

Ep #26: Internal Alignment Vs. External Validation



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With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Welcome to *The Empowered Principal 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.

Hi guys, what's going on? Happy Tuesday. It is so good to be back. I've been taking a break from recording as I've been traveling and spending time with my family back in Iowa. I've really missed creating content and recording these podcasts for you guys. I tend to record them in batches so I record a few, send them in, record a few more, so I'm usually about a month ahead of myself.

But this time, it is June. By the time you hear this, it will be the end of June, and most of you should be about ready to wrap up the year and head out for some deserved down time. Good for you.

This time is so crucial for you as leaders and really crucial for your emotional wellbeing. So I want you to please promise me to schedule lots of play and rest during your time away from work. It's so important.

And if you're new to our podcast, welcome. We're so happy that you've joined us. A very special thank you to awesome Montana and Principal Smith for taking time to write a five-star review for the podcast. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Super excited.

I'm going to be holding a second drawing on my Facebook business page for another \$100 gift certificate to Amazon. So this podcast will drop on June 26th. Hey, podcast 26 dropping on June 26th, that's pretty cool. So I'm going to schedule a Facebook live for the gift card drawing the week of July 2nd through the 6th. And that's because I'm getting married on June 27th.

Ep #26: Internal Alignment Vs. External Validation

Well, I'm having a celebration for my elopement on the anniversary of our marriage, which is June 27th. So I'm going to be kind of busy that week. I'm going to be up in Tahoe, but I'll make sure to snap lots of pictures and keep you guys in the loop. So be sure to follow my business page at [akellycoaching](#) and click on - to get those updates you know how you can click to say let me know when people go live? Click on that so you'll be sure to catch the drawing. And if you aren't able to make it live, I will announce the winner in next week's podcast.

Alright guys, cool. Here we go. So today's topic is timely in the sense that as you are relaxed and you're casually thinking about planning for next fall, or maybe you're not. I want you to consider how you think about the work you do as a school leader, but this time in the sense of your work ethic.

How is it that you approach the job as principal? What beliefs drive your approach? And what comes up for you when I say the words work ethic? And I want you to hold on to this thought for a few seconds while I elaborate, okay?

So when I was a school leader, I often felt or experienced feelings of guilt and shame. I want you to keep in mind that guilt and shame are different emotions. Guilt is when you feel badly for something you did or did not do, that goes against your values and that you're aware that you could have handled yourself differently. Shame, on the other hand, is an intense pain that you feel when you believe that you personally are flawed, that something is wrong with you. Either you're not good enough, smart enough, strong enough, capable enough, all those enoughts. When you personally feel flawed, that is feeling shame.

So there are times when I felt guilt during my tenure about things that I knew I did not give my 100% best effort. So sometimes I would multitask during a meeting or halfway listen during an IP, or maybe I didn't plan my staff meeting as well as I knew I could have. And then there were other

Ep #26: Internal Alignment Vs. External Validation

times where I actually felt shame. I felt ashamed when parents had strong negative reactions and called me names. And some people were actually violent towards me. I've even had parents threaten physical harm.

Now, when that happened, I felt ashamed in the sense that I wasn't good enough to do the job. Not so much that they were threatening me. There's a difference there. But I also felt ashamed when I couldn't keep up with all the things I wanted to do and I felt I wasn't a good enough leader. Have you experienced that? That feeling of like, no matter how hard I try, I just can't do it, I must not be good enough for this job.

And I also felt shame one time when my superintended scolded me - one of my superintendents, I had several - scolded me for something that I actually did not do. And yet, I felt a sense of shame that I had done something wrong, that I was inherently wrong as a leader.

So you feel guilt when you act in a way that does not align with who you are and who you want to be and how you want to show up in the world. And the difference between guilt and shame, in my opinion, is that you feel guilty for things that you have control over, which is typically your approach to a situation.

So you feel guilty when you do not act in a way that aligns with who you want to be. Shame, on the other hand, is a feeling that comes with the thought that you are inherently not enough and there's no ability to change who you are. That thought, that feeling stems from a lack of control to change. With guilt, you have complete control. With shame, you feel like there's no changing who you are. Can you see that difference?

I believe that guilt comes from your own opinion of your approach, when you don't believe you've met your own standard. And shame stems from other people's opinion of your approach when you believe their opinion of you. And it can only feel shameful when you agree with their opinion.

[The Empowered Principal Podcast](#) with Angela Kelly

Ep #26: Internal Alignment Vs. External Validation

Now, some people spend their entire lives feeling shamed by others, and they attempt to change their feelings by people pleasing, by pleasing other people. We adjust our approach over and over based on feedback we receive from other people, and this is dangerous because if we don't first question whether we personally agree with the feedback, we find ourselves running on a treadmill trying to whack-a-mole everybody's opinion to solve it, to help them feel better so that you can feel better.

A disempowered principal is one who believes every bit of feedback he or she receives and goes about trying to adjust her approach because she believes that the way she personally chose to do it is not good enough. An empowered principal, on the other hand, is one who listens to the feedback, questions it, considers its validity by comparing it to her own opinion and values, and typically considering if she's obtaining the results she personally wants or not - so you're comparing this person's feedback, you're comparing your own values and validating this person's feedback based on the result you are getting or that you want. And then you consciously decide whether or not you will accept or adjust your approach based on that feedback.

The reason I highlight the difference between guilt and shame is because the two emotions drastically influence our approach and our reason for choosing our approach. So when I asked you earlier about what drives your work ethic, I want you to consider your thoughts and emotions that influence your approach to work.

We often times say that people who "work hard" have a strong work ethic. Yet, do we question why they're working hard? Do we wonder what's driving their work ethic? Are we working hard because it feels good to produce results? Or are we working hard simply to please other people?

Most people when asked will say they have a really strong work ethic. But less often do we ask to define what a strong work ethic means to them.

[The Empowered Principal Podcast](#) with Angela Kelly

Ep #26: Internal Alignment Vs. External Validation

some people may define it as working long hours, bustling about, completing all of their paper work on time, just looking busy, looking productive, running about, telling everybody how busy they are, they think, "Oh, I'm so busy, I must have a very strong work ethic."

Other people might simply say they're doing what's expected of them based on their job description, and that defines strong work ethic. Now, other people, and this is the category I choose to aim for, I want to fall into. I like to define work ethic is providing the best value to my employer and my customers as possible and showing up as the best version of myself.

I believe that work ethic is in the eye of the beholder. It's just a definition and we all have a different definition on it. So what one person considers a strong work ethic, another person may not. And this is why and how we can slip into people pleasing but define it as strong work ethic.

So I want you to consider how you define your work ethic and reflect on how you show up based on that definition. Also consider what's driving your work ethic. What is it based on? Is it based on your opinion of your own work and what you consider to be providing the most value that you're capable of? Or are you running around and constantly changing your approach because of somebody else's opinion? Their unquestioned opinion I should say, of your work.

So be mindful of whether you are driven by your own opinion of yourself, or you're engaging in people pleasing activities. And as you've heard a thousand times before, people pleasing will get you nowhere. Based on your approach, you either are working to please others or you're working to please yourself. But it serves no one in the end if you're people pleasing, and here's why.

Because think about this. You have experienced, I'm sure, a time where you changed your behavior in an attempt to make someone else happy and

Ep #26: Internal Alignment Vs. External Validation

then you do everything that they say that they wanted and they're still not happy. Their opinion changes. And here you are, thinking, "Why did I do that for?" Like, this is what they said they wanted, now they're not happy, and you can see how that's a vicious cycle of going round and round trying to give them the desired result that they want versus standing grounded in your desired result.

And at the very least, when you believe the thought that you're in the job simply to please those around you, you are going to operate from a shameful mindset and will most likely feel miserable most of the time.

The key to determining your work ethic from an empowered state is to place your values and opinions of your work above all others. And I mean all others. That includes your boss. You may really, really like and respect your boss and seriously consider her just amazing, and you want her feedback, you crave it, and you might decide many times to adjust your approach based on her feedback. Totally cool.

Adjusting your approach because you believe the feedback is helpful and it's going to support you in achieving the result that you want is very different than just taking the feedback as is, at face value without considering your own evaluation of the feedback. If you receive feedback from your boss and it does not align with your values, you can most certainly ask questions in order to understand where she's coming from and to see if you can find some level of alignment within yourself.

But you have to keep in mind that as a leader, it is your responsibility to choose your approach based on what you believe is best for yourself, your staff, and your students. Other people will always, always have different opinions about you, and they're going to think they know what's best, they're going to tell you what they think is best.

Ep #26: Internal Alignment Vs. External Validation

You're with me in this, right? I'm in the pool with you. I get how that feels. And it's not easy to not people please, in all honesty. I understand that. It's fine for them to have their opinion and to share it with you even because we're not in control of their behavior. That's fine. But also, you have the right to your own opinion. You have the right to decide for yourself what you believe is best because you are the leader. You are responsible, you are taking ownership of your school.

Do not discount your personal work ethic and your own values. Please take yourself into consideration. Because people pleasing behaviors, they're always, always in an attempt to receive external validations for your actions and results. And I have to say, not wanting external validation is one of the most challenging thoughts I have been working on just recently in my new line of work.

I do not get tons of external validation for the work that I'm creating and putting out into the world. Sometimes I do, I've got some loyal followers, thank you all, and I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but as a principal, I know it can be rough. And there are days when you do not get any external validation.

But here's my point: empowered principals don't require external validation. It's a nice - it's a cherry on the top, it's lovely when it happens, but you don't lead from a place of needing it. You lead from a place of internal alignment. And if you want to lead from this empowered state, you have to learn how to validate yourself based on your personal level of alignment.

Are your thoughts, emotions, and approach to your job fully aligned? Are you proud of your results? Do you believe you showed up to the best of your ability? If the answer is yes to these questions, then your work is good enough. You as a human being, you as a leader, are good enough. No one else needs to validate you.

Ep #26: Internal Alignment Vs. External Validation

You can feel pride in your work because only you know your expectations of yourself and the results you aim to achieve. And guys, I get it. Even when you miss the mark, you don't hit the bulls eye, you don't get the score you were hoping for for your school, or the scores dropped - a lot of times we're focused on the scores, the scores, the scores.

But let's say you miss the target. If your approach is aligned to your work ethic, then the other people's opinions have no weight. It feels so good to be free of needing external validation because you've met your own standards, and that my friends, is what empowerment is all about.

So go get it, think about your work ethic definition, how you want to be, how you want to show up, what are your set of standards, what do you value in your job, and go get it. Have an amazing week, enjoy resting and playing this summer, and be sure to catch me on Facebook live the week of July 2nd through the 6th because I'm going to be drawing a second \$10 gift card to Amazon winner. Let's do this!

Have a great week guys, catch you later. Bye.

Hey, empowered principle, if you are enjoying this podcast and want to dive even deeper, check out my website at angelakellycoaching.com to schedule a free no obligation discovery call. It is so much fun to connect over the phone and chat with you guys about what's going on and learning how I can be of help to you. I am here to serve you. Tell me what you need and I've got your back.

Applying this podcast information is really helpful and personalized coaching will expedite total transformation. So sign up today, give me a call, and let's get to chatting. Love it. Love you, take care, have a great week.

Ep #26: Internal Alignment Vs. External Validation

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.