront warning: the *ought* to *is* journey I will guide you through is no stroll in the park. I didn't realise quite how hard it was to loosen a loyalty to an ought so that I could fully meet reality as it is, until I had an anaphylactic shock in a pub garden outside Marlborough, England.

What can I attribute this episode to? Well, I was in the middle of telling my adopted mum and dad that I was tracing my birth family – an act that felt like I was threatening the very seat of my belonging to my adopted Rowlands' family.

The twin feelings of alarm and guilt at transgressing this loyalty to the parents who had so lovingly picked up my six-month-old self from the floor of a mother and babies' home, now felt like evolutionary danger (will I be abandoned by parents, again?), and within an hour, I was being pumped with adrenalin on a bed within Savernake Community Hospital.

* The philosopher David Hume's is-ought fallacy points out the risk of us leaping from descriptive fact to ethical prescription ('as everyone speeds in their car, I ought to too'). An *is*, does not make an *ought*. This book takes a different angle: unpacking the systemic source of our oughts and the power they have to distort reality and hold back change. While it can be dangerous to go from *is* to *ought*, I shall argue that it is extremely advantageous to go from *ought* to *is*!

Thankfully, my mum and dad's hearts were large enough to embrace a vast field of loving inclusion, and from that moment I gingerly embarked on my journey to discover and become known to my Irish birth family, my ancestral *is*, I had never felt more alive and quakingly free. I was starting to experience both the prize (greater ease in my life by discovering the truth, or 'is-ness' of my birth) and the price (fear of becoming outcast from a belonging group) of moving from *ought*, to *is*.

Looking back now, I can also see how the breathlessness and burning welts that arose across my body in the pub garden that day were the somatic price I had to pay to feel free of an obligation to always please others (a commonly held *ought* of an adoptee).

Moving from *ought* to *is* is far from being a cognitive, academic exercise. You *feel* this work in your body.

I did not know that at the time, and after my recovery from the anaphylactic shock (for which no medical, allergic reaction cause could be found), continued to tremble at the thought of how the trace for my birth family, and unconcealment of my full identity, might detrimentally impact my adopted family, to-be-met Irish relatives, loving close relationships and the work that had previously defined my life. Challenging my ought-based loyalty to please felt both liberating and frightening, in equal measure.

Yet moving beyond the safety of my imprinted codes, while bringing feelings of guilt, became utterly worth it.

From my infancy, I had trod a safe path, hard-wired as an adoptee to please others and be perfect so that I could secure belonging. Casting to one side this fiercely preserved 'oughtyness' (a word I am coining to denote a state of being trapped within one's oughts) – 'don't rock the boat', 'get on with my given life', 'for goodness' sake Deborah, don't show your inner vulnerability to the world!' – I, for one, embarked on the long truth-uncovering journey to cast aside the instinctual impulses that had kept me safe and integrate the alienated parts of me.

And it turned out that I was able to trace and meet both my birth father and, separately, my birth mother. By openly and respectfully agreeing to the reality of my cast-out birth – a 1960s child shamefully conceived to unwed parents in Catholic Ireland, and secretly born in a mother-and-babies home in Lancashire, England – I stood fully in my genealogy of truth, my own *is-ness* (a word I will use in this book, alongside *oughtyness*, to describe the essence of being with what is). I was shot through with intense joy – though it was quite scary to be separately reunited with birth families on both my mother's and father's sides while preserving the life-giving love of my adopted family.

What did this outcome teach me? Well, I had startlingly learned that my wiring to please others (my ought), and the reality of how others would

receive me (what is), were not one and the same thing: I *could* initiate an unsettling experience, risking displeasure, without loss. How our oughts can deceive us!

This key to finding, experiencing and revealing the *is* of my origin story unlocked the door to a fulsome life that has brought ease, flow and astonishing outcomes. In particular, the experience of discovering and standing in my previously hidden familial truth gifted me a cellular insight for my destined work in the field of whole system change and its leadership: *deep in my bones, I know how reality disclosure releases movement* (you only need to see the superlative Mike Leigh film, *Secrets and Lies*, to understand this).

Oughts close off those parts of reality we humans don't want to see. Yet, hushing things over and denying the existence of something doesn't ever make the hidden go away. I, however, can now stand in the fullness of sight. And this 20-year personal journey, threaded through 35 years in the field of organisational change and its leadership, has given affirming insight into these central messages that I will unpack in this book.

Change flows with greater ease when we can bravely agree to the reality of the present and respect all that has led to this point (what 'is'). Whereas change takes so much more effort when we exclude or denigrate what is felt as difficult or disturbing, and force things into how we wish them to be (our 'ought'). If we wish for greater ease in enabling change, we need to learn how to discern our baked-in oughts, the chains of conscience that loyally guard our belonging to groups, and by acknowledging them, break free of their power to hold back change and living life in all its fullness.

The Price of Ought

What do we risk in not taking the *ought* to *is* journey? Well, it could help explain why breaking patterns and catalysing change towards more helpful places is so challenging, and we end up with the societies that we have.

It is not without trepidation that I write a book about the counter-intuitive power of accepting reality – acknowledging what truly is the case – to initiate change. Acceptance, and getting alongside it all in today's world of strident moral opinions, enflamed by social media, can be seen as soft and excusing: to belong to this conscience group, it is your duty to take sides! Any attempt to get alongside all positions feels weak and 'centrist'. Flexibly adjusting one's views as the nuances of a complex reality become visible is criticised as 'flip-flopping', or a disingenuous tactic to garner more votes/likes.

Moreover, the task of defining 'truth', the nature of reality, has tested the likes of philosophers, natural and social scientists, artists and theologians

for millennia, and is particularly problematic in today's so-called post-truth conspiracy-theory-laden era. Can we ever arrive at a complete objective truth and know the world *as it is*, independent from the clouded eyes of the observer? Isn't what is 'true', or deemed to be the case, embedded in a set of power relations that seek to control, gain an advantage over and manipulate others?

To top it all today, with the breakdown of trust in our institutions, a growing cynicism of 'experts', the growth of populist political leaders and the rise of truth-democratising social media, whose truth, in any case, counts ('recollections may vary' being an apt statement from the UK's now-departed Queen Elizabeth)?

I value these societal trends as attempts at heart to seek a wider ground of truth to stand on. Yet they are also creating a divided, disenchanted, destabilising and polarising world – where coordinates about how to think, speak, act and live out our lives seem to have been thrown out of the window.

This is why I feel compelled to write this book now. We are caught up in a world of *ought*, a battleground of strongly held opinions that criticise (even cancel) others and stridently (and blindly) hold forth on what is good, necessary, or imperative. This at times dogmatic drive towards what is desired, or ideal, can also have a devastating impact on mental health and well-being as we agonise over our appearance, identity and status in the eyes of others.

Ought is essential. I have earlier stated its primal, evolutionary survival value. We cannot secure our belonging without this inner wiring of conscience that teaches us to stay innocent within loyalty groups. Collectively, the continuity of our social structures rests on these hidden, unwritten rules that allow a system to be the same tomorrow as it is today. Society would have no governing codes without a sense of imperative and correctness. And yet, ought can become a real liability as the desire to be faithful and loyal to a position can lead to severe distortions of what is deemed to be true.

Perhaps the most visible consequence of an *ought* world in the United Kingdom recently has been the Post Office's widespread miscarriage of justice: an instructive case in the inability and reluctance to confront truth and reality (what *is* the case). Out of a deep-seated loyalty to preserve the identity, reputation and continuity of a 400-year-old reputable institution (remember, oughts ensure survival), the Post Office leadership wrongly accused hundreds of their sub-postmasters and sub-postmistresses in communities across the land of fraud, taking money from the till. Whereas the 'money-gone-missing' in the accounts was due to a fault in the new Fujitsu Horizon accounting software programme the Post Office was introducing: a secret reality that the Post Office senior leadership knew about yet failed to pursue or openly acknowledge.

Because of this reality denial by the Post Office and Fujitsu, more than 900 sub-postmasters and mistresses were wrongly prosecuted as criminals: 236 went to prison, convicted of theft, many were financially ruined and lost their relationships, homes and livelihoods, and there have been four recorded suicides.

Oughts, our inner survival wiring (and I have no doubt that the Post Office senior leaders felt ‘innocent’ through this, as they viewed the institution’s protection and survival as paramount), can distort reality in damaging ways. They give us a blind quality of allegiance, which can have us end up in less than comfortable places (such as prison, if we are a Rudy Giuliani turning himself in on election racketeering charges for Donald Trump).

Do we want truth and reality to matter anymore? In a world that is comfortable with alternative facts, I do. My work in the field of systems, change and leadership demands it. More broadly, I can feel lost – blindly reaching for a felt sense of how to think, speak and act, but with no clarity on what that is or if it can exist.

If we genuinely wish for the changes we seek, I invite us all to resist the onslaught on truth too.

The Founding Energy This Book Stands On

Alongside my personal ought-to-is story and today’s ought-proliferation context, stands my three decades plus in the field of change, whose wisdom I also feel compelled to share in this book.

Throughout these decades I have been continually struck by the realisation that, if only we can learn to lead change *as it actually happens* (continual attention and adaptation to dynamic, emergent reality, as in the living world around us), rather than leading change based on how we believe it *ought to be managed* (unfreeze a static, resistant system, change it to where it needs to go, and then embed the new state), then we achieve sustainable change with far greater ease. I have made it my mission and ministry to stand for a change approach that works from messy, lived reality, not the illusory comfort of command and control.

This field experience is backed up by my leadership of four rounds of global, empirically based research, and I have now written three previous books about change and its leadership. *Sustaining Change*³ set out my earliest research into the practical approaches and behaviours correlated with success in situations of high magnitude disruption and change complexity – what one needs to *do*. More recently, *Still Moving*⁴ and the *Still Moving Field Guide*⁵ added to these *Sustaining Change* frameworks the inner state skills required of a leader taking their organisation through change – how one needs to *be*.

This time, in this book, I will go one step further and add a final, vital ingredient into the leading successful change mix: a base note that was faintly present in my previous books, but which now needs to make its presence louder and clearer – as this element is essential for all who want to ‘go past Go on the Monopoly board’ of change.

In this book, I will focus on how the capacity to willingly stand alongside all of reality (and not just that towards which oughtyness propels us) catalyses change. Our belonging and survival needs need not be threatened when we dare seek and disclose wider truths that will challenge those of our team, friendship groups, community movements, political party, entire organisation and even nation.

This is a challenging statement, but do let it sit with you for a while: reality is always friendly. But believing this does seem to depend on us seeing the innate goodness and purpose of all that comes our way.

Working with *What Is* Requires a Shift in Attention

Writing this book was not on my radar screen, and yet the valuable things in life can come unbidden – if one is sufficiently alert. Having established a *Still Moving* change practitioner community over the years, I was greatly looking forward to our annual practitioner ‘Masterclass’ gathering. What unexpectedly unfolded in and around that gathering became the final spur for writing this book.

Fifteen of us were due to gather. Yet in the two days running up to the event, even at the airport the night before, as I was checking in, six people contacted us to pull out. I found myself oscillating between calm acceptance (‘It is what it is, let’s work with the disturbance as a resource, as it must be part of something bigger than us’) and agitated projection (‘They *ought* to be more committed’, ‘actually, I *ought* to have set this up better’). Just as our hands play across the piano keys left to right and back again, so can our minds zip between *is* and *ought*.

Nonetheless, I and my co-facilitator decided to go ahead: a decision we did not rush into, but one taken after we had explored our immediate emotions (the *is*-ness of disappointment, sadness, anger) and instinctive reactions (the *oughtyness* of ‘how could they’, ‘we didn’t do it right’). Without fully knowing what potential would unfold (working with *what is* is like walking into mystery), we decided to go ahead, stick with the messiness of the situation and *be with what was the case*.

On the plane ride to the location that evening, I paid attention to the oscillating tussle still coursing through my inner state and wrote down three large words on a piece of paper, ‘*IS VS OUGHT*’. My mind was alive through the night, processing how these words summed up the wrestle between one

part of myself that was inviting me into a full immersion of *what is*, and, in the other corner, another part of myself trying to control and direct the situation by wishing reality were *something else*. Oh, the agony!

Yet given my primal instinct for full immersion in the truth of reality ('Hello birth family!'), on the opening morning the next day, I set up 15 chairs to represent in the room all who had wished to be there, not just seat the 9 who showed. My aim was to give the missing participants – and the impact that that was having on the 9 present – a powerful force in the field. Systems require to be whole: if there is unacknowledged exclusion, someone present would need to carry their energy. As we all sat down, the sense of missing colleagues was palpable, and, in the discomfort, some of the participants wished to move the empty chairs away (we *ought* to be sitting closer to each other).

I invited them not to do that, to sit with the discomforting reality of the *is*, and instead led an opening dialogue to not only name what had happened, without any judgement, but also explore how to work with loss, out-of-control change and uncertainty (we were change practitioners, after all!). The seating arrangement allowed us to fully *experience* the *is*-ness of the situation (working with *what is* requires accessing intelligence beyond cognition and speech, as my anaphylactic story above shows).

It was an intense, honest and moving opening that included us facing the consequences of being a smaller group. We decided – after much consideration – against setting up a virtual dial-in call with those absent colleagues who had asked if they could join online, as the cost of that to our own experience was felt to be too great (working with *what is* can require tough choices and the risk of making oneself unpopular).

We did, however, keep communications flowing through the experience with those of us who could not make it, not as an obligated chore but as a genuine acknowledgement of how the dramatic drop in group size had acted as a valuable point of learning. My impulse to turn the contrasting orientations of *ought* and *is* into a whole book became the resonating theme through our two-day retreat, and as I sit here writing I have before me the sticky notes of how we came to contrast these two quite different ways of showing up to experience.

In a nutshell, here's what the sticky notes said: to journey from *ought* to *is* calls for us to focus on the reality of the living present – what's here now, not the desired for future; it challenges us to include all that happens with a welcoming and including heart, not judgemental indignation; it assumes that all that happens is the only thing that could have happened, our task is to find meaning in experience, not wish things to be different; it requires our right-brain⁶ skill to see the bigger picture, welcome novelty and incorporate our emotional and somatic intelligence, not just our left brain analytical skill to break what we find down into logical and familiar parts.

All the above asks that we relinquish our attachment and loyalty to deeply held fields of belonging and identify with something bigger than ourselves. Easy to say, harder to do, as this 'loosening of the oughteries' to discover a larger, more unified field beyond our wiring requires us to befriend feelings of guilt and loneliness (it was tough to say 'no' to the request of our no-show colleagues for an on-line connection to our gathering).

None of these attentional modes of showing up to life are the default mode of our human species, which seeks comfort over truth. And yet, I believe the prize of seeking and working with *what is* far outweighs the perceived comfort of staying gripped in an *ought*.

I wish that the messages that come through me in *From Ought to Is* will help a wider world. On behalf of the whole Still Moving change community, I look forward to bringing them alive in this book.

This Book

From Ought to Is will offer you an educational and experiential journey to feel less trapped by your loyalties and more able to be with what is the case. This move from *ought* to *is* will not always be comfortable, as our oughts arise from such treasured places, but I wish you to feel well-resourced along the way. You may wish to read this book alongside a close friend or colleague, as some of my reviewers have said how more powerful (and fun!) it was to put the insights into practice by having a partner walk the journey with them, discussing and applying each chapter in turn. Our formation journey is always better undertaken when in community.

I will be weaving together three related commentaries: my journey since the completion of *Still Moving* that I hope will be personally relatable and invite you to reflect on how you live your life; extensive practical insights and advice for leading systems and organisations through change from my 35 years in the field; and finally, my observations on the broader changes flooding through the broader socio-political-cultural landscape today that I hope will be stimulating and thought-provoking and influence how we can collectively show up to life.

I will be your primary guide, but I will draw on the wisdom of poets, philosophers, social and natural scientists, and theologians along the way. Be prepared to meet quite a medley of characters, all of whom, though, share a deep, compassionate drive to help humankind see the true nature of reality.

There will be reflective questions and mini-activities throughout to help you experience and apply the messages to sticky situations in your life – culminating in the penultimate chapter dedicated to application. Finally, I invite you to read the book at a second level: not only taking in

the content but also *noticing your own is-ness vs oughtyness responses* as you read. Register how reading the book impacts you in the present moment and notice how you might wish for it to be a different reading experience, where you wish to jump onto your own oughtyness!

Here is what to look forward to.

Chapter 2: The Deep Power of Ought

In this chapter, I will define what is meant by the word, *ought*, and show how our loyalty to imprinted codes about how to be in the world is rooted in our need to belong, with the associated powerful workings of conscience. While of value in this context, I will set out the costs and problematic consequences of an ought stance when seeking change, showing how its fixations and excessive judgements narrow our perceptions of what is real, limit creativity, sow division and discord, and create unease in our lives. From this default grip of ought, what are the pointers to an alternate way?

Chapter 3: The Transformative Punch of Is

In this chapter, I will explore the task of how to be fully with *what is*; how can we find within ourselves that place from which we are at ease with all that comes our way, approaching life with greater awareness, compassion and choice? To fully grasp what I mean by *is*, I will set out two contrasting definitions of what is truth: the correctness of a proposition vs the disclosure of what is being, yet hidden. I will show how it is this latter, dispositional definition of truth that clears the pathway to change. While not without discomfort, it is only by noticing, naming and facing the truth and the reality of what is ordinarily concealed, that we can be free to walk a new path.

Having defined, illustrated and contrasted the world of *ought* and the world of *is*, the next four chapters offer practical resources for how to keep steering towards *what is* when seeking change.

Chapter 4: Systems and the Pursuit of Truth

In this chapter, I will look at four underlying properties of all collective human life – the systemic orders of Time, Belonging, Place and Exchange – to enable you to see a little more wisely into the undercurrents that are governing the functioning of your team, family, company and nation. Understanding and working with these deeper soul voicings of a system are

not optional if you wish for change and movement. I will share Still Moving's most recent round of research into change and its leadership, which, for the first time, compellingly found a positive correlation between change success and your capacity to attend to these deep systemic realities, and I will advise on how best to approach change in a way that attends to them.

Chapter 5: Leading Change From /s, the Personal Skills Required

Having described and illustrated an invaluable framework for meeting a system's *collective* is-ness, or reality, what about the *personal* leadership skills you will need to pull this off? As I have said earlier, heading towards truth and reality need not risk your survival, but it sure does take some skill. In this chapter, I will share the Still Moving Change Leadership skills framework, which we have researched as being vital in change: a set of interdependent *inner* state capacities (quality of your *being*) and *outer* action practices (quality of your *doing*). Combined, these skills enable you to release your system from its loyalties and catalyse sustainable, more effortless change.

Chapter 6: The Journey of the Soul

Our soul is at the dead centre of our being, and therefore any sense of skill in change. In this chapter, I will explore the nature of soul as our essential accompaniment, guide and beckoner for our passageway from *ought* to *is*. It is nigh on impossible to have real contact with the depths of *what is* without the grounding ballast of our soul: as our essential character, calling, connector with wider fields and fate, our soul longs for us to be free of our oughts. The chapter will resource you in two sections: *living* with soul as an enabler of ease and flow in our personal lives and *leading* with soul as the ineffable quality that will take your change leadership to a level of greatness.

Chapter 7: Emotions and Movement

As voicings of the soul, our emotions are an essential resource in change. Learning to handle the emotions that arise out of awareness (reality can be confronting...) is another key skill in catalysing change and movement. In this chapter, I will explore the nature of emotions, their source, and what they are trying to tell us and fly the flag for placing emotions firmly and respectfully into the arena of change and its leadership. I will pay special

attention to the nature of guilt, grief and joy, as I can guarantee this tryptic of emotions will pop up in the journey to break free from our loyalties to ought, as we head towards wider truths.

Chapter 8: The Journey Between Ought and Is – A Hothouse

In this chapter, you can take a ‘rapid transit journey’ from *ought* to *is*. I provide you with a sequential build of practical, immersive exercises drawing on all the previous chapters that will guide you through a lived experience of moving from a world in which you are governed by your oughts, to a world where you are open to taking in wider realities. I hope you enjoy the exercises and consider taking them out into the world to conduct within the systems for which you wish movement. Try them on for size!

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Would the world as we know it collapse if we abandoned *ought*? For sure, we would inherit a psychopathic society devoid of glue and shared values. In this final chapter, I will address the knotty philosophical and ethical question – in the face of any suffering or difficulty, be that human or ecological, should there be a template of what *ought* to be? If one abandons an ought world completely, what is left of our dreams, aspirations, sense of justice and right/wrong, research endeavours to find breakthrough solutions, and cultural templates that guide identity and give boundaries for belonging?

There will be no neat concluding answer to this conundrum, but an invitation to become *aware* of when we are in *ought*, and when we are in *is*. Based on this heightened self-awareness, can we dial down on our ought-y codes – or at least, update our ‘red lines’ – and in their place befriend the more spacious *is-ness* as our starting point for healing, change and movement?

The worlds of *ought* and *is* are not straightforward. As we arrive in the world, we are given their tension: do we open our eyes to all of reality, or just head towards a version valued from our early field of belonging? How we resolve this tension between *ought* and *is*, wiring and reality, will become our signature tune in life. *From Ought to Is* is an invitation to expand our contact with reality, feel less trapped by our loyalties, and, by respectfully putting our wiring to one side, make greater peace with our lives and more clear-sighted sense of our ever-increasing complex world.

I hope you can join me.

