

Ep #5: Making Intentional Decisions Despite Negative Emotion



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Angela Kelly

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Welcome to *The Empowered Principle Podcast*, a not so typical, educational resource that will teach you how to gain control of your career and get emotionally fit to lead your school and your life with joy, by refining your most powerful tool: your mind. Here's your host, certified life coach, Angela Kelly Robeck.

Hello empowered principals. How are you guys doing on this beautiful day? I am wonderful. I have to share with you. I am heading back to Iowa soon to meet my niece's new baby boy. She is expecting any minute now and I just am thrilled to be able to go and meet this new baby.

Babies to me are such an amazing reminder of how much we are loved and how perfect we really are. Babies are just pure love, aren't they? They are such an amazing role model as to how to give and receive love. Babies love to give love and they love to receive love, and they're pure love and I just love that about them.

I embrace sinking into that present moment whenever I'm holding a precious little one. They remind me how to lead my life with love and that reminds me that we were all born to experience the giving and receiving of love, and I just - I embrace them so much. I cannot wait.

I had to share that with you guys because it's so exciting for me. So on with the program. Okay, so in the last episode, we dove further into how our thoughts create our emotions. We used the STEAR cycle to understand how different thoughts regarding the same situation can create different emotions and that when we are aware of the thoughts that arise in response to a situation, we had the capacity to decide whether we choose to believe our thoughts or not.

We also have the capacity to consider different thoughts if the thoughts that first appear in our brain are not truly in alignment with how we really want to feel. Okay? So today we're going to explore how our emotional response to

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our thoughts influence the approach that we choose to take in our daily lives.

Our brain produces thoughts about the world all around us. These thoughts trigger emotional responses or vibrations in our bodies. So these emotions which we also call feelings, because we actually feel them in the body, right? That's why we call them feelings. But today we're going to explore how those emotions impact the approach, which I define approach as an action plan or a set of actions that you choose to take in our lives. So for every situation, you have a thought around it, you have an emotion, and that emotion determines, influences the approach or set of actions that you choose to take.

Tony Robbins who was a forefather in the self-development and coaching industry, he says that we develop these blueprints for our life circumstances, and for him, blueprints are a map or series of maps on how we believe our lives and the world around us should be. With the operative word being should. So blueprints are basically stories that we create about how we expect life to go. And when our life conditions, which is the current reality of what is going on in your life, if it aligns with your blueprint, then we experience happiness and pleasure.

However, when the life conditions, our currently what's going on in your life, when they don't align with your blueprint and what you expect should be happening, that is when we experience pain and suffering. So this means that when things in our life are going the way we think they should be going, we feel happy, right? And when things are not going the way we believe they should, we feel discontent. We feel upset, we feel disappointed, we feel all the negative emotions.

So the way we approach life when we feel happy is different than the way we approach life when we feel unhappy. I think you can relate to that, I

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hope, right? That's pretty basic. Our emotional state of being is directly related to the way we choose to handle ourselves. Think about this, right?

Think of how you approach your day when you are bubbling with enthusiasm and energy versus how you approach your day when you are tired and perhaps you're dreading a meeting or something you have going on that day. Do you take the same actions throughout the day no matter how you're feeling? Most people do not.

They allow their emotional state to determine their behavior. I know before I learned this through self-coaching. I was letting my emotions drive my entire life. I did not realize at all that I had some control over how I was feeling, which then would impact my approach to daily situations. I simply reacted to the emotional state that I was in at that time, which you guys, this is so important to understand because it leads to very inconsistent results because your emotional state can change on a dime.

And it will lead to inconsistent results, and I know they did in my life because depending on my mood I was choosing very different ways to approach my goals and even like, day to day situations or you know, your husband might do the same action, day one you respond this way and day two you respond a different way because you're in a different mood.

And I also think that we use our moods as an excuse to allow certain behaviors to occur while I was in a bad mood, or I'm not feeling it today, right? We say these things to excuse ourselves in the way that we're feeling.

So when we experience happiness, we naturally continue to choose the approach that we believe is responsible for the good feelings, right? So when we're feeling happy and we think, "Wow, this approach to this situation is really working, I'm going to keep doing that because it makes

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me feel good", you choose that approach until something shifts and our life no longer matches the blueprint we've created.

So we'll carry on with an approach that works for us as long as it's making us feel good. And the easiest way to paint this picture is to think about a relationship that turns sour. When you first started dating somebody, everything is sunshine and butterflies, right? Here she could do no wrong, you're so mesmerized by everything. Let's take an example like I had a friend that I was - person I was dating, and he would whistle while he was cooking dinner. And when I first met him right, it was like, that is so cute. Whistle while you work. You just feel this love and you think about them and you associate pleasure and excitement and love and connection to this cooking dinner and the whistling.

And that's because my blueprint, my expectation of this relationship was just as I wanted it to be. It perfectly matched my relationship blueprint. But as time went on, the things that I used to think were so cute kind of start to get irritating, right? You no longer appreciate the whistling, maybe you're having a bad day and you're in a bad mood when you get home from work and they're whistling and in a great mood, and all of a sudden the whistling is an irritation to you.

So you snap, right? "Knock it off" or "Stop whistling" or "Why do you have to whistle all the time?" And this person's thinking, "Wow, that used to be darling. Like, what's going on?" So how does this happen, guys? Like, what happens when something went from being a feeling of pleasure and love to this feeling of irritation, right? What happened is that your blueprint changed. You went from wanting and loving the whistling chef to not wanting a whistling chef, right?

So now that your expectations have changed, right, your approach changes because your blueprint is no longer matching that current life

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situation in that moment, and boom, feelings of pain and suffering emerge versus those feelings of pleasure and happiness and love.

So I think about this concept as it relates to getting hired for my first principalship. So for those of you who are brand new into the job, you can probably relate to this. Most of the people I've talked with who became principals have this experience in some way shape or form.

So when I first got hired at my brand new school as a brand new principal, I was so excited about the job. So I was still finishing up my career as an instructional coach, but I was already thinking about how wonderful it was going to be to run my own school and make my own rules and how my relationship and my staff and relationships with the kids and all the fun things, right?

And I was - I felt so prepared. I'd had over you know, two years of training and I earned my administration credential, I took workshops on school leadership, I was reading tons of books, I was talking with veteran principals, I was aching to become a principal. So when the day arrived and I stepped into my new role, I had very rose colored glasses, or a rose-colored blueprint of what I thought this job would entail.

So very quickly, very, very quickly, probably day one - actually, I remember my first day of school because we lost a student. A child with special needs wandered off of the campus and we had to call the police and find her and I was traumatized and it was my first day. So if that didn't happen to you on your first day, amen. Proud of you. This happened to me.

So anyway, very quickly my rose colored blueprint of how awesome a principal job was going to be and how what I thought was going to be very freeing and you know, like, I was out of a classroom, I just had much more freedom, was not true. So my blueprint of how I thought it should be certainly did not match the reality of my life.

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And they just did not align whatsoever, and I can laugh now about it because at the time, I can see the dissonance, but I didn't know that was before I went through life coaching training with Martha Beck. So I didn't know what was happening within me, but I can tell you I was not laughing then. Was not laughing then.

I experienced an incredible amount of angst because my blueprint certainly did not match my reality. So this happens in our lives all the time and we think something should be a certain way. When it is, great. When it's not, not so great. So when we experience negative emotions, we choose one of three approaches. We either stall in inaction, we indulge in reaction, or we create intentional action.

When we stall in inaction, or indulge in reacting, we are letting our emotions take the wheel. We deflect, blame, resist, justify, avoid, disconnect, and numb ourselves. We avoid having the discussion, we blame the situation on others, or we might blame ourselves, but we disagree with what happened and we hash it over in our minds time and time again.

We tend to lash out at others and spend time trying to explain and justify our thinking. We avoid situations or people, and we try to avoid the painful thoughts. We disconnect, we numb ourselves in an attempt to wash out the pain.

When we allow negative emotions to select our approach to a situation, we experience inconsistent results. The actions we decide to take or not take when we let anger, frustration, disappointment, sadness, resentment, or vengeance decide for us are vastly different than when we consciously choose to act.

For example, if your district policy is that each school must send out a weekly newsletter, and you hate taking the time to write the newsletter, so you just decide you're not going to do it, which is inaction, you run the risk

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of having to answer to your colleagues or superiors, right? Or if you choose to react and complain that no one reads the newsletters anyway, so it's just basically unnecessary, you run the risk of being told you have to do it anyway, right? So you go to the office and you know, superintendent you say, "Hey, why are we writing this silly newsletter? Nobody's reading them anyway, I don't want to do it." Basically, you'll probably be told you have to do it anyway, right?

A third choice might be to schedule one hour a month; this is making a plan, right, you're making a plan to action. Perhaps you schedule one hour a month where you write down all four weeks' worth of the newsletters, hand it over to your secretary, let her do the formatting, and she can complete the rest of the newsletter.

Or perhaps your plan is that you find articles online and you share them with the parents. You don't even need to write it yourself. You can simply find somebody else's work and write something very short and sweet and then share an article that you find interesting for your families. Or perhaps you could find somebody else who's happy to write the newsletter for the school.

So when you decide to intentionally choose to take action, a number of options become available. The task can get completed in a way that works best for you. A tool that I learned from Martha Beck, who to me is a life coaching goddess, she has a tool she calls bag it, better it, barter it. Or as I call it, the triple B.

When you have a task that you don't like to do, you can choose to bag it, which means simply decide not to do it, bag it meaning throwing it away. You can better it, which is finding a way to make the task more fun and appealing, perhaps by treating yourself after you've completed the task, or you can barter it. You can find someone else who's zone of genius is the

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task at hand if you don't feel like it's your zone of genius. You can barter it. "Hey, if you do this for me, I'll do that for you."

You can also batch it, which is what she described as setting aside a time to knock out a bunch of them at once. You do it in batches and you just get it done for the month and then you put it behind you. I guess that makes the tool quadruple B if you think about it. Bag it, better it, barter it, or batch it.

So quadruple B, people, think of your choices. Whichever method works best for you is your choice, right? As long as you're making a conscious choice to take the action, it doesn't matter how you reach the goal. Guys, so many times we get caught up in the how. I know we want to talk about the how. How do I do this? How do I do that? What's the best way?

There's no best way. The best way is the way that works best for you. You get to make the decision on the how. And when you consciously choose to decide how you're going to approach something, that is when your brain gets creative and will come up with 10 options, or five options of how you can get this done.

So here's a little secret that most people don't know about taking action, or developing their approach to a situation or a problem that they're having or an issue they're trying to solve. Here's the secret. You don't have to feel happy in order to choose an intentional plan or an intentional approach. You can acknowledge that you feel negatively about it and you do it anyway.

Tony Robbins says that we can do one of three things. We can blame ourselves, we can blame others or the event, right? So we can choose blame, that's option one. Option two is we can change our blueprint and change the way we look at life, or three, we can change our life circumstances, right?

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So what he means by this is that we can choose to stew in the blame, which really disempowers us, it doesn't do anybody around us or ourselves any good. We can change the way we think that things should be and we align our own expectation with the current reality of what's going on. Or we can choose to take action to change the situation so that it aligns with our experiences.

Blaming ourselves and others does not create change in your thinking or the situation. Changing your blueprint is completely within your control. However, there are times when our blueprint is a challenge. Our belief system is so deeply rooted that we find it extremely challenging to truly change the way we think about something, and that's okay. But know that changing your blueprint is the most in your control.

Now, option three I find interesting because it is very possible to change your life circumstance. You can choose to quit the job if you don't like it, right? You can choose to move to a different district or a different position within your district. You can make circumstantial changes but that doesn't necessarily change the way you think and feel. So if you're seeking out the opportunity to change your feeling, you have to start with the way you're thinking about it.

If you come across a situation however that you find yourself not wanting to change your thinking about, you might want to try changing your circumstance. But I highly invite you to consider first looking at the way you're thinking and feeling about the situation because that is what's impacting the way you approach it. And if you're hitting a wall with your approach, it might be beneficial to identify how you're feeling by what you're thinking, and maybe adjusting those to feel better in order to try a different approach.

Let me give you an example. I'm currently in a mastermind group with fellow coaches, and we were discussing ways to increase our money vibes

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by coaching through thoughts that may be blocking us from increasing our income. So this thought came up. "Relationships are more important than money", and that created a serious debate in the group. People were very thrown off by this. How could money be more important than relationships? That is not true.

People were absolutely not willing to change the thought, "Money is more important than relationships." They could not buy into that thought and believe it. Here, guys, that's okay. If you feel an extreme resistance in changing your blueprint, then you can work towards changing your approach to get a result that will match your thought.

So in the STEAR cycle, you would keep the T component, the thought, that is the T line, right? And then skip down to writing your desired result. So in the STEAR cycle that we talked about a couple episodes ago, S equals situation, T equals thought, E equals emotions, A equals approach, R equals results. So if you put the thought that you want to hold on to in the T line and then you go down and decide, "Okay, here's the thought I'm thinking and here's the result I want", you can play around with the STEAR cycle to see what emotions and approaches come about based on your belief systems.

You may have to adjust it a few times to get that desired result to actually come to fruition, but if you're really committed to the current blueprint, it really is possible to choose a different approach even when you are feeling a negative emotion. It is possible to not change your thinking, not change your emotion, and still make an intentional decision to take action anyway.

So back to the example of my mastermind, I want to finish this story because people are like, "What happened?" So there were people in the group who could not let go of, "Relationships are more important than money", but they could hold on to, "Relationships" - how did it go? "Relationships and money are both valuable to me", or something like that.

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They basically made them more of an equal level, and even for some people that was still uncomfortable. Some people just stayed - held on to the thought and they want, you know, their result to demonstrate their thought that yes, relationships are more important than money to me. Other people were willing to say like, "Both money and relationships are important to me" because they justified it by saying money is a tool in which I can use to enhance my experience and build my relationships. So they used the money more as a tool and that helped them shift their thinking.

So whichever way you decide, you can play the blame game, you can blame yourself and others, which is basically your inaction because you're just spinning on thinking you're disempowered, it's outside of your control. You can choose to change your own thinking, which is internal thought work, or you can keep the thought and then you can create an approach that still gets you the result you want regardless of how you're feeling.

I hope that makes sense to you. You have to write it down. So try that, write it down. I want you to play around with it a little bit and just notice that your emotional state truly does impact your approach, however, if you're able to catch yourself, you might be able to take action and determine an approach that will get you the result you want even if you don't feel good in the moment.

So we'll talk more about how to use negative emotion and how to work around negative emotion in a future podcast, but just be aware this coming week how your emotional state impacts your decisions and how you approach the day, how you approach meetings, how you approach staff members, how you approach students, how you approach parents, all the way around.

So just be aware of those emotions and how they're impacting your action plans, okay? Alright, that's what I've got for you guys today. So listeners, hey, please, if you enjoyed this podcast, would you please take a moment

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to get on iTunes? I'm waiting for some reviews. I want some feedback, y'all. I want to know how this is going, I want to know that you like this or you don't. I want to hear it. I want to hear it all. Give it to me.

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So that is it. I think you're amazing, I think you do amazing work. I love what you do for kids, I love what you do for families and parents. I know you're working it, I know you're killing it out there, guys, and thank you for being you. Thank you for listening and please, please, please stay empowered my friends. Have an amazing week. I'll talk to you next week. Take care, bye.

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