

Ep #12: Making Decisions as Your Essential Self



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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, welcome to episode 12. Hi guys, how is it going? How is your week going? What is up? I have to tell you, I have had such a productive week. I have written three podcasts this week. I've also written two letters of recommendation for former teachers that I worked with when I was a principal.

I'm working on a chapter in my new book and I've written at least five newsletters – which, by the way, if you haven't yet signed up for my weekly newsletter, you can get weekly inspirations from me. They're short and sweet, delivered right to your screen. Just go to my website at angelakellycoaching.com and click on blogs and you will be able to sign up, for free, to the weekly newsletter. It's all good.

Oh yeah, I've also coached a ton. You guys, I have been coaching the best people. I just love coaching. There is something about working with your ideal person, your tribe, the people you were meant to be with and it feels like pure bliss. I just love it. So it has been an awesome week.

And I was just thinking about this – okay, I'm recording this podcast on a Friday afternoon – I cannot believe it's already Friday because every single day I wake up, I feel like I'm on vacation. I feel like I'm in a dream-world. I love every single day of my life. It's crazy. And the crazier thing is that I'm actually working about as many hours as I did as a principal, but my work week looks totally different, right.

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And I bet you're wondering, how is it possible to work that many hours and be happy? Well let me tell you, this is what we're going to talk about today. So today, we're going to discuss something a little bit different; something you might not have heard of before, so I want you to hang with me because this is how I got from believing that I had to work for somebody else and had to work a job and had to work the job that I went to school for – to college for – into believing that I could create and live a life that actually feels good to me. It's everything, people; listen up.

So, the first time I studied life coaching – or way-finding, as she calls it – under Martha Beck – that was about eight years ago – what we learned is that we have two selves within us; often of opposing opinions, right. So we have these two selves. They're called our essential self – and that essential self is the part of us that was formed before we were even born. It is who we were destined to be, who the universe created us to be, before we came into physical being. That is our essential self.

Our second self is called the social self. And the social self is the part of us that was developed once we were born into the physical world and it is developed by the responses to social pressures. There's two of us, right. There's this who we were, kind of, meant to be – whether you believe in god creating us or the universe creating us or science creating us. All of the forces that came to be is our essential self. Our social self is how we develop and mold and evolved over time – how we were molded – into this little social being once we were on earth.

Those are the two selves. And Martha explained to us that these two selves, they're both essential to us, but in different ways. So the essential self is essential, actually, in two ways. One, it's the very essence of who you are, and two; you absolutely need to tap into your essential self in order to live the life you were meant to live.

On the other hand, your social self is the part of you that, once you were born, acquired all sorts of life skills along the way. All of the things like

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walking, talking, reading, writing, driving, cooking, learning how to wait in line, using your manners, all of the activities and skills that brought us social approval is who our social self is. So, I want you to remember this; one of the six basic human needs across all of mankind is the need for love and belonging. We seek approval from other human beings because we have an innate desire to be loved and to belong. That is how the social self works.

The problem is that we feel dissonance in our lives when the essential self and the social self have opposing desires. These different desires create opposing thoughts in our brain. And when we believe two thoughts that oppose one another, we have what we call cognitive dissonance. And this is basically just a fancy way of saying that we have two sets of beliefs that are opposing, that are opposite.

When we have opposing belief systems, we feel torn, unsure, confused and overwhelmed because our brain is trying to believe both thoughts simultaneously. So, for example, your essential self might be saying, "I need two more hours of sleep. Please let me sleep in, dear god." And social self is saying, "No, I need to get up because I need to be at work by 7AM." And you drag your tired little buns out of bed and you jump in the shower.

Your essential self says, "This is the most boring meeting I have ever been in. I want to poke a Sharpie directly into my left eye." How many meetings have we been in where we want to harm ourselves because we are so bored to death? Meanwhile, we sit through the meetings because our social self tells us, "I need to fully participate and pay attention so my boss thinks I'm a good employee and a good student."

We do this all the time. Our essential self is telling us one thing, what it really desires and our social self is saying, "Nope, sorry. I have to be the boss on this. We need to do it this way because this is how it's supposed to be."

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And guys, I honestly do not personally know anyone whose essential self and social self are in complete alignment. I mean, wouldn't that be awesome? I know, I for one am surely not one of those people. My essential self and my social self are in conflict a lot of the time. But it is, however, my life mission to listen and to align my two selves as often as possible.

So, for most of us – and I'm assuming this really applies to educators and school leaders – is that our social self is definitely the boss. Okay, you went into education because you loved teaching and learning and teachers are the boss, that's why we go into teaching. And then we go into school administration because hey, now we get to be the boss of teachers. How cool is that?

Our social self loves to climb the ladder and loves to be in charge. So day in and day out, we do what we've been told is the right thing to do. We choose to be responsible. We seek guidance and we seek approval from other people and from those around us and our situations. Our social self has tremendous assets, guys. It's hard-working, very planned, it loves predictability.

Our social self seeks harmony with others and avoids confrontations. So our social self helps us navigate through social situations in order to have harmony. It seeks out that harmony. It's very disciplined in its learning and it wants to master new skills. It's a good part of you. And we need that social self in order to produce and achieve.

However, the fact that our social self takes over a little too often and a little too strongly is where we get into trouble. It wants to control our behavior all the time. It actually even bullies our essential self. And over time, the essential self, whose characteristics include being more playful and fun, spontaneous, curious and creative, she loses her voice in your life.

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The more your social self steps into the role of control and power and forcing you to be a certain way, the more your essential self is silenced. And eventually, the two become disconnected altogether. The essential self is really attraction based; meaning that it desires what the soul was designed to do. And our social self, on the other hand, is avoidance based, meaning that it avoids things that are not socially popular or acceptable. Even when that thing is what your soul desires, it will push it away because it doesn't feel comfortable, because it doesn't feel that other people will like it or approve it or that it's popular.

And the desires for acceptance and love and belonging override the desires for passion, play, soulfulness and creativity. And sadly, guys, this leads to discontentment and unfulfilled human souls. And you know, like so many people are walking around on this earth like the empty cavern of a body without fulfillment. And that is no way to live. That is not why we're on this earth.

So, are you depressed yet? The good news is this; that it is possible to reconnect with your essential self. The trick is that you have to stop using your mind to make decisions and you need to drop into your body because it is through the body that your essential self speaks. Now, let me be real with you; the social self pretty much hates dropping into body and it will resist the hell out of dropping into body. And it's going to tell you this is so stupid.

I really struggled with this. But I'm telling you, if you are finding that feeling empty and miserable are no longer acceptable to you, then you must find a way for your essential self to guide you and to be the leader of your life. So your essential self talks to you through your body, through physical body vibrations and perceived symptoms. So let me explain. Some of the ways your essential self tells you no, that you're going away from your soul's purpose and being, are things like this.

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When you're engaging in an activity and you have very low energy, you're just like, "I'm so exhausted. I'm so tired." You feel like you can't carry on. All that low energy – no, that's a no. When you forget – when you are so forgetful, you're like, "Oh my god, I can't believe I forgot to go to this meeting." Or, "I cannot believe I forgot going to my dentist appointment," because how many of us love going to the dentist, right? We accidentally – quote en quote – forget to go or we forget that we ate a pint of ice cream at lunch, so when we eat another one at dinner and our bodies feel like erg, we're like, "Oh shoot, I forgot. Oops, sorry."

So forgetfulness is an attribute in how the body tells you no; how the essential self tells you no. Other things include your body getting sick. You know like when you have something big coming up at work that you're dreading doing, all of a sudden, you're like, "I feel a scratchy throat coming on," or, "Oh my god, I have a headache or I feel like I'm coming down with something." That is a way that your body is communicating with you that it does not want to do that or you're not going down the right path.

Making mistakes – when you feel like you're bumbling, fumbling all the time and you're feeling awkward making mistakes – that's another one. If you feel very obstinate or resistant or you avoid at all cost, those are pretty obvious ones where the essential self is saying, "No thank you, no, no, no I don't want to do that. that is not a part of who we are." Those are definitely no.

Other things like social awkwardness – when you're feeling really awkward and uncomfortable in a situation, that's probably an emotional way of saying, "No thanks." And finally, if you find yourself engaging in anything particularly addicting – things that you feel like you can't really control but you're doing them anyway – things like alcohol, drinking too much wine or cocktails, engaging in any kind of drugs, recreational, cigarettes, weed, you know, hardcore drugs. If you're sleeping too much, if you're shopping too much, if you're watching too much TV and you don't really want to be doing them but you find yourself just doing them anyway; those are all addictions

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that your essential self is trying to get your attention and say, “No, no, no this is not our path. This is not what our desires truly are.”

So if you're having those kinds of body sensations and symptoms, your body is trying to communicate to you. Your essential self is trying to let you know and red-flag you that there's a problem.

Now, here are some of the ways that your essential self will say yes. Things like this; when you feel a really high vibe of energy, when you are excited, enthusiastic, when you are really jazzed. You know that feeling when you go to bed that night and you're so excited, like, to get up the next morning and get on it? That high energy, that's a yes.

When you can remember things super easy, those types of things that you remember with no problem at all – like, for example, I remember people's birthdays; most people's birthdays. There's something about my brain that loves remembering people's birthdays, probably because I love celebrating with them. But I remember people's birthdays and I remember things that they've said they've liked in the past.

So those are two things that my mind just clings onto; my essential self loves – so things that you remember easily. Times in your life that your health was on-point; you were fit as a fiddle. You felt physically, emotionally, mentally strong, fit, you had a lot of vitality. A really high vibe of health is another sign that you're on your essential self's path to yes. Other things – being on point, feeling like, “I'm in the groove, I know what I'm doing, feeling kind of a magnetic attraction where you're really attracted to what you're doing or who you're with.

Another sign of yes is feeling in the flow; you're connecting with others easily. You're socially feeling comfortable, you are in the zone, you're talking about a topic you love – that whole vibe called being in the flow, that's when your body is saying yes.

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And this is one of my favorites; when you're engaged in an activity where you lose time. You just lose track of time because you're so involved. You have no idea what time it is. You don't even think to go to the bathroom or like stop to take a drink of water. You're like so focused and engaged that time just washes away and you're just in that moment, participating and engaged. Those kinds of things tell you that this is an absolute yes; you are on the right path.

So, Martha has spent her life studying this, reading, researching and writing books about how to connect with your essential self, so I'm obviously not going to be able to cover everything I've learned from her on this one podcast. But I can share with you a couple of ideas to help get you started; things that I find most helpful for me and getting at least started with the process. Because I will say this, it takes a little bit of time to drop into your body, especially when you've been telling yourself no for the past 30-40 years.

Take your age, subtract two, and that's how long you've been telling yourself no. Because that's one of the first words you learned, right, to say no. So this is what I want you to do – try this. I want you to try to stop doing. I know that sounds counterproductive but hear me out.

Our social self is so conditioned to believe that you must be – quote en quote – doing all the time. Do, do, do in order to get ahead, right. We buy into this idea that life means participating in activity all of the time. We're told to hustle, hustle, move our muscle, just do it, get on it, never stop, keep going. And we also see people that we admire, or at least we admire their lifestyle – we admire what they're doing or who they are – and we think that we should do more of that in order to be more like them.

We believe, and I believe this too – I have to work on this – I believe that we should do something. You know what, we tell ourselves, “Just do anything,” right. I have a son. He's 18 years old. There were days I was like, “Do something. Do anything. You lying around until noon in your bed,

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lazy teenager, do something.” Just do something – we’re so wired to do. We want ourselves and everybody else around us to be doing, doing, doing.

And like I said, this was one of the hardest things for me to do was to stop doing. I really did buy into the idea that doing more is what will make me successful, until I studied under Martha and she had us practice and feel how doing without doing feels. You see, doing without doing, it’s not about not engaging in physical motion, right.

It’s not about sitting and meditating on a mountain all day. It’s about doing from a place of flow; a place of knowingness, a place of understanding your purpose and why. Now, I’m not saying this to get super-philosophical, but there is a difference between just engaging in random activities or things you think will get you what you want or slowing down and being intentional and doing with purpose; doing with intention. And this involves stopping long enough to feel what to do next. We’re so in our heads, it’s about dropping into the body.

So stop doing involved taking time to actually observe how your body responds to the daily tasks in your life, all of the things on your to-do list, all of the things you’re doing. So try this – write a list of all the things that you have to do tomorrow before you get to tomorrow. Do this tonight. So write a list of your to-dos, then put down the pen and paper and relax. You can either sit for this or lie down but get really comfortable. Close your eyes and breathe deeply a couple of times. Get your body into a relaxed state.

And I want you just to envision your list and think about those tasks you have for the day and envision yourself doing the task. But instead of thinking about doing the task in your head, I want you to observe in your body, from your feet all the way up to your head and look for vibrations in the body. Look for some signals.

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How does it feel when you think – so let's say, for example, I'm a principal and I write down on my list, I have two IEPs, I have a teacher observation I have a meeting with a parent and I have my leadership team meeting from one to five. So all of these things, you take each of them and you envision being in those meetings; not thinking about how you're going to do it up in your head but feeling how it's going to feel to be sitting in that meeting, to be engaged in that activity.

And what you'll notice is that sensations will occur. Sometimes you'll get a numbness and I think that's the body's way of locking down your social self trying to intervene, saying, "No, we're not going to feel badly. We're going to just numb and do this." Release that and try to feel. Whether you feel it in your feet, maybe you feel it in your hips, maybe you feel it in your gut, maybe you feel it in your chest or your throat, you'll have different sensations.

Feel these sensations. Then, on a scale form like negative ten, being the worst ever, to a positive ten being total elation, how would you rate the task? And just – you don't have to do this for every single thing, but you can do it for a few and see if you notice a difference in vibration between things you prefer to do and things you do not prefer. And my guess is that, for most of you, the daily tasks you're asking your essential self to participate in are probably a far cry from her actual desires and they don't feel like they're in a state of flow.

Doing without doing allows you to stop and recognize how your to-do list actually feels to your essential self. So, stop doing, start feeling, see what comes up for you. These vibrations in your body are called your body compass. They steer you in the direction that most tickles your heart's desires. That's what you want. This is a good thing.

In order to feel fulfillment, you must be able to follow the signals of your essential self. Your social self will never, ever get you there. And the more you try to force by using your essential self to lead the way, the less fulfilled

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you will be; the less passionate you will feel and you will lead a path and look back at the end of your life saying, “What the hell did I do? What was this all for? What was the point?”

And I don't want you to feel that way. That is why I'm here today. So here's a fun one. I'm going to tell you, when you first start feeling the vibrations in your body, when you really start to do nothing and you search – you drop into body. And I can explain this more in a future podcast, but when you drop in, it might feel uncomfortable. You might actually have some really intense vibrations come up for you.

Just know that they're not going to kill you and that you're going to be okay and that you can snap out of it anytime you want. But they might be uncomfortable, but that's the only way to tell the essential self, “It's okay, I'm listening now. I'm sorry I spent so long not listening, but I'm listening now.” So practice feeling the vibrations versus just taking action without purpose.

Now, on to the fun stuff – and your essential self is going to love this activity; I promise you. So, in this activity, you're going to take out a piece of paper and a pen. Now, any old piece of paper and pen will do, but if you find beautiful paper and your favorite pen, you get bonus points because what we're trying to do is allow your essential self as much pleasure as possible so that she'll share everything with you. You want her to speak up and she does this through your body.

So, what you're going to do is get your beautiful paper and your beautiful pen and you're going to snuggle up in your favorite place and you're going to write. You're going to describe, in complete detail, what an ideal day for you would entail; not what everybody thinks you should do, not what your parents want you to do or your husband or your children or your boss, but what you want to do.

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Now, this is not like a dream vacation day. This is not like, “I’m going to plan some European vacation.” That’s not what this is about. I want you to daydream an ideal ordinary Monday through Friday workday; just a regular old day. Now, if you could do anything anywhere for as much or as little time as you wanted with no restrictions, what would you do? How would you spend your day?

If making money weren’t the issue, if no other people were the issue, if you had all the resources that you needed, how would you spend your time? What would feel most like fun? What would be the most possible fun you could have in a workday? Would you work alone or with others? Would you go to a workplace or would you work from bed or home? Would you make music? Would you tell jokes? Would you clean toilets? Would you write stories; teach surfing? I don’t know; what would you do? Where would you live? What car would you drive? How would you spend your time in the evenings? Let your essential self go completely wild.

I want you to write, from the moment you wake up to the moment you hit your pillow at night, how would you spend that day? Just paint the most perfect picture you can. Make this so juicy that your heart is racing with excitement, almost to the point of overindulgence. Design the day so that your brain stops and says, “Wait a minute, that’s not possible. You could not live like that. that would be way too easy and fun and you certainly aren’t going to make money doing that.”

If your brain is saying that, then you, my friend, are on the right track. So do this, and then I want you to think about how that would actually feel to live that way. How does the thought of an ideal workday feel to you? And notice that by simply thinking about the possibility of living a life with ideal workdays, you already feel drunk with enthusiasm, excitement and adventure.

I mean, who needs Martinis when you could live this way every day. Imagine what it would be like to experience it. I can tell you that I am now

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living my ideal life and it is everything that you are imagining that it might be for you. And you guys, you know what's even more wild? Now that I'm living what I said I wanted to live in my past, right.

My past essential self daydreamed this ideal day. It involved working from home, being location independent, spending my days writing, coaching, engaged with people but on my own terms. Now my essential self continues to expand her horizons and evolve what she believes is an ideal workday. Because I stopped doing and I listened to what I really, really wanted, what my essential self was craving, I finally was able to make that vision a reality and I manifested my new lifestyle into my physical world.

Doing this very thing ignited desires within me I never knew existed because they'd been buried so deep by our social self that initially, when I first started this process, they were not even in the realm of consciousness. But now that I'm committed to peeling back the layers and listening to my essential self, I'm exposing bigger and bolder dreams; dreams I never knew I had but were always down there, waiting to be listened to, waiting to be heard and waiting to be acted upon.

When you are living as your most essential self – and my coach calls this your highest state or your highest vibe – your essential self is the one leading the way and your social self is the one supporting you in achieving your biggest desires. Our brain likes to believe that it should be the other way around because it craves the characteristics that make up your social self. Your brain like structures, routines, consistency - she likes it to be efficient and safe and consistent.

But the problem is, as you already know, our social self will take over and it will disempower the essential self. It will take over. And then you're led down a path that leads you to non-fulfillment. And guys, you know the coolest part of this whole thing – this is what I think is the coolest part – is that your essential self does not desire anything that is not possible for you to achieve

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Did you hear that? Your essential self will not desire anything that is not possible for you to achieve. Anything that you desire, anything that you crave to either have or experience or feel, is completely possible. It is within reach because you would not desire it otherwise. The key in knowing what you want is to allow your essential self to be the pilot of your life and to assign your social self as the co-pilot.

This is where your social self will shine. When your essential self leads and your social self supports, you, my friends, become one fabulous empowered soul. I hope this fired you up. I hope you enjoyed this podcast. If you did, please share it. Share it on your social media, share it with friends and family and let people know that life is meant to be enjoyed; that your essential self does know what you want, that it's possible to have it. And no one else knows your destiny or your essential self's desires except for you. So stop letting other people tell you what you should be doing – that's kaka. We're not going with that anymore.

So, if you love the podcast, share it. I super appreciate that. the more educators out in the world who understand this and know this, the better. And we will continue to talk about this next week. Have a wonderful week, my friends. Have an empowered week. Take care; bye-bye.

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