

Ep #6: How Approach Impacts Results



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With Your Host

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 principles. How's it going this week? I am so, so good, and I am so happy that you are here with me today. As I create this episode, I am back in Iowa visiting with my family again. But how we got here is very different than most of my trips.

Here's the deal. My son and I drove all the way from the beaches of Santa Cruz to the snowy plains of Iowa. It was an incredible two-day journey across California, we went through Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, and then into Iowa. So the first day we ended up driving about 13 hours, and went about 1000 miles, and the second day we drove for approximately 11 hours, we went about 800 to 900 miles. It was just shy of 1900 miles total.

The drive for me was really a practice in mind over matter. We had sore buns, twitchy muscles, we were tired, guys. But we chose to make this trip an absolute joy. We made it a choice. And I have to tell you, spending time with my son, Alex, was by far the best part. We laughed, we cried, we sang songs, we listened to movies, it was so much fun. And it was really cool because we reminisced about all the fun that we've had in this car.

For those of you who don't know, I've had a Honda Pilot for a long time, I love the car so much, I tell everybody how much I love my Honda Pilot, but it's a 2006, and it's getting older and my sister and her producer needed a second car, so we sold the car to them and we decided in order to get it to them, we were going to drive it. So we kind of decided this last minute.

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So Alex and I were like, reminiscing about the car and how much fun we've had in it, and really it feels like it's a part of our family, a member of our family. So the trip driving, although I was really tired and weary, it was an absolute glorious experience, but I have to say I'm really glad that I'm flying home. So I had to change all my flights to one ways and anything. Anyway, it was a good deal.

So I'm spending the next two weeks with my mom, my sister, my dad, and I'm very hopeful that my niece will have her new baby. We're waiting for this baby to arrive. She is currently in the early stages of labor and we're anxiously awaiting his little arrival, I'm so excited. So I've got tons of amazing things going on in my life, and I hope you do as well.

Okay, enough with that. We are on the last component of the STEAR cycle. The last component is the R. It is the results. And this is the component that gets the most attention. Before we understand how it is actually the most influenced by all the other components. Our brain skips right over thoughts and feelings and dives into action and results, which makes sense when you think about it because the results are the physical manifestation of our thoughts, emotions, and actions. And they are tangible to the brain.

So the brain likes to see the results as the impetus because it doesn't want to have to experience the discomfort, right, of the interior work that takes place prior to taking action. We're also bombarded with tons of social messages telling us to hustle, to take action, just do it, whatever it takes, and so on, right? So these messages, they're absolutely fine in regards to gaining momentum and getting ourselves like, pumped up and motivated. However, what they don't take into account is the work that takes place behind the scenes in our brains.

So remember, our thoughts about our situation trigger an emotion. Our emotions drive the way we decide to approach our situation, and from this emotional state, we deploy an action step or a set of actions. This means

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that we choose different ways to approach a situation depending on how we are feeling.

We covered this in depth in the last podcast. So when our blueprints – the blueprints of the way that we believe things should be in the world – when they're in alignment with our current reality – what really is going on in our life – we feel a sense of happiness and content.

But when our blueprints do not align with our current reality, we feel discomfort and unhappiness. And these different emotional states drive the way we decide to handle ourselves in any given situation. And this is critical to understand because of its impact on our results.

So, am I suggesting to you that you always need to get into this happy or positive emotional state before deciding what approach to take? No, not necessarily, guys. As humans, we are not wired to feel happy all the time. In fact, the very thought that you should feel happiness all the time, when in reality you don't, that creates dissonance and discomfort. It's a little bit ironic, right?

We think we should feel happy and then we're not, so we end up being unhappy that we're not happy. It's kind of funny actually. So here's what I'm suggesting: I'm suggesting that you become aware of your emotional state when determining your approach to a situation. So when an issue arises at work, see if you can take a moment to notice how you are feeling and what emotional state you are in. You'll feel it.

You will be able to physically feel it in your body. When you're in a more positive state, you feel more relaxed, enthused, excited and you'll feel an energy behind that, but it's a relaxed, more peaceful energy. When you're in a more agitated or negative state, your body is more at attention. It gets more rigid and tense.

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Or, perhaps is you're in an apathetic state, you don't feel much vibration or energy in your body one way or the other. So when you are making decisions at work, you really want to tune into what state of emotion your body is in. So depending on that emotional state, you're going to choose a plan of action. You're either going to indulge in reaction, stall in inaction or create intentional action.

And for many of us, most of the time, we're so busy just processing and the brain's trying to keep up with what's coming at us and all of this information and all these situations and issues coming at us, especially as a principle, they're endless, right.

We have little or no time and little or no awareness of our emotional state, so we tend to default to reacting. The emotions appear and we respond accordingly to how we're feeling. We all do this. It is so normal to react because the process happens so quickly. We definitely might lean into reactions when the emotions are incredibly intense one way or the other.

So the stronger the emotions, they feel like they're more challenging to observe – like to step back and observe your emotions – than less intense emotions. So for example, you're more likely to react if you witness a student being attacked on the playground, and you just, the minute you see it without even realizing, you have a thought, you have an emotion. Your emotion is fear, right. You want to protect this child. You kick into reaction mode – than you would, let's say if you're just coming in with your cup of coffee, sitting down and checking emails.

Now, trust me, I have had emails that make me want to lose my mind and react very intensely. But in general, that idea of a student on your playground being attacked has a much higher level of intensity of emotion, and an emotional state, than would be just sitting down checking routine emails.

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So in general, the higher the intensity of your emotion state, the more likely you are to engage in reacting. So, on the other hand, when your emotional state is very relaxed or apathetic, we may choose to do absolutely nothing. We tend to do this by brushing things off, procrastinating, or just in general avoiding taking action. And let me say, it can be a very powerful choice not to react and not to make a move at all.

I actually consider an action over reaction most of the time, when I'm aware, right. Even if it's for a short time, so that I can stop myself and make a plan for intentional reaction. What is important to know is this – this is so critical, and I had to learn this over time – when you choose inaction, and you choose not to react or not to make an action plan at all, you choose to do nothing, that inaction is a form of taking action. You do get a result from the act of inaction. Results are always occurring, regardless of which approach you choose.

Let me share a really vulnerable and uncomfortable story with you that happened to me about a decision I made to choose inaction. A few years into my principalship a student had an issue right at the end of the school day. It was brought to my attention actually after dismissal. And I said, “Okay, I'll investigate the situation first thing in the morning.”

So, all the students had been picked up for the day, everybody was going home. I locked up the office and I decided to stay late to catch up on some work. Meanwhile, one of the students who'd been involved with the reported incident shared what happened with their parents. One of the parents came back to the school to talk with me.

It was way after hours. It was actually getting dark. They were pounding on the front door and demanding to meet. They were screaming. And it was after hours, I didn't have any information, so I didn't think that meeting would resolve anything at the time. The thoughts that were actually going through my head were things like, “There's nothing to talk about until

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tomorrow. It can wait. It's not going to be a big deal. We'll just talk tomorrow. I don't have any information to share with this parent."

I wasn't seeing, at the time, why should I take action to meet with this person when I had no information to share. So I avoided the conversation. I chose to do nothing because I didn't think it was a big deal... until it was.

The parent, upon my not responding, went to the superintendent and threatened to go to the local newspaper saying they would do anything in their power to get me fired. They were upset. So the next morning, I was in a meeting and I was called over to my superintendent's office. Now, fortunately the superintendent at that time was an amazingly supportive boss. We sat down, we talked through the situation, we created a plan of action together. I felt really supported – I felt horrible, by the way, I just want to let you know. I felt like an idiot for making that decision, but at the time I had honestly talked myself into taking inaction.

So later on, of course, I met with the parent, discussed the investigation results and apologized to that person for not taking different action. So I share this with you to say that my choice of inaction definitely had results; they just weren't the ones I had intended for or had hoped for. So the moral of this story is the approach you choose will yield different results.

And here's the crazy thing, guys: we believe that our results impact the way we feel, which then impacts the way we think. But the reverse is actually true. How we think impacts our emotions and then our emotions impact our results, because it impacts how we decide to approach the situation. And the cool thing is, if you focus on obtaining the result, no matter what, that you'll be in an emotional state that will allow you to endure trying multiple approaches until your goal is reached.

This happens because when you are willing to achieve a result, no matter what, the kinds of thoughts you are thinking are things like, "I'm going to try

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multiple ways to solve this problem. I know I can figure this out. There is always a solution. I'm going to keep trying." Those kinds of thoughts going through your head are going to lead to emotions such as feeling capable, determined, energetic, positive, and all of those types of emotions are going to drive you towards a variety of potential solutions to get you what you want.

So in my case, if I had believed that I could create a result of connection and collaboration with the parent, or even just to soothe their fears, worries and concerns, even though I had not yet investigated the details of that situation, I feel that under those set of thoughts, I would have felt more courage to take the action to meet with that parent and hear the concerns.

This may have led to a calmer resolution. And I can't know for certain that it would have, but my choice to take a courageous action with the intention of solving the problem could have resulted in a more positive outcome for all those involved. And the nice thing about choosing a plan with intentional action is that once you're in the situation, even if the conversation isn't going exactly as you'd hoped, if you keep focused on the end result, what you want – you want a peaceful resolution, you want collaboration, you want connection with this family, you want to understand what's going on, you want to hear their concerns, you want to address them as best you can, you want to comfort them in knowing you are here, you're willing to understand, you're willing to hear them out, you're willing to take action tomorrow to get the investigation underway, all of those things.

So the important takeaway here is that thinking directly impacts results, and it goes through this STEAR cycle process and it happens, lickity-split. And the reason that I broke this down in incredible detail is I wanted to cover it component by component, because now that you understand the process of how our brain works and how it influences our actions and decisions, and ultimately the results, this is where the fun begins. Now we get to start solving real problems.

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So next week, we're going to dive into one of the problems I hear more than any other problem in the education industry. There are many, mind you, but this one stood out to me. Let's talk about time. There's never enough time to do all the things we need to do as a principal. The teachers say there's not enough time to cover everything we need to with the students. District office says there's not enough time to get to everything we need to get to this year. So let's break down the concept of time and how we can wrap our thinking about managing time and our thoughts about time, okay.

So really excited to problem solve with you all. Please, please, please, if you love this podcast, if you find it valuable, if you're starting to take away some new information and applying it to your life, please share it with other people. Please take a second and go into iTunes and review it so that more people can find this information. I feel like this type of information is not available in our everyday resources for principals, and I feel it's so valuable.

I want to provide you tons of content. And guys, this podcast is free. All this information I'm giving to you, totally free. Share it with your friends. Take a moment to please write down a five-star review on iTunes. I would love you forever. That would be so amazing. And it just takes a few minutes, so please do that for me and I will continue creating this podcast absolutely free for you. I love doing this.

So, here we go – share with me a problem you're having and I will walk you through it on a future podcast. So you can email me at AngelaKellyCoaching@gmail.com, or you can just send me a quick message on Facebook at AKellyCoaching, and we will address your problems. We'll talk through them. If you have questions, if you have ideas, you have concerns, if you don't think this is working, let's talk and I'll coach you through it. It will be so much fun; completely free, just because I love you and I love the work you do in the world.

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So, thank you so much for listening, guys, and I will see you next week. Take care, bye-bye.

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