

# The Access-Engagement Culture Matrix Tool

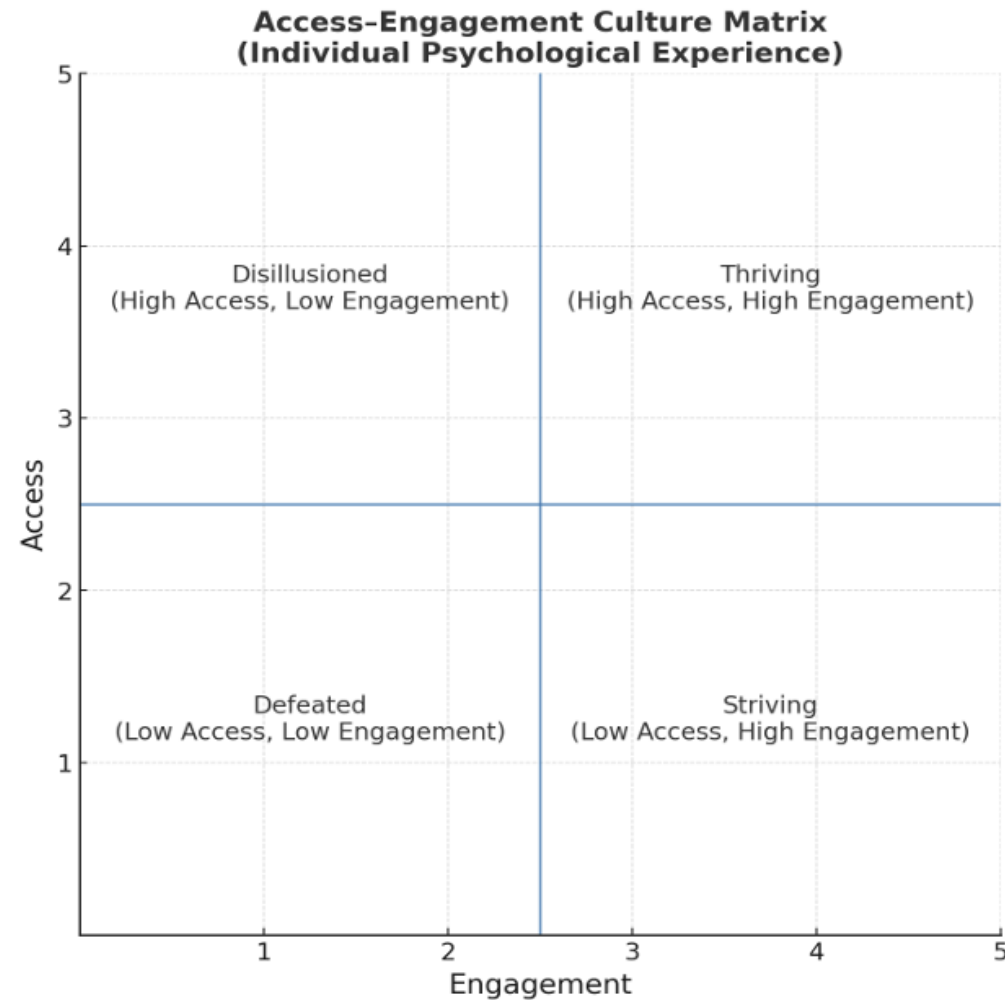


Get to know Dr. Douglas better through his website:

[www.safehavendialogues-llc.com](http://www.safehavendialogues-llc.com)

## A framework for understanding individual success and psychological well-being

The Access–Engagement Culture Matrix assesses how well an environment supports the personal success and well-being of individuals. It evaluates two critical dimensions: **Access (Y-axis)**: The extent to which individuals can enter, navigate, and leverage opportunities and resources. **Engagement (X-axis)**: The extent to which individuals can meaningfully participate, feel connected, and contribute authentically. When combined, these dimensions reveal four distinct psychological experiences that shape individual outcomes.



### ■ Thriving (High Access + High Engagement)

Experience: Energized, supported, and flourishing.

Well-being: Strong belonging, optimism, growth, and resilience.

Outcome: Sustainable success and fulfillment.

### ■ Striving (Low Access + High Engagement)

Experience: Motivated and determined, but constrained by systemic barriers.

Well-being: Hopeful but at risk of frustration or burnout.

Outcome: Short-term progress possible, but fragile without structural support.

### ■ Disillusioned (High Access + Low Engagement)

Experience: Resources exist, but individuals feel disappointed or alienated.

Well-being: Cynicism, disconnection, erosion of trust.

Outcome: Success limited to transactional benefits; low long-term commitment.

### ■ Defeated (Low Access + Low Engagement)

Experience: Isolated, unsupported, and struggling to persist.

Well-being: Stress, alienation, hopelessness.

Outcome: High risk of attrition; individuals cannot thrive.

### How to Use the Matrix

1. **Assessment:** Rate Access and Engagement on a scale (1–5) across three measures each.
2. **Plotting:** Average scores to position the organization, department, or program on the matrix.
3. **Analysis:** Identify where individuals or groups cluster (e.g., many "Striving" students suggest motivation but inequitable access).
4. **Action:** Design interventions to move individuals or systems toward the Thriving quadrant.

**Key Insight:** The matrix not only diagnoses structural and cultural strengths/weaknesses but also connects them to psychological well-being and long-term success. It highlights that true thriving requires both access and engagement.



# *AECM Testimonies*



This was a transformational workshop for me. If you have not attended one, I highly recommend

—Dr. Merry Lindsey, Dean, Meharry Medical College

As an African American going into the medical field, discrimination is still very prevalent to this day, so being able to take an uncomfortable situation and reframe it to a positive outlook and not react out of emotion is how I would apply it to my life. Stopping to think first.

—Graduate Student, Meharry Medical College

It was revolutionary!

—Elizabeth Decker, Board of Directors, SIM South Florida

# *AECM Testimonies*



About Dr. Douglas' book on access and engagement:

A compelling collection of real-world case studies that reveal how inequities in the workplace affect employee well-being, performance, and organizational culture. Written by Dr. Frank L. Douglas, this book draws from experiences in healthcare, government, corporate, and academic settings—offering powerful insights for HR leaders and executives committed to building inclusive, resilient, and high-performing environments.

# *AECM Testimonies*

Testimony on Dr. Douglas' book: "Until You Walk in My Shoes": A Reframing Methodology to Overcome Systemic Discrimination ...

"I think it is a brilliant book. I really strongly encourage everyone to read it. If you are an aggrieved person, I want you to read it. If you are someone who is managing a company or division of a company, I think it is very important at this time of history to read this book."

*Jack Canfield*

*Co-author of "Chicken Soup for the Soul" series and "The Success principles".*

