

## Ep #8: How to Make More Time



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With Your Host

**Angela Kelly**

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## Ep #8: How to Make More Time

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. What is up, you guys. How are you doing? I have to tell you, I am living the dream here in Santa Cruz. It has been like summer here over the past few weeks. I can't even register in my brain that it is February. It is so amazing.

I love February because it is my birthday month and I've been having an awesome few days back. And I just think the weather being this beautiful makes it that bit more incredible, even though you can probably hear in my voice I have a little bit of a cold. So I'm sorry; I held off recording this podcast as long as I could. I got a little bit of a cold, probably flying home from the Mid West. You know how it is when you're traveling, and there's all kinds of germs on planes.

But I have been taking good care of myself; long walks on the beach. And I have to tell you, watching the ocean never gets old. I have been going down to the beach every morning and taking long walks in the fresh air to take good care of myself, get some exercise and breathe in fresh air. It is just – it is so soothing. And watching the ocean reminds you of how small your problems, quote end quote problems, really are.

Those ocean waves, they just keep crashing, day in and day out, regardless of what the rest of us are doing running around on this earth, you know, and spending time with our busy days, right. I think about the ocean and I realize its sole purpose is just to be there. It doesn't need more time, it doesn't need more money, it doesn't need more energy, it doesn't

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need anything. It just does it's one thing. And yet, that one thing that it does, it's absolutely magnificent.

Think about what the ocean does day in and day out. The tides come in, the tides go out, the waves come in, the waves go out. And over the course of its existence, it actually changes the shape of the earth. It changes the shape of the coastline. Isn't that wild? I think it's such a beautiful thing. And today, we are going to talk about time.

And I apologize for not talking about time last week, but I feel that last week's episode was so powerful and it was so important and it was such a calling for me to share my feelings and experiences about creating this podcast and having somebody out there in the world be affected by it and impacted by it, and that just meant everything to me. So thank you for letting me share with you how I felt about the very first review.

And if you haven't had a chance to catch that episode, that was episode seven. So welcome to episode eight. Today, we are going to talk about one of the most prevailing limiting beliefs that I believe a person can have. It's the story of there's too much to do and not enough time.

Now, let me say up front that there are entire books written on the topics of time, business, overwhelm, too much to do, et cetera. I've studied this topic from various angles, and today, I'm going to open the conversation and provide you with some food for thought and dive into some more specific aspects on our thoughts around time on future episodes.

Actually, today I have to tell you, I had such a hard time creating this podcast because there are so many components, which just means so many thoughts that we have about time. I was finding it hard to rein them in. So I tried to choose three thoughts we're going to consider looking at, or exploring. And we'll get into more specific topics about time in later episodes.

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Okay, so today I'm just going to give you three ideas to consider. And I just want you to know that time is a deeply, deeply rooted belief system. So hang with me on this one, guys, it's good stuff.

As educators, we often say that there's too much to do. We look at our calendars and our deadlines and we're feeling overwhelmed. We fret about the schedule – at least I did. I fretted about my schedule every day. You know that Sunday night feeling? Like Friday night, you're like woo-hoo. On Saturday, you're like, "I love Saturday. It's the best day of the week." And then Sunday, around three or four o'clock, you start to feel that dread; the doom and gloom of Sunday night.

That's because we're thinking about all the crap that we have to do for the week. We are stressed about how we're going to fit everything into the day, into the week; into the school year, right? It just goes by that fast. Guys, I hear you. I certainly held onto my belief system that the job was so demanding and that there was never enough time to get everything done that I needed to do.

I used to complain to my secretary all the time, and I commiserated with my fellow principals about how hard the job was and how I was spending my every waking moment just trying to keep up. And I did. I would wake up and I would check my calendar, and I would go to work and spend 10 to 12 hours per day at work. Then I would come home, and guess what? More emails, or more planning or more something until basically I passed out at night.

And I have to admit, even with coaching, I was really challenged to change my thoughts on time. I had a coach about the last two to three years of my principalship, and it was tough. And to be really honest, I didn't completely shift my beliefs about not having enough time until I was actually out of the principalship.

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I had to experience having nothing but time in order to realize that time was never my problem. And let me tell you, that was such an eye opener for me. So, what I'm excited to share with you are some of the ideas and strategies that I've learned regarding my thoughts on time. Let me forewarn you, your brain is not going to like some of these ideas. It is not going to like what I'm saying.

Our beliefs about our time are so strongly rooted, and you're going to find yourself disagreeing and resisting these ideas. That's okay; just sit with them for a while. The fact that you're even entertaining or opening to just the idea of different thoughts is everything. So, just consider these as another way that people look at time and expose your brain to new ways of thinking, because this exposure to new ways of thinking is the first step in building a better relationship with time in the long run.

So, idea to consider number one – this is my first idea I want you to consider – that we are not too busy. Being too busy is a concept. We say we are too busy when our calendar is full of activities. We say we're too busy when we cannot attend to something in a given moment because we're already engaged in another activity. And we also say that we're too busy when we don't want to attend to something in that moment.

We use too busy as a permission slip to go 100 miles per hour and rush around all day. And we use too busy to feel important and gain status. We also use too busy as an excuse to get out of things we do not want to do or participate in. So we use it as an excuse. It's a victim mentality, too busy. "I'm too busy to take this on. I'm too busy, I can't meet with you. I'm too busy, I can't go to that party."

But really, we are never too busy. Our body is not too busy. It is either here or there. It's either moving or not. So consider this – our body is not too busy and our schedule is not too busy – it is our thinking that is too busy. Our mind creates thoughts that tell us we are too busy. It thinks about your

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to-do list and it generates a story telling you how busy you are, how there's too much to do, how you don't have enough time to get everything done, blah, blah, blah.

Your brain creates these thoughts so that if you don't get something done, it's protected you from feeling bad about not doing them. Remember, guys, the brain wants to seek pleasure, avoid pain and be as efficient as possible. When the brain sees a to-do list 100 miles long, or a calendar that has back to back meetings – and to be honest, sometimes overlapping appointments, right – it triggers us into fight or flight mode.

The brain develops thoughts that tell us, "It's too much. Don't make me do all this work, there's not enough time; we're too busy." And these thoughts create feelings of panic and stress and overwhelm. And when we're feeling panic and stress and overwhelm, we tend to avoid taking action; which means we procrastinate.

Not taking action results in not getting things done, which spins us in a cycle of distress and further inaction. It's not good. We'll talk about procrastination more, but I want you to try this – when you set yourself spinning on the thought, "I'm too busy," try saying the complete opposite. Say to yourself, "I'm not too busy. I'm not too busy, I've got this. I'm going to focus on just one thing at a time."

Your brain's going to argue with you and tell you, "No, no we really are too busy." You can just say to your brain, "No, we're good. We are not too busy. This will all get done when it needs to get done. I am focused on where I am in this moment, and that's all that matters right now." Challenge yourself; challenge your brain.

And if you can challenge yourself to considering, even considering that there is enough time, you will be amazed at how you relax your body and

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your mind, and how much you actually get done because you're in the zone. So try that little trick. Tell your brain, thanks, but no thanks.

Okay, idea to consider, number two – there is no such thing as multitasking. When we feel overwhelmed, our brain wants to either choose inaction and avoid, or it wants to tackle everything and it wants to get everything done at once. And we believe we can do this by multitasking.

We answer emails during a conference call, we plan out our staff meeting agenda in our head when we're observing or taking care of the kids at recess. We listen to an audio book that we were supposed to read two weeks ago for a leadership team meeting while we're typing up our newsletter that's due tomorrow.

You know you do it, people, because I know I did it. And if I did it, you guys did it. I don't know of a principal who has not done this from time to time. Our brain tells us we're being more efficient and we believe it is because during that moment, it feels like we're actually accomplishing two things simultaneously. But here's the secret – that is fake news.

The human brain can only focus on one thing at a time. You are actually not doing two tasks at one time. Your brain is constantly switching its attention back and forth, back and forth, back and forth between the two tasks. Guys, this actually takes you longer than if you'd concentrated on one task at a time.

Think about a time you were multitasking. Let's take the example of checking emails during a conference call, or perhaps a meeting or something. Okay, so no one really knows you're checking emails, especially if you're on a conference call, and the conversation isn't pertaining to you in that moments, so a quick couple of emails won't hurt your thinking.

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You bang out a couple, right, the simple ones, and then you run into an unexpected email from a parent. Of course, it catches your attention, right. You get completely engaged with this email, and someone says on the conference call, “Hey, Angela, how did that conversation go for you with the staff?” And you snap back in and you’re like, “I have no idea what was just said...” Because your mind was thinking about the parent email, so you stammer around and you try to answer as if you were listening, right. That happens to us.

When we’re multitasking, we get sucked into one thing and then we get sucked back into the other. Now, if you don’t believe me, I want you to try this little experiment. We did this at my mastermind at The Life Coach School a couple of years ago. It was so funny.

I want you to just find a sentence in a book that’s moderately long, has several words in it. Get out your timer on your phone. First of all, I want you to copy the sentence letter by letter, but after you write each letter, you’re going to number the letter down below. And I want you to time how long it takes you to write that sentence and number it when you’re doing it one letter, one number, at a time.

Then, I want you to go back and do the same task again, but this time, I want you to write the complete sentence first and then number all of the letters after you’ve completed writing the sentence. Now, time how long it takes you to write the sentence and number in this manner and see if there’s a difference.

I can almost guarantee you that there will be a distinctive difference between multitasking and doing the two tasks individually, one right after the next.

So to our brains, tacking two or three things at once sounds more efficient, but in reality, we waste more time switching between the tasks than we



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would if we completed each task one at a time with complete focus. So try this – try taking one task that you normally try to multitask, such as emails – I know that’s a common thing to try and multitask – instead of trying to halfway listen in a meeting or conference call and halfway pay attention to emails, try setting aside some time outside of the meeting just for email. Commit a 30-minute window of just doing emails and see if you’re able to knock out more emails than you do when you’re in a meeting.

This is called batching. Instead of doing an email here or there, you actually schedule time in your day to focus on just answering emails. This works well for tasks that you repeat on a daily or weekly basis. So things like your weekly newsletter, or your staff meeting agendas, or scheduling observation meetings with teachers or working on your budget – perhaps that’s a monthly thing you do – but putting it into one batch of longer tasks helps you be more efficient with time.

Another way you can do this is to schedule longer blocks of time to complete a task versus trying to switch out every 30 minutes from one task to another. Scheduling one task for an hour a day and another task for a second hour of another day, let’s say, you’re telling the brain that there’s only one thing to focus on. And that, for that full hour, your brain gets to relax and be more creative than when it’s thinking about multiple tasks at once.

You’re falling deeper into concentration and creativity because you’re not trying to keep aware of everything else that needs to get done or worrying about your next appointment or shifting focus ever 15, 20, 30 minutes at a time. Try those two things and see if you can become a little bit more efficient with your time by focusing just on one task versus tricking yourself into thinking that you’re multitasking.

Okay, idea number three to consider – you won’t find time, you must make it. So, we’re always saying things like, “I’ve got to find more time. How am I

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going to find time to get this done? When am I going to get this done?” So, author and coach, Steve Chandler writes, in his book *Time Warrior* – which is a fantastic book, people. Read it if you are struggling with time. He says that you won’t find time in your day. You’re not going to just find it. It’s not lying there on your desk or on the ground. You’re not going to pick it up and have more time. But in order to find time, you must make time.

And he believes that we define time as a linear series of events but, that linear time is only created in the mind. Think about this, guys. If you took away all manmade devices and measurements of time, clocks, watches, cell phones, schedules, deadlines, everything that measures time out in our day for us, what would time actually be?

Would it exist? How would you define time? And then how much time would you need to complete tasks, projects and goals if you weren’t measuring the time? Basically, what happens is that you get things done in the amount of time that you either need to get it done or that you allow to get it done. And the reason that time exists as a linear series of events is because the human brain created it.

The universe didn’t create linear time; we did. It’s only a construct of our mind. And if it’s a construct of the mind, then it can be manipulated into what you need and want. I know, I know you’re thinking I’ve gone mad here. What person on earth doesn’t use linear time? I’m not crazy, guys. Hang with me here. I know – I realize for those that are in the field of education, your entire career hangs on linear time.

Just think about it – the school day, the bell schedule, the school year, trimesters or semesters, whichever your school uses, testing windows, meetings and how many meetings we schedule, and deadlines and so on and so on. I understand that you have a need to work within a system of linear time. I’m not saying don’t work with linear time, I’m saying be aware that it’s constructed by the human mind.

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I do think, however, that many of us underestimate and we disempower our ability to be in control of our time. We enter each work day with the belief that our schedule for the week is given to us and that we must just obey it. We have to take care of this and we have to take care of that and we must do this and we must do that, and we're so busy being busy that we don't stop to question why we're doing what we're doing. We just do.

And, people, this is dangerous. It puts us into a state of automation and drives us away from our purpose, pride and joy. Doing so, without questioning or thinking, turns us into robots. When we act robotically in our job, we feel numb. When we feel numb, we start to resent the work. When we resent the work, we buffer with food, alcohol, sleep, shopping, watching TV, whatever you guys do, or a combination of these things.

So, in order to feel that you have control over your time, or at least that you are able to manage your time better, you must first believe that having control over your time is even possible. If you don't believe this now – and I know that it's possible that you don't believe this is possible – you need to do some thought work. So I want you to run a STEAR Cycle with this.

I want you to put the STEAR Cycle into play and put this into the thought line and see what emotions, what approach and what results come from this thought. So if you are thinking, "I have no control over my time," put that in the T line. Your situation basically is your work calendar; your work schedule. Your T is, "I have no control over my time." And then see what emotions, approach and results pop up.

You might have things like, "When I think I have no control over my time, I feel completely defeated. Or you might feel powerless, or you might feel overwhelmed. But in the end, you probably feel like somewhat of a victim. You feel like your calendar has control over you, versus you having control over the calendar. And when you're feeling that way, you just go through the motions. You do it with numbness. Or, you try to get everything done.

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You run around like a crazy person trying to do everything, meeting everyone's expectations, trying to be the A+ student.

And the result is either one of two things – you either do things halfway and they're mediocre all the time because you're doing a million things at once; or you run yourself into the freaking ground, people. You kill yourself. You have no energy left for living. I did this. The A+ perfectionist girl in me, people pleaser, wanted to do it all and do it all at 1000%.

So, this is what I had to do – I want you to try this. You must first decide that you have control over your time. So do the thought work necessary to at least believe that it is possible that you have some control over some part of your time. If you can just go there, you're on the right track. And once you start to feel that you have some control, you can take a look at your schedule for the day. And I want you to try and do this the night before, or before you get to work, or you can go into work early before other people arrive and give yourself at least 15 minutes to complete this process.

I recommend doing it at home because you're not in state when you're at home. You're still in your home environment, and that's a different energy than the energy you feel at work. Once I got into my office, I was on go mode, and my robotic tendencies kicked in and there was no stopping me. I was like The Terminator.

So, if you can do this the night before, at home, please try this process. So, look at your day, and for each appointment on that calendar for the day, ask yourself, number one – is this appointment essential? Yes or no? You're going to say yes to all of them, by the way.

So what I want you to ask next is, is this truly essential? Meaning, will your job or others be in danger, or you be in danger, if it does not happen. And this question makes your brain stop and really evaluate the task at hand. Is

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it truly essential to happen that day, tomorrow, at that time for that length of time? If so, why is it essential? Ask yourself, why am I doing this? What is in this for me, what is in this for other people? What's my purpose?

This tells you the value that you're placing on the appointment or schedule or whatever it is you're doing at that moment. Then ask yourself, who is this essential for? Is it essential for your wellbeing, yourself? Is it a teacher? Perhaps you have an important coaching meeting with a teacher. Is it about a student, a parent? Is it about your boss? Is it about the school board? Is it about god knows who? Are there things on your calendar and you're like, "What is this about? Who is this for? Who put this on here?"

I know I had those too. It's like, what the heck is this? So, decide who it's essential for. It gives you some more purpose and understanding and value behind what you're doing in that time. Then you ask yourself – you kind of basically triage your calendar and you get the essentials on point, and the rest, you decide – if you can fit them in, fine. If not, they get pushed back or they get batched out or they get sent to somebody else.

But ask yourself, of these essentials, does it have to be completed by you? Or is there somebody else who might be able to do the job just as well as you? You don't have to be a god or goddess as a principal. You don't have to be the one that does it all. And I think that this is a really hard thing; giving up control is very challenging. We can talk about that. There's so many things to talk about, guys. I love this podcast. We are going to talk about that in a future podcast; giving up control is about gaining control of your time.

So, do you have to complete the task, or can somebody else complete it just as well? Now, if you are the only person for the job – and there are things that you must do as a principal – what is the time limit that you put on this task? Can it be done in less time? How will you set a time limit for the appointment so that it does not take longer than scheduled?

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So, what I mean by this is that the amount of time we give a task is the amount of time that we have to get it done. If we give ourselves two hours, it will take us two hours. If we give ourselves 40 minutes, it will take us 40 minutes. The other thing is this – if you have a task that involves other people, like meeting with other people, it's important to set the timeline and tell them from the onset of the meeting, "We have 30 minutes to meet, and then I need to be XYZ." You want to set a timeframe so that you have boundaries around your time. It's important to do that – or an hour meeting. But set your time ahead of time.

And finally, the *crème de la crème* – and the thing we forget to do, but when we think about it, it's like an ah-ha – is this: did I build time into the day to allow for interruptions and work completion? Getting your work done and having interruptions are simply a part of the job. It used to infuriate me when people would interrupt me when I was on a deadline trying to get something done, and it was almost Murphy's Law that something huge would come up that I would have to take care of, and that I was doing my job after hours meeting my deadlines.

That was my problem, because I wasn't managing my time well. But until I learned to actually build time into the day for interruptions and work completion, I realized that these were just a part of the day, and that when I built time around interruptions and ensuring that I had time during my work day to get my actual work done, that it decreased my stress and improved my health long term, because I wasn't constantly living on this super anxiety – oh my gosh, I'm not going to get it done – or anger. Basically, fear I wasn't going to get something done or angry that I was interrupted – and it also enhanced the way I interacted with those who interrupted me, because I wasn't freaking out knowing that I had taken that time into consideration.

So that, to me, is a gift to yourself if you can build time into your day for interruptions and work completion. Now, you're not going to know when the interruption will occur, but if there are buffers built into the day where

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you've got some downtime to get your work done and then interruptions happen, you will feel much less stress than if you bumper to bumper to bumper your schedule back to back to back.

So, in summary, folks, being too busy is a mindset. It's a way of thinking, feeling and being. You don't need to buy into business. You can constantly choose to believe that you have plenty of time. And the way that you believe you have plenty of time is by recognizing that what needs to get done always gets done. Look back to last year; everything got done. You're good; it's going to get done.

You can get things done from one of two ways. You can get them done from a constant state of panic, worry, stress, pressure, or you can get things done from a state of knowing, confidence, calm and constraint.

So in the upcoming episodes, I'm going to continue the conversation around time and provide you with some further strategies and tips on how to schedule and how to manage your thoughts about time, including things like morning routines, open and closed cycles, and the difference between having to and choosing to.

And speaking of time, it will only take you a few minutes of your time to write a review on iTunes. I've been asking you for eight episodes, folks. And I know you're out there listening, because I'm getting lots of five stars as a rating, but I need a few minutes of your time to write a review, and here's why.

First of all, those few minutes of your time could end up being of \$100 value to you. I have three Amazon gift cards worth \$100 each, and I'm going to hold a drawing for all of those who leave a written review of the podcast. Guys, I can't have a drawing if no one's writing reviews. I could give it to Beautiful Chick, all three of them. I want to, but I think it's fair to have the drawing.

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That's a pretty great use of time, if you ask me, guys. For five minutes of your time, you could win \$100. So come on. I want to thank you for those who have left a five-star rating, but I can't know who you are, and that's why the review is so important. Thank you for those, very, very much, who've given me five stars. That means everything to me, but I don't know who you are. iTunes doesn't let me see who has rated, only reviewed. And guys, it's really fun. We've got a drawing. This is exciting.

I did this for my staff. I would give them freebies and they loved it. I would tape little gifts under their chairs; they just loved it. So much fun. We're having fun here. So please, take a moment, write the review and it could be \$100 in your pocket.

So, if you have enjoyed this podcast, I kindly ask that you share it with fellow educators so that we can spread the word and you can have control over your career, your work day and your life, people. And, if you want to take this information to the next level and dive deeper into becoming empowered both personally and professionally, check out what VIP coaching can do for you.

Sign up for a 30 minute free discover call to learn how you can expedite your empowerment. You can sign up for the call on my website and [angelakellycoaching.com](http://angelakellycoaching.com). Have an amazing week you guys, I will see you all next time; bye.



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