The Positive Accountability Cycle

Traditional accountability all too often looks for who to blame.
Positive Accountability looks for *what we can learn and how we can grow.*

1. **Define a SMART Agreement:** Clarity is the foundation of accountability. Before accountability is possible, both parties must agree on what success looks like. Remember, *you can't hold me accountable for something I didn't agree to do.* A SMART Agreement spells out expectations, timelines, and measures of success — removing ambiguity before it becomes conflict.

2. Implement: Action is where intentions become results. The leader's role during implementation is to create conditions for success - removing obstacles, providing resources, and providing the *right amount of oversight* while trusting people to execute.

3. Check In: Regular check-ins, agreed to in advance, surface problems early and keep things on track toward success. They involve *mutual* accountability, where we all own our responsibility. A good check-in isn't surveillance - it's support.

4. Review: The final review is a focused conversation about what was achieved and what can be learned going forward - it's *not* a "performance assessment". The key questions are, *"What worked, what didn't, and what can we learn?"*

5. Learn & Grow: This final step moves the cycle forward by incorporating the insights into better agreements for the next round. This is what makes the accountability cycle positive: *every iteration gets stronger*.