

Ep #25: Do You Owe Anyone Your Time?



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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, my friends, how are you doing? What is going on? Happy summer, I hope you are having so much fun – at least some fun. Come on, life is about fun, fun – you need to be having fun. I know I'm preaching to myself because I was not a firm believer in having fun. I was a firm believer in hard work and productivity and always being productive.

And I have learned the hard way that if you do not give your essential-self time to rest and play and dream and scheme and interact with the people you love most and put down our cell phones and do all of these things, we are not complete; we're not whole. And trying to do it all one way, by willpower and discipline and force and push, you do hit a plateau. You hit a wall and even the creativity that is coming out of you from that place can be less than 100%.

So the way I see it, if I don't fill both my social-self and my essential-self's needs, productivity needs and the rest and play needs, I find that the level of quality I'm putting out is watered down. It's tired; it's not as vibrant and energetic as I would like it to be. So I am learning to play and to rest and to have fun and to take time away from being productive on my business.

And I know that sounds so counterintuitive, but it really works; it really works. So last week, I was in the grind, I was all about the book and writing the book. I've still got about four or five chapters left to go, but I'm about halfway there. But it's got to get done by the end of this week, so I feel that – even just saying it out loud – I feel the panic.

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But what I know is that giving my body plenty of rest, really great food, lots of water, a walk to the beach, fresh air, some exercise – I just started back on my regular routine and I'm telling you, it's giving me all the energy I need and all the creativity I need to get the book done in less time. So instead of cutting out things, I put them all back in. and I tried that and I'm already ahead of the game and it's Monday.

So alright, today we're going to talk about owing time to other people. And this is really a conversation about when other people feel or believe or think that they should get some of your time. These could be family, they could be friends, colleagues. Do you feel you owe time to anybody? Do you owe time to your church; perhaps your friend group, maybe you have family obligations and birthday parties or celebrations and anniversaries?

Do you feel you owe time to your work or your boss? Who do you feel you owe time to and what does that mean to you? What are you making that mean – that they need your time or they want you to give up your time for them.

Let me start by talking about bosses and colleagues and work, because there's a different energy around what we think about our bosses asking us for our time or colleagues asking us for time. And this is the idea that, well, they're paying us for our time. My boss is in charge of my time because he's paying me for my time.

And I think this could be a whole separate podcast, but I will briefly talk about this now. When you think that my boss wants more of my time – and I used to think this a lot – or my school required more time or just the demands of the job require all of my time – when you think that to be true, you are assuming that the reason you're getting paid is the amount of time you're spending on the job. And I would like to suggest that you consider you're not getting paid for your time; you're getting paid for the value that you provide during that time.

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Think about that for a second. So when you get paid to do something or you've been paid for something – my dad owns his own business. He's a sign-painter and he does all kinds of different artwork. He designs and creates. He creates it from conceptual into reality and then people pay him.

Actually, my dad is a great example because he owns his own business, he works for himself, he's his own boss. He gets paid not for how long it takes him to create a product for one of his clients; he gets paid for the finished product, the value, because they pay him money for that product and then that product brings them value to their business. So he does signs for people's businesses.

They don't pay him for, like, "Oh, it took you 16 hours, two days' worth of work to get my thing done, here's 16 hours' worth of pay." They don't think like that. But we have been conditioned, especially in the education system, we've been conditioned to believe that we get paid for our time, but that's not true.

Think of it this way; think, if you were just paid for time, you could go to work and you could just sit there and do absolutely nothing but give them your time. And that would be paid-for time. Like, I'd go and I put my bottom in your chair for eight hours and you'd pay me for that eight hours of time. That's not why people hire you. You would probably not last very long in any job if you believed that you are getting paid for your time.

What you're getting paid for is to produce value in those hours while you're at work. So when you say, well I owe my boss time or my job time or my colleagues time, it's not the time, it's the value, okay. And I love the idea of my dad because my dad's very productive too. He can get something done in a couple of hours and charge the same amount of money for that product as if it were to take him 10 hours.

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Like, maybe back in the beginning when he was starting his business, it took him longer to create the same level of quality product that it might take him to only do in a couple of hours now. So it's not about the time, it's about the value, right.

So I admit, like, I struggled with the idea of my value over time in my years of working for other people. And it really would bother me because I was very value-based and I believed that, "Hey, please don't question how much time it's taking me to get my work done." My colleagues used to say, like, "Man, you get a ton of stuff done at work."

It's like, "Yeah, because when I'm here, I'm game on. I'm doing this, right." And I got my stuff done, I helped them get their stuff done, like, I was focused and engaged and I was in motion working. I loved that. I loved working at that level. So people would say to me, "Wow, you're getting so much done. Chill out, calm down, you don't need to do all of these things." Like, no, I want to do this because I value value, basically.

But when I got into, let's say, a more administrative role, it was about time. So don't get me wrong; they got a lot of my time, more time than I was willing to give or wanted to give. I gave it, but unwillingly. But that's because I felt an obligation.

So when you're a principal, you guys know, there are really, really long days, and then there are some days where you're like, I want to leave a couple hours early to, I don't know, you're going to attend something for the weekend, you want to get a head start on traffic or you you've put in 60 hours by Wednesday and you're thinking, "Oh man..." Maybe not 60 hours. That would be a lot, but you've put in 12, 14-hour days and you would like to come in late the next morning. Maybe you're attending your son's conference at school or something.

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Anyway, you want to flex that time and I felt like I was giving value, I was giving plenty of value, I was always there, I was following up on my work and then a comment was made about, “Oh you weren’t at this meeting.” And I said, “No, I let my secretary know that I would be late. I was coming in late because I had an appointment with my son.”

And this whole idea around time versus value – so I would say at work, “Look, if there is a problem with the quality or the quantity of my work, please, let’s sit down and talk. But telling me that I have to have butt in seat from eight to six does not serve me and it certainly doesn’t serve you.”

And I think, in the education system, we are so wrapped around this idea that we’re there for the time and not the value we provide. And you’ll know because you’ve got teachers on your campus that are like hotcakes. They’ve got all their stuff done ready to go, they’re always on-point. They’re in all the extra activities and in all the meetings and on all the committees because they value time and they value value.

And then you’ve got other people that are getting paid the exact amount because of tenure – we won’t get started on tenure right now, but because of tenure, they could just come in and kind of do the bare bones and they do not produce as much, but they’re there for that amount of time or even more.

So that’s how it relates to work, at least in my head, but what I’ve also noticed is that people also equate time not just with value but care, concern, interest, need. Like, in order for people to feel valued, they want you to give them your time, which I’ve learned is a translation for attention. When you take the time to give attention to others, they feel valued.

This is a form of human connection that we all need because it does matter. It matters to our families, it matters in our businesses for sure, it matters at school, it matters with our friends. So time with friends means

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valued, means attention, right; the time that it takes to give that part of your life attention is how people feel valued.

But what I've been noticing, especially as my business has really picked up and I am focusing much more of my time on business and a little bit less time on nurturing relationships is that different people need various amounts of time to feel valued. So some of my friends – some of my very closest best friends, I hardly talk to, or I spend very little physical time with them. We might text or we follow each other on social media or we might even talk on the phone once in a while, but in terms of really spending day to day time with them, it's very, very, very small.

But the moments that we do connect, whether it's either over the phone or in person, it's like time never existed between those moments and we're right back where we're at and we just feel all the love and all the fun and excitement as if we were together every single day. So some people can – that's me, that's how I am. Like, I have very close friends who live all over the world and the country and I know that any call, I could pick them up and we would be right back to square one.

Other people, I've noticed, need much more consistent and frequent interaction and attention and sometimes much longer periods of time and lengthy amounts of interaction to feel that same value that you feel in the friendship. I've got tons of friends in my life of all different levels. They all want my time and attention; I want their time and attention. We value each other, we value face-time and phone-time to feel connected and we love that we're a part of each other's lives.

And then I have other friends who really need much more than I am either willing to give or want to give or even am aware even to think – because I don't need it, I don't think about it in terms of other people needing it more than me. So I have to be kind of vulnerable here and say that it's something I've struggled with, right. I just am not a person who needs a high level of

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other people's time in order to feel valued and loved by them or to feel love for them.

I can be with a person for a short amount of time and feel very connected to them for a long period of time. And these are people I adore and I feel like I could spend more time with, but I'm not worried. I'm not frantic about losing the friendship. I don't have any fears around whether they are my friend or whether I am their friends or however that relationship is.

Like, I feel like we get each other, we understand that value and that equating to the time is on-caliber with one another. And I think this awareness has served me well in that I'm able to structure my life in a way that allows me to get a lot done with my day. And I get a lot done with my time, it allows me to spread myself over lots of activities, adventures and a lot of different people.

So the people that I connect most easily with are those who are similar to me in the amount of time that they need to feel and connect. Like, I even have this relationship with my husband and my kid.

You know, I'm around wives who call their husbands multiple times a day during a girl's weekend or a girl's night out. You know, they're constantly being in touch and others of us, like myself, are like, "Alright, I love you, see you when I get home." Maybe a text to say hey, I made it safely or on our way home, something brief like that, but I don't spend a lot of time on the phone to my husband when I'm away from him because when I'm with him, I'm not on the phone with other people. I'm with him talking with him and when I'm with those women, I'm talking with them. I want to be present.

And the same holds true for my son actually. Like, he's a freshman at college. We talk once in a while. He's 19, so we're basically texting and then when we've really got to talk, we talk on the phone and then when he's home we spend time together. But I know I have some other mom

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friends who are out there texting their kids daily and they're really sad and they're touching base all the time and I totally get it. I miss him so much, but that's just not how we roll in my family.

My son might block my number if I called him that often. But what is happening in my life – and it's kind of a consequence of the way that I think and the way that I give value to my friendships is that I find myself steering away from people in my life who need tons of time to feel that I value them.

And it bothers me because some of these people are really close to me, very close to me, and some even family members. But what I notice is the more that I feel that clinginess creeping in – and this is in my head, right, but I feel extra resistant and avoidant. And then, what happens? I do resist and avoid in my actions, not consciously, but more on a subconscious level, and then what ends up happening is that that person eventually gets upset with me because they don't feel that I'm valuing our relationship.

And then, what really bothers me about that whole idea is that when I pull back, I am told that I don't care, that I'm being selfish and these comments totally send me into a spiral that I'm not good enough, that I'm not being a good enough friend, a good enough sister, a good enough mom, a good enough daughter, whatever.

And then I start to question if I am being selfish, and then I wonder, am I not connecting with people in a more valuable way, in a more authentic way? Is there something wrong with what I'm doing? And I've been coaching with my coach on that because when I think about my business, I want to be able to serve my clients who value time and attention and I also want to connect with them in a way where I'm not being clingy or needy. Like, they have me if they need me, but I'm not checking in on them every second.

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And I want clients who are like, “I’ve got you – I love the coaching, but I’ve got this during the week.” So it’s interesting to think about how we engage in terms of how we value time and attention from other people. And it goes both ways, like thinking about where are we in our lives, being clingy or needy and wanting more time and attention out of somebody than they have to offer, and then how do we react to people who we believe are not giving us enough time and attention or that want more of our time and attention.

So it’s really just a work in progress and I’m still learning how to balance all of that out, the balance of showing that I care and loving on people and liking all their social media stuff. Like, I really do value them, but I just don’t want to get tangled up in doing it because I’m trying to make somebody like me or because I believe that they want something from me that I don’t want to give.

So there’s a couple of things here. Number one, it is acceptable to create boundaries around your time. And just know this – I’ve talked about boundaries before, but they’re very simple. Boundaries around your time for yourself, they’re created for you; they’re not created for them. So you are telling yourself, I have a boundary around, let’s say, this part of my day. Like, my workday is from 8am to 4pm and I don’t let other people dictate my day during my business hours as an entrepreneur.

This is an example. I’m just making this up out of my head. So a boundary, though, is created for you. It’s what you are deciding for yourself. You’re not deciding for them how they’re going to behave – that’s not going to work for you. It’s about you and what boundary creation around time you’re making for you. And then it’s all about your actions; what you’re going to do or not do related to time boundaries.

If you have a boundary that says, you know, I work from eight to noon on my business, then when the phone rings and you’re not wanting to be

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interrupted, you have to commit to yourself not to pick up the phone, even when you want the distraction, right. That's something I've learned with the book writing.

Now, here's the kicker; you create the boundary for yourself and then you follow through for yourself about your boundaries. And then number three, you have to be willing to let them feel however they are going to feel. If they're frustrated with you, if they are angry at you, if they're mad at you, if they're disappointed or if they're sad, whatever emotion they're having, it's not about your time boundary; it's about the way they're thinking about it.

And where I think it's easy to fall into a trap is when we think like we don't want them to feel bad about our boundary for ourselves, so we give into the boundary. We break the boundary, basically, because we don't want them to feel bad. And if you dig deeper into that, why is it that we don't want them to feel bad? Because we believe that we're the ones making them feel bad, but that's not true. They're feeling bad about – if you have a time boundary and you're sticking to it and then somebody wants to get a hold of you and they're mad that they can't get a hold of you, you should be picking up the phone, you can allow them to be upset with you and just hold tight to that boundary. It's like a toddler.

You have to be the same. When you want somebody's time and attention and they don't pick up the phone, first of all, you never know, maybe they have a very good reason why. Your brain's creating a lot of drama around why they're not picking up and then you have your feeling about it, and then you realize you need to own your feelings about it. So this goes both ways, you guys.

But one, you have to be willing to let them have the feeling and you have to live with them being upset and it's okay, and you have to be willing to be upset and own your own feelings and let them have their own time boundaries, and that's okay.

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So I know that time is such a valued resource and we're so – time to me is very precious. I want to enjoy my time in the best way possible, loving on everybody. But I want to be able to do it in my own way and I have to realize that my own way is good enough. It's acceptable the way that I love on my people, acceptable the way I love on my family and friends and clients.

All the ways that I do it, it's okay and it's enough and if somebody's not okay with it, I have to let them have that feeling and own that. And I don't need to change my time boundaries to let other people feel better because, if you think about it, will I feel better? Will that serve me? No. And now I'm in a cycle of they made me do it or it's their fault, and then I'm in a spiral of blame and lack of responsibility and all of that business; which y'all know, we are not doing that up in here.

So, okay, my friends, if you have questions about how to set boundaries on time, please email me, send me a line. You know where to find me, Instagram, Facebook, I'm on my website. If you want to dive deeper and go into full one on one coaching, please let me know and I'm actually in the process of setting up some group coaching experiences. So for those of you who are a little bit too afraid to dive into one on one personal coaching, I've got your back, sister. We're going to do some group coaching so you can feel like you're in a group of loving people in a safe space and kind of figure out what this is all about.

So there you have it. Have an amazing week and I'll talk to you next week. Take care, bye-bye.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Empowered Principle Podcast*. If you enjoyed this episode and want to learn more, please visit www.angelacoaching.com where you can sign up for weekly updates and learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.

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