GROWING DEEP

Leadership & Formation Framework

Workplace Culture Resource

Lutheran Education AUSTRALIA

Contents

What is workplace culture? 1
Why is workplace culture important? 1
Leadership and Culture 1
Growing deep- our culture 2
Why is work culture important to Lutheran Education? 2
Resources to support a focus on Lutheran culture 4
Clarity of Direction 5
Loving service 6
Positive recognition 7
Professional ownership 8
Creative focus 9
Purpose and meaning 10

What is workplace culture?

Workplace culture is defined as the atmosphere or climate of the work environment. It is the perception of how it feels to work in Lutheran education, within a particular location, office, school, team or for a specific leader. It is the ideal operating environment required to provide a working climate that will enable people to work sustainably at their highest potential.

Workplace culture exists in within every organisation and team. Workplace culture evolves in the absence of it being moulded, or purposefully created by the leaders of the team or office, or school. In leaving this to chance, it is equally likely that the resulting work culture will be effective or ineffective in supporting the direction and purpose of the organisation and may either help or hinder the ability of the team members to operate and work at their best.

Why is workplace culture important?

Workplace culture effects organisational effectiveness. An unmanaged culture is likely to result in lower levels of motivation and, at times, cynical and disenchanted individuals providing minimal contribution. A positive work culture results in higher levels of motivation and effort from the people within that team or unit or school, and has been shown through research to drive higher levels of effectiveness and productivity.

An effective culture is about creating an "energised", outcome-focused work environment that attracts, sustains and retains the best professionals available and intentionally develops leaders for the future.

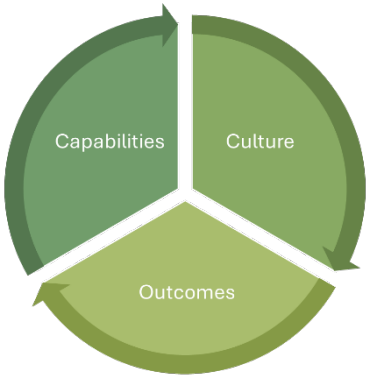
In almost all cases where research is available, groups or teams that rate well on key workplace culture measures, operate more effectively and deliver stronger outcomes than those with lower ratings.

A highly effective workplace culture doesn't just happen- it is created and sustained by leaders and their teams.

Leadership and Culture

While workplace culture plays a critical role in influencing the behaviour of the members of an organisation and the outcomes it produces, the demonstrated capabilities and behaviour of leaders plays a particularly vital role in creating and shaping the culture. Leaders create and manage culture consciously and unconsciously by reinforcing values and assumptions through their own behaviour, as well as the structures, infrastructure, processes and procedures they establish to guide others' behaviour.

Edgar Schein of Harvard Business School suggests that the most important function leaders have within their organisation is the creation and management of workplace culture.



The diagram to the right represents the powerful inter-relationship between capabilities, culture and outcomes for Lutheran education. The 'loop' acts to reinforce either positive or negative outcomes.

Considering the context of Lutheran education, intentionally building and developing a highly effective cadre of Lutheran education leaders who can drive this culture nationally is a key strategic imperative.

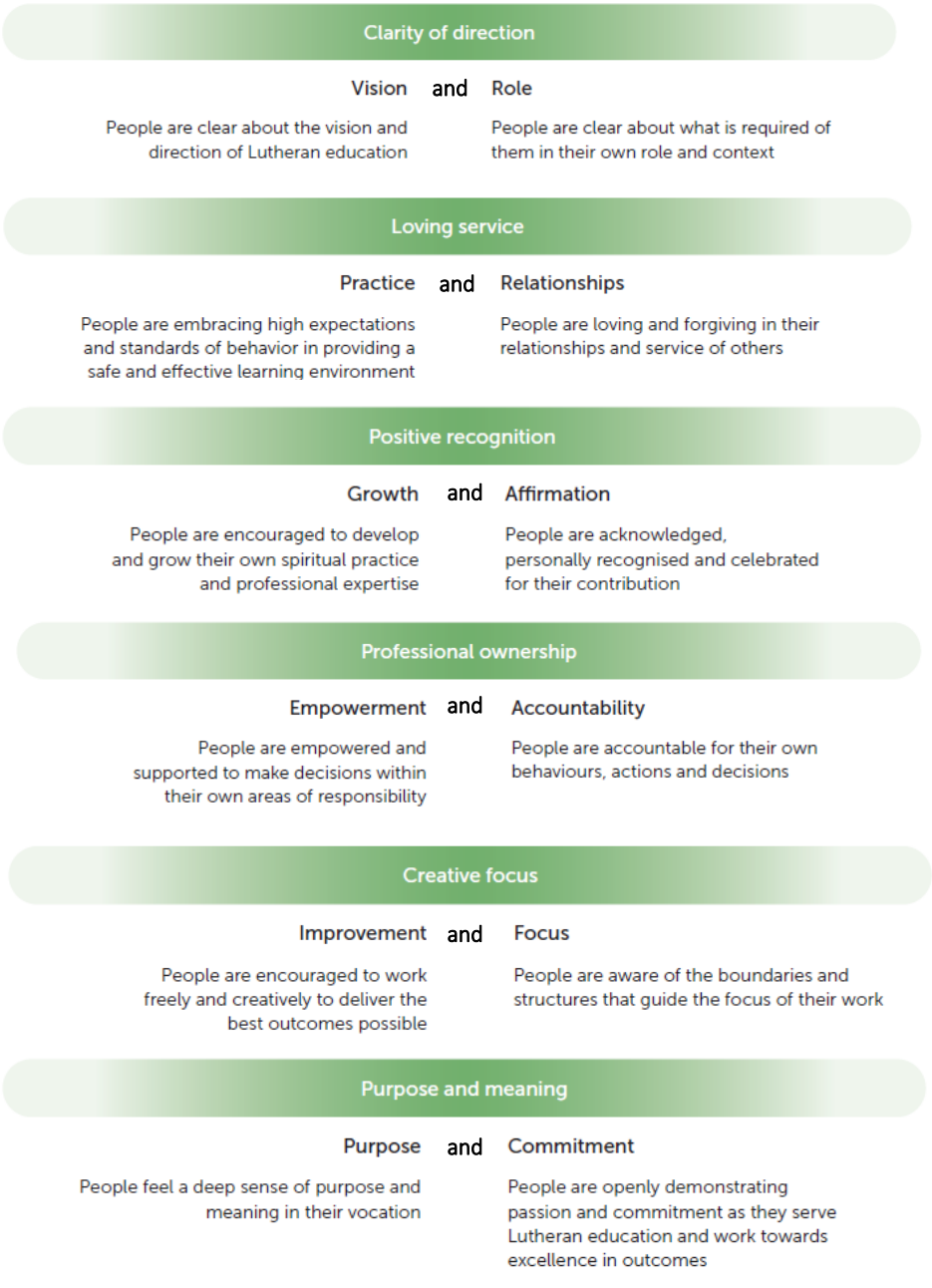
© Lutheran Education Australia

Growing deep - our culture

Lutheran education workplace culture

Lutheran education workplace culture describes the atmosphere or climate of the work environment. It is the perception of how it feels to work in Lutheran education, within a particular location, office, school or team. It is the environment we are aspiring to create – a culture of fostering educational excellence that is immersed in a Christ-centred approach to education – where all we do and say is based on our desire to see every person thrive and flourish in their work and life. Service in response to God's love is at the heart of all that we do.

The following graphic summarises the workplace culture or environment we are aspiring to create in Lutheran education.

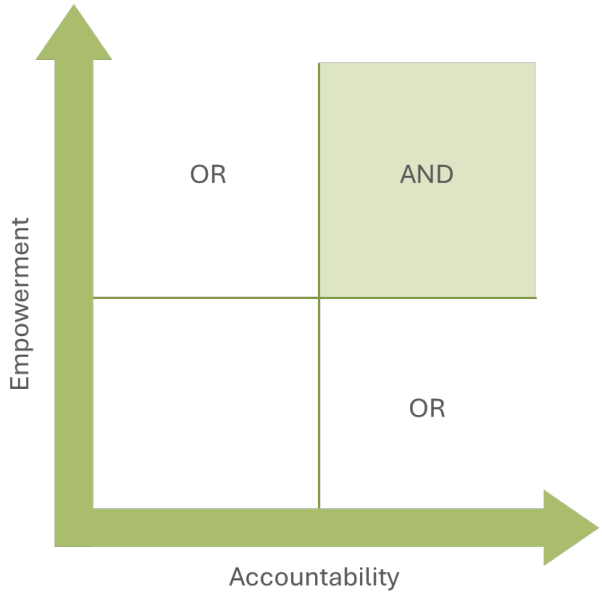


© Lutheran Education Australia

Why is work culture important to Lutheran Education?

Instead of considering the indicators as existing at either end of a continuum whereby having strength in one indicator necessarily means weakness in the other, we propose thinking about how both indicators of a Lutheran culture dimension can coexist and flourish together in a way where both can be equally strong and effective. This often represents a key challenge for leaders but creates a valuable and effective way of operating to embed the unique Lutheran distinction nationally. It is particularly challenging when leaders are required to effectively "hold" seemingly paradoxical creative tensions in educational settings.

Managing this creative tension will provide a focused lens through which both of these aspects of daily work in Lutheran Education are seen and felt as equally important, rather than one trading off the other in a state of continual compromise. They will also enable leaders to continue to ensure our Lutheran Education workplaces are distinctly Lutheran and upholding the ethos of the Lutheran Christian teachings.



© Lutheran Education Australia

Resources to support a focus on Lutheran culture

The following pages contain resources to prompt your thinking around your school culture.

The task: Take the cultural elements and develop a matrix to consider what you might see hear and feel in the workplace as each of the paired elements are either strong, weak, or in balance.

Using the example of 'Professional Ownership' above:

What is empowerment?

Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing an individual to think, behave, take action, and control work and decision making about her job in autonomous, independent, self-directed ways. It is the state of feeling self-empowered to take control of your own destiny. Empowerment is feeling in control of your work environment and that you have permission to make decisions in the areas you control and are responsible for in your job.

What is accountability?

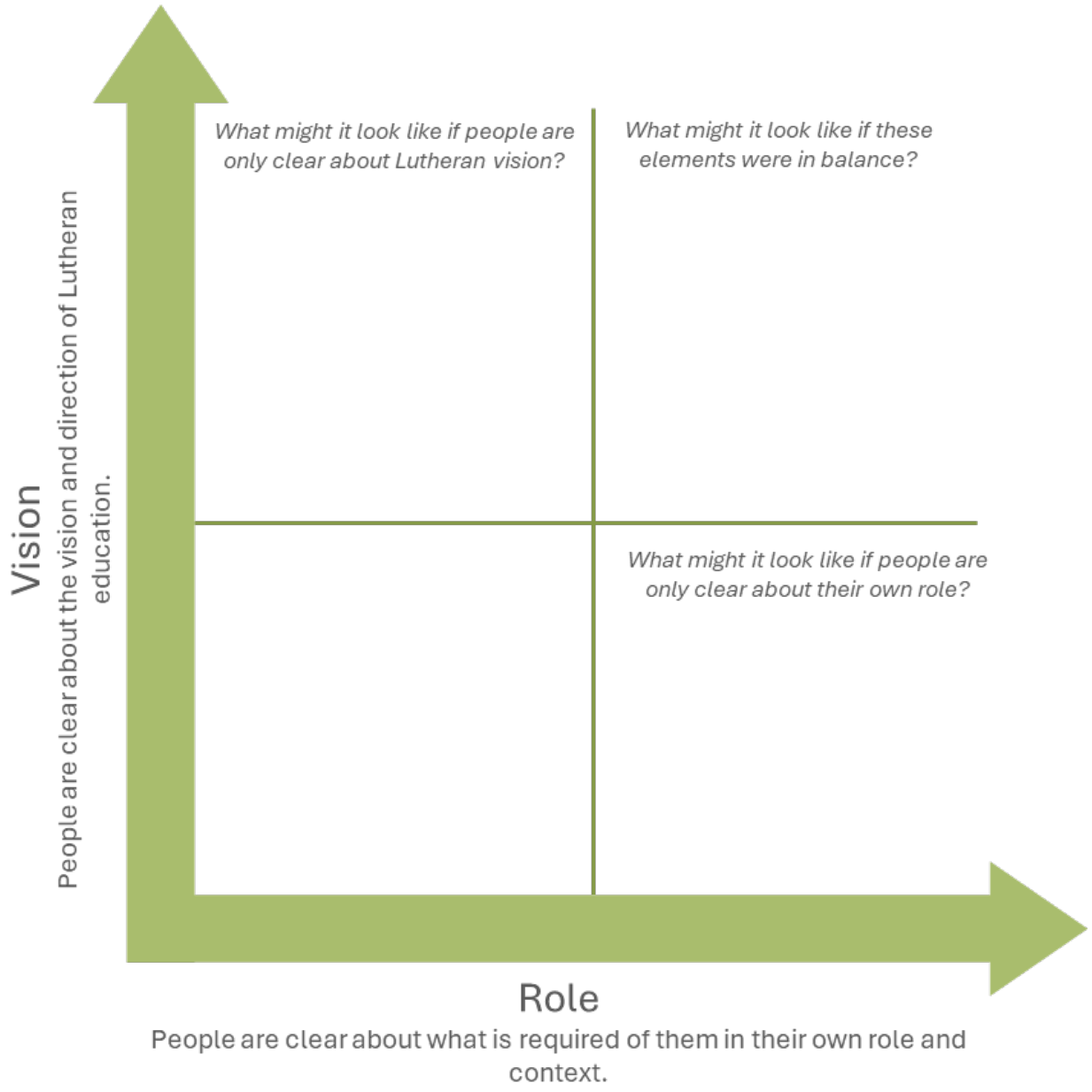
Accountability means being answerable for decisions and having appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure standards are applied or adhered to. Accountability is often used synonymously with concepts such as responsibility, answerability and liability.

© Lutheran Education Australia

Clarity of Direction

What is vision?

What is role clarity?

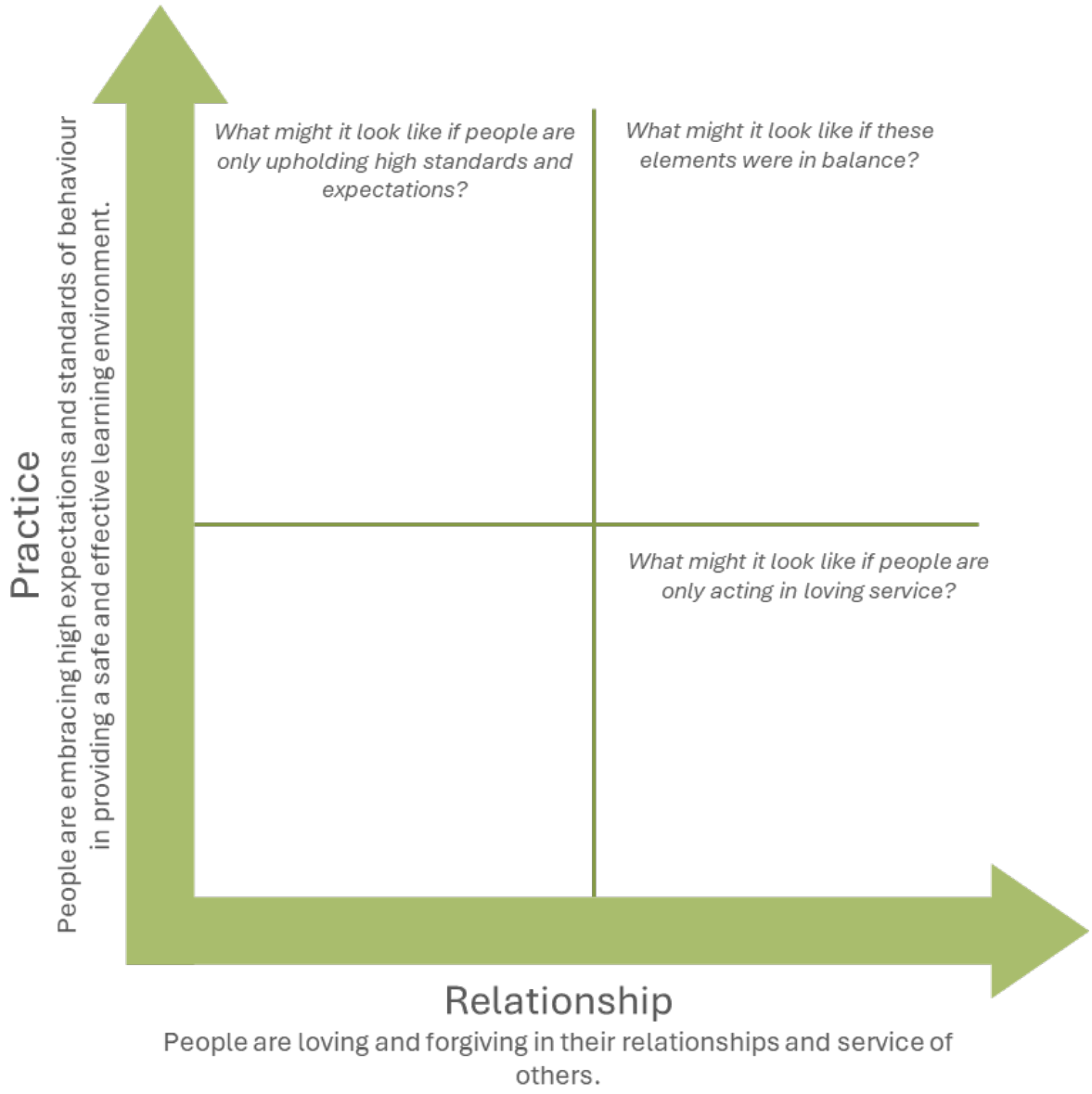


© Lutheran Education Australia

Loving service

What is practice?

What is relationship and service?

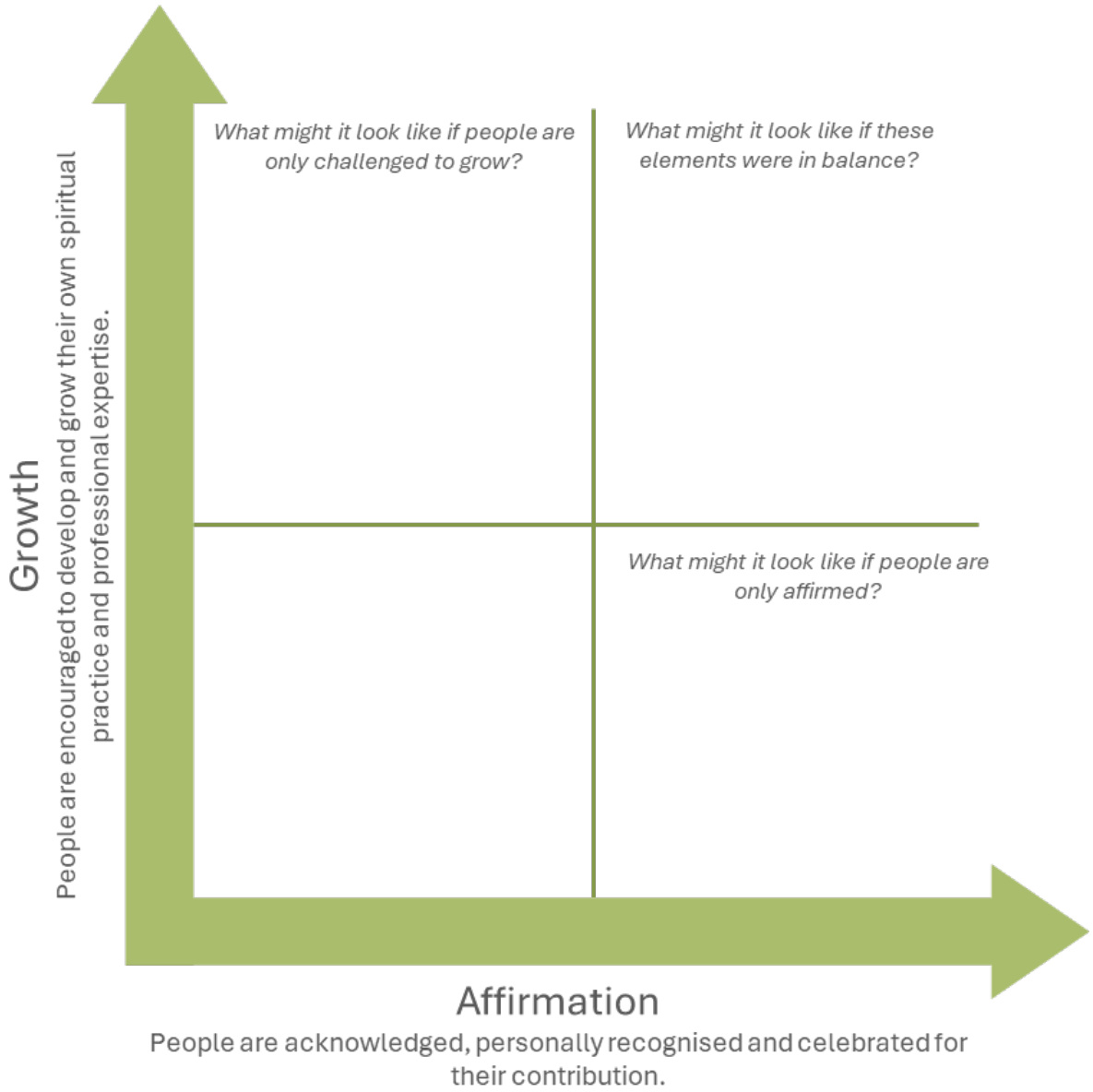


© Lutheran Education Australia

Positive recognition

What is growth?

What is affirmation?



© Lutheran Education Australia

Professional ownership

What is empowerment?

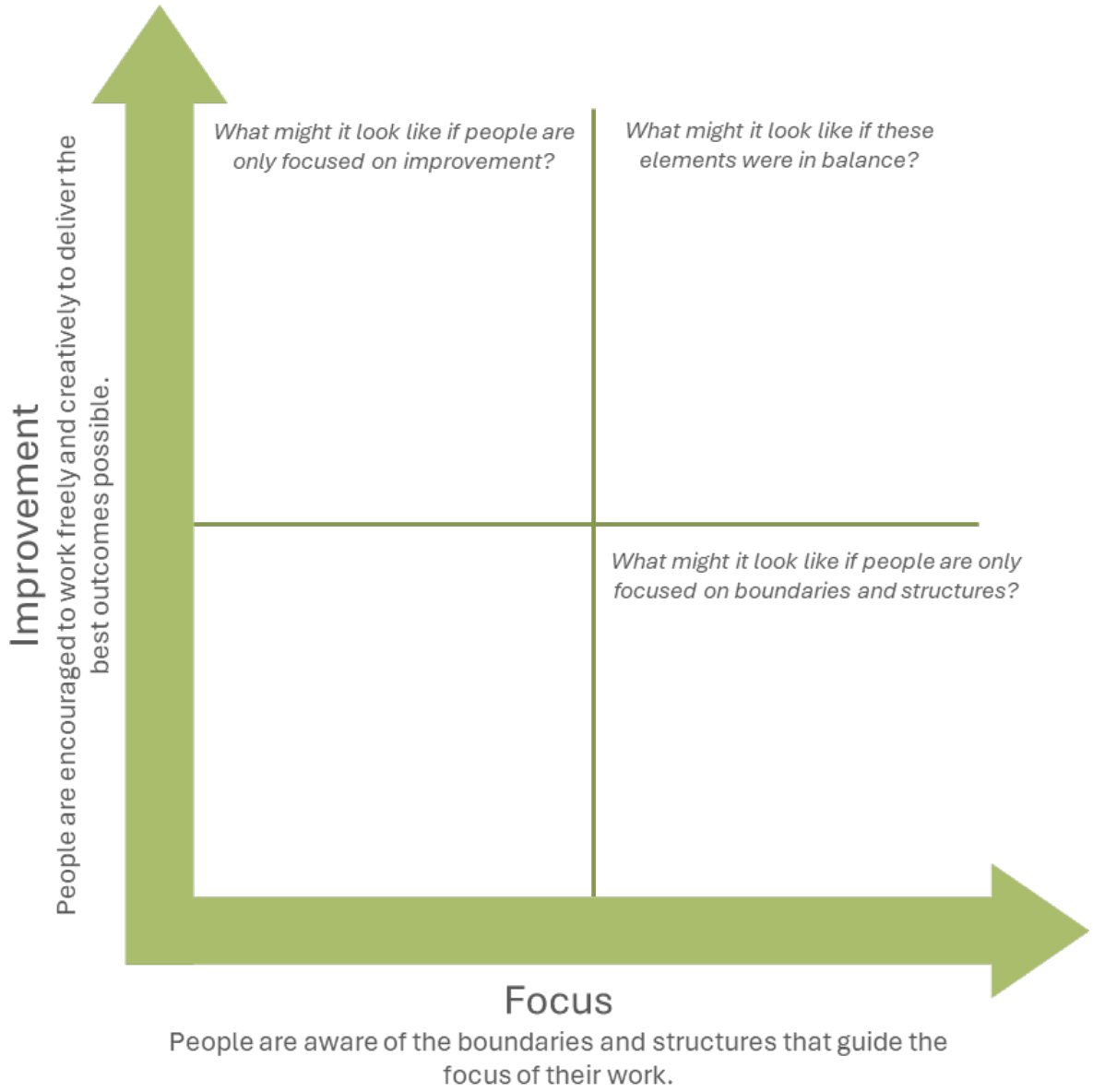
What is accountability?

© Lutheran Education Australia

Creative focus

What is improvement?

What is focus?

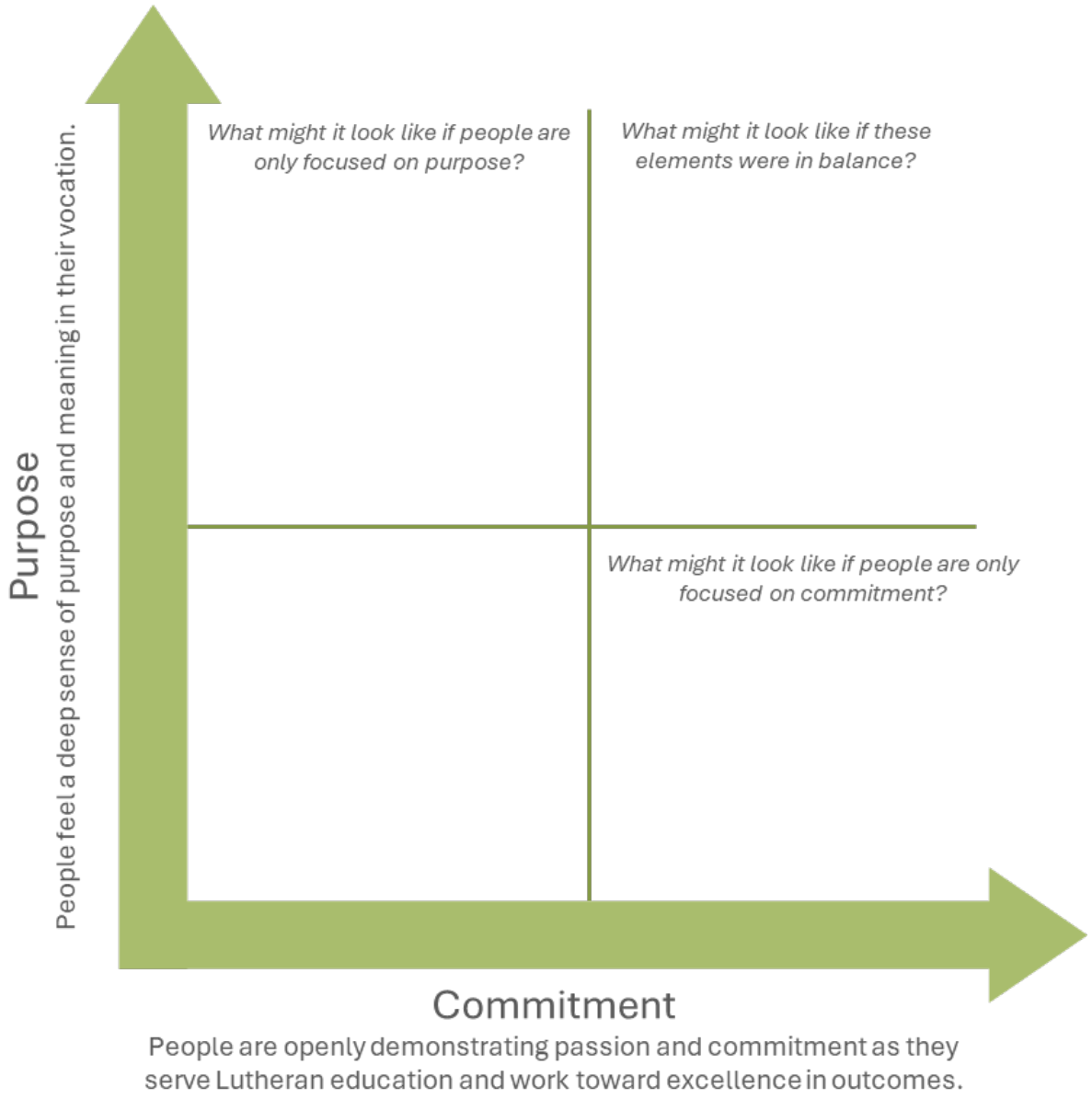


© Lutheran Education Australia

Purpose and meaning

What is purpose?

What is commitment?



© Lutheran Education Australia