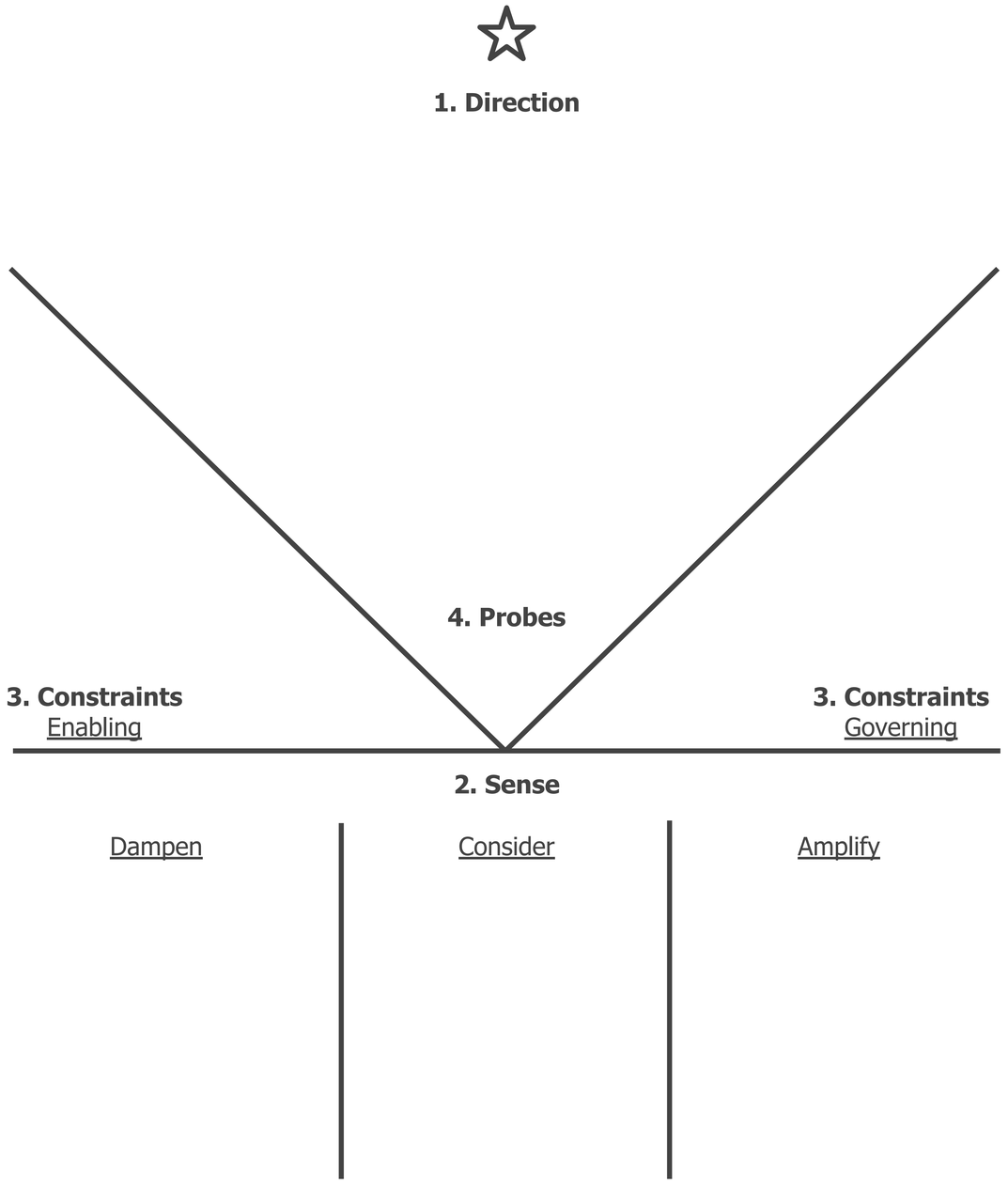


Complexity Canvas

v0.8

How to use this canvas

Use this canvas as a brainstorming and reference tool as an alternative to roadmaps when navigating complexity. It's more like finding your way through a dense jungle with a machete and a compass than it is planning a road trip across the country with the help of SatNav. Use the canvas on a whiteboard with sticky notes, or use your favourite virtual equivalent. The canvas is split up into four main areas. When starting a new canvas, start with the Direction area, and work your way through to Probes. Once you have an established canvas, review and update it on a regular basis to track progress and test assumptions, but don't limit yourself to following the 1-4 sequence.

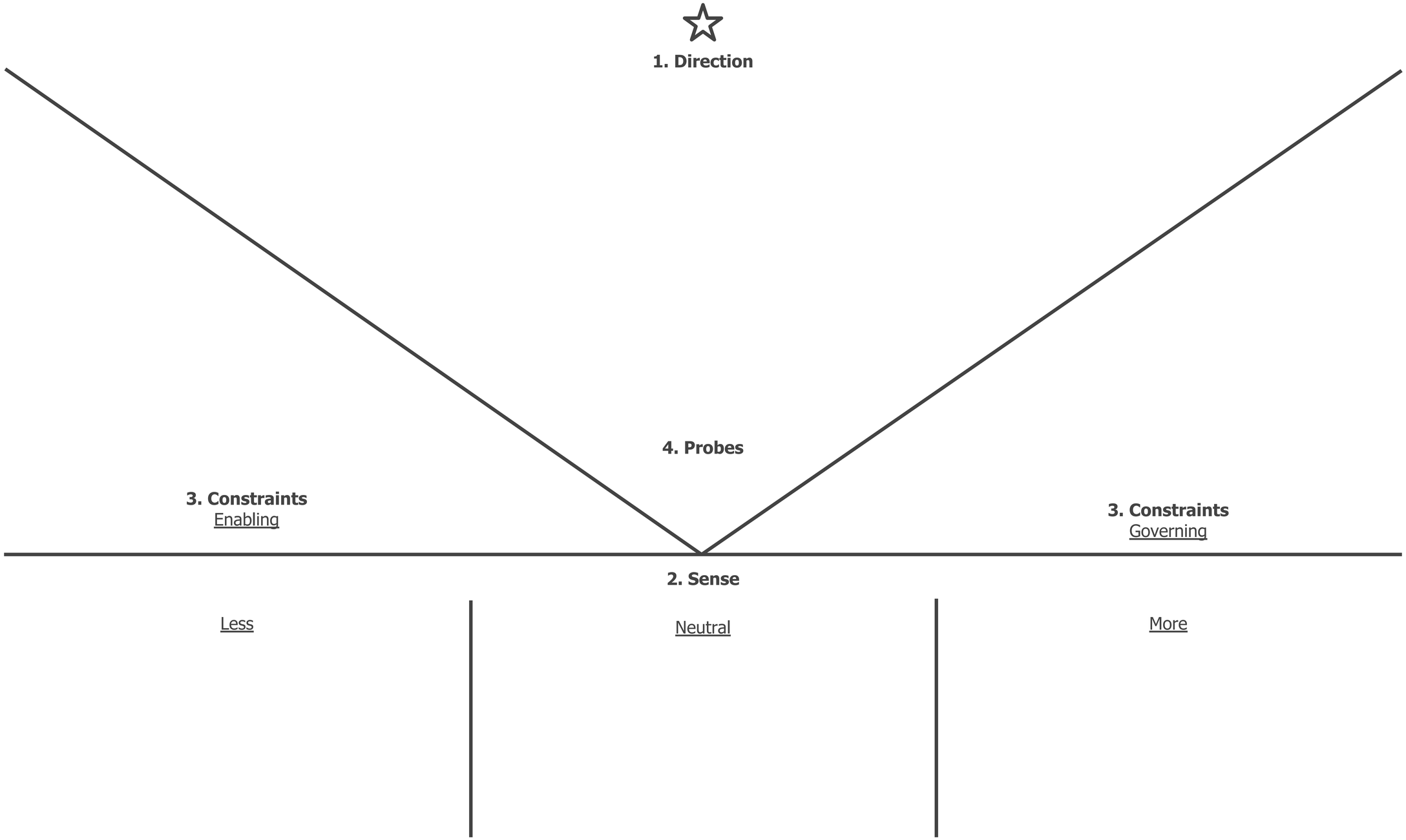
1. Direction - This is where you think you're heading. Your north star. You may never get there, you may not know how to get there, but it's your current best guess for where you want to go. You can add one or more ideas here, such as OKR objectives, guiding principles, or anything else that gives you a sense of direction.

2. Sense - Next you'll want to assess where you currently are, what you currently know. The Dampen section can include failed experiments, mistakes, and other things to avoid in future. Keeping these visible helps to avoid repeating them, but don't forget to test your assumptions. Yesterday's mistakes are tomorrow's opportunities in a changing world. Consider is for the cold hard facts or other general context. This is a good place for metrics, key results, current activities etc. The Amplify section can include successful probes, experiments, positive feedback, and other things you want to see more of.

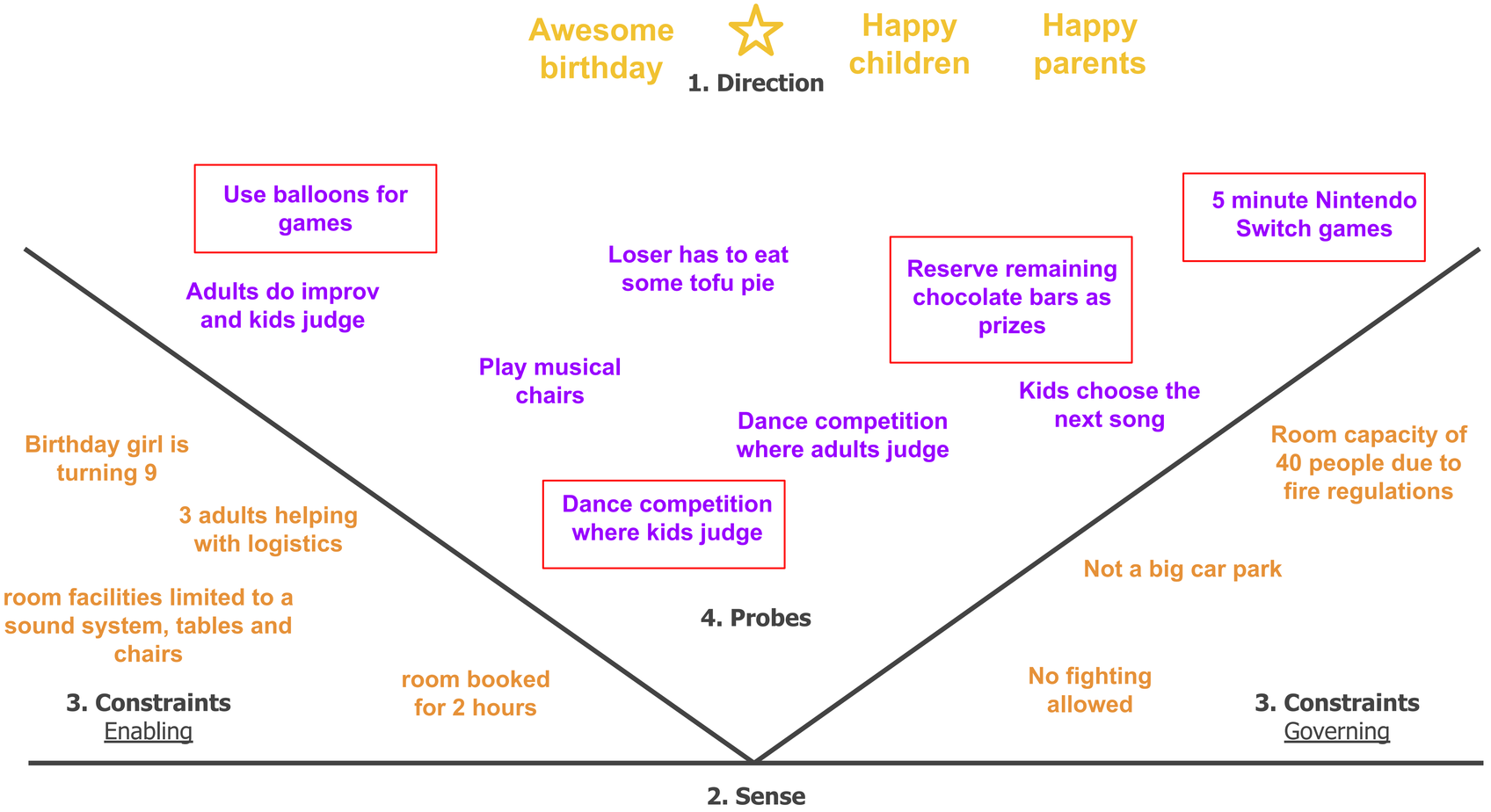
3. Constraints - What you want to do to move forward will be constrained in many ways. Enabling constraints paradoxically open up possibilities. Too much freedom can result in chaos or waste. Squeezing possibilities at one level opens up new possibilities and creativity at a higher level. Governing constraints close off possibilities, typically from the outside in, such as rigid rules or physical limits.

4. Probes - Given where you want to go, where you are right now, and what's constraining you, what are your possible next steps? Use this area to capture the possible safe-to-fail probes and experiments that you can do right now, and highlight the ones you're going to do next or are currently working on. You'll want to do as many of these as quickly and as cheaply as possible in parallel.

This canvas is inspired by and based on the Cynefin Framework (https://www.cognitive-edge.com/).



This canvas is inspired by and based on the Cynefin Framework (https://www.cognitive-edge.com/).



Less	Neutral	More
People got lost finding the venue	Venue address	Dancing games are well received
Kids kept fighting about using the Nintendo switch	Music playlist	Most of the chocolate bars all gone already
Kids did not like the tofu pie	Balloons and other room decorations	Parents enjoying the adult food
	12 out of 14 invitations accepted	Parents are socialising

Complexity Canvas Example 1

Children's' birthday party

This example of the Complexity Canvas uses Dave Snowden's classic example of complexity - the children's birthday party.