

Scatterplot Your Leadership

A Bold Move Toward Becoming a Liberating Leader

Support-Challenge Matrix

A Support-Challenge Matrix Exercise

In Episode 4 of the ***Leaders Rising Podcast***, Founding Partner Dr. Tom Nebel recommended a bold move:

Scatterplot yourself on the Support-Challenge Matrix.

Then, ask someone else to do the same for you. Why? Because how you intend to lead isn't always how you're experienced.

This guide gives you the exact framework to do just that.

“You’ll never be a liberator unless you know how people experience your leadership.”

— Dr. Tom Nebel
*Founding Partner and
Executive Chairman*

SUPPORT CHALLENGE MATRIX



The Support-Challenge Matrix

Every leader operates in a rhythm between support and challenge. The goal? Be a **Liberating Leader**: someone who brings the right **support** + the right **challenge** consistently.

	Description	What It Feels Like
Liberate	You empower, challenge, and support others to rise.	Trust-building, growth-filled
Dominate	You push people hard but don't walk with them.	Pressure, burnout, fear
Protect	You coddle or avoid conflict. You rescue.	Safety, but stagnation
Abdicate	You check out or withdraw.	Confusion, frustration, apathy

Scatterplot Yourself

Self-Reflection

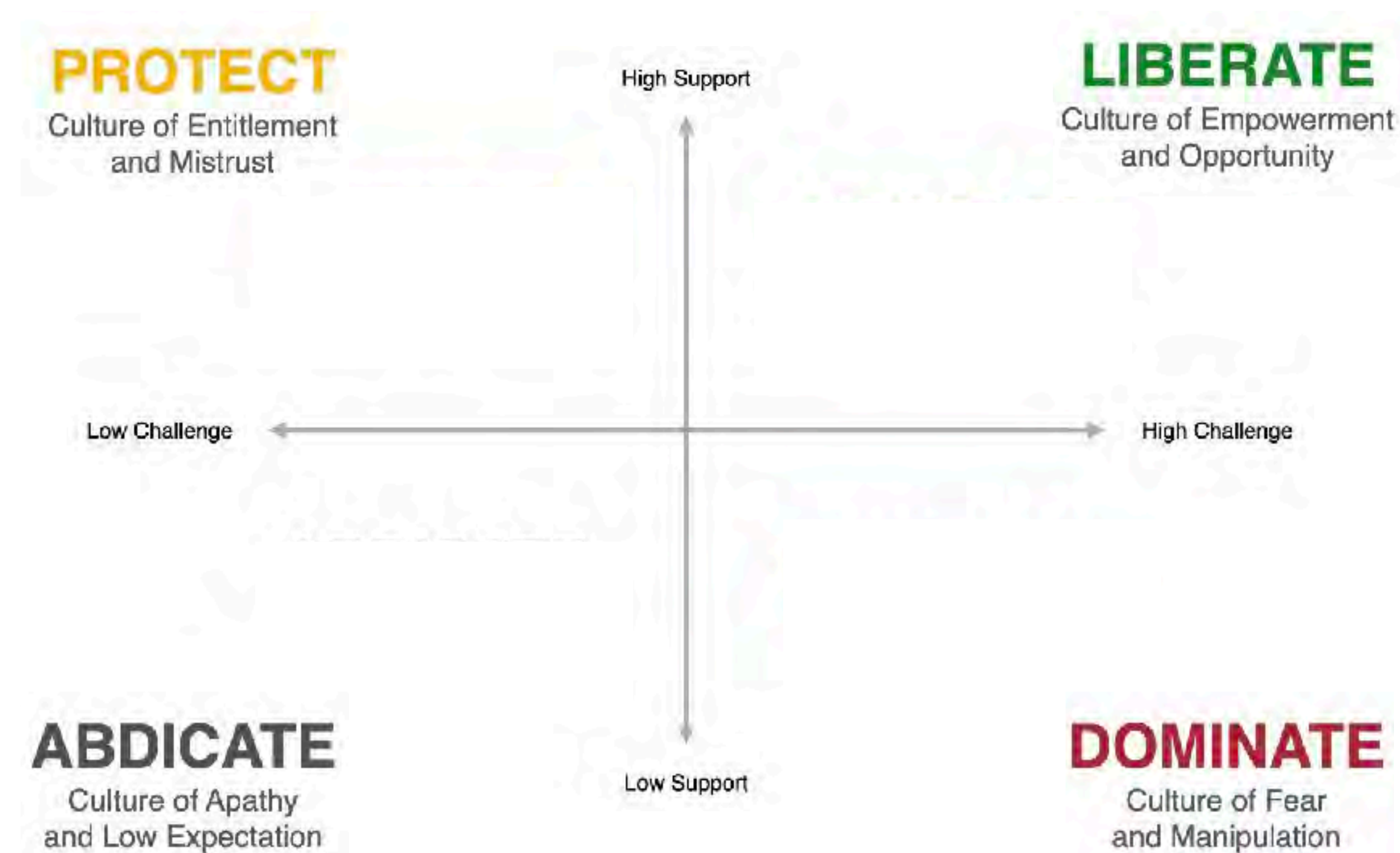
Step 1: Think about 5 people or groups in your life
(examples: team, spouse, kids, peers, clients, manager)

Step 2: Place a dot on the matrix below for each person/group based on how you think you lead them.

Step 3: Add initials beside each dot.

Reflection Questions:

- Who gets your best leadership?
- Where might I over-**Challenge** but under-**Support**?
- Who do I **Protect** instead of **Liberate**?



The Bold Move

Self-Reflection

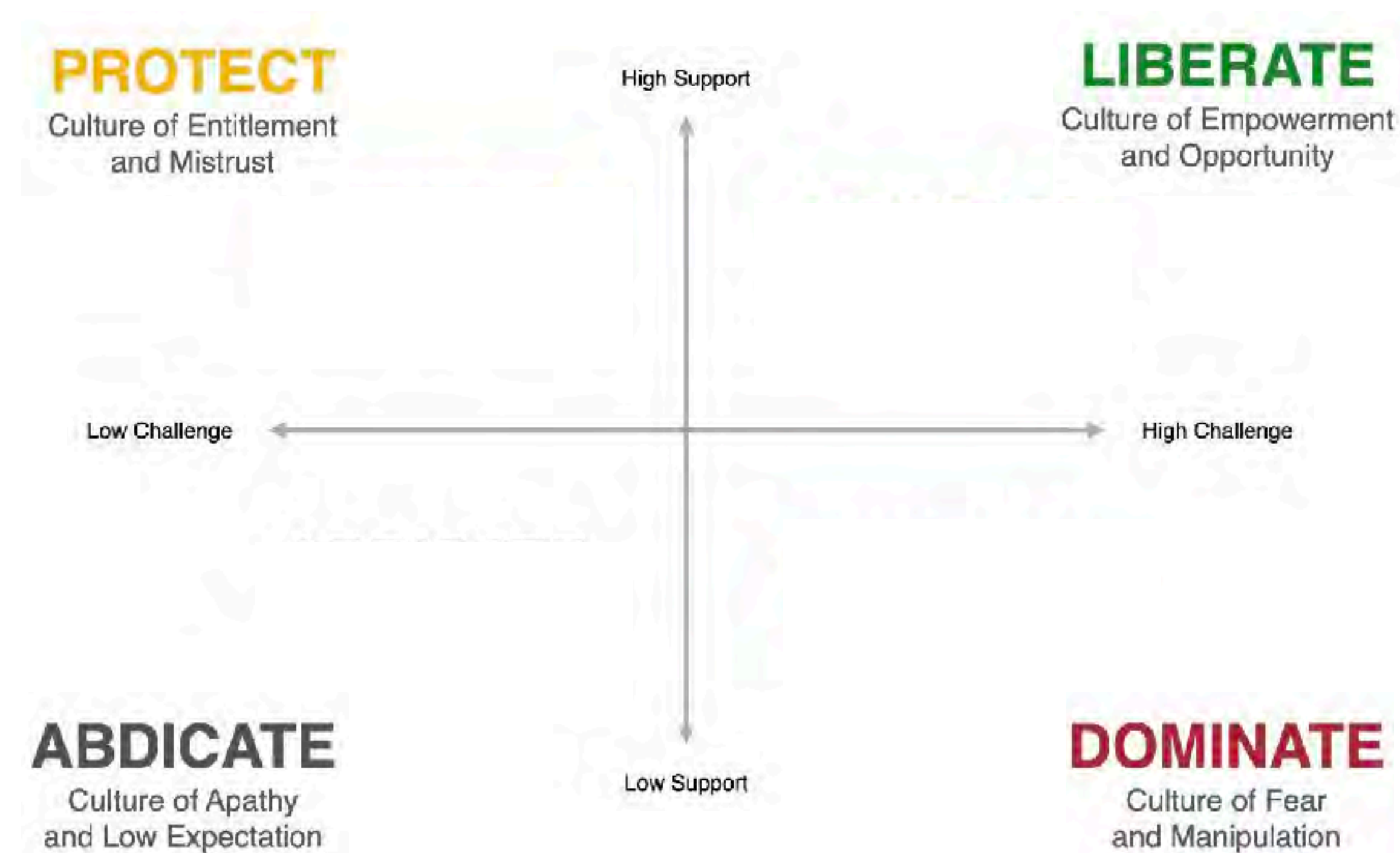
Choose 1–2 people and invite them to scatterplot you.

Say This:

“I’m working on my leadership. Would you be willing to help me see myself more clearly? Here’s a tool called the Support-Challenge Matrix. I’d love your perspective on where I tend to show up with you on this grid.”

Ask them to:

1. Place you on the matrix.
2. Explain why—briefly.
3. Share how you might better support or challenge them.



Debrief

Next Step Reflection

What did you learn?

Write down 3 takeaways from your scatterplot and feedback.

What's 1 adjustment you can make this week to move closer to the Liberate quadrant with someone?

Optional **Team Exercise**

How to Use This in a Team Setting:

10-min Introduce the tool to the team

5-min personal reflection: how did this impact you?

15-min team pair-up for scatterplot conversations

10-min large group debrief

Option: Use this tool each month as part of performance reviews or check-ins.